



top



gear

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TOP GEAR SPECIAL EDITION: THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP

BY LES JOHNSON



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



Les Johnson tells this fascinating story of meeting Joy Rainey on the Adelaide to Darwin Rally and bringing together the history of a unique XK120 that was part of the lives of three families in the story. The car is now owned by his brother Norman. John Slater, Editor



I spotted Joy Rainey motoring along on the Adelaide to Darwin Veteran Rally in her 1904 Oldsmobile on numerous times over a few days on the rally.

She was unmistakable due to her small stature and the classic car she owns, but I had not spoken to her until I meet Joy officially one afternoon at one of the rally night stopovers, at Renner Springs in the Northern Territory.

Joy had travelled all the way out from England and shipped her beloved 1904 curved dash Oldsmobile to compete in the Adelaide to Darwin Veteran Motor vehicle car run held in August and September 2014.

Joy's support crew was Mark Riley, Bruce Young from England and Lorraine Pohlman from Geelong Victoria who I am in great debt to for her effort in helping me with this article on my brother Norman's XK120 Jaguar.

Without her enthusiasm this article on this rare XK 120 Jaguar would have not been possible.

Joy Rainey is a well documented racing driver in the UK and a seasoned traveller who recently took her beloved 1904 Oldsmobile across the USA. She started in Los Angeles 13th April 2013 finishing at Daytona Beach Florida 15th May 2013.



*Mc Kibbin (Rally Organiser)
Joy Rainey & Mark Riley in the 1904 Oldsmobile*



Joy Rainey being breath tested by the local constabulary on the Darwin Rally



Joy Rainey & Bruce Young



Joy Rainey & Mark Riley



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



I waited until my son Rick and Lorraine were present, to confront Joy on the knowledge I had, on her fathers Jaguar XK120, because I love to set my son Rick up on a conversation with one degree of separation.

Rick was on the event with my wife Roselee, our loving daughter Sharon together with Rick's beautiful partner Lisa and our wonderful grandchildren, Emily, Ryan and Sophie.

I had been informed of the connection while talking to Bruce Young and Lorraine Pohlman at an afternoon tea break on the Stuart highway, re her 1904 Oldsmobile car.

It was when Bruce mentioned to me that Joy's father Murray Rainey had started the Geelong Speed Trials in 1956 that the pennies dropped. I told Bruce my brother Norman now owns and has restored Joy's fathers XK 120 Jaguar Chassis number 660839.

Lorraine immediately informed me that her father In-Law Robert (Bob) Pohlman was the one responsible for the metal hard top conversion, showing me a photo of Joy's mother Norma alongside the Jaguar outside Murray Rainey's work shop in Geelong Victoria.

What people carry in their wallets!!

...and so the story begins.



The Johnson family expedition clan with the 1913 Willys Overland Raceabout



Norma Rainey outside Murrays workshop



Classic lines of the XK 120 Jaguar



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



The Rainey's moved to the UK in the 1970's now over forty years ago. Norma Rainey is 92 years old at the time of writing in September 2014 and lives in Eavesham, England with daughter Joy.

My father Cullen Powell Johnson, commonly known as Col, worked for Murray Rainey as a Taxi driver between 1955 and 1956. So when my brother Norman in 1980 showed the recently purchased Jaguar to my father at his Oakville home, my father advised brother Norman that the car belonged to Murray Rainey, and told him what he knew about this famous Jaguar XK120 from Geelong.

The amazing part to this story is that Norman, aged 3 years old and myself, aged 5 years old where living in Gertrude Street, West Geelong while all this racing and work was being carried out on Normans future Jaguar XK120 only 2 miles away.

Our old family house is still there today, 62 years later.



*Front and rear view
photographs supplied
by Lorraine Pohlman*



*Classic lines of the Metal Hard Top. Joy
advised me that the car was later painted bright
red and matching red leather interior.*

*Above photograph supplied by Lorraine
Pohlman, daughter-in-law of Bob Pohlman,
taken around 1953-1954 outside Murrays
Garage at 161 Moorabool Street Geelong
Victoria.*

It is now a music store called "Oxygen."



