

Sir James Scott Douglas

Although generally associated with the 1950s Scottish privateer race team Ecurie Ecosse, Sir James Scott Douglas was actually only one quarter Scots, and had been born in England at Sherston near the Wiltshire/Gloucestershire border. When he first started racing his own Jaguar in 1952, he joined the Bristol Motor Cycle & Light Car Club, which ran race meetings at the nearby Castle Combe circuit, and was elected as Club President for the years 1953 and 1954.



*Bristol MC&LCC annual dinner & dance, December 1953.
Centre Sir James Scott Douglas; far left Bristol MC&LCC Chairman Cliff Salter.
Also pictured the Lord Mayor of Bristol and the Sheriff of Bristol.*

The legendary Ecurie Ecosse privateer team, later to become famous for their outright victories in the Le Mans 24 hour races of 1956 and 57, had been formed late in 1951 by David Murray in Edinburgh, with fellow Scots Ian Stewart (no relation to Sir Jackie) and Bill Dobson using their own Jaguar XK120s. To complete a three-car team, and thereby attract sponsorship money from Esso, Murray enrolled another XK120 owner, the 'large and likeable' 21-year-old Sir James ('Jamie') Louis Fitzroy Scott Douglas, Bt.

While on his father's side Jamie's ancestors had been a well-established Scottish Borders family*, and he had inherited the Baronetcy from his uncle Sir George Douglas when he was only five, his mother, Lady Blanche Somerset, of Badminton, Gloucestershire, was the eldest daughter of English aristocrat Henry, 9th Duke of Beaufort. Perhaps inappropriately for the very Scottish Ecurie Ecosse, this meant that Jamie was a descendent of "*the Hammer of the Scots*" King Edward I; he was also related to 1931 Le Mans winner Francis Curzon, 5th Earl Howe. Lady Blanche's first husband, the Earl of St. Germans, had been killed steeplechasing; she then married Captain George FV Scott Douglas in 1924, but he died following a polo accident in June 1930, four months before only son James was born at their home at Manor Farm in Sherston.

Prior to owning the XK120 (registration LXO 126) Jamie had little or no racing experience, and his first race for the new team was at Charterhall, near Duns, on 6th April 1952. Their second event, the following weekend, was at Castle Combe and by this time Jamie had become a Bristol MC&LCC member. Having led away at the start of the unlimited sportscar race Jamie finally placed 5th in an Ecurie Ecosse 2-4-5 result.

During the rest of the year, he competed in over 25 races around the British Isles in LXO 126, with his best result being third place in the 140 mile Wakefield Trophy road race at the Curragh, near Dublin, in September. Five weeks prior to that, though, the team had embarked on its first continental foray, to Reims in northern France. Here, in the three-hour sportscar Grand Prix de Reims, Jamie finished in a very creditable third place, the race being won by Stirling Moss in another C-type.

* His paternal great-grandfather was Sir George H Scott-Douglas, 4th Baronet Douglas, of Springwood Park.

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For 1953 the other Ecosse drivers bought new C-type Jaguars, so Jamie followed suit. Early in the season, though, he also had several outings in the team's Formula 2 Connaught, albeit with little success. He debuted his new C-type (MVC 630) at the Bristol MC&LCC's 25th April meeting at Castle Combe with a victory in the sportscar race, but from then on concentrated on continental events. Returning to Reims on 5th July for the 12-hour race, with Ninian Sanderson co-driving, he placed fourth. At the end of the month, now with Guy Gale as co-driver, he tackled the 24-hour race at Spa. This time they finished an excellent second, to the works Ferrari of Mike Hawthorn and Nino Farina, a result that helped Jaguar to second place in that year's World Sportscar Championship. A month later and the team were at the Nurburgring for the 1000 Km race but there was near disaster for Jamie in practice when he overturned the C-type, being thrown clear, uninjured, on its first roll. Switching to his hastily prepared XK120, Douglas and Sanderson eventually finished the race tenth.

Although Jamie then sold his C-type he continued in 1954 with Ecurie Ecosse, who were now equipped with the lightweight ex-works team C-types from 1953. The first outing was a trip to Buenos Aires in January for the Argentine 1000 Km race where, again with Ninian Sanderson co-driving, he finished in fourth place. A handful of races in England followed, then in August at Zandvoort Jamie had what Autosport described as one of his best ever races, completing an Ecurie Ecosse 1-2 behind team-mate Sanderson, in what seems to have been his final race.

After the 1954 season he retired from motor racing – he was also having health problems – but, still benefiting from some significant inheritances, continued to maintain a playboy lifestyle, in 1957 buying the 250-ton Aquavite, a converted American-built minesweeper fitted out as a luxury yacht and usually kept moored in Monaco. Eventually though, he appears to have run out of money and returned to London, becoming employed as a journalist by the Daily Express to use his Society connections. However, suffering poor health and with a serious weight problem, in 1969 he suffered a heart attack and died aged just 38.

