

Member Andy Bryant's Memories of Mk 1 Jaguar Facing Days

By Andy Bryant

Very recently Kate and I were very warmly welcomed into the home of Peter and Maralyn Davies, by Peter and Maralyn, who were joined by Neville and Judy Barlow.

We agreed that as a new member, I should write an article about my 1958, Mk1, 2.4 litre Jaguar – which I raced throughout the North Island, in Car Club Sprints and Hill Climbs, Intermarque/Club events and National Classic and Historic “Wings and Wheels” – such as the Whenuapai February event, from 1985 – 1993.

This car, purchased in October 1982 through Peter Blank, was a 1958 model, with a wide 3.4 litre style grille, 4-wheel (Round pad) disc brakes and cutaway spats. Despatched from the factory, painted in Imperial Maroon – it went straight to Singapore.

The intention was to modify it to Category 1, Appendix K, of the M.A.N.Z. regulations for saloon cars.

In 1983, Dave Young of Wanganui, not only re-built and reconditioned both the front and rear suspensions, but also the brakes and the steering system. New shocks were fitted all round and the left back spring re-built. Later, competition front springs were fitted

Meanwhile, a set of Mk1/Mk2, 4.5” rims were widened professionally to 6”. XJ16 rims also could be bolted directly to the back and to these rims were fitted a set of Firestone H.P.R. Radial (Steel Belted) 195x60x15” tyres, for Sprints or Hill Climbs – or 205x60x15” tyres for longer circuits such as Pukekohe. The rubber in these 130mph rated H.P.R.s was a very hard-wearing compound – ideal for four-wheel drifting on (Hard) hot mix bitumen in 1983.

As modified, the car was capable of 100 -115 mph. With 1.25 degrees of negative camber, and these rims and tyres, the steering became very sharp and direct – but very heavy!!

A beautiful “Moto-Lita” wood rimmed steering wheel was fitted to provide more room for heeling and toeing and double de-clutching up and down the old Moss 4-speed (4.27 Diff) gearbox.

In 1984, the engine block and head were re-built to exacting standards by Colin Campbell of Hastings. The head was port and polished – but with standard cams. A twin exhaust system was custom made using two Mini Cooper mufflers.

Now the car made that distinctive braying baritone (C-Type / D-Type) noise – a delight to the ears! Naturally, the clutch was re-built and the hydraulics reconditioned.



1958 Mk 1 on Low profile tyres, brand new grille and badge.

As re-built, the car was very flexible – going down to 15 mph in top gear, and gave 24 mpg on the open road. (Both sets of the lower profile tyres lowered the gearing considerably.)

Most of the woodwork was restored by myself to a darker Mk8/Mk9 hue with a marine grade varnish; “Instant Estapol”. The engine too was brought up to concours standards.

In 1985, in February, was my first race – the national “Wings and Wheels” event at Whenuapai. Later at the same event, I found I was lapping some 11 seconds a lap quicker than the next 2.4 litre – and 5 seconds a lap slower than a modified 3.8 litre Mk 2 Jaguar.

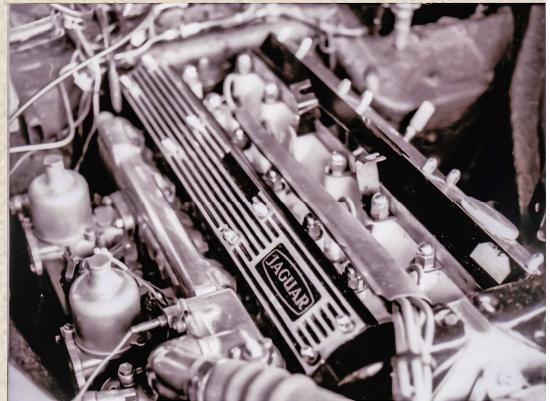
Thus, the car was entered for the Le-Mans style relay – Intermarque events at Pukekohe, a 40-lap endurance race, also at Pukekohe, as well as the Charter Corp. meetings at Manfield from 1985 – 1993.



***Wings and Wheels - Whenuapai Feb 1985
3 races that day—First occasion on the track.
Andy is on the far left.***



***1985 “Gold Star” Hill Climb event.
Admiral Road, Masterton.***



The immaculate 2.4 litre engine bay.

Racing in a very smooth but competitive way – both with the Mk 8, 1980 – 1984, and then in the smaller, lighter Mk 1 2.4 litre, 1985 – 1993, enabled one to live and express the “Ethos” of Jaguar at the time.

That is - Grace, Space and Pace.

Andy Bryant

Founding President and Life Member – Taranaki Jaguar Drivers Club.