

# The Motor Road Test No. 18/59 (Continental)

**Make:** Jaguar.

**Type:** XK150S Fixed-head Coupé.

**Makers:** Jaguar Cars Ltd., Coventry.

## Test Data

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**CONDITIONS:** Weather: Fine, mainly warm, light wind. (Temperature 52°-72° F., Barometer 29.5-30.3 in. Hg.) Surface: Smooth dry concrete and tar macadam. Fuel: 100 octane pump grades.

### INSTRUMENTS

Speedometer at 30 m.p.h. . . . . 1% fast  
 Speedometer at 60 m.p.h. . . . . accurate  
 Speedometer at 90 m.p.h. . . . . accurate  
 Speedometer at 120 m.p.h. . . . . 2% fast  
 Distance recorder . . . . .  
 2% slow (at fast-driving tyre pressures).

### WEIGHT

Kerb weight (unladen, but with oil, coolant and fuel for approx. 50 miles) . . . . . 29 cwt.  
 Front/rear distribution of kerb weight 50½/49½  
 Weight laden as tested . . . . . 32½ cwt.

### MAXIMUM SPEEDS

**Flying Quarter Mile**  
 Mean of four opposite runs . . . . . 132.0 m.p.h.  
 Best one-way time equals . . . . . 133.9 m.p.h.  
**"Maximile" Speed** (Timed quarter mile after one mile accelerating from rest.)  
 Mean of four opposite runs . . . . . 122.4 m.p.h.  
 Best one-way time equals . . . . . 125.0 m.p.h.  
**Speed in gears** (at 5,500 r.p.m.)  
 Max. speed in direct top gear . . . . . 113 m.p.h.  
 Max. speed in 3rd gear . . . . . 86 m.p.h.  
 Max. speed in 2nd gear . . . . . 59 m.p.h.

### FUEL CONSUMPTION

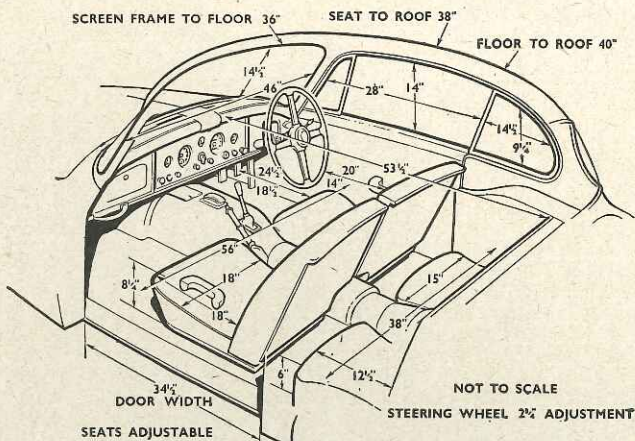
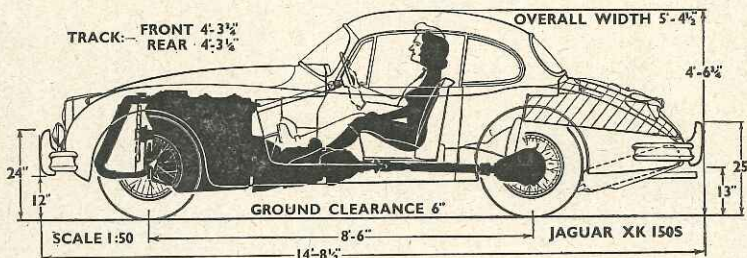
**(Overdrive top gear)**  
 33½ m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level  
 28½ m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level  
 27 m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level  
 25½ m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level  
 23½ m.p.g. at constant 80 m.p.h. on level  
 20½ m.p.g. at constant 90 m.p.h. on level  
 18½ m.p.g. at constant 100 m.p.h. on level  
**(Direct top gear)**  
 27 m.p.g. at constant 30 m.p.h. on level  
 26 m.p.g. at constant 40 m.p.h. on level  
 25 m.p.g. at constant 50 m.p.h. on level  
 23½ m.p.g. at constant 60 m.p.h. on level  
 22½ m.p.g. at constant 70 m.p.h. on level  
 21 m.p.g. at constant 80 m.p.h. on level  
**Overall Fuel Consumption** for 2,632 miles, 141.8 gallons, equals 18.6 m.p.g. (15.2 litres/100 km.)  
**Touring Fuel Consumption** (m.p.g. at steady speed midway between 30 m.p.h. and maximum, less 5% allowance for acceleration) 22.0 m.p.g.  
 Fuel tank capacity (maker's figure) 14 gallons

