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1954 JAGUAR XK120 EX-WORKS COMPETITION

Chassis Number: S 661165

'You can never tire of driving a good car...and RJH is superb....I was born too late, too poor, and too far from the action; how I long to have been Eric Haddon with RJH on the Tulip or the Alpine. They're what an XK120 is all about' (Mike McCarthy, *Classic and Sports Car*, June 1983).

Debuting at Earl's Court in 1948, the production Jaguar XK120 road car was hugely successful, largely due to the design of the 3.5 litre double overhead camshaft, six-cylinder engine and the torsion bar independent front suspension. In production until 1954, RJH 400 was the twelfth from last right-hand-drive example to be made. Purchased by impressive privateer rally-man, Eric Haddon in February 1954, RJH 400 was prepared for competition by Jaguar's extremely resourceful Works Department, in anticipation of Haddon's plans for the Jaguar.

The Works Department maximised the performance of RJH 400 by removing and adapting some notable features of the XK120, including a new exhaust exit system, whereby the exhaust pipes exited through two holes in the rear wing rather than the production low, dual exhaust system. A sump guard was fitted, the suspension modified and numerous C-type specification additions were fitted including a close ratio Moss gearbox, allowing for a useable top speed of 120mph. Bonnet louvres were installed along with an outside filler cap, twin petrol pumps wired in parallel, an aluminium fuel tank and a radiator blind. Once completed, Jaguar's Works support continued with stalwart 'Lofty' England handling Haddon's rally entries.

The first outing for RJH 400 was the notoriously challenging Tulip Rally in Holland in May of 1954. The route consisted of 14 special stages, five eliminating tests and a speed test at Zandvoort circuit, all over a distance of 2,100 miles. A sizeable entry of 211 cars lined up on the start line. In what was rumoured to be an immensely challenging year, Haddon, along with his co-driver, Charles Vivian, bought RJH 400 home to win second in class; an impressive achievement for their first outing with the Jaguar.

Next up was the fabled 'Coupe des Alpes', where Haddon and Vivian successfully won the Unlimited Class. As Andrew Whyte testifies in his book, *Jaguar Sports Racing & Works Competition Cars from 1954,* 'Haddon and Vivian drove prudently – in the 1954 Alpine Rally – sacrificing many road marks; but they were rewarded with a win in the over 2.6 litre class...one of the last competitive international rally performances for a Jaguar XK120'. November brought the M.C.C. Rally and another class win for the Haddon-Vivian duo. With just 207 crews qualifying from 334 starters, the event was demonstrably tough, underlining the ability of RJH 400 to do the job.

After such a triumphant competition career, Haddon subsequently sold RJH 400 to a Doctor Watchman of Liverpool who used the Jaguar to perform his rounds in the city until 1973. Three further UK owners followed, the latter of which was Kevin Donnelly of Staffordshire, who took the Jaguar on the Lombard Golden Fifty RAC Jubilee Rally in 1982. There is a lovely letter from Haddon to Donnelly in the accompanying history file where Haddon remarks, 'it gave a fine and reliable performance at all times, which gave us a great deal of pleasure and, as teams of Jaguar enthusiasts, we helped to fly the flag wherever the sport took us'. Donnelly evidently took a lot of pride in RJH 400 and the Jaguar was featured in *Classic & Sports-Car* magazine in June 1983 and in *Classic Cars* in March 1987.

In 1992, Mr. Robert Clark of New Zealand purchased RJH 400 and imported it 'down under'. RJH 400 was in Clark's ownership until the current owner purchased it in 2015 and returned the Jaguar to its UK birthright. In current ownership, RJH 400 has been sympathetically restored by UK marque specialists who have returned it to its important 'Coupe des Alpes' specification.

RJH 400 boasts a wonderful period competition history and is accompanied by a richly detailed file, containing copies of contemporary motorsport media reports, an old style UK logbook, period photography, restoration invoices and a certificate of

authenticity from the Jaguar Heritage Trust. This highly significant, ex-Works, sports racing Jaguar is eligible for the Mille Miglia and numerous other important road and rally events around the globe

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