

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## How Barrie Whizzo Williams met his perfect match - the wildest E-Type ever

### Lead

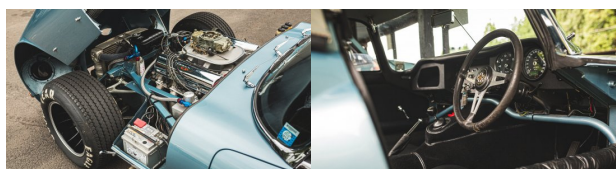
Out of circulation for over 40 Years, CKL Developments have finally rediscovered the craziest E-Type ever made: the monstrous Egal. This is the story of its inception, and how it came to meet the one driver who could truly tame the beast.



The Egal's story starts with two friends by the names of Rob Beck and Geoff Richardson. While both were accomplished racers in their own right, Rob was a better wheelman, while Geoff was gifted when it came to building race cars. The two had been fielding what was one of the fastest XK120s ever, but felt that they had reached the full potential of the 308hp, 990kg Jag, having lapped Silverstone in just 1 minute 8 seconds (in its shorter 60s configuration). Now they were looking for something rather more potent, and they found it in the form of Rob's lightened 1962 E-Type, which he had recently crashed at Castle Combe and needed a new engine.



For the 1964 season, Rob commissioned Geoff to install a 7 litre Holman and Moody Ford Galaxie engine that had been intended for use in a powerboat, Rob being an avid powerboat racer himself. Surprisingly, the Ford and Jaguar power plants were almost identical in weight. Talking to Chris Keith-Lucas from [CKL Developments](#), their reasoning for this was never explained beyond that they simply wanted to go faster. The previous year they had fitted a 3.5 litre Buick V8 into a Formula Junior, lending them confidence in their ability to shoehorn large engines into small cars, and shoehorn they did.



The E-Type was fitted with heavy-duty front brake discs and callipers, and equipped with a competition roll bar, dampers, and torsion bars. After lowering the whopping American V8 onto the rolling E-Type chassis, it quickly became clear that the only way it would fit was to use the existing Jaguar gearbox with a twin-diaphragm clutch Borg & Beck developed for the AC Cobra. Too polite to ask Jaguar how much punishment the gearbox could actually take, it was therefore the only unknown link in the drivetrain and likely the weakest component. However, the Jaguar gearbox had proven its reliability to Geoff and Rob in racing service thus far, so they soldiered on. Having modified the bulkhead and repositioned the steering rack to accommodate the larger engine, the V8 was mated to the chassis, and the thus the Egal was born; it's name a portmanteau of E-

Type and Galaxie. On the dyno at Geoff's workshop, the engine made 475 bhp, with max torque of 500 lb ft. This was 1964, with 60s brakes, and just 1200kgs to shunt: try to imagine what a spectacle that must have been.



After initial tests, Geoff and Rob were equally delighted and surprised with how well all the components gelled, reporting that it handled just as well as a standard E-Type. Unsurprisingly, however, the original Jaguar radiator soon proved inadequate when it came to cooling an engine with nearly double the capacity. A new Gallay radiator was fitted, and the lightweight aluminium bonnet was given the distinctive GTO-style inlets to cool the gargantuan American power plant. An extra power bulge housed the Holley carburettor and vents were also sculpted into the front nose to cool the brakes. The Egal was now ready to race.

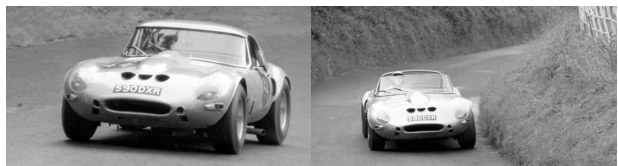


The Egal's early career was very much a trial by fire, racing almost every weekend. Its first outing was at the Nottingham Sports Car Club's mid-summer meeting at the Silverstone Club circuit, winning the sports car race as well as the Libre racing car event with Rob behind the wheel. It was a promising start for the Egal then, but not without its snags. E-Types aren't renowned for their stopping capability, and with almost double the horsepower and top speeds of up to 150mph down the straight, Rob came away from the race with, let's say, a mild level of concern. After a thorough inspection of the entire car, the Egal was fitted with Le Mans type Jaguar brakes at the rear, consisting of larger discs and callipers as well as thicker pads, giving the pair more confidence in the Egal's ability to shed speed. However, understandably, Rob soon decided it might benefit his lifespan to spectate rather than pilot the wildly powerful Egal himself.



