Chapter 2

The lightweight C-type

Nothing stands still in life, and particularly in motor racing. In 1952 Lancia had been represented at Le Mans by just a couple of Aurelias but in 1953 they would enter three new 2.7-litre V6-powered D20s. Ferrari benefited from a larger entry and engines of greater capacity than the Jaguars. Talbot-Lago had tidied up the bodywork of its cars and entered three examples of the 4½-litre T26 GS. Briggs Cunningham’s team had a new C5-R to supplement its C4-Rs. Alfa Romeo had three of its 3½-litre 3000 CH coupés.

So it was that the competition was getting tougher and Jaguar needed to raise its game another notch if it was going to repeat the success enjoyed in 1951.

Even by late 1952, Jaguar was beginning to prepare for the 1953 race. According to Andrew Whyte’s book, *Jaguar Sports Racing and Works Competition Cars to 1953*, Bill Heynes issued instructions to Jack Emerson regarding the engine requirements for Le Mans towards the end of 1952. The document read as follows:

**LE MANS ENGINES – 1953**

Will you please put in hand immediately the building of five engines for Le Mans Race, one a practice engine, one to be a bench engine, and three for the actual competition.

I confirm the following specification which was discussed:

**CYLINDER BLOCK.** To be fitted with steel bearing caps before machining, to be adapted for the fitment of Will’s rings, to have the oil drain modification in the rear bearing. Main bearing lead Indium Bronze.

**TIMING GEARS.** Subject to satisfactory tests, the hydraulic type damper will be used, or, alternatively, a positively-set damper.

**SUMP.** 1952 Le Mans type specially tested for porosity and fitted with a strainer for additional safety. A new run of the suction pipe is to be arranged to assist in defeating cavitation.

**EXHAUST MANIFOLD.** A set of manifolds to be made up in 20 gauge Inconel tube, and bench testing by Mr. Emerson. Confirm by extensive road testing at M.I.R.A.

**OIL PUMP.** New type pump with spring loading to give 50lbs. per square inch with a definite stop limiting the openings of the valve to this amount, and if possible a secondary light spring to ensure return of the valve in case of failure of the main spring.

**CYLINDER HEAD.** Three heads of the present 120C type are to be sent to Mr. Weslake for flowing, and these will be held in reserve and used for testing the engine in case the three-port type head does not materialise or fails in its tests.

**3-PORT TYPE HEAD.** The models which are now available are to be sent to Mr. Weslake for port flowing. In the meantime, the head drawings are to be put out for pattern making, and sample castings as soon as possible.

**CARBURETTORS.** Initial work will be done with three 2½ S.U. carburettors; three double choke Weber carburettors employed Dunlop disc brakes, which gave the cars a significant advantage over their more powerful rivals with drum brakes.
The 1953 Le Mans 24 Hours

Great Cars Jaguar C-type XKC 051

signboards, one indicating faster, slower or come-in by a simple and clear moveable arrow, the other giving lap times with plus or minus amounts clearly marked in black and white, illuminated at night by a hand-directed flood-light. The Ferrari pit were urging their cars on with an impressive single-piece self-illuminating sign, like an advertisement hoarding, in the centre of which was a square containing the Ferrari ‘horse’ with a light behind it, which flashed on and off. Similarly a flashing Shell sign on the tableau indicated a refuelling stop. Pit signals varied with the teams, some being over-complicated, others restricted to a minimum, while one of the smallest cars had the largest board of all. ‘

The report continued: ‘By the time the early morning mists had cleared and the Jaguar pit was full of frying eggs and bacon, Rolt and Hamilton were still a lap ahead of the lame Ferrari which was nevertheless still going hard; three laps behind came the Fitch/Walters Cunningham a lap ahead of the Jaguars of Moss/Walker and Whitehead/Stewart.’

