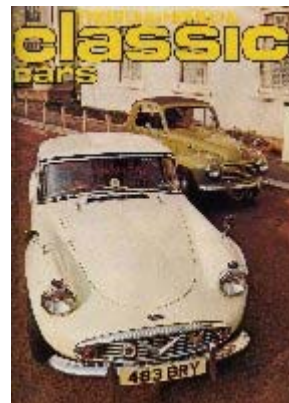




Thoroughbred & Classic Cars - June 1976

THE SPECIALISTS, LYNX ENGINEERING by Paul Skilleter

This is a company which since its formation six years ago has maintained what is known as a "low profile" - in fact, it wasn't until the advent of the Lynx D-type Replica in 1974 that even many Jaguar enthusiasts realised their existence. However, the company has worked steadily away and has achieved a very high reputation amongst owners of historic sports racing cars.



I DON'T intend to examine the D-type replica here as it's the firm's services we're looking at this time, and these operate under the title of Lynx Engineering Ltd (the replica is manufactured under the name of The Lynx Motor Company). It all started through Guy Black's own interest in Jaguars, which manifested itself in a restoration project concerning the late Guy Williams' C-type Jaguar (which incidentally is for sale). Gradually a number of C-and D-type spares were accumulated and it then appeared sensible to run it all as a proper business. The key men at Lynx now are Guy Black, who himself was a Weslake apprentice, and Chris Keith-Lucas who is highly skilled in design and panel work. But this is also a

very close-knit concern, and the other five staff employed work very closely with the partners — Les Jones, a superb mechanic and well versed in the idiosyncrasies of D-type engines, Reg Rozier, an ex-tool maker, James Black, Guy's brother who helps out mainly on the electrical side, Guy's wife who sees to the accounting and secretarial jobs, and Michael Farbrother, a teacher, who's filling in some time by van driving and generally assisting.

There were in the immaculate Newenden workshops when I visited them no less than five Jaguars undergoing work - Clive Jarmon's ex-Robert Danny XKSS (719), David Duffey's C-type (XKC 040), Tony Charnock's two production D-types (516 and 536) and Chris Drake's production D-type, 546. Also while I was there, Phillippe Renault's D-type arrived from the paintshop (XKD 558 but converted to "long nose" specification), and XKC 006 was about to be sent there; not counting MDU 214 (XKC 004) which took us to lunch in convoy with the prototype Lynx replica. All somewhat mouth-watering!

The work done is plainly of a very high order: Chris Keith-Lucas's panel work is superb, and the £60,000-worth of parts enables Les Jones to rebuild a "C" or "D" engine more faithfully than in probably any other workshop in the world. Besides engine parts, chassis and gearbox parts are kept too, and even original Jaguar body sections so that new panels can be made exactly as they were on leaving the factory back in 1956 or whenever.



What can't be found (Guy spends much of his time searching out and buying old new stock) is made — I saw patterns for water pumps, spinners, number plate lights, pulleys, gearbox casings (which on the D-type usually gets cracked if the box has ever been roughly disassembled by a ham-fisted mechanic), C-type sumps and much else. Sometimes the original manufacturer is approached to see if a small batch of "old" parts can be made again — the original braided oil line is an example — or otherwise parts are made on a "one off" basis in a machine shop. This is besides the aforementioned original spares held, which include Lucas electrical items, dry sump equipment (including new Plessey pumps) and Perspex windscreens and light covers (patterns for which are made by Chris and sent to White & Ellerton, the London Perspex specialists). And although parts are acquired or made mainly to enable Lynx to carry out any job a C- or D-type owner may require, the company will sell bits separately to private owners; and they don't charge whatever figure they think the poor man will pay but just 10% above what that part has cost them - a refreshing attitude. The only "but" is that the car in question is carefully checked out to ensure that the would-be spares buyer isn't hoarding for resale, or trying to build a "real" replica out of a chassis number. To this end, Guy undoubtedly has the most accurate and up-to-date register of C- and D-types in the world.



Obviously Lynx are Jaguar orientated, but other similar cars can be rebuilt as well, or design projects undertaken — and it is into the latter sphere that Guy, a design and development engineer with pattern making experience, is keen to expand. He enjoys doing original design work and is just completing the re-design and re-manufacture of the Cozzette supercharger. Other cars worked on include Lotus 11s (Lynx completed the bodywork for the gullwing coupe that Rod Leach now has), Lister-Jaguars, Bentley 3-litre, GT 40, Ferrari 121LM and various vintage cars.

It is no doubt apparent that I was very impressed by what I saw in this Sussex village, and I expect to see this live young company taking on many interesting cars and projects in the coming years. Their address is: Lynx Engineering, Station Road, Northiam, Rye, Sussex, telephone no. Northiam 2585.