

# Marketplace

## Jim Stokes Workshops

We normally interview old-car dealers for this page but, for a change, this month we decided to visit Jim Stokes, the well-known supplier of high-tech engineering services to the Veteran, Vintage and classic car worlds.

Actually there was a second reason for our visit. Last year our Oily Rag 1914 Cadillac had the misfortune to crack a cylinder head cooling jacket whilst out on a run. This was due in the main to an outlet port at the bottom of the cylinder having become blocked with rust, preventing the coolant from circulating. Asking for advice amongst our motoring acquaintances, the name of Jim Stokes was mentioned and as his workshops are not too far away at Waterlooville, Hampshire, we made an appointment with him for help and advice.

Situated in four modern industrial units, one of which is in Havant, just outside Waterlooville and five minutes from the M3, we were greeted by Jim and given a tour of the workshops. Starting with the engine building and testing department, he showed us an Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 engine that had been recreated in-house from scratch. It had just come back from being put on a dynamometer for four hours to test its output and to run it in. It was destined for the USA as a replacement engine. Jim aims to install his own in-house dynamometer in the near future. He also explained that rods and pistons are some of the very few items that are bought in, as are the rough castings. The rest of the items are fabricated from the basic



**Above left** Jim Stokes standing beside an Alfa Romeo 8C 2300 engine in the engine building department **Above right** Jim's recently completed 1953/4 Cunningham C4R sports-racer



materials. Working from original drawings, these are transposed by a computer and turned into 3D images, enabling casting patterns to be built of sand automatically. This can include strengthening fillets and cooling blocks. The degree of accuracy is to that of one grain of sand.

We moved on downstairs to the large garage workshop floor, where cars were being worked on. In one corner was the privately-owned Alfa Romeo 158/159 Grand Prix car that Jim rebuilt and has looked after for many years. At the other end of the workshop was a 1904 Cadillac that was having a gearbox rebuild after having suffered problems on the Brighton Run. Jim has worked on a wide range of cars, from 1898 Panhard to Porsche 959.

A sports car we did not recognise was a 1953/4 Cunningham C4R, one of Jim's restorations/recreations. Only two originals are thought to exist and they are in collections. As they are not currently being run, Jim decided to build this car, and

he has carried out the same process with the Lancia-Ferrari D50 and the 156 Sharknose Ferrari. The cars mentioned are a speciality of the JSW workshops. Original parts, drawings and contacts are used where possible to achieve this. Computer scanning and the resulting CAD/CAM drawings are all part of this process. This results in better documentation and build which is superior to the original, and enables even chassis and bodywork components to be manufactured from scratch.

Up above on the second floor was the spares department. Triple M is the spares manufacturing arm of the JSW Group, which specialises in the production of one-offs or batches of components from supplied drawings. These are made for restorers, parts suppliers or individuals. Working from originals or drawings, the parts are fabricated in the machine shop using the latest CNC machine tools. Items held in stock or that can be manufactured are blocks, manifolds, sumps, heads and

starters – mostly for Lancia, Ferrari and Alfa Romeo, although anything is possible. Metal stitching by the Lock-N-Stitch method is another one of the services offered. Awaiting attention to be repaired by this method was a cast-iron segment from a London Underground tunnel.

Another arm to the JSW Group is Classics by JSW, over in Havant. To quote the brochure: 'This is our dynamic organisation specifically dedicated for the classic car owner and enthusiast to offer expert service at affordable prices.'

In 1970 Jim started work as a 'raw apprentice' with Marsh Plant. After three weeks he was promoted to general apprentice, running the racing department of Aston Martins which he did for 11½ years. He went to college on Mondays and Tuesdays and went to work the rest of the week, often staying away to work on cars in situ. In those days he owned a Series E Morris Eight which he had bought for £5, then a long wheelbase Land Rover which he converted from petrol to diesel and drove down to the Sahara. He also had a Singer Le Mans project which he never quite finished. After that came an Aston Martin 2/4 Mk I that had once belonged to Max Aitken of Fleet Street. That car had to be sold to finance his new company.

He became self-employed in 1981, starting JSW Ltd with his wife Hilary as a partner. In 1987 he concentrated solely on his own engineering work which, with Hilary's financial expertise, has grown ever since and now employs 33 personnel. He takes great pride in his company's workmanship and fiercely guards his worldwide reputation. Jim or Hilary may be reached on +44 (0)23 9225 4488 or by email at [info@jswl.co.uk](mailto:info@jswl.co.uk)

Gregor Hills

**Below left** Jim in the spares department holding an Alfa 2300 supercharger casing made in-house **Below right** Overall view of the cars in the workshop being worked on







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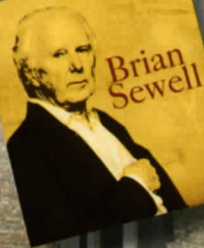


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AUTO-BIOGRAPHY



Brian Sewell

# The Automobile



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