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



Our home in the years 1952-1957 in Gertrude Street West Geelong



Duff and Pohlman Body works in Preston Street Geelong - (Lorraine Pohlman)



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



This extract is taken from "A YANK DOWN UNDER" a biography written by Bob Pohlman and relating to the Murray Rainey Jaguar XK120, and the amazing workmanship on the Jaguar's metal hard top, carried out by the panel workshop of DUFF & POHLMAN, Preston Street Geelong Victoria.

The Second Term at the Gordon really taxed my energy; I now had to work more after school hours to make more money as the Aussie £ (pound) had shrunk but my GI assistance hadn't increased to keep up with inflation.

Each weekend was full with panel work and painting. At the end of term 1952 I was so far behind in my studies I failed four subjects. I had now agreed to do a major modification for Murray Rainey on his XK120 Jaguar Sports Car, and studying to cram for the failed subjects.

One Saturday afternoon my happiness was murdered, my marriage destroyed my love and my friend became hated. From that time on, Pat and I were to live separate lives, although we lived side by side at 454 Ryrie Street in Geelong. The tension was unbelievable.

When I heard the Wilsons who rented a house at 11 Fredrick (just at the rear of 454 Ryrie Street had brought a house in Norlane and would soon be moving, after some soul searching, I decided to buy this place.

I had seriously considered taking Patsy and John and returning to the USA but what then? I felt I had now some roots in Australia. Grandma and Bill Troup were my friends and I was getting a fair cliental in my trade. But I still had to sit for four supplementary exams and pass at least two in order, to qualify for a scholar's pension in the following year. I just couldn't concentrate on Calculus, Applied Mechanics and Graphic's, but passed in Mechanical Drawing.

Not Enough- Fed Up, Fucked Up and Far From Home. But I had my loved ones to care for. I needed to cash my traveller's cheques on the black market in Melbourne (USA dollars were in great demand).

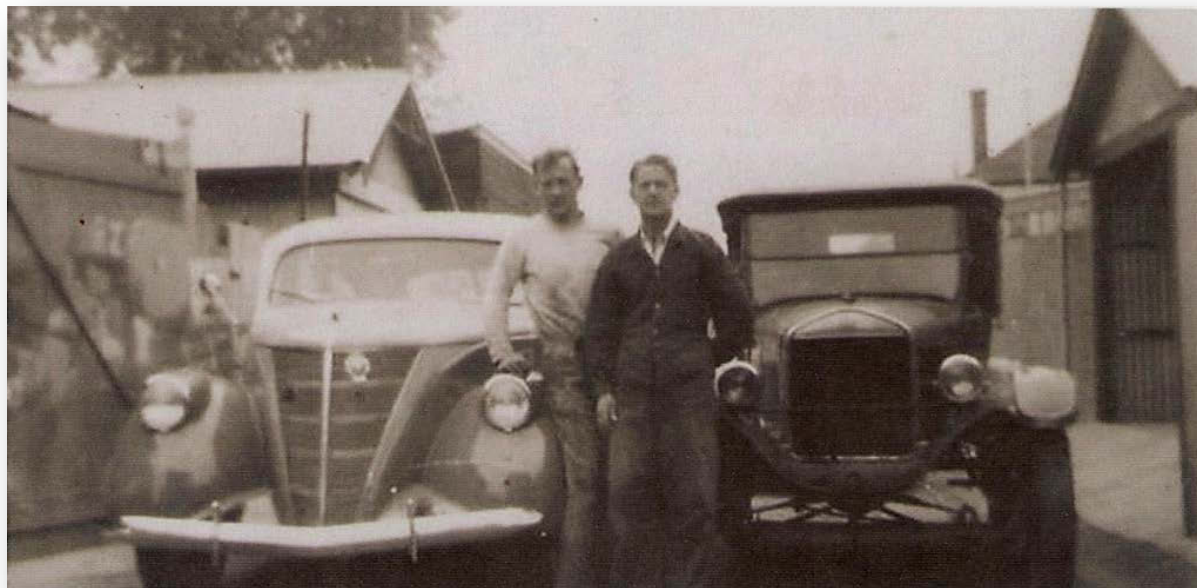
I borrowed an MG sports car from a fellow student, Wom Sun Chinn and another fellow student, Mary W. came along to give me directions and company. In the ensuing weeks she helped me select furnishings for my first ever home. Mary was a great friend and confidant.

