

# MEET THE EXPERT

Learn more about Stuart MacNeill from classic XK parts specialist, Coventry Auto Components, including a top tip for anyone restoring a Jaguar and his love of wakeboarding

## Qualifications and past experience

I was into cars from the age of seven or eight, happily wandering around the Coventry Herbert Museum when all the cars and bike collections were just hidden downstairs. This was long before the superb Coventry Transport Museum.

I have worked in the motor trade since leaving college at 18, starting in Motor World car parts shops, then a similar position in Unipart's first superstore with workshops, training up other parts' guys to do it properly.

I then served six great years in Jaguar's Central Production Stores at Browns Lane, feeding parts directly to the tracks, until I was promoted to the position of stores group leader on the final line track areas for the XJ40 and XJS.

I arrived, as manager, at Coventry Auto Components in 1994, so have many years of experience under my belt, which I now share with customers through the advice and unique drawings that I publish on my website's online shop at [coventryautocomponents.co.uk/store/](http://coventryautocomponents.co.uk/store/).

## Best part of the job

I enjoy learning new skills to build my knowledge, experience and unique artwork for my online shop. This then allows people to learn how to build up their car correctly in an efficient way. I have been digitally remastering many early Jaguar parts' books (starting with SS 100, Mk V, Mk VII and Mk VIII) as a side-project, which I am yet to market. I am happy to say that my younger son, Nathaniel, has come into the business to take up the mantle.

Because we run the business with a very personal touch, we have written a new feature into our website. If you are starting a rebuild of an XK or just looking at a part build project that you know will run into thousands, then you can now do a virtual shop; if it passes a value criteria, the order can be sent through the 'do a deal' portal in the shopping basket, when we will look at how we can work with you to consolidate parts and shipping costs, then package it up as a custom, one-off deal for you, within certain criteria. This specially written software incorporates even more of our human touch into our fantastic website.

## NAME

Stuart  
MacNeill

## PLACE OF WORK

Coventry  
Auto  
Components  
Ltd

## POSITION

Director /  
Owner



## Most commonly seen problem/part requested

We are known best for making all the difficult bits, especially chrome-plated products such as hood windows, grilles, bumpers and overriders. People come to us to ensure the parts are right, are made to a high quality from good materials and that they fit properly. Not all parts are equal and we make all the fiddly bits, too.

## Advice for anyone wanting your job

Take an interest and keep learning. If you don't know the answer to a problem, go away and research it. Don't ever try to guess – you will probably get it wrong. If you put your heart and soul into it, you will get a lot back from it.

## Top tip for Jaguar owners

Plan and build the car for yourself and how you want to use it, even if you have the intention to sell it on later. You will get far more enjoyment from owning it if you build it to suit your own style and purpose.

## Favourite car

That's my modern XK 4.2 because I love the car's beautiful curves, the V8's amazing sound and the effortless way it leaps down the road. We take it apart and play with

that, too, so my knowledge of late model XKs continues to rapidly expand.

## Most memorable event

I slept by the trackside to watch Jaguar win Le Mans in 1988 and have amusing memories of half of my Jaguar IT department workmates missing the coach back and getting left behind

## Worst place you've broken down in a car

The infamous M25 when the oil pump failed at 80mph in my Ford Orion. I just managed to get it up a slip road before everything seized solid.

## Any surprising hidden talents

Five years ago, I learnt how to wakeboard and discovered I'm a natural. I love it. It's fantastic fun skimming over the surface of the water on a thin sheet of fibreglass at 20mph-30mph. It helps feed my natural need for speed.

## COVENTRY AUTO COMPONENTS

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