Behind these two Jaguars lay the two Ferraris – the coupé of the Marzotto brothers and the open Cole/Chinetti car. At 6.30am, however, news came that Tom Cole had been thrown out of his Ferrari at Maison Blanche. The car had got out of control after passing a slower one, hit the bank and Cole was thrown out and died instantly. Ascari slowed at the scene of the accident but carried on after realising he could do nothing. In tribute, Autosport commented: ‘Tom was a most popular personality amongst racing men, and was rapidly gaining a reputation for being one of the world’s fastest sports car drivers.’

At 8.30am, both leading cars came into the pits together. Hamilton, in his eagerness to get out still in front, nearly collided with one of the DB-Panhards as he accelerated away. As Villoresi followed him through, it became apparent that the Italian’s clutch was slipping badly. The Ferrari continued to run for another

During his early-morning stint, Rolt remained a lap ahead and kept the pressure on the ailing second-placed Ascari/ Villoresi Ferrari, which was suffering clutch problems. Philip Porter collection

The clock on the Dunlop bridge shows 6.45am as Rolt, aboard XKC 051, comes up to lap the John Fitch/Phil Walters Cunningham C5-R, which finished third.

Courtesy of Adrian Hamilton

At around 8.30am, having completed 211 laps, XKC 051 made its longest stop of the race, at 4 minutes 1 second, when all four wheels were changed and Hamilton relieved Rolt. LAT Images
two hours, though, albeit at considerably reduced speed, and by mid-morning it had dropped to fifth place due to stops to try to fix the problem. The car was finally withdrawn at 11.00am, leaving the Marzotto brothers as the sole remaining Maranello representatives, in fifth place.

The Jaguars now ran first and second and at midday, after 20 hours of racing, Rolt and Hamilton had completed 253 laps at an average speed of 106.2mph, with team-mates Moss and Walker four laps adrift. Walters and Fitch in the Cunningham were still pressing hard, a further lap back, and now this was the only car likely to provide any sort of threat. It was the fastest car through the flying kilometre at over 154mph, so the two Jaguars could not let up.

With two hours still to go, the leading car exceeded the distance completed by the previous year’s winner and carried on, metronomically, towards the finish, four laps ahead of its team-mates. In the closing stages the order did not change – Hamilton took over from Rolt for the final stint, followed by Moss, Fitch, Stewart, Giannino Marzotto, Trintignant, Cunningham, de Tornaco, the Cunningham coupé and Johnson in the Nash-Healey. Autosport described the scene in the Jaguar pits. ‘For the final stage, Duncan, Stirling and Ian Stewart are motoring the Jaguars – the two Petes and Tony are biting their fingers off behind the pits where Tim Seccombe, Angela Hamilton, Mary Walker and Lois Rolt are busy frying steak and eggs for the hungry pit personnel. Mr Bill Lyons has scarcely left.
his post for a moment, nor have Mort Morris-Goodall, Bill Heynes and Lofty England. One just can’t go away for a little thing like sleep, when one of the greatest things that has ever happened in the history of British motor racing is going on, on that fast Sarthe circuit. ’

In the last hour, all three leaders began to suffer with split bonnets due to fastening catches breaking. Moss stopped to tear part of his away, as did Fitch with the Cunningham, while Stewart looked to be in danger of losing the whole side of his Jaguar’s bonnet. Apart from this, the leading trio were sounding healthy and still lapping at over 100mph.

As The Motor reported: ‘As the clock moved up to 4.00pm the gendarmerie moved out in force in front of the pits. In the crowded enclosures the massed spectators stood ten deep with every eye down the road to the finishing line. ’

It was a total triumph for Jaguar, the cars finishing first, second, fourth and ninth. Rolt and Hamilton covered a record 2,534.5 miles – 220 more than the 1952-winning Mercedes-Benz 300SL. Only Jaguar, Cunningham and Austin-Healey got all their cars to the finish of the race, which Road & Track described as ‘the most murderous Le Mans that has ever been run’.

