

Jim Rattenbury

One of the oldest living drivers from the very early years of racing is British Columbian Jim Rattenbury, who was born and raised in Kelowna, B.C. and today lives with his wife Connie in Vancouver. A mechanical engineer of some note, Jim was there at the second year of racing at Abbotsford in a Jaguar XK-120. He then used his mechanical engineering abilities to design and build small Crosley-powered home-built specials in which he made quite a name for himself. By 1955 he had the top under-1500cc special in the British Columbia, quite a feat in an area that prided itself on such cars. He moved up in size and speed dramatically when he purchased the first and only D-type Jaguar in the Northwest from Vancouver's Plimley dealership in late 1956. A great mechanic and improver of cars, Jim modified the Jaguar's engine and stretched the body quite a bit but was never able to quite beat the other modified cars stateside. However, he was very successful at Westwood and Abbotsford in his home area and rarely missed a race.

During the time Jim was campaigning extensively in the D-type, he was also perfecting one of the most unusual appearing specials of the time –and all time—a space frame chassied car with a Crosley engine and a very peculiar headrest configuration that gave the car the nickname “a guppy on weights” (we'd say “steroids” today). After the D-Jag had been sold to Starr Calvert, Jim dropped a Porsche Carrera motor (later an RS60) into the special and campaigned it with the same vigor he had displayed in the Jag, but with more success as far as class wins were concerned, at any rate. Later on he was to race professionally in other cars, finally retiring after a bad wreck. In addition to being racecar driver Jim was one of the inaugural members of the SCCBC and its second President. He passed away in 2007.