

Developing Racecraft with the 1958 Manual O/D Mk 8, 3.4l, and the 1958 4 speed Manual Disc Braked Mk 1, 2.4l 1980—1993

By Andy Bryant

Throughout those years when the racing became more competitive, and rules and regulations tighter and tighter, I raced - for the sheer joy of the opportunities to compete and the wide variety of circuits, from Pukekohe, and on Whenuapai's airfield, to Ohakeha and Manfield - to distant Ruapuna, near Christchurch.

At Baypark, near Mount Maunganui and at Ohakeha, I probably drove 10/10ths - where and when I used all the Mk 8's performance and handling - and all my natural ability - to good effect; I lead the entire field away at Ohakeha in 1984 - and drove to two second place's at Bay Park in the early 1980's.

Peter Blank, formerly of the Hamilton JDC, equally a very naturally gifted driver - and racing engineer, also raced in those years, moving through his very standard Mk 7, to his blue 1958 Mk 1 3.4l (In Richard Waugh's book - now restored) to his Imperial Maroon Mk 1 (1958) which he very effectively upgraded to a 3.8l with triple SU's, Series 3 XJ6 Big Valve Head and some 178 HP at the back wheels.

His next race cars were an XJ6 - again with a modified head - in the Hamilton street race - in 1994 - to his about 400 HP XJ12, at the Wellington street race - and also used on the Wigram airfield in Christchurch. By that time, he was competing against Les Parkinson. (Probably in his V12 XJS)

Again, Peter enjoyed the "Cut and Thrust" of racing but with confidence in the modifications he had made. As I said, I competed for the sheer joy of it - it was no "ego trip" or the desire to show off!!

All that I learnt on the track, as well as that learnt in preparation and maintenance was used to introduce a "Driver and Traffic Education Course" in schools, from 1983 -1991.

*Beginning at Boys' High School in New Plymouth, it developed into a Form 6/Year 12 course for every pupil at that year level, at Hillcrest High School, Hamilton - at part of the wider Health Syllabus, from 1987 - 1991.

*We involved (at the time) the Traffic Department's Education Officers explaining the Graduated Licensing scheme, a local rally driver, Ross Meekings, arranging a grass Gymkhana competition for pupils, and practical sessions involving how to change a wheel, how to bleed the brakes, and gap and fit new sparking plugs, - as well as how to buy a second hand car, and other relevant topics.

Driver and Traffic Education in the Wairarapa

5 students from Kuranui College, Greytown, about to depart to Manfield, Feilding, for an opportunity to be put around the circuit at racing speeds, by Andy Bryant (Jaguar) and David Arnot (Mercedes) 1985



One was how to control a skid, as a result of oversteer, or understeer, was taught using video, and of course, the grass gymkhana.

Each year the school entered pupils in the Waikato Secondary School Driving Competition, with our pupils coming in the top three - each year.

Gary Keith, the local Jaguar Agent, presented a trophy to the school's best drivers each year, this being a leaping cat on a glass plinth.

Pupils rated this "Driver and Traffic Education Course" very highly indeed - and it was held in high esteem by the schools principal, Jon Leitch, and the parents alike.

A selected group of pupils were put around Manfield and Pukekohe where and when they could be taught how to corner, brake and drive most assertively and smoothly.

All in all, a very effective education in safe driving for all students at some three schools.

Andy Bryant