Enter Barrie "Whizzo" Williams. Well liked for his flamboyant driving style on track and his immense appetite for mischief when not racing, as Chris puts it: this was a "marriage made in heaven". Having recently turned his back on F3, Barrie was perfectly placed to take up the invitation to race the Egal in the summer of 1967. Having honed his skills in rallying before entering circuit racing, Barrie was curiously comfortable going sideways, making him a perfect fit for what was essentially a drift car before such things existed. According to Barrie, Geoff rang one day to ask if he would like to pilot the Egal. His response was simple: "I'll drive anything!"





Geoff handed Barrie the keys to get a feel for the car for a couple days, and so he drove back to his home in Bromyard with his elk hound called Tom in the passenger seat. Barrie was quick to realise what a monster the Egal was—it “bellowed fire and flame”—perfectly suited to Barrie. Having become comfortable with the car, Geoff promptly entered Barrie in a sprint event at Long Marston airfield near Stratford-on-Avon at Rob’s recommendation.



At the start line Rob said to Barrie “You know this is a very powerful car. I’ll give you some tips on starting. I’ve done a lot of this sort of thing. You take the revs up to 2000 and when the light changes, you dump the clutch and floor it. Then change gear very quickly”. Starting next to Malcolm Gartland in his GT40, as the light went green, Barrie followed Rob’s instructions closely, and disappeared in a huge cloud of blue smoke, first careering right directly towards the GT40, and then fishtailing left, using up the entire straight before eventually getting the Egal under control. After the race, Barrie was called to the course clerk, who promptly delivered a lengthy lecture on sprint starts. Barrie returned to Rob who said “Dramatic. Yes, I’m awfully sorry, I made a mistake, I meant 1000rpm”.



Barrie went on to enjoy a string of successes in the Egal, and even won three races in one day at Silverstone: Formula Libre, Sports Cars, and a GT race. However, as newer, more-advanced race cars entered the scene, the Egal started to lose its competitive edge as old issues began to resurface. A return to Silverstone was the first time the Egal’s shortcomings became clear; while the car’s straight-line speed remained unmatched, according to Barrie, “They could stop, and we couldn’t”. Unfortunately, it was evident that the Borrani wire-wheels simply wouldn’t allow bigger brakes, nevertheless the Egal continued to race.



Come the 1970s, the car had migrated to Scotland with Jaguar racers Bob Kerr and Tom McCallum. The car continued to be raced and developed, acquiring wide alloy JA Pearce wheels and tidied-up rear wings. Then at the end of the 70s, the Egal was bought by a collector in the States and it dropped off the UK map. During its time over the pond, the Egal underwent a very high quality restoration to fast road spec at Vantage Motorsport in Connecticut. For reasons that escape us, the previous owner decided 475 horses were insufficient, and so the Galaxie engine was bored out and stroked to 8.5 litres with over 650hp and 605 lb ft of torque. The wide JA Pearce wheels made way for even wider alloys in the hopes of taming the Egal's tail-happy nature. However, rather than being able to break traction, the Egal now has too much grip and is in danger of breaking gearboxes instead. The team at CKL and the car's current owner are determined to restore the Egal to its pre-americanised glory and have sourced an identical Holman and Moody V8, so we should hear the Egal shouting it's way around an English circuit soon — Borranis and all. A sight we're sure Barrie would have loved to see.

*Photos by Rob Cooper*

**Gallery**























































