

# The Lister Car Company

*By Neville Barlow*

For most of us with an interest in the history of Jaguar and their motor racing successes the name “Knobbly”, brings to mind the name Lister Jaguar.

The Lister Motor Company was a British sports car manufacturer founded by Brian Lister in 1954 in Cambridge England. Amongst all the Jaguar powered sports racing cars built in England the Lister Jaguar Knobbly was simply the best. They were the most numerous and the most successful. That probably came as a surprise to anybody who believed what was written about

that manufacturer at the time. Lister was a small company in Cambridge chiefly occupied by the fabrication of wrought iron gates and railings for ancestral homes.



Brian Lister was the grandson of George Lister who set up the company in 1890. They were involved in general engineering, blacksmithing and decorative wrought iron work. In the early days from 1954, Brian Lister produced a number of Cooper inspired cars with tuned MG engines. It was at this time that he met his long time driver, Archie Scott Brown.

At a later time Lister swapped in a highly tuned Bristol 2 litre engine. This car won the supporting sports car race to the 1954 British Grand Prix at Silverstone, for the 2 litre class. In 1957 a handful of Bristol's were made with wind tunnel designed bodies. He also attempted a single seater Coventry climax engine car with an MG gearbox. It proved disappointing.

In 1957 he redesigned the car around a 3.4 litre Jaguar XK in-line 6 cylinder engine with an aerodynamic aluminium body. It was tested at the time to achieve a 0 – 160 kph in 11.2 seconds.

The Jaguar D Type sports car was the dominant racing car of the time, due to its outstanding performance and handling but when Jaguar withdrew from racing in 1957, Archie Scott Brown had the field to himself. He not only won the British Empire Trophy but won 11 races out of his 14 starts in the Knobbly.

The Knobbly became one of the most successful race cars of the 1950's with other drivers such as Sir Stirling Moss and Bruce Harford amassing a huge collection of Trophies.

A documented list of 53 podiums, includes 29 first, 15 seconds and 9 thirds.

In 1958 the Lister Jaguar entered international competitions. However, Archie Scott Brown was

killed that season when he crashed the Lister at Spa- Francorchamps. Although Brian Lister continued with the help of aerodynamics man Frank Costin, his heart was not in racing anymore. He was very affected by the death of Brown and the many other drivers of the day who were also killed in Sports and Grand Prix racing. He could not stand the thought of any more drivers perishing in cars produced by him. By the end of 1959 Brian withdrew from competition, although production of sports cars parts continued for his customers.

The company was sold in 1986 to Laurence Pearce who produced variants of the Jaguar XJS, before producing a bespoke sports car the Lister Storm which was launched in 1993. This car was powered by the largest Jaguar V12 engine of 7.0 litres, derived from the Jaguar XJR9.

The Storm was developed in many guises and won the FIA GT Championship in 2000.



*Lister Storm*



*Stirling Moss—Lister Jaguar*

They also developed a Le Mans Prototype, the Storm LMP in 2003. In 2013 Lawrence Whittaker and his father, Andrew, took the opportunity to purchase the Lister Company.

The sale involved the purchase of the intellectual property rights, the plans and drawings as well as the property rights of Pearce's Lister cars.

The new company was rebranded as The Lister Motor Company. In ten months they announced the build and sale of replica Lister Knobbly, to mark 60 years since the first Lister racing car was built. In early 2014, they said all cars produced had been sold with



**Jaguar Lister Thunder**

orders worth £5 million.

In June 2016 the Lister Motor Company announced the build and sale of 10 special Lister Knobbly Stirling Moss editions. These cars are capable of both road and track use and Stirling would personally hand over each one. The price was £1 million each.

In January 2018 Lister presented the LFT 666. This car is a modified Jaguar F Type R with the 5.0 litre V8 supercharged engine. Power has been increased to 666ps (657 bhp) and named the Thunder. Top speed is 335 kph and 0 – 100 kph in 3.2 seconds. Starting price is £143,155.

In January 2019 the LFP SUV arrived. Based on the Jaguar F Pace, this car also boasts the V8 engine with 661 bhp and 322 kph. It is claimed to be the fastest SUV in the world. Start price is \$NZ 275,000.



**Lister LFP SUV**

Only 250 of these will be made, so you had better get in quick!!

The company is not resting on its laurels. It has designed what they call the 2020 Lister Concept. It is not known if or when they may release this beast.

*Neville*



**2020 Lister Concept**