### STEERING

Turning circle between kerbs:  
 Left . . . . . 34½ ft.  
 Right . . . . . 31½ ft.  
 Turns of steering wheel from lock to lock 2½

### BRAKES from 30 m.p.h.

0.91 g retardation (equivalent to 33 ft. stopping distance) with 75 lb. pedal pressure.  
 0.63 g retardation (equivalent to 48 ft. stopping distance) with 50 lb. pedal pressure.  
 0.32 g retardation (equivalent to 94 ft. stopping distance) with 25 lb. pedal pressure.



### ACCELERATION TIMES from standstill

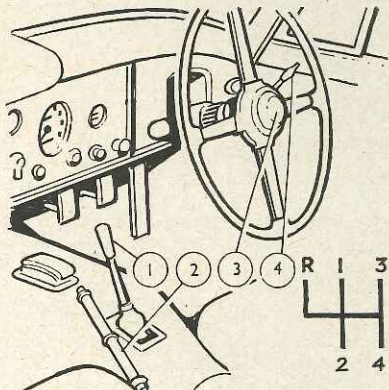
|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| 0-30 m.p.h.           | 2.9 sec.  |
| 0-40 m.p.h.           | 4.5 sec.  |
| 0-50 m.p.h.           | 6.1 sec.  |
| 0-60 m.p.h.           | 7.8 sec.  |
| 0-70 m.p.h.           | 10.6 sec. |
| 0-80 m.p.h.           | 13.2 sec. |
| 0-90 m.p.h.           | 16.5 sec. |
| 0-100 m.p.h.          | 20.3 sec. |
| 0-110 m.p.h.          | 25.6 sec. |
| 0-120 m.p.h.          | 36.2 sec. |
| Standing quarter mile | 16.2 sec. |

### ACCELERATION TIMES on Upper Ratios

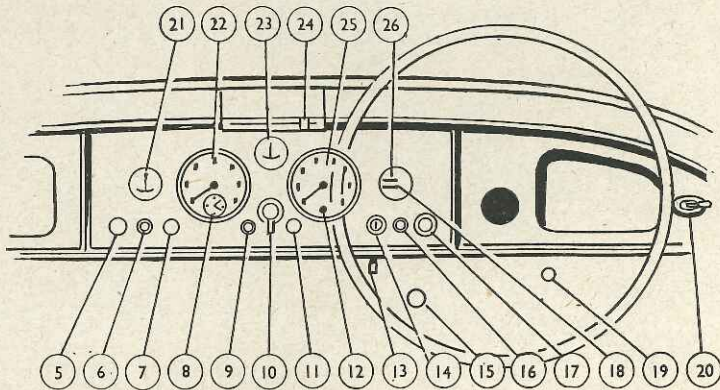
|                | Overdrive top gear | Direct top gear | Third gear |
|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|------------|
| 10-30 m.p.h.   | —                  | 6.4 sec.        | 4.9 sec.   |
| 20-40 m.p.h.   | —                  | 6.4 sec.        | 5.0 sec.   |
| 30-50 m.p.h.   | 8.4 sec.           | 6.1 sec.        | 4.5 sec.   |
| 40-60 m.p.h.   | 8.5 sec.           | 6.3 sec.        | 4.0 sec.   |
| 50-70 m.p.h.   | 9.2 sec.           | 6.7 sec.        | 4.5 sec.   |
| 60-80 m.p.h.   | 9.6 sec.           | 6.3 sec.        | 5.1 sec.   |
| 70-90 m.p.h.   | 9.5 sec.           | 6.5 sec.        | 5.6 sec.   |
| 80-100 m.p.h.  | 10.9 sec.          | 7.4 sec.        | —          |
| 90-110 m.p.h.  | 14.4 sec.          | 9.1 sec.        | —          |
| 100-120 m.p.h. | 18.9 sec.          | —               | —          |

