

# The Story of “Lizzie”

## **Austin Swallow Specifications**

Dimensions:	10 ft long, 4 ft 2 in wide, 5 ft high.
Body Work:	Aluminium on an ash frame.
Weight:	8¼ hundredweight (420kg).
Engine:	4 cylinder, 747cc side valve producing 10½ bhp.
Transmission:	3 forward and 1 reverse non-synchromesh.
Electrics:	6 volt with coil ignition and electric starter.
Braking:	Cable operated using internal expanding on 4 wheels.
Seating capacity:	4 seats (2 adults and 2 very small persons).
Performance:	45 mph (reputed to be 50 mph down hill).

- Austin Swallow Sports Saloon – 1931
- Coach work by the Swallow Sidecar Company – Coventry, UK
- Vehicle manufactured approximately November/December 1930
- Purchased in 1931 and registered RH 2610 on 23 March 1931
- First owner Mary Jane Hopley of Hull in the UK
- The car was mainly driven by the daughter of the aforementioned and remained on the road until 1948. The car was then laid up in their garage for 21 years with the ash frame suffering badly from wood worm.
- “Lizzie” was then relegated to the wreckers in Hull UK where she stood for seven years. Fortunately most of her valuable and original parts remained intact.
- 1976 “Lizzie” was purchased by Marion Davidson of Hull with the intention of restoration but alas the enthusiasm ran out and on 23 March 1978 she was sold to another potential restorer in James Arthur Hodgkins of Surrey in the UK but sadly the restoration did not take place.
- 1984 she was purchased by Duncan Gilbert of Exter in the UK and restoration commenced. Duncan overhauled her mechanically bringing the vehicle to roadworthy standard; however Mr Gilbert was daunted by the work still to be completed and in 1991 sold the vehicle to allow him to get on with other cars he was restoring.
- 1991 “Lizzie” was purchased by Michael Cassidy of Bromley in the UK, Michael was an engineer and a pedantic restorer, quickly

realising the ash frame was too far gone he removed the original aluminium skin, bogged up the original frame and then dismantled it piece by piece and then utilised the original bogged up pieces as templates to create a new frame out of specially selected and cured ash. The original aluminium skin was then carefully refitted to the new ash frame with many adjustments taking place to ensure the fit was as perfect as possible. The restoration continued with all the original parts and fitting being brought back to as new condition. Michael searched numerous “autojumbles” to obtain the parts that were missing from “Lizzie” all the time ensuring they were original Swallow components and true to the 1931 Sports Saloon. With all now in place the vehicle was re-painted in its original colour scheme as noted in the log book and as also marked in chalk on the inside of the door skins as instructions for the Swallow paint shop. These chalk instructions remain in place today.

- With the assistance of Connolly’s of Wimbledon in the UK the seats were covered with an excellent copy of the leather originally supplied to Swallow. New head lining and trim was aquired which near on perfectly matched the original.
- 1994 saw “Lizzie” completely restored as original and was proudly driven and shown off by this fastidious restorer.
- 1995 had “Lizzie” and another Swallow Sports Saloon – GT 4963 lead the Jaguars on the “Entente Cordial” celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of Jaguar Cars. The two Swallows were displayed at Pierrefonds as bookends to the 220 MPH XJ220. The last stage of the journey was a gendarme escorted parade from Pierrefonds to the display site at Palais National in Compiègne with the XJ220 leading the way followed by “Lizzie” and GT 49763. The Swallows covered over 450 miles.
- 1995 “Lizzie” entered the Great Haseley Rally along with seven other Swallows. “Lizzie” won the Jaguar Trophy for best saloon. Earlier in the year “Lizzie” was entered in the 33<sup>rd</sup> National Rally at Beaulieu and won the coveted “Swallow Cup”.
- 1996 “Lizzie” was entered in the 34<sup>th</sup> National Rally at Beaulieu and for the second year in succession won the coveted “Swallow Cup.
- Sadly in October 1996 Michael Cassidy suddenly passed away leaving his beloved “Lizzie” behind, this sad event happened only two years after he had lovingly and faithfully restored his car to original condition and specifications.
- 1996 (October) through to August 2008 “Lizzie” sat in an environmentally controlled garage of the late Michael Cassidy. The vehicle was attended to from time to time by Michael’s son to

ensure she was in good operational order. After a year of searching for such a car my letter of plea came to the attention of Michael's wife and family, this arrived at a time when they felt they could let "Lizzie" go and hence I purchased what is now my 1931 Austin Swallow Sports Saloon RH 2610.

- October 2008 the Swallow arrived from the UK to its new place of residence, being my garage. Since her arrival she has been tenderly cared for and minor improvements continue to be made. My philosophy is to drive "Lizzie" as much as possible and get her out and about so that others may enjoy the sight of this wonderful little car. It is pleasing to see the smiles it brings to peoples faces as we motor around or display it at various functions or show it to children. The most common statements are: "how cute is that" or "it is beautiful".
- Since her arrival in Australia "Lizzie" has been successful in winning many trophies and awards.
- In 2013/2014 "Lizzie" was stripped back to bare metal and received a new paint job (a process that took far too long) with her not being back on the road on until the middle of 2015. The paint colour matches exactly that of the original.