Pat decided to leave so moved to Melbourne and asked me for a divorce, which I reluctantly agreed to, so that was that. Before she left she selected a young lady to be our housekeeper and to look after Patsy and John. Pat left in the afternoon and I was so terribly depressed to see her leave. Despite all that had happened, I still loved her.

The young lady who came in to look after us was over sexed and promptly proceeded to take my mind off my departed wife.

I had been living a life of celibacy from just after John had been conceived. She also had a couple of girlfriends who helped out at odd times. I had a lot of catching up to do.

The modification to convert Murray Rainey's XK120 Jaguar was way behind time and Rainey was pestering me to hurry up and that was while I was preparing for exams, so I hated to have to disappoint Murray but I had an Idea. While had worked at Heath Motors (when I first came to Australia) I had lengthened a Ford sedan chassis to be made into a funeral coach and when next I saw it, it had been fitted with steel panel work. I was very impressed at the quality of the panel work. In my early working days I was involved in panel work on delivery vans but this workmanship was outstanding. I was told a man named "DUFF" was the tradesman



1937 Zephyr Lincoln V12- Bob Pohlman & Jim Duff with Bill Acfiod's T Model Ford (L.Pohlman)



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



I had heard that this fellow was now without premises and equipment as a fire had destroyed everything he owned. So I suggested to Murray Rainey that he and I should have a talk to this fellow.

We did and I met my future business partner and best friend, Jim Duff.

We got on well and I had the tools and equipment and Jim and I worked together on Murray Rainey's XK120 Jaguar project and I painted and made it ready for the Rainey's to drive the car to Noosa Heads in Queensland.

(This is a bit by the way)

On their return journey, Murray called into the principal Jaguar Dealer importers and distributors in Sydney in order to purchase a fan belt. When they inspected the cars hard top version, they were taken back. "We were told by head office that the XK140 won't be available for at least two years"

When the XK140 arrived in Australia four years later, it looked very similar except ours had Holden door handles.

This Happened in Grandpa's old garage at the rear of 454 Ryrie street Geelong Victoria.



*Murray Rainey at the wheel of the Jaguar XK120 Reg Vic-SD547 Year 1957
The Metal hard Top roof was fitted by Jim Duff and Bob Polhman of bodyworks (Duff and Pohlman) Geelong Victoria.
(Photograph Joy Rainey)*



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



Despatched on 15th July, 1951 to Bryson's, Melbourne. No information available until Murray Rainey of Geelong acquired it in February, 1954. He removed the roadster body and fitted the special coupe body from Chassis XK120 660102. The body from 660839 was then fitted to the Chassis of 660102. Rainey continued to use the car in racing events. He advertised it for sale in December, 1958. In 1960 Ian Cummins bought the car from Reno Motors and sold it to his cousin Graham Cummins a few months later. Thence it passed to a Griffith dealer who had it sold in Sydney. It was still then in quite good condition. It was purchased unregistered from C.V. Murrays by Brian Graham of Mosman NSW around 1968, and he retrimmed it. It was then painted metallic blue and still owned by Graham in 1972. It is said to have been thereafter owned by a policeman in the ACT, before being acquired apparently from Max Monash of Hunters Hill by Steven Watson of Kogarah NSW, together with XK120 660150 in 1976. He used the car on the road for a few months before the registration lapsed, but he did not enjoy XK motoring and the car was eventually sold to Norman Johnson of Oakville NSW in 1980, also with XK120 660150.

At that stage it still had the coupe body fitted and was complete except for the grille. Norman Johnson has since taken the body off the chassis and is removing the roof to restore the car as a Roadster as per original manufacture. A shame for this famous Duff and Pohlman Metal Hard Top Jaguar to become yet another common XK120 Roadster after all the racing history achieved by Murray Rainey.