‘Lofty’ England lends a helping hand to Duncan Hamilton as he jumps down from the pit counter to take over the wheel for the final part of the race, the scene keenly observed by spectators and photographers. LAT Images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Laps</th>
<th>Reason for stop</th>
<th>Driver change</th>
<th>Time in pit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Routine (one rear wheel changed)</td>
<td>Rolt to Hamilton</td>
<td>2m 30s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Routine (both rear wheels changed)</td>
<td>Hamilton to Rolt</td>
<td>1m 52s</td>
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<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>Routine</td>
<td>Rolt to Hamilton</td>
<td>1m 35s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>167</td>
<td>Routine</td>
<td>Hamilton to Rolt</td>
<td>1m 34s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>Routine (all four wheels changed)</td>
<td>Rolt to Hamilton</td>
<td>4m 01s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>246</td>
<td>Routine</td>
<td>Hamilton to Rolt</td>
<td>1m 44s</td>
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<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>Routine</td>
<td>Rolt to Hamilton</td>
<td>1m 31s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>304</td>
<td>Finish</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Total time in pit: 15m 16s

The American magazine made another pertinent point: ‘It is interesting to note that Charles Faroux, doyen of French motor racing journalism and world famous expert on the Le Mans circuit, forecast that the race this year would be won on acceleration and braking, and it was in just these departments that the XKC is a changed car: the new disc brakes give perfect “g” at every stop, the three Weber carburettors and altered porting give enormously increased torque at low rpm. The new chassis is some 280lbs lighter. It was indeed clear that the factory XKC cars are the fastest sports car in the world today, with a substantial margin over all its rivals, as well as being the most reliable.’

Motor Sport commented: ‘Jaguars set the pace at the fall of the flag, had held the pace for the whole 24 hours and had command of the race at a speed never before realised, which caused all but two of the opposition to retire or drop right back.’ It described the race as, ‘The fiercest battle ever fought on the Sarthe circuit.’

Recalling the race in 2006, Tony Rolt said: ‘It was perfect. It was dry, ideal conditions, the car handled beautifully, the brakes worked really well. ’

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Chapter 4

The winning drivers

Tony Rolt and Duncan Hamilton enjoyed a long partnership in sports-car racing, notably with their six consecutive appearances at the Le Mans 24 Hours, capped by their celebrated victory of 1953 in XKC 051.

Their first Le Mans outing together was in 1950, when Donald Healey invited them to team up in his Nash-Healey, an open car powered by a 3.8-litre straight-six engine from Nash, the American manufacturer. Despite being rammed from behind on the Sunday morning and losing 45 minutes in the pits for repairs, they looked set for third place until Sydney Allard’s car got past three laps from the end and left them in fourth spot.

The following year Healey returned to Le Mans, now with a coupé-bodied version of the Nash-engined design. Again Rolt and Hamilton drove a fast and dependable race to finish sixth, this time against stronger opposition, above all from Ferrari and Jaguar.

Later in 1951 Rolt secured a place in the works Jaguar team for 1952 after a fine performance as a reserve driver for the factory in the RAC Tourist Trophy at Dundrod, as described later in this chapter. Rolt recalled how Hamilton followed him into the Jaguar team: ‘Lofty said, “What about another driver?” and I said that I thought Duncan [Hamilton] would be a very good choice. Bill Lyons said, “Isn’t he rather wild?” I said, “He’s not wild in other people’s cars, only in his own cars.” Eventually he signed up… and we always drove in long-distance races together.’

After a maiden solo outing for Rolt at the International Trophy meeting at Silverstone, he and Hamilton teamed up for the first time as works Jaguar drivers at Le Mans in 1952 but their car (XKC 012)
Chapter 5
Other outings in 1953

After Jaguar’s Le Mans success, William Lyons sat down with Bill Heynes and ‘Lofty’ England to discuss the team’s racing programme for the rest of the year. The outcome was summarised in the following memo from Lyons to Heynes, England and ‘Mort’ Morris-Goodall.

With the necessity to review our Racing Programme following the Le Mans result, it was agreed this afternoon that the following changes are to be made.

REIMS, July 4
No official participation, but if Peter Walker and Peter Whitehead definitely enter, then we are to do our best to provide them with a car which is capable of winning. Any other participation to be discouraged, unless we are committed to Stirling Moss, when the position is to be reviewed.

