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1963 JAGUAR E-TYPE LIGHTWEIGHT

Chassis Number: S850663

Jaguar built only 12 Lightweight E-types in period. Of those, only two were modified with distinctive low-drag bodywork. And, of those, only one can boast a continuous history. From low-profile club meetings to the Le Mans 24 Hours, 49 FXN has been campaigned for well over 50 years. But what makes it unique is the work that was carried out by a small, highly motivated, scientifically focused team over the winter of 1963-'64. This was a car that was equally at home around the twists and turns of Brands Hatch as it was on the Mulsanne Straight, a sure sign that its development went beyond its headline-grabbing bodywork.

The key players were 49 FXN's joint owners – Peters Lumsden and Sargent – and Sami Klat, who'd been studying mechanical engineering at Imperial College London. The final piece of the jigsaw was the garage run by Jack Playford and his sons, Brian and John. "It was a group effort," explained Lumsden. "Without any one of us, we wouldn't have achieved what we did. It was a co-op; no one was 'primus'. We all had the same objective – how can we beat the other buggers?!"

On 7 May 1963, an internal Jaguar memo was sent to Bill Heynes, copying in Lofty England, among others. It was entitled 'Specification of Lumsden GT E-type – 1963'. Chassis S850663 was given body number R5864 and engine number RA1348-9S, the 3871cc unit having a 35/40 cylinder head, fuel injection, aluminium block and a dry-sump system. This was to be the fabled 49 FXN. The remainder of the season saw Lumsden and Sargent rage battle in the Lightweight at Nurburgring, Goodwood, Silverstone and Brands Hatch with varying degrees of success. Season completed, Lumsden, Sargent, the Playfords and Sami Klat started their programme of modifications. By the time that 49 FXN next raced – at Goodwood in March 1964 – it would be a very different machine.

Klat first turned his attention to the E-type's aerodynamics, specifically reducing drag. A new roof section was developed that featured a broader, higher, flatter rear. It reduced lift as well as drag, and the team tested it on the M1 motorway with wool tufts attached at strategic points, enabling them to monitor air flow. Following a plethora of other similar modifications, a distinctive low-drag body shape resulted but this was only a small part of the team's work. It came into its own at Le Mans, but everywhere else the modifications that had been carried out to the chassis and engine were of far greater importance.

The heavily revised 49 FXN reappeared for the Sussex Trophy at Goodwood in March and finished in an encouraging seventh position. The following month that low-drag shape had the chance to really prove its worth during the Le Mans Test Weekend. Finishing second in class and sixth overall, Lumsden and Sargent must have arrived at Le Mans for the 24 Hours with a certain amount of optimism. Ranged against them was a fearsomely strong GT entry that included two Shelby Daytona Coupes and a quartet of 1964 GTOs, too.

Autosport reported that, in the opening few hours, the two Lightweights of the British and German Peters had been 'duelling merrily'. By the time the four-hour mark arrived, 49 FXN was up to 16th overall, and was lying fifth in the GT category behind the two Shelby Daytona Coupes plus the GTOs of Ireland and Hugus. According to Jaguar's official report, it got as high as third in class behind only the Shelbys; it was also timed at 174mph on the Mulsanne. Sadly, however, it didn't survive the night due to a gearbox failure.

After the car's French adventure, Peter Sargent finished second and sixth in two races at Brands Hatch and eighth in its next outing at Goodwood. That 1964 season would be the last for the famous Lumsden-Sargent partnership as Sargent unfortunately succumbed to an injury. Lumsden carried on throughout 1965, taking a number of wins, including two at Brands Hatch plus a 'double' at Crystal Palace. In early 1966, 49 FXN was sold when Lumsden also hung up his helmet. That was far from the end of the story, however. It was first bought by John Scott-Davies, who raced it at club events throughout '66 and scored three wins. A documented handful of additional owners campaigned the E-type until it was purchased by US-based Englishman Howard Cohen.

This began a 20-year spell in America, during which FXN was occasionally raced in historic meetings and was also displayed at the prestigious Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance.

It returned to the UK in 2000 with Sir Anthony Bamford who returned it to serious competition. Over the course of the next three years, it was raced at blue-riband historic meetings by the likes of Frank Sytner and Willie Green. From Bamford, the Jaguar passed to Viscount Cowdray, who continued in the same vein. Jochen Mass and Derek Bell both raced 49 FXN at the Goodwood Revival, but it was regular driver Ludovic Lindsay who gave the car its best result there to date – second in the 2005 RAC TT Celebration with Formula One ace Gerhard Berger as his team-mate.

