

NEW PLYMOUTH NATIONAL RALLY—DAY 1

By John Bourke

The Taranaki Jaguar Drivers' Club were the hosts to the 14th National Jaguar Rally based in New Plymouth over Easter 2021.

Day 1, Friday 2nd April, began with a group from our club assembling in Rotorua and driving the very scenic route through Whakamaru, Bennydale and on to Pio Pio for lunch. On arrival in New Plymouth, we checked in at our Hotel, The Plymouth, and then enrolled for the Rally over at the Devon Hotel.

Saturday featured the "Show and Shine" display of all the cars registered for the rally, plus the Concours Car judging. This was held at the East End Reserve, which was right beside the sea, on a glorious sunny day. A magnificent line of Jaguars dating from the 1935 Swallow SS1 belonging to our Bill and Jenny Harding, right up to the very latest models, were on display.



During the day we caught up with several old Jaguar acquaintances from previous National rallies (this was my 5th) and also most of the people from our club.



The B.O.P. club had 15 cars and 30 members at the rally, which to me was a disappointing attendance when compared to the Christchurch Club, with 84 members who made the effort, and our club membership numbers being similar. The cars on display kept the local crowds in awe at the beauty of the Jaguar marque from old to new.

From our members point of view, we were all in anticipation of a podium result for Bruce Jamieson and Bruce MacDiamid who had their cars in the Concours judging event.

The evening function was a dinner/dance held at the Plymouth Hotel where some 400 attendees were treated to superb food and a band which created a wonderful trendy beat of Gaelic/Scottish/Irish flavour. It certainly inspired everyone to dance.



Sunday featured the Gymkhana, held at Stratford, covered by Gary Bexley. In the evening the Dinner and Prizegiving were held at the Devon Hotel. The highlight for our members was the Concours Awards claimed by two of our group.

Bruce Jamieson entered his 2001 XKR 4 litre Supercharged Silverstone. On arrival at the venue, prior to judging, Bruce was directed by an official, off the driveway and on to the grass verge at the East End Reserve, and into a large drainage divot.

To his horror, Bruce damaged his front bumper valence and completely tore off his rear bumper. Despite this tragedy, Bruce still came 2nd in the Post Classic Sport category. This car is always superbly presented by Bruce and Marilyn and they fully deserved this award.



The next thrill for our club attendees was when the 2006 S-Type R Supercharged V8 of Bruce MacDiamid and Jo Spry scooped the pool in the Saloon Car class.

They won the following awards:

- First - Concours Modern Saloon**
- First - Concours Best Saloon of Show**
- Second - Concours Best in Show**

This huge honour was well deserved by these members who always present their cars impeccably and we all applaud Bruce and Jo for this outstanding result.





The winner of Best in Show was Ron and Jenny Reeve from Christchurch with their 1957 XK 140.

All in all, this was an enjoyable Rally. The next one will be held in Christchurch over Easter 2024. For those who enjoy the Jaguar marque, the company of likeminded people who enjoy a good time together,

I suggest you start putting aside the date in your diary. The Christchurch club is 60 years old and is the oldest Jaguar club outside of the U.K. They last hosted the National Rally in 1988. With some 200 plus members and a host of car and recreational activities in the immediate area, this Rally offers many encouraging opportunities.



Several members from other clubs suggested that the B.O.P. Drivers' Club would be ideal as hosts of the National Rally in 2027. It has always been structured to have alternate rallies between the South and the North Islands.



John