SILVERSTONE, July 8
All 3 Le Mans cars are to be prepared for this event, but possibly only one of them entered.

 Spa, July 25th–26th
No official participation. Consideration to be given, however, to one car entry.

GOODWOOD, August 22nd or alternatively TT.
To be considered for official participation. One, two or three cars.

NURBURGRING, August 30th
No official participation.

PAN AMERICAN, November
No official participation.

As Andrew Whyte comments in his book Jaguar Sports Racing & Works Competition Cars to 1953, this confirmed that Lyons regarded anything other than Le Mans as being a luxury in the overall company budget. The opportunity to show off the winning car in front of a home crowd was not to be missed, though, and so XKC 051 was sent along to the British Grand Prix meeting at Silverstone.

Silverstone
British Grand Prix meeting, demonstration run
19 July 1953

Drivers: Tony Rolt/Duncan Hamilton

Motor Sport mistakenly reported that there was no official Jaguar entry for the Sports Car race at the British Grand Prix meeting at Silverstone on 19 July, but in fact Jaguar did send a single car, XKC 052, for Tony Rolt. Duncan Hamilton had been due to drive it but he was still recovering from injuries sustained at Oporto, straight after Le Mans. Even so, the pair completed a parade lap in XKC 051 for the benefit of the home crowd, as Autosport reported: ‘The excitement and sounds of the Grand Prix having died down, Duncan Hamilton and Tony Rolt now bring out the Le Mans-winning XK120C Jaguar, the sleek green car and its blue-clad occupants gaining the hearty plaudits of the crowd for their performance in the great French road race.’

Rolt did not have much success in the sports car event at the wheel of XKC 052, as Autosport recorded: ‘Parnell in an Aston and Rolt in the Jag circulate with barely five yards between them, until Rolt outbrakes the Aston into Copse on lap four. On the eighth lap, Parnell gets back past at the same point. Rolt begins to drop away and on lap 21 pulls into pits to retire with broken piston.’

XXC 051, with Peter Walker at the wheel, is seen on the line at the Prescott International Hill Climb on 20 September 1953. The car was fitted with a 4.27:1 rear axle and Walker won his class with a time of 49.69s.

LAT Images
At the British Grand Prix meeting on 19 July 1953, British spectators were able to applaud Jaguar’s achievement when Duncan Hamilton and Tony Rolt completed a parade lap in XKC 051 immediately after the main race. ‘Lofty’ England is chatting to Hamilton in the pits, while Rolt and William Lyons look on.

The Revs Institute for Automotive Research/George Phillips

XKC 051 stands proudly in the paddock, complete with laurels, for the benefit of the home crowd. The reason why the number plate has been covered up is unknown.

Grand Prix Library

Dundrod

RAC Tourist Trophy

5 September 1953

Drivers Tony Rolt/Duncan Hamilton
Result DNF

The 20th International Tourist Trophy held at Dundrod in Northern Ireland on 5 September 1953 was the sixth round of the World Sports Car Championship. ‘Somehow,’ wrote Motor Sport, ‘the TT never seems to resume its former glory’, the magazine citing the arrival of only 27 of the 45 cars listed in the entry.

In his book Jaguar Sports Racing and Works Competition Cars to 1953, published in 1982, Andrew Whyte stated that, at the time of writing, he had been unable positively to identify the drivers of each of the three lightweight C-types entered for this event (XKC 051, XKC 052 and XKC 053), although the driver pairings were as usual. For the purposes of this book we have assumed that other reports are correct in stating that Tony Rolt and Duncan Hamilton were in XKC 051. Certainly, Anders Ditlev Clausager, editor of D-Type, C-Type and Lightweight E Register, claims that Rolt/Hamilton were the drivers of XKC 051 and that the car was fitted with a 9:1 compression engine and a 3.54:1 rear axle.