In the hands of subsequent owners Ross Warburton and its current custodian, 49 FXN has continued to compete at the top level of historic motorsport. Each owner has added their own chapter to the history of this most charismatic and beautiful of E-types, and to see the car now is to see evidence of its various lives.

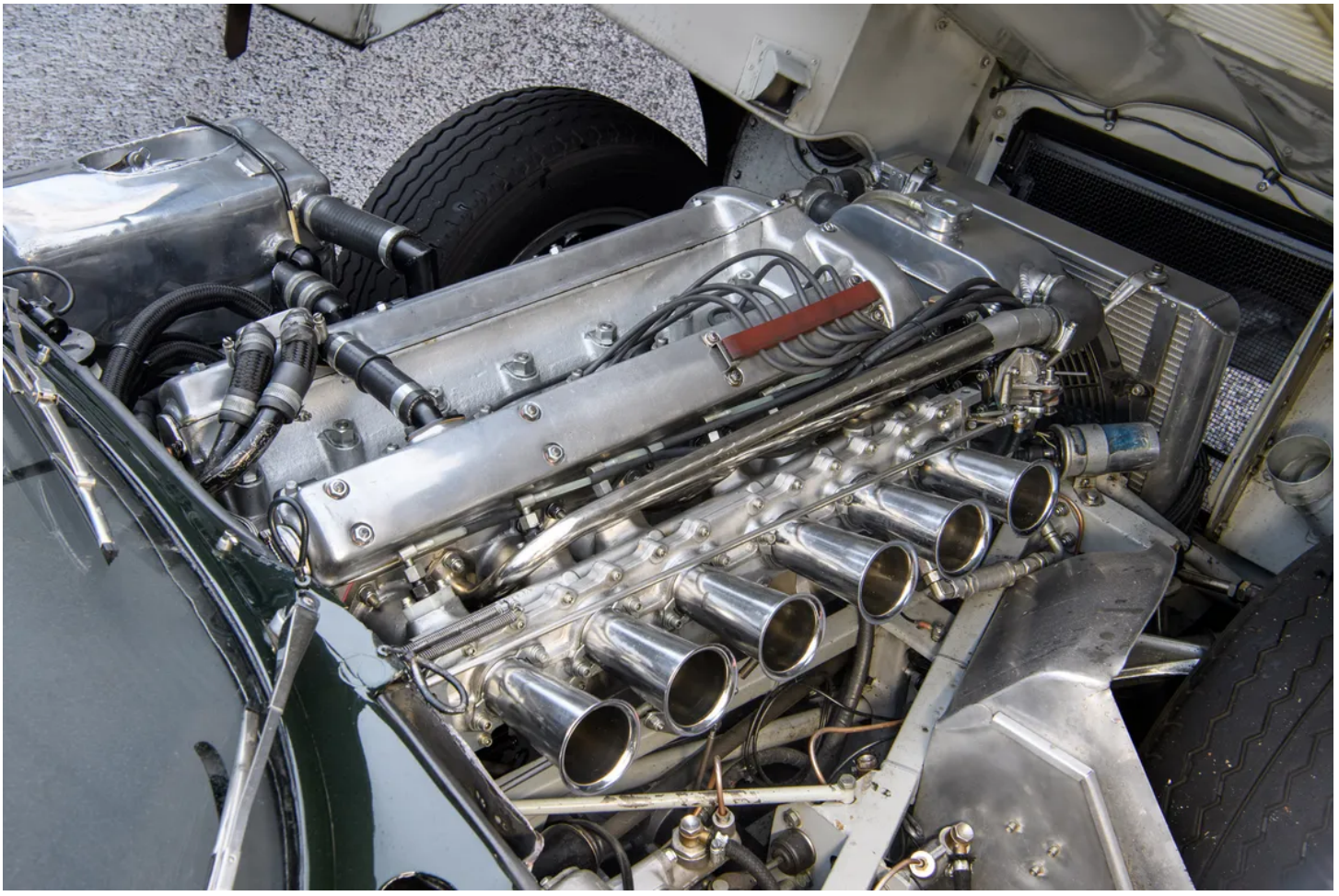
This is a Jaguar that was run by brilliant privateers and which took on the might of Ferrari and Shelby in perhaps the greatest era of GT racing. It was competitive on circuits as different as Le Mans and the Nurburgring, and even now is an instantly recognisable presence. Few cars boast such originality, such a compelling history, such a unique nature. Even among its famous peers, it stands alone.