Scottish motorsport journalist Graham Gauld summed him up thus: *“Sir James Scott Douglas was one of the most colourful of all the Ecurie Ecosse drivers, was great company and certainly enjoyed life and wealth whilst it lasted.”*

Pete Stowe 2016/21

Known races:

Date	Circuit	Race	Co-driver	Car	Reg no.	Result	Notes
06-Apr-52	Charterhall	3 hours sports cars (handicap, team relay)		XK120		Team 4th	
06-Apr-52	Charterhall	Formule Libre		XK120		?	
12-Apr-52	Castle Combe	Sports cars unlimited		XK120	LXO 126	5th	
12-Apr-52	Castle Combe	Team relay race		XK120		Team 3rd	
19-Apr-52	Ibsley	Handicap		XK120		?	
19-Apr-52	Ibsley	Sports cars over 3000cc		XK120		6th	
03-May-52	Turnberry	Formule Libre		XK120		3rd	Possibly also entered 2 sports car races
24-May-52	Crimond	Sports cars unlimited		XK120		5th	
24-May-52	Crimond	Formule Libre		XK120		?	
29-May-52	Douglas IoM	British Empire Trophy (200 miles, handicap)		XK120		6th	1st in class
31-May-52	Charterhall	Racing cars unlimited		XK120		8th	
31-May-52	Charterhall	Sports cars unlimited		XK120		7th	
21-Jun-52	Boreham	William Lyons race for XK120s		XK120		7th	Possibly also entered Sports cars unlimited race
21-Jun-52	Boreham	Formule Libre		XK120		finisher	
29-Jun-52	Reims	GP of Reims		XK120		3rd	First Ecurie Ecosse continental event. Run to Index; placed 10th, was 3rd on scratch.
10-Jul-52	Jersey	Road Race Heat		XK120		5th?	
10-Jul-52	Jersey	Road Race Final		XK120		6th	

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Date	Circuit	Race	Co-driver	Car	Reg no.	Result	Notes
27-Jul-52	Charterhall	Racing cars unlimited		XK120		3rd	
27-Jul-52	Charterhall	Sports cars unlimited		XK120		3rd	
02-Aug-52	Boreham	Sportscars over 2000cc		XK120		?	100 miles.
16-Aug-52	Goodwood	9 hours	Zora Duntov	XK120		dns	entered but probably dna
23-Aug-52	Turnberry	Sports cars over 1500cc Heat 1		XK120		?	
23-Aug-52	Turnberry	Sports cars over 1500cc Final		XK120		?	unknown if ran in final
06-Sep-52	Curragh	Wakefield Trophy		XK120		3rd	Scratch. Run concurrently
06-Sep-52	Curragh	O'Boyle Trophy handicap		XK120		2nd	Run concurrently
27-Sep-52	Goodwood	Handicap		XK120		?	Entered. Unknown if arrived
27-Sep-52	Goodwood	Sports cars		XK120		?	Entered. Unknown if arrived
04-Oct-52	Castle Combe	Sports cars over 1500cc		XK120		?	
11-Oct-52	Charterhall	Sports cars unlimited		XK120	LXO 126	unplaced	
11-Oct-52	Charterhall	Formule Libre		XK120		rtd	blew core plug.
06-Apr-53	Goodwood	Lavant Cup Formula 2		Connaught		?	not in first 8
06-Apr-53	Goodwood	1st Easter handicap		Connaught		?	not in first 5
18-Apr-53	Ibsley	Sports cars over 3000cc		C-type	KSF 182	4th	
18-Apr-53	Ibsley	Formula Libre		C-type	KSF 182	4th	
25-Apr-53	Castle Combe	Sports cars unlimited		C-type	MVC 630	1st	
26-Apr-53	Italy	Mille Miglia		XK120		dna	Entered (#626)
09-May-53	Silverstone	Daily Express International Trophy heat 1		Connaught		9th	
09-May-53	Silverstone	Daily Express International Trophy final		Connaught		17th	
09-May-53	Silverstone	Production sports cars		C-type		dns	ran in F2 instead
19-May-53	Dundrod	Ulster Trophy heat 2		Connaught		7th	
19-May-53	Dundrod	Ulster Trophy final		Connaught		12th	
25-May-53	Thruxton	Racing cars unlimited		C-type	KSF 182	?	
25-May-53	Thruxton	Sports cars unlimited		C-type	KSF 182	?	
4/5-Jul-53	Reims	12 hours	Ninian Sanderson	C-type	MVC 630	4th	
11-Jul-53	Wicklow	Leinster Trophy handicap		C-type	JWS 353	?	3rd on scratch
18-Jul-53	Silverstone	Sports cars		C-type		rtd	Low oil pressure. British GP meeting
25-Jul-53	Spa	24 hours	Guy Gale	C-type	MVC 630	2nd	World Sportscar Championship
30-Aug-53	Nurburgring	1000 Kms	Ninian Sanderson	C-type	MVC 630	dns	JSD crashed in practice
30-Aug-53	Nurburgring	1000 Kms	Ninian Sanderson	XK120	LXO 126	10th	World Sportscar Championship
05-Sep-53	Dundrod	RAC Tourist Trophy	Ninian Sanderson	C-type		dns	entry withdrawn
24-Jan-54	Buenos Aires	Argentina 1000Km	Ninian Sanderson	C-type	LSF 671	4th	World Sportscar Championship
29-May-54	Aintree	Sports cars unlimited		C-type	LSF 420	6th	
05-Jun-54	Snetterton	William Lyons Trophy Jaguar handicap		C-type	LSF 420	5th	
05-Jun-54	Snetterton	Sports cars unlimited		C-type	LSF 420	4th	possibly other races
07-Jun-54	Goodwood	Sports cars unlimited		C-type	LSF 420	12th	pit stop, 2 laps down.
15-Aug-54	Zandvoort	International Sports cars unlimited heat		C-type	LSF 420	?	
15-Aug-54	Zandvoort	International Sports cars unlimited final		C-type	LSF 420	2nd	Ecurie Ecosse 1-2
24-Oct-54	Pedrables	IX Copa Barcelona		C-type		dns	Salvadori blew engine (practice). Spanish GP meeting.

Information sources

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Westcountry Motorsport History

Website <https://bpmc.org.uk/petestowe/wmh.htm>

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