For Rolt and Hamilton there was certainly no return to the glory of Le Mans as XKC 051 retired with gearbox problems after just five laps. The car of Peter Whitehead and Jimmy Stewart, XKC 052, fell victim to the same problem about halfway through the race. The third C-type, XKC 053, driven by Stirling Moss and Peter Walker, finished fourth, although this was after Moss waited by...
The start of the 1953 RAC Tourist Trophy at Dundrod, on 5 September. XKC 051 (No 6) can be seen first in line with Tony Rolt running across the track to jump in. The car retired after only five laps with gearbox problems.

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Chapter 8
Geoffrey Allison
1956

Following Bill Smith’s tragic death, 30-year-old J.G. (Geoffrey) Allison of Pocklington, Yorkshire, acquired XKC 051. Allison was born on 16 August 1925, the son of Alfred Thomas Allison, whose own father, Joseph Allison, had started a firm of house-builders in Pocklington in 1907. The family company built many of the houses around the Pocklington area, including the award-winning Algarth Garden Estate. Described as ‘very go-ahead with his life’, Allison had a wide range of interests. As well as his motor racing activities, he captained Pocklington at rugby in the years 1948–50 and obtained a pilot’s licence to fly light aircraft.

It seems that Jaguar rally driver and dealer Reg Mansbridge of Lincoln acted as an intermediary in dealing with the car after Smith’s death, presumably following the wishes of Bill’s father, John. Certainly XKC 051 was placed in the care of Jaguar’s Service Department, and the Jaguar Heritage Trust holds in its archive a letter from Mansbridge dated 23 January 1956 instructing ‘Lofty’ England to release the car to a Mr Nicholson, who was to be accompanied by Geoffrey Allison. The car was duly collected on 31 January.

According to Peter J. Sainty’s memoir of Bill Smith, An Artist at the Game, Allison’s mechanic, Peter Wright, remembered the appointed day as ‘bitterly cold’. Wright also described their efforts to repair the disc brakes once the car was at Allison’s premises in Pocklington. Although it is unclear exactly what was wrong with them, the task resulted in them becoming ‘knee deep in shims’. Allison changed the car’s colour from red to white, although he retained Smith’s thin black central stripe.

Although some accounts claim that Allison achieved several club wins with XKC 051, extensive research for this book has uncovered only four recorded meetings in which he took part, including the first-ever event at Mallory Park, on Whit Monday, 21 May 1956, although he did also compete in hill climbs and sprint events in the car. It is possible that some of these ‘club’ wins might refer to his activities in other cars, as he is known to have rallied and also competed in British club racing at the time.

Allison’s name appeared on the entry list for the Goodwood Easter production sports car race on 2 April 1956 with car

On 21 May 1956 Allison took part in the first-ever car meeting at Mallory Park in Leicestershire. Driving XKC 051, he came third in the Formule Libre event and then won the over-2,700cc sports car race. Courtesy of Lyn Rickatson
number 97, but he did not take part. The car is listed as a Jaguar XK 120 rather than an XK 120C or a C-type, so whether or not this was intended to be his début race with XKC 051 is unknown. Instead, his first event, and the only one of International status that Allison seems to have entered, was the unlimited sports car race at the Aintree International 200 meeting on 21 April 1956.

Aintree

International 200
21 April 1956

Driver Geoffrey Allison (car 36)
Result 16th

A clear-cut victory for Roy Salvadori in his Aston Martin DB3S, was how Autosport described this event. Salvadori was chased by the three Ecurie Ecosse D-types of Ninian Sanderson, Desmond Titterington and Ron Flockhart, until the latter dropped back with brake problems. Titterington passed his team-mate to take second and that was how they finished, these three well ahead of the rest of the field. Allison does not feature in the report but his first outing in XKC 051 resulted in a distant 16th place out of 17 finishers.

Sitting outside the Pocklington garage and now painted white with a black stripe, XKC 051 is obviously fully prepared for Allison’s first outing with it, at Aintree on 21 April 1956, as it is carrying its race number of 36.