### HILL CLIMBING at sustained steady speeds

|                                     |                               |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Max. gradient on overdrive top gear | 1 in 8.0 (Tapley 375 lb./ton) |
| Max. gradient on direct top gear    | 1 in 5.8 (Tapley 385 lb./ton) |
| Max. gradient on 3rd gear           | 1 in 4.5 (Tapley 495 lb./ton) |
| Max. gradient on 2nd gear           | 1 in 3.0 (Tapley 705 lb./ton) |



1, Gear lever. 2, Handbrake. 3, Horn button. 4, Direction indicator switch. 5, Windscreen wipers switch. 6, Panel light switch. 7, Heater fan switch. 8, Clock. 9, Screenwasher button. 10, Lights switch (including foglamps). 11, Interior



light switch. 12, Headlamp main beam indicator. 13, Trip adjuster. 14, Ignition switch. 15, Headlamp dip switch. 16, Starter button. 17, Cigar lighter. 18, Water thermometer. 19, Bonnet catch release.

20, Overdrive control. 21, Fuel contents gauge. 22, Tachometer. 23, Ammeter. 24, Heater temperature control. 25, Speedometer. 26, Oil pressure gauge.

# The JAGUAR XK150S Fixed-head Coupé

**An Immensely Impressive  
Car Which Offers Near-racing  
Performance in Complete  
Touring Comfort at a  
Surprisingly Moderate Price**

THE XK150S fixed-head coupé Jaguar is easily the fastest closed car ever subjected to a full-scale road test by *The Motor*. Its mean maximum speed of 132.0 m.p.h. compares with 143.7 m.p.h. recorded with the competition 2-seater Jaguar C-type; but far from detracting from the performance of the XK150S, comparisons of the figures obtained with the two cars show the 150S in even more remarkable light, for whereas the C-type was a very stark model produced in limited series for sports-car racing, this latest fixed-head coupé with S-type engine is very much an everyday motorcar, smooth and flexible, in which people can, and will, go about their normal occasions with complete closed-car comfort and amenities.

With its weight and wind resistance increased by bumpers and fog lamps, as well as the increased frontal area of the coupé top, it is indeed surprising that the 150S should approach the C-type speed as closely as it does.

What is not just surprising, but truly astonishing, is that the 150S recorded exactly the same time, 16.2 seconds, to cover the standing quarter-mile—at the end of which both were travelling at close on 90 m.p.h.—and that the difference in the time taken to reach 100 m.p.h. from rest varied by a mere one-fifth of a second, a difference so small that the performance of the two can be regarded as identical up to the three-figure mark. If the truth of the time-worn tag about the racing car of today being the touring car of tomorrow ever needed proving, these two tests supply all the evidence necessary.

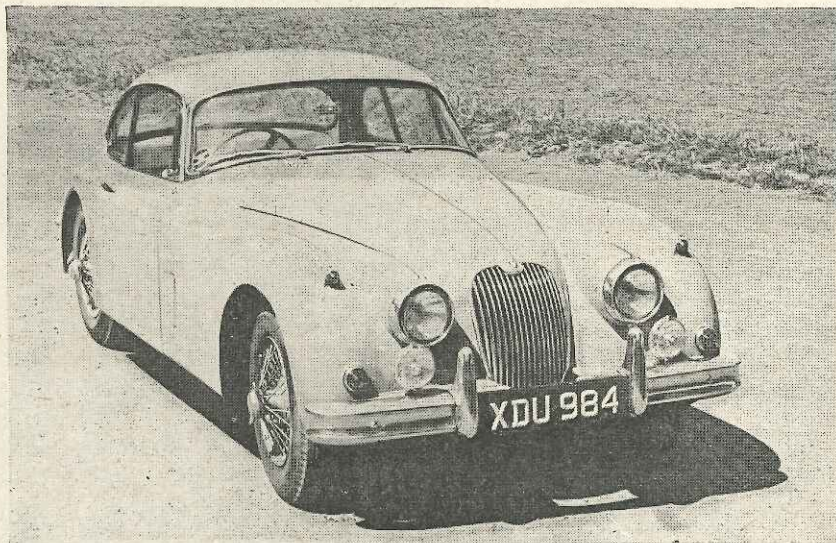
## In Brief

Price (including Powr-Lok limited-slip differential as tested) £1,487 plus purchase tax £623 4s. 2d. equals £2,110 4s. 2d.

