

Modifying for Competition and Racing

Mk VIII Jaguar

1980 – 1984

By Andy Bryant

As a pro-active member of the Taranaki, Hamilton, Auckland Jaguar Driver's Clubs – and then invited to become a member of T.A.C.C.O.C., I was invited to practice, and Clubman's racing days at Bay Park, Mt Manganui, and the Pukekohe Circuit. Peter Blank, based in Horitu out of Hamilton – provided encouragement, enthusiasm and much needed mechanical expertise. From 1981–1983, his spare parts business flourished as he built up and raced a Mk1, 3.4 litre/3.8 litre, a Mk VII, XJ6 and finally an XJ12.

At Ardmore, in January 1989, his 3.8 litre Mk 1 put out 178Hp at the rear wheels, and Ray O'Fees Mk IX, 160Hp at the rear wheels.

The Hamilton J.D.C. at various times must have been the only Club fielding a Mk VII (Peter Blank's), a Mk VIII (Andy Bryant's) and a Mk IX at events.



***Shorters Le-Mans relay race Feb 1982
Pukekohe Grand Prix Track. Lead car for the team
of 4: Peter Blank's Mk VII, Alan John's Mk VII,
another Mk VII & Andy's Mk VIII***

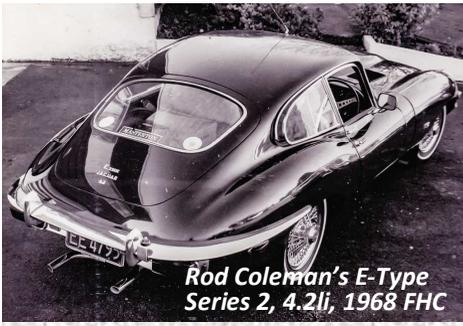


***Baypark Raceway - The Mount,
Feb 1983. Leading Ted Phelp's 3.8 litre Mk II and
passing inside Alan John's 1954 Mk VII***

Ray O'Fee at Ardmore's reunion in 1989 – used 3 Anti roll bars up front and 15" Cheviot rims which bolted straight on. This allowed him to use wide modern rubber.

In 1984, on 18th February, at Ohakea, my car had a Peter Blank built (New) engine, bored out 40 thou – giving it an extra 100cc.

In addition, Peter had polished up, and re-shaped the inlet manifold, and the resulting increase in horse power, and more importantly torque, made it competitive. That day it led the entire field round the first corner and up the first straight.



Both Rod and Bob owned many Jaguars over the years; I well remember Uncle Percy's very early Mk11 3.4l - a pearl grey one, which I used to wash for him when he came to stay, being driven by Rod, with such verve, that I am sure we did 0 - 60 mph in less than 9 seconds!!

Bob, in 1985, supplied a trailer load of Jaguar parts—mainly Mk10/420G, of which the camshafts, shims and bucket tappets proved

most valuable when building up the ported and polished B-type head for my category 1 Mk1 2.4l.



Both these photos: Mike Westall's Mk 2, Ray O'Fee's Mk 9 and Peter Blank's Mk 7.

After the racing, from 1984 - 1988.

Form 1984, following the Whenuapai event, the Mk VIII was used on the road daily, for work and trips to the Southern Alps, mostly to Nelson Lakes National Park, the Lewis Pass area and the Spenser mountains - and as far south as the Darrants near Milford Sound.

The 2" exhaust system, with Mini Cooper mufflers was retained, the racing clutch modified by Colin Campbell in Hastings, and the car fully serviced by Terry Grimmer of Grimmer Motors in Hamilton, from 1987 onwards.

The restoration process began in September 1988 - a time when I could use my Mk1 2.4l road/race car for daily use.

Andy Bryant

Founding President and Life Member, Taranaki Jaguar Drivers' Club, and a former member of T.A.C.C.O.C, Auckland, Hamilton Jaguar Drivers' Club and the Wairarapa Car Club.