As the Allison family’s building company expanded and diversified, it came to include this garage on Railway Street, Pocklington. Courtesy of Andrew Salton

This is the quality Allison was up against at Aintree – where he started near the back of the 17-strong grid and finished 16th. Roy Salvadori’s Aston Martin DB3S (33) leads off the line with Ninian Sanderson’s Ecurie Ecosse D-type Jaguar (21) alongside, and in their wake the field includes three more DB3Ss and six more D-types. British Automobile Racing Club

As the Allison family’s building company expanded and diversified, it came to include this garage on Railway Street, Pocklington. Courtesy of Andrew Salton

XKC 051 in Geoffrey Allison’s garage soon after he bought it, still painted red but with some of the paint now flaking off. Courtesy of Lyn Rickatson

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XKC 051 in Geoffrey Allison’s garage soon after he bought it, still painted red but with some of the paint now flaking off. Courtesy of Lyn Rickatson
Chapter 10
Briggs Cunningham
1968–84

Briggs Cunningham is probably the only owner of XKC 051 never to have actually driven it. He acquired the car in February 1968 from Miles Brubacher as a restored rolling chassis and put it on display in his Briggs Cunningham Automotive Museum in Costa Mesa, California.

Cunningham was born on 19 January 1907 in Cincinnati, Ohio, the son of a wealthy financier. His interest in cars came about as a result of his uncle taking him street racing, but he also took up sailing at a young age, an interest that featured strongly in his life, along with golf and flying.

In 1927 Cunningham went to Yale University to study engineering but left in 1929, went sailing and through that interest met Lucie Bedford, whom he married. While on honeymoon in Europe he attended a number of races and also purchased an Alfa Romeo sports car at the Earls Court motor show.

During the 1930s he raced yachts successfully and also gained a private pilot’s licence. At the age of 24 he was a member of the winning crew of the Fastnet race aboard Dorade and, years later, skippered the first victorious 12-metre yacht, Columbia, in the 1958 America’s Cup. He also invented a special ‘downhaul’ (part of a sailing boat’s rigging that applies downforce on a sail) to change the shape of a sail and increase the speed of a yacht, and the device today still carries his name.

However, it is as a builder and racer of cars for which he is best known. He took up racing with friends from college, Miles and Sam Collier, brothers who had both already raced in Europe, and the three later founded the Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA). The Second World War interrupted their activities, but not before Cunningham had built his own special known as the Bu-Merc – a modified Buick chassis with Buick engine but the body from a Mercedes-Benz 55K. During the war Cunningham served in the civil air patrol monitoring Atlantic coastal waters, having been rejected by the US Navy due to an asthmatic condition as well as his age.

In 1946 Cunningham entered the Bu-Merc in a road race at Watkins Glen, finishing second, and also raced a supercharged MG TC in club events. That year Luigi Chinetti was appointed Ferrari’s US importer for the area east of the Mississippi and Cunningham became his first customer, purchasing a 166 Inter that he raced in 1949, along with a Healey Silverstone. But Cunningham had already set his sights far higher: he wanted to enter an American car for the 24 Hours at Le Mans.

Cunningham had already met Phil Walters and his mechanic Bill Frick, who were building their own hybrid, the Fordillac – a Ford coupé fitted with a modified Cadillac V8 engine. Cunningham bought their company, Frick-Tappett Motors of Long Island, New York, with the intention of entering the 1950 Le Mans 24 Hours. Chinetti, the winner at Le Mans in 1949, arranged an invitation to the event but the organisers would not accept the Fordillac as they were not production cars. Instead, Cunningham
entered two 5.4-litre Cadillac Coupe de Villes, one of standard appearance, the other with such an extraordinary body that it was nicknamed ‘Le Monstre’ by the French press. Performance upgrading for both cars included multiple carburettors, stiffer shock absorbers and better brakes. The car with the special body, which was designed for aerodynamic advantage, was timed at 134mph down the Mulsanne straight and Cunningham and Walters finished 11th in it, just behind the standard-bodied entry driven by the Collier brothers.