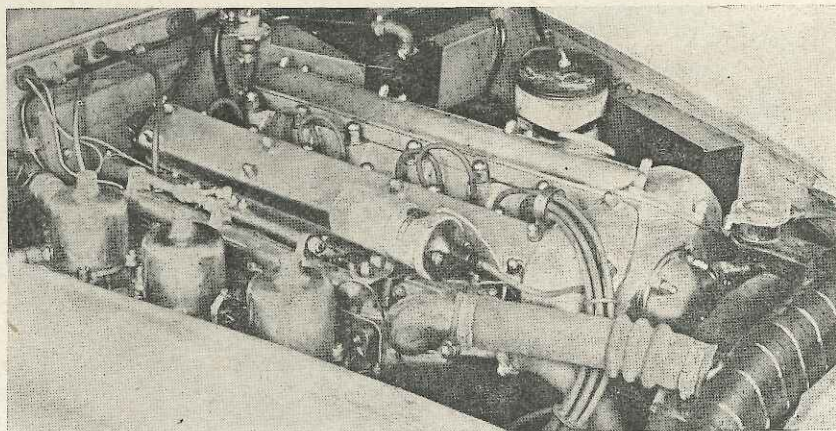
Price with normal axle (including purchase tax) £2,065 4s. 2d.

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Capacity ... ..                         | 3,442 c.c.   |
| Unladen kerb weight ...                 | 29 cwt.      |
| Acceleration:                           |              |
| 20-40 m.p.h. in top gear                | 6.4 sec.     |
| 0-50 m.p.h. through gears               | 6.1 sec.     |
| Maximum direct top gear gradient ... .. | 1 in 5.8     |
| Maximum speed ... ..                    | 132.0 m.p.h. |
| "Maximile" speed ... ..                 | 122.4 m.p.h. |
| Touring fuel consumption ...            | 22.0 m.p.g.  |

Gearing: 19.6 m.p.h. in top gear at 1,000 r.p.m. (overdrive, 26.4 m.p.h.); 28.2 m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. piston speed (overdrive, 36.2 m.p.h.).



TRIPLE S.U. carburettors identify the S-series Jaguar engine of which the twin-camshaft cylinder head also has improved inlet porting. The long, well-filled bonnet drops away to provide satisfactory forward driving vision.



The maximum speed of 132 m.p.h. is so high that some may question its practical value. In the sense that many of those who buy this model will rarely, if ever, attain it, there is force in that criticism; but that argument overlooks the worldwide spread of motor roads, and the fact that there are many occasions on such highways when very high speeds can be held in safety by a driver of experience. We ourselves, having lost time in a maze of city streets, found that along almost the whole of a Belgian motorway a true 100 m.p.h. could be maintained continuously and easily (bar an occasional momentary drop to 90 or so for overtaking), this bringing us back on our busy schedule.

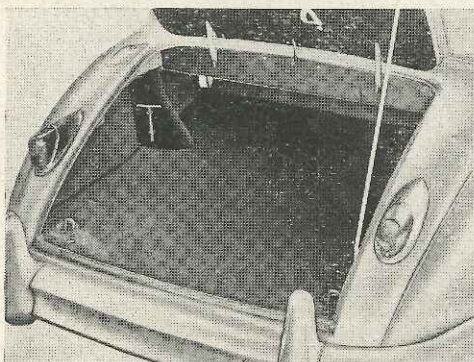
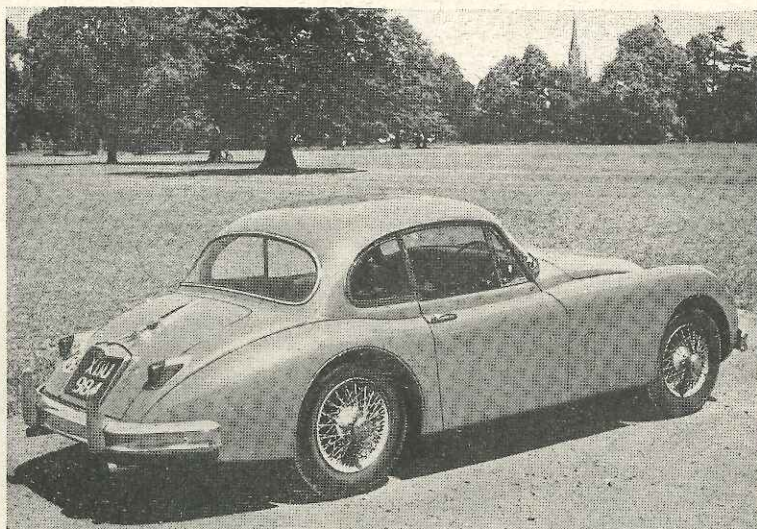
In short, it is the margin of performance available that lends value to the ultimate maximum and it is true to say of the XK150S that it is one of those very rare cars in which even fast drivers find a margin of performance at their disposal under almost any conditions.

