

# Members part Profile: Forming the Taranaki Jaguar Drivers' Club in 1983

*By Andy Bryant*

## *A perspective, 40 years on from 1983 - 2023*

In 1983, I was appointed to teach mathematics at New Plymouth Boys' High School, known locally as N.P.B.H.S.

Initially, I lived with and shared an apartment of a Housemaster, in one of the boarding houses, "Moyes House" throughout term 1, but in May was able to rent a completely refurbished villa on the edge of the CBD - which (And still has) three garages; one double, with a sizable work bench, the other a compact and single car structure suitable for a small car. (A double garage for my two Jaguars, + one for a flat mate)

Though two flat mates shared the rent of \$150/week (A Nurse and an Engineer), we lived independent lives but shared the big kitchen and dining area with its gas heating, and the big lounge with an open fire on occasions.

Once settled in at 17 Mt Edgecumbe Street, I called a public meeting on 18th May 1983, to form a club for owners and drivers of Jaguar and Daimler cars - restored or unrestored - or as they say now: "Recommissioned"!

That initial meeting was a great success; people came forward from all walks of life, mainly in their 30's, like me, with 20 - 25 year old Jaguars, and young families, who had all previously been a sub-branch of the Wanganui based "Jaguar Owners Club".

A number of cars had been fully restored: two, to very high standards such as Tony and Marilyn Evans B.R.G. 1968 Jaguar 420, and Bruce and Sandie Gray's 1963 white Mk2 3.4l auto. And John Armstrong's 1933 SS1.

During the 18th May meeting an interim committee was formed, bringing together a very talented group of enthusiasts, who all appreciated the high performance, stunning curves, the walnut and leather interiors and the high engineering standards of the Jaguar sports and saloon cars made in the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's.

Events were quickly planned, with Bruce Gray appointed as Publicity Officer, such as a car display in Moller Motors, with at least one E-Type, a grass gymkhana, runs up the mountain - to "Mountain House" above Stratford, and to Dawson Falls above Hawera, in