Cunningham resolved to return to Le Mans with a much more effective challenger, so he set up his own race shop in West Palm Beach, Florida, where a team of 32 engineers and mechanics built three Chrysler-powered Cunningham C2-R roadsters for the 1951 race. Two of them crashed but the third, driven by Walters and John Fitch, held second place behind the winning Jaguar C-type for much of the Sunday morning until a con rod failed with four hours to go.

Cunningham’s ambitions included becoming a manufacturer and with the new C4-R cars he built for 1952 he hoped not only to win the 24 Hours but also to sell a road version to take on Ferrari, Jaguar and Aston Martin in the American market. Again he took a three-car team – two roadsters and a closed coupé – to Le Mans and this time one of them finished the race. Cunningham himself drove the survivor, one of the roadsters, for all but four of the 24 hours because his co-driver, Bill Spear, felt unwell, and they claimed a heroic fourth place behind two Mercedes-Benz 300SLs and a Nash-Healey.
After its sale to Peter Livanos, XKC 051 was treated to another full restoration, this time at the hands of Gary Pearson, who was already familiar with the car from his outings in it at the Goodwood Revival, and with the intention of restoring the original body that had been retained by Adrian Hamilton.

‘It probably went on for over three years,’ Pearson explained. ‘We had to restore the original body which meant obviously taking off the RS Panels body, which had been on it and was the one I raced it with. But as we got it down to a bare chassis we found a few little rust spots and things underneath, and so the chassis needed some repairs and it ended up being down to a bare frame, sand blasted, a few little repairs that needed doing underneath and then built back up again. Even though the car obviously had a massive restoration with DK Engineering, it had got a bit of patina about it, because Adrian had done a lot on the road and races, and we didn’t want to make it look like a brand new car again. So what was done was done sympathetically. Mechanically, it was completely gone through and then obviously the big job was the body – a huge task.

‘The centre section was completely intact. It was all in bare metal, but because it was so hard and so fragile it had lots of cracks in it. I expect some of the cracks must have occurred while the body was off the car as it’s obviously quite flimsy. But all of that could be repaired, with little patches in a few places. ‘It took a long time and a lot of research before we could even find a filler rod to be able to weld all the cracks, because the metal is so thin and could just crack again. And then we had to put patches in and find the right sort of material. Just to find materials that would work, without actually ruining anything, was a huge job.’

‘The tail had been altered because the rubber fuel cell had been removed and somebody had put in a boot lid to make a much bigger boot space. The compartment had all been turned into a boot storage area with a big boot panel put in the top. We had to put more material in the tail because of this horrible boot lid.’

As outlined in Chapter 9, the conversion of the boot occurred during the ownership of Miles Brubacher, as confirmed by his son, John. Pearson does not like to ‘over-restore’ a car, preferring to leave as much original material as possible, including keeping what he refers to as its ‘wounds’.

‘It’s part of its life, isn’t it?’ he observes. ‘This car is almost unique in that it’s still got its original body, so you have to preserve all of this. We could have chopped all this out and made it look brand new, but what’s the point in that? None at all. The whole point of what we were trying to do was to preserve as much as possible.’

As for the chassis itself, only relatively minor detail work was required. ‘The car has done so many road miles over many years with all those tours and rallies,’ Pearson continued. ‘After all that hard mileage there’s bound to be a Cockpit view of the car as it is today, after a new restoration by Pearsons Engineering with original body refurbished. Zumbrunn Studio
some little cracks and bits of corrosion – nothing major, just bits and bobs. For example, the steering rack mounts were starting to crack and there were little cracks around where the rear suspension arms go. These sorts of things tend to suddenly appear – they start to corrode a little bit and then just pop through. Things like that are just going to get worse, not better, so we got rid of the rusty bits and tidied it all up.

‘As for the paint on the chassis, it’s not as if we were getting rid of original paint, because we knew it wasn’t – because the thing was totally restored.’

One thing that was clear was that XKC 051 was still in highly original form. ‘It has never had a big accident. Certainly, when we went through it, it was clear that all the welding is the same, and it’s all consistent with Jaguar work.’ When the work on the chassis was...