Before leaving the question of ultimate maximum speed, a word or two should

be said about tyres. Because performance tests of this car would obviously involve a substantial mileage at speeds in excess of 125 m.p.h., it was suggested by the manufacturers that we might care to use racing tyres. It was felt, however, that this would depart from an essential principle of Road Tests—that the car should be driven in the condition in which it is normally sold.

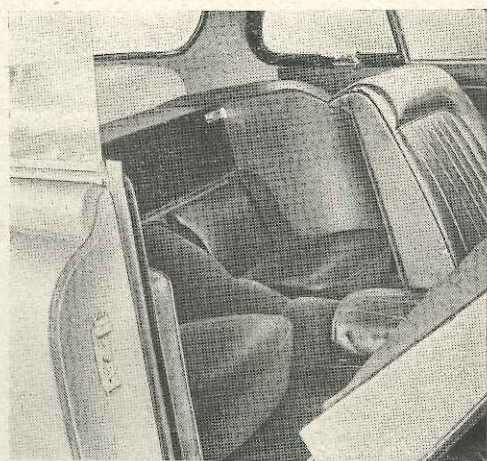
Accordingly, the normal Dunlop "Road Speed" covers were used, but (in accordance with the recommendations of both tyre and car makers) were inflated to 40 lb. at the front and 45 lb. at the rear as a safety precaution for maximum speed trials. This compared with the manufacturer's normal recommendation of 30 lb. front and 35 lb. rear for fast driving and 23 lb. front and 26 lb. rear for everyday motoring.

In passing, it may be remarked that these high pressures (which were retained throughout the performance tests) gave a surprisingly comfortable ride, even over Continental *pavé*, whilst the car remained beautifully steady on both the



THE CURVED tail of the Jaguar makes for a shallow boot but luggage accommodation is nevertheless good for a car of this type and can be supplemented by the rear passenger compartment (right) which has two removable child-size seats. The boot floor lifts to reveal the spare wheel.

### The Jaguar XK150S Fixed-head Coupé



actual timed kilometre and round a very gentle high-speed bend taken at something in the region of 130 m.p.h. on the approach run in one direction.

For normal usage, the recommended fast-driving, front/rear pressures of 30/35 lb. struck us as the ideal, because although it shakes a little on "wash-board" corrugations, this car is remarkably well sprung for comfort, and low tyre pressures tended both to reduce the responsiveness of the steering and increase the effort required.

At "fast driving" pressures, both handling and comfort reach a very high standard. Corners can be taken fast without appreciable roll and whilst the 150S is not, perhaps, so "tidy" as one or two quite exceptional sports cars we have tried when cornered near the limit, it nevertheless displays cornering qualities which are very much above average and has no unexpected vices to catch the unwary. The rack-and-pinion steering which needs only  $2\frac{1}{2}$  turns from lock to lock is pleasantly direct and accurate, giving the driver a useful degree of "feel" which on changing road cambers can be almost excellent yet suffering little from wheel-kick on rough surfaces. Cornering on wet roads, the vast power naturally needs to be used with some discretion.

One of the surprising charms of this Jaguar, a car in which familiar landmarks are apt to appear on the horizon with unexpected suddenness, is the quite remarkable top-gear performance. The maximum gradient climbable in direct top is of the order of 1 in 5.8 and it will climb a gradient of 1 in 7 with a little power in hand at any speed up to 90 m.p.h. or can be slowed right down to 10 m.p.h. Even in the overdrive top

ratio, it will cope with a 1 in 10 gradient at speeds up to 90 m.p.h.

