



## 1955 JAGUAR XK140 FHC SE

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**With MNJ 812 now in my clutches,** mechanical fettling is fully underway. The Jaguar came with smaller-than-standard 15-inch wire wheels shod with old, hard tyres. This reduced the gearing considerably and the ride was damn firm. In my experience, tyres go off after about five years and new rubber really improves a car's dynamics.

But before choosing suitable tyres, I needed a set of correct sized 16x5in wheels, so called Charles Americanos – he knows everything there is to know about wires – of Motor Wheels Services International. MWS was established in 1927 and is renowned for the restoration and manufacture of veteran, vintage and classic wire wheels. Wires can be had in stainless steel, chrome or silver paint finishes, and I went for the painted silver, which is most authentic. These wheels are very accurately constructed to the original Dunlop pattern and cost a remarkably reasonable £168 (including VAT) each. With the Jaguar on painted 16in wires it now looks 'right'.

I then needed tyres that maintained this correct stance, but with decent handling and roadholding. The XK was originally fitted with crossplies but I wanted a set of high-speed road tyres with which I can compete. The



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answer is Blockley crossplies. A little over four years ago, historic racer Julian Majzub teamed up with ex-Dunlop competition manager Derek Freathy to set up Blockley, and their high-performance vintage and historic tyres have met with remarkable success. The pre-war tyres are FIA approved and the company produces 600-16in post-war tyres that are suitable for classics such as my Jaguar XK140.

Running on Blockley tyres (£199.75 each) with Derek Freathy's Classico Competition tubes and rim rubbers (£43.95), the Jaguar has been transformed.

The previously jittery ride is now supple and the handling and roadholding have improved tremendously. Now, when you sling the Jaguar through roundabouts, it drifts controllably, turning any old drive into a real motoring pleasure.

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