

A MAN

By Neville Barlow

I have a friend or perhaps more accurately an acquaintance. He is someone I have known for over 60 years, away back in the days when we were both in the same sports team. We learnt a lot about each other's strengths and weakness in some interesting conflicts. We seem to bump into each other by accident every few years and the common theme is always motor cars and usually Jaguar cars.

On an occasion in those long distant years when we were starting out in life, I was able to borrow my father's lovely Jaguar and we double dated with our young ladies and took them out for dinner. It was a first for him and I was nervous as I had never ordered a bottle of wine before. I handed him the wine list and he quickly pushed back my way. Trying to be oh so sophisticated I pointed to the first wine I saw to which the waiter haughtily said "I believe that is a very dry wine Sir" as I slunk under the table. We made do with Barossa Pearl. His Father had a Jaguar as well and it was seen rocketing through our town on many occasions driven by him and his brother.

He was an 'A' grade mechanic but he sold tractors. He was New Zealand's top salesman for several years. He also found time to produce a winning 4 car stock car team which travelled the length of N.Z. winning most of the time. He also built the fastest Drag car in N. Z. I followed his feats in awe. He started a building company and ended up with 50 odd rental properties in our town.



My Father at times financed his business and all deals were sealed with a hand-shake. My respect for him grew immensely because he was a man of his word.

Many years ago I surprised him by attending his father's funeral. I really did not know why as I really liked the man. It was always interesting to catch up with him to see what cars he was driving. His building enterprises enabled him to buy many exotic Ferraris, Lambo's, and Mercedes etc.

He also entered Politics brought about by one of his best workers telling him that he wished to leave his job. What brings this about was this man's reply.

This worker said if he went on the dole and his partner did also they would receive at least 20% more per week than he was currently being paid. He did his research and found this was correct. He set about contacting WINZ, his local Member of Parliament and even drove all the way to Wellington to speak with the Minister in charge of Benefits. They all told him he was wrong and dismissed him as a fool!

So in the next NZ Election he put his name forward to represent his local area and walked in to Parliament with a big majority.

Sometime later I caught up with him and asked how he was going. It was obvious that it was not his game because he was a hand's on, straight as a die, no nonsense, true to his word man.

Soon after we arrived in Tauranga he rang me. He said he had been into Duncan and Ebbetts to

have a look at the Jaguar car line up. When they realised that he knew me they said "Talk to Neville." Apparently he was taken by a 2 litre Jaguar and asked what I thought. I told him with his experience in the Motor industry he would surely only be happy with the top of the line Jaguar, the XJ model. If it was good enough for Margaret Thatcher and every following English Prime Minister it should be good enough for him. So he ordered one made to his specification and it arrived 6 months later. Thank goodness, he said it is a very nice car.

Just recently Judy and I were out for a walk and he drove into our little village. He explained that he had had a bit of luck and sold a block of land for an eye watering sum of money. He still loves the XJ but has now

purchased a McLaren!! Why, because he had never had one of those. Recently we were out walking and came across a brand new St. John ambulance parked at a local house. On it we read 'Donated by this man and his wife'. He is an amazing man, now into his 80's and when he can, he still goes to what he calls work.



Neville