If the landmarks come up with exceptional rapidity, the deceleration offered by the Dunlop disc brakes on all four wheels is in keeping with the acceleration. Not only are they powerful, light and sensitive, but they remain so after repeated applications from high speeds so that a driver in a hurry on winding or congested roads can use the car's performance on clear stretches without fear of brake fade.

Before going further, a word or two should be said about the special features of the S-type.

#### Three-carburettor Head

The engine differs from the normal XK150 design in having the special "straight-port" cylinder head intended for use in conjunction with a three-piece induction manifold carrying three S.U. type HD8 carburettors with trumpet inlets taking air from a steel-mesh, flame-trap type of air cleaner, the whole arrangement designed to give better filling than is possible with two carburettors. In conjunction with a 9:1 compression ratio, the effect is to give the greatly increased output of 250 b.h.p. at 5,500 r.p.m. Other special features include lead-bronze bearings for the mains and big ends.

The only practical penalty that seems to be involved is the obligation to use 100-octane fuel. On the Continent, after we had made our performance tests, no more 100-octane fuel was available and it was necessary to use the next best obtainable. Although full throttle was avoided to prevent pinking, the effect became noticeable subsequently when the plugs showed every sign of having been "cooked" and a change was made to

the harder Champion N3 type as a precaution.

Run on the correct fuel, the engine starts readily on the automatic choke, is beautifully smooth, flexible and quiet (with only a pleasantly restrained exhaust note when working really hard) and displays a surprisingly moderate thirst for petrol. Despite the manner in which the large twin o.h. camshaft engine fills the bonnet, all the points which call for routine attention are easy to reach.

To deal with the greatly increased torque of the S-type engine, a stronger clutch is used, but this calls for no undue effort, although the travel of the pedal is rather long and it must be depressed fully to free the clutch completely. Engagement is smooth and second-gear starts are possible, but these

virtues are somewhat nullified by a throttle linkage which is insufficiently progressive in the initial stages so that considerable finesse is necessary to get the car off the mark smoothly.

The gear change, too, could be improved. The remote control gear lever has rather a long travel and the synchromesh is effective only if changes are not hurried. Indeed, the gearbox is the least pleasing feature of the car and cannot be regarded as reaching the very high standard of the rest.

On the model tried, a Pow-Lok limited-slip differential, which is offered as an optional extra, was fitted, and this proved surprisingly effective in cutting out wheel spin when a rapid start was made from rest. It was, in fact, found necessary to adopt a rather different technique when carrying out standing-start tests as the usual wheel spin was absent, and over-brutal driving could produce some axle patter—a phenomenon which could also be induced by accelerating hard in the gears out of a sharp corner.

An excellent feature is a Laycock-de Normanville overdrive, which is applied to top gear only. This gives the very high cruising ratio of 3.18 but such is the smoothness and flexibility of the engine that overdrive can be profitably used when trickling through 30 m.p.h. limits. Engagement and disengagement are by a manual switch effective only if the throttle is at least partially open so that there can be no snatch. The manual switch is situated on the offside of the fascia board, behind the direction indicator switch and out of reach of the driver's fingers unless his hand is taken off the wheel.

Good features of the control layout

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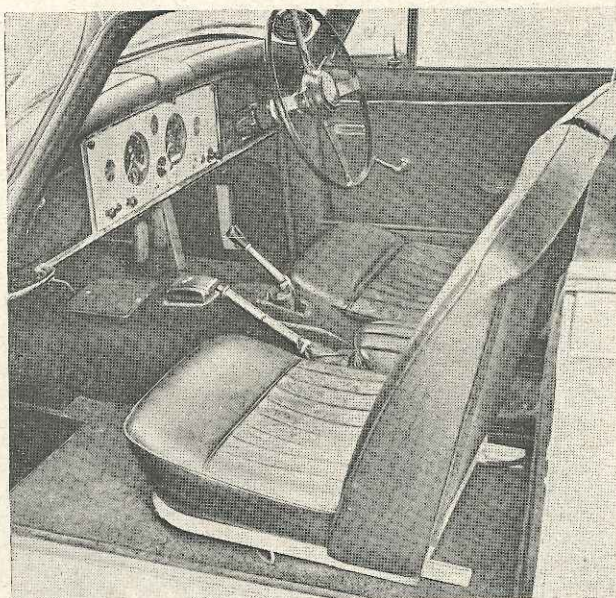
include room for the driver's foot to the left of the clutch pedal, adjustable steering column for the four-spoke wheel and a central fly-off handbrake which, however, is scarcely as powerful as one could desire.