Photograph taken 1980's (Norm Johnson) son Shawn shown (aged around 4 years old) taken prior to the Bob Polhman and Jim Duff Metal Hard Top Roof was removed.



THE MURRAY RAINY XK120 HARDTOP



XK120-660839 now registration number NJ 120

Photograph taken 1980's (Norman Johnson) with roof now removed at Oakville NSW



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



Norman Johnson XK120 -660839 (Ex Murray Raney) after restoration back to original condition.



*XK120 660150 Now a Jaguar XKSS.
Photograph taken 2011-Aug-21st Eastern Creek Raceway
Norman Johnson driving with passenger Colin Watts (fellow TSCC member)*



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



Notes: Murray Rainey

XK120- 660839

1954-Nov-28th	Templestowe Hill Climb 69.50 secs.
1955-Apr-9th	Collingrove Hill Climb 47.22 secs.
1955- May-8th	13th- Templestowe Hill Climb 73.37 secs.
1956-May-27th	1st Geelong Sprints 18.80 secs
1958-Aug-24th	2nd Geelong Sprints

XK120 660102

1952- Feb	Bonnievale Speed Trial
1953-June-21st	V.S.C.C. Blue Ribbon Rally
	7th Co- driver N. Wallace
1952-Dec-13th	8th Templestowe Hill Climb 71.27 secs.
1954-Nov-28th	Templestowe Hill Climb 71.67 secs



*Murray Rainey with metal hard Top Jaguar XK120 66839
Geelong Speed Trials
Photograph supplied by Joy Rainey*

Murray Rainey and the Geelong Speed Trials Event

The Geelong Sprints was conceived by Murray Rainey and first run in 1956. as a prominent member of the Western District Car Club and Geelong's Automotive industry, the event was a means for promoting Geelong and offers the local community a chance to see some of Australia's Top Motor sport Identities competing in the most powerful exotic sports and racing cars of the day. The sprints modelled on the famous Brighton Speed Trials in England, which were established in 1907. The venue and picnic atmosphere of the trials has been an attraction in its-self. The course in the Edwardian setting surrounding, Ritchie Boulevard. (Geelong's roadway to Eastern Beach) and part of Eastern Beach Road. The track lined by one side by terraced lawns which form a natural grandstand; this provides an excellent view for spectators of the day's competition along with spectacular view over the historic Eastern Beach waterfront precinct, picturesque Corio Bay and the distant Melbourne Skyline. In 1978, the Vintage Sports Car Club of Victoria relaunched the event and since then became increasingly more Nostalgic, demonstrated by the ongoing participation both competitors and spectators who enjoy historic Motor Sport and generally things vintage.

Over the years, competitors have a significantly numbers of National and International Motor Racing identities these include: - Sir Jack Brabham, Sir Stirling Moss. Lex Davidson, Tony Gaze, Bob Jane, Bib Stillwell, Norm Beechey, Doug Whiteford, Jim Keown, John Harvey, Darcey Russell, Dick Johnson, Win Percy, Jim Richards, Glenn Seton, Craig Lowndes, Formula 1 Mika Hakkinen, Jonny Herbert, Pedro Lamy, Stan Jones, Alan Jones the World Drivers Champion of 1980, launched his motoring career at the 1964 event.

Murray Rainey the Man and his Cars etc. (Born 1917 - Died England 2006 aged 89)

Murray Rainey was one of the first Australians to acquire a Cooper MKIX in 1955, to which he fitted a second hand Manx Norton single cylinder engine. He quickly established himself as one of the fastest Formula 3 drivers, often beating cars in bigger classes with which they often race, and twice becoming Australian Hill climb Champion. In 1957, he began to look for more performance but rejected the usual route of fitting a twin cylinder engine and chose instead to supercharge the Manx, something most experts said could not work. He made other modifications to the car including double wishbone and coil springs at the front.