SOLD


49 FXN


49 FXN


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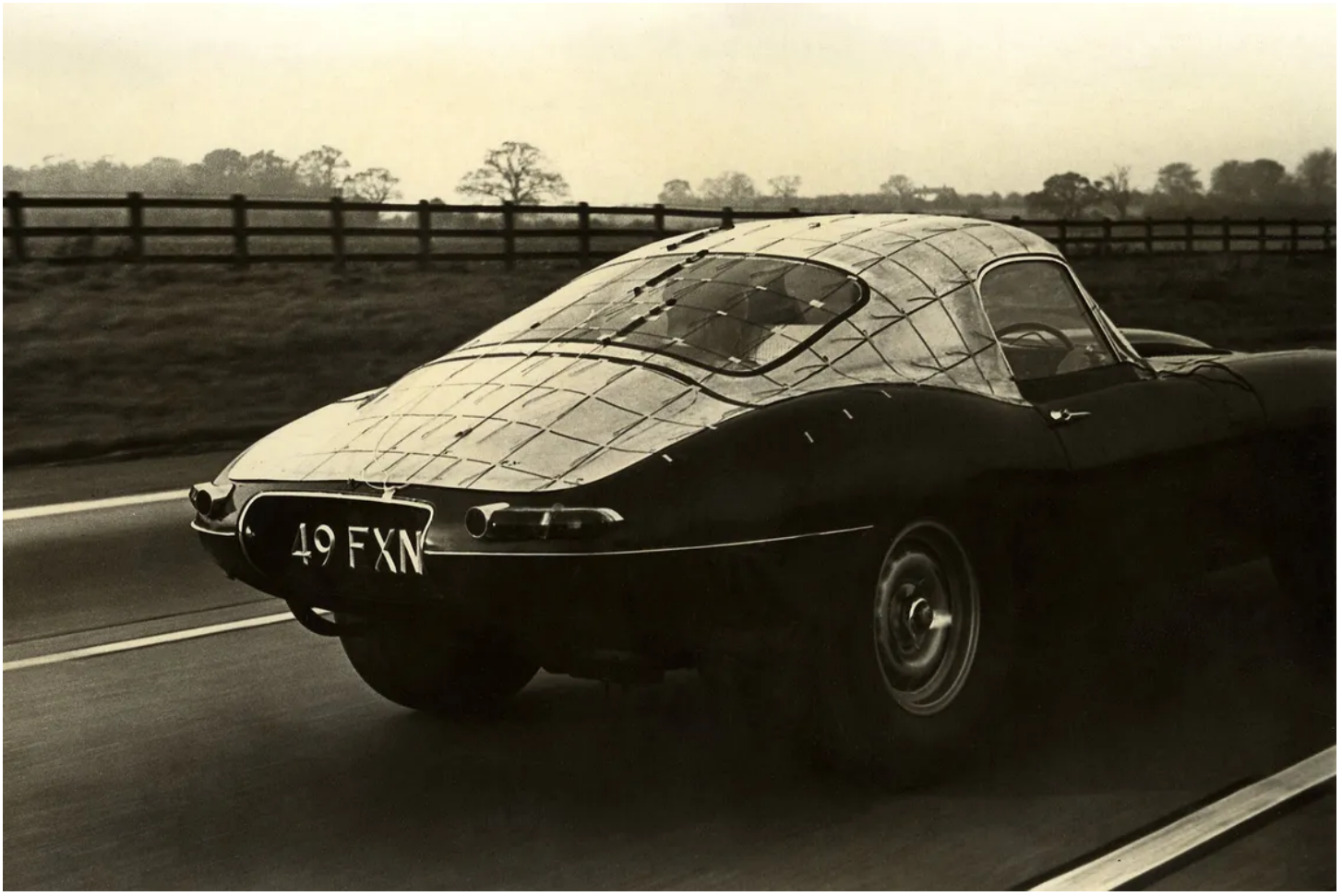



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