The instruments are centrally located and have circular black faces with clear white hands and figures, a small detail which is particularly appreciated being that the thermometer and oil pressure gauge share a single dial in front of the driver, their readings so planned that, when both oil pressure and engine temperature are normal, the two hands form a roughly vertical straight line and enable the driver to check that all is well in a single quick glance. The smaller switches are arranged along the base of the central panel in a manner not likely to cause confusion and moderately easy to reach.

The separately adjustable front seats offer a very adequate degree of comfort for long runs, but deeper shaping of the squabs for extra lateral support would be an advantage on such a car as this, whilst another minor improvement would be a less coarse seat adjustment. Vision to the sides and rear is excellent, but most of those who tried the car were at first rather conscious of the long, high bonnet—a somewhat inevitable penalty of so much engine! Average-to-tall drivers, however, can see both front wing tips.

For ventilation, the winding door windows disappear completely into the doors and the usual triangular hinged ventilating panels are provided on their leading edges. In addition, the quarter lights are pivoted to provide an extractor effect when required. The doors are wide and the flat floor makes entry and exit

**CONTROL CENTRE** for one of the world's fastest closed cars: practical details include a telescopic steering column, padded armrest on the transmission tunnel, cold air vents at foot level, and doors which are hollowed out to provide extra elbow room and useful pockets.



easy, but care in opening is necessary alongside high pavements.

At the rear, a pair of small removable seats is provided and it is quite possible for one tall adult to be accommodated—in tolerable comfort if not in luxury—when occasion demands. Otherwise, the rear compartment forms a useful and sizeable adjunct to the rear luggage boot which, although somewhat shallow, nevertheless provides good accommodation for a car of this type. A sensible feature is that the partition between the boot and rear seats can be lowered to enable awkward objects to be accommodated partly in the rear compartment

and partly in the boot.

Other details include a fresh-air heater and demister which work adequately if the fan is used . . . two well-placed transparent visors . . . headlights which give an excellent range and are supplemented by two foglights focused to pick out opposite kerbs . . . and stowage for the spare wheel and very comprehensive tool kit in a locker beneath the boot floor.

In all, this XK150S Jaguar is a truly remarkable car which combines a stupendous performance with surprising docility and good manners. To drive it is one of the more memorable experiences motoring has to offer.

### Specification

| Engine                            |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Cylinders                         | 6   |
| Bore                              | 83 mm.  |
| Stroke                            | 106 mm.   |
| Cubic capacity                    | 3,442 c.c.  |
| Piston area                       | 50.32 sq. in.   |
| Valves                            | Overhead (twin o.h. camshafts)                        |
| Compression ratio                 | 9/1   |
| Carburettors                      | Three S.U. horizontal type HD8, 2 in.                 |
| Fuel pump                         | Two S.U. electric                                     |
| Ignition timing control           | Centrifugal and vacuum                                |
| Oil filter                        | Tecalemic full flow                                   |
| Max. power (gross)                | 250 b.h.p.  |
| at                                | 5,500 r.p.m.  |
| Piston speed at max. b.h.p.       | 3,840 ft./min.  |
| Transmission                      |   |
| Clutch                            | Borg and Beck, 10 in. s.d.p.                          |
| Top gear (s/m)                    | 4.09 (overdrive, 3.18)                                |
| 3rd gear (s/m)                    | 5.247   |
| 2nd gear (s/m)                    | 7.60  |
| 1st gear                          | 13.81   |
| Reverse                           | 13.81   |
| Overdrive                         | Laycock-de Normanville, manual control                |
| Propeller shaft                   | Hardy Spicer, open                                    |
| Final drive                       | Hypoid bevel  |
| Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 r.p.m.   | 19.6 (overdrive, 26.4)                                |
| Top gear m.p.h. at 1,000 ft./min. | 28.2 (overdrive, 36.2)                                |
| Chassis                           |   |
| Brakes                            | Dunlop disc all round, servo assisted                 |
| Disc diameter                     | 12 in.  |
| Rubbed area of discs              | 540 sq. in.   |
| Total pad area                    | 31.8 sq. in.  |
| Suspension:                       |   |
| Front:                            | Independent by torsion bars and wishbones             |
| Rear:                             | Semi-elliptic   |
| Shock absorbers:                  | Girling telescopic hydraulic                          |
| Steering gear:                    | Alford and Alder rack and pinion with internal damper |
| Tyres                             | Dunlop Road Speed with tubes 6.00-16                  |