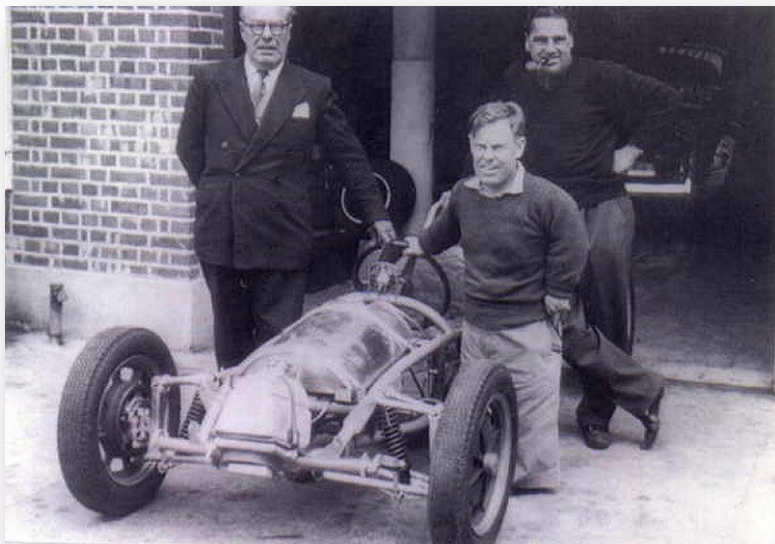
Murray brought his Cooper to England for the 1958 season this proved frustrating, first because of the Norton engines were restricted to petrol (which he did not know until he arrived) and an accident at Crystal Palace which badly damaged the car.

Murray sold the Cooper in 1960.

Following his accident at the Palace, Murray tried to find workspace in the Cooper Works for his repairs, and became very interested in fitting a version of the Grand Prix Cooper front suspension to his damaged 500. Charles Cooper was unimpressed and prevented any work being done, much to Murray's frustration. Fortunately certain mechanics were more helpful, quietly pointing out that in a couple of days Pa Cooper would be off to the Dutch Grand Prix, and while the cats away.... On his return, Pa was furious and sought to tear strips off Murray (no mean feat as both could be somewhat 'forceful'), until mid-rant he noticed how prospective customers were looking closely at this " works-developed" option, the thought of extra sales quickly changed his mood.



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



Murray Rainey poses with John and Charlie Cooper at the Cooper works. (Note the front suspension)



Murray Rainey Phillip Island in the Cooper MK9- Manx Norton powered 22nd-April-1957



THE MURRAY RAINNEY XK120 HARDTOP



Alfa Romeo's

Sometime during the nineteen- sixties a 6C 2300 chassis, in fairly parlous condition, but fitted with an 8C 2300 supercharged engine, was imported into the UK, having originated from North Africa, where it had been used for racing.

Eventually it came into the hands of Murray Rainey, a brilliant Australian Engineer, living in Surrey. He rebuilt and modified the car considerably in the "seventies", fitting his own coil spring suspension, and handsome bodywork reminiscent of that fitted to 8C 2900 Mille Miglia cars. He also built a sister car, fitted with a 6C 2300 engine, but unique in that it has twin blowers, like a Type B Monoposto. This car in particular is likely to puzzle any Alfa Romeo enthusiast examining it who does not know Murray Rainey!

Both cars have been successful in hill climbs and driving tests driven by Murray Rainey and his daughter Joy, who has made a habit of braking ladies hill climb records outright.



Joy and Murray Rainey with the two Alfa Romeo's at Brooklands



THE MURRAY RAINNEY XK120 HARDTOP



Joy Rainey competing in the Alfa Romeo 1937 8C at Shelsley Walsh 1976



THE MURRAY RAINEY XK120 HARDTOP



*Joy Rainey wins 1979 outright Ladies Record broken by the Murrain at Shelsley meeting
A modern racing car designed and built by Murray called the Murrain.*

This article penned by me (Les Johnson) is a means of documenting part of my brother Norman's XK120 Jaguar History and the well document Australian racing legend Murray Rainey along with Robert (Bob) Pohlman, Jim Duff, Murray Rainey's daughter Joy , my father Cullen (Col) Johnson , to cover those very early 1950's years of the Jaguar's life and our family involvement .