### Coachwork and Equipment

|                            |   |   |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Starting handle            | Nil   | Instruments: Speedometer (with decimal trip mileage recorder), rev counter (with inset clock), fuel gauge, coolant thermometer, oil pressure gauge, ammeter |
| Battery mounting           | Twin 6-volt, one in each front wing   | Warning lights: For ignition, headlamp main beam, low fuel level, direction indicators, overdrive switch  |
| Jack                       | Manual ratchet type   | Locks: With ignition key. Doors and petrol filler. With other keys. Glove locker and boot   |
| Jacking points             | One each side of car (access through apertures in floor)  | Glove lockers: Two, one with lockable lid, one open   |
| Standard tool kit:         | Adjustable spanner, 6 box spanners, sparking plug box spanner, 2 tommy bars, 4 open-ended spanners, jack and lever, wheelbrace, pliers, copper and rawhide mallet, screwdriver, grease gun, tyre gauge, feeler gauge, distributor screwdriver, valve timing gauge, brake bleeder tube and container, valve extractor. | Map pockets   |
| Exterior lights:           | Two headlamps, two fog lamps, two side lights two stop/tail lights, reversing lamp, number plate lamp   | Parcel shelves  |
| Number of electrical fuses | 6   | Ashtrays  |
| Direction indicators:      | Flasher type, self-cancelling; separate at front and combined with tail/stop lights at rear   | Cigar lighters  |
| Windscreen wipers          | Lucas two-speed self-parking  | Interior lights   |
| Windscreen washers         | Trico, vacuum-operated  | Interior lamp (below rear window), panel lights, boot lights  |
| Sun visors                 | Two of tinted transparent material  | Interior heater   |
|                            |   | Fresh-air type with demister  |
|                            |   | Car Radio   |
|                            |   | Extras available  |
|                            |   | Upholstery material   |
|                            |   | Floor covering  |
|                            |   | Exterior colours standardized   |
|                            |   | Alternative body styles   |
|                            |   | Open two-seater and drop-head coupe   |

### Maintenance

|                           |  |  |                             |
|---------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|
| Sump                      | 15 pints, total (13 pints refill) S.A.E. 30 (S.A.E. 20 below 32 deg. F., S.A.E. 40 above 90 deg. F.) | Front wheel toe-in   | Parallel to 1/8 in. toe-in. |
| Gearbox and overdrive     | 4 pints, S.A.E. 30   | Camber angle   | 1/2-1 deg. positive         |
| Rear axle                 | 3 1/2 pints, S.A.E. 90 hypoid  | Castor angle   | 1 1/2-2 deg. positive       |
| Steering gear lubricant   | Grease   | Steering swivel pin inclination  | 5 deg.                      |
| Cooling system capacity   | 23 pints (2 drain taps)  | Tyre pressures:  |                             |
| Chassis lubrication       | By grease gun every 2,500 miles to 12 points   | Normal:  |                             |
| Ignition timing           | 9 deg. B.T.D.C. (static)   | Front  | 23 lb.                      |
| Contact-breaker gap       | 0.014-0.016 in.  | Rear   | 26 lb.                      |
| Spark plug type           | Champion N5  | Fast driving:  |                             |
| Spark plug gap            | 0.025 in.  | Front  | 30 lb.                      |
| Valve timing: Inlet opens | 15 deg. B.T.D.C., closes 57 deg. A.B.D.C.  | Rear   | 35 lb.                      |
| Exhaust opens             | 57 deg. B.B.D.C., closes 15 deg. A.T.D.C.  | Maximum speeds:  |                             |
| Tappet clearances (Cold): |  | Front  | 40 lb.                      |
| Inlet                     | 0.004 in.  | Rear   | 45 lb.                      |
| Exhaust                   | 0.006 in.  | Brake fluid: Wakefield Crimson or any other fluid conforming to S.A.E. specification 70 R.I. |                             |
|                           |  | Battery type and capacity: Twin 6-volt batteries (12-volt system) 64 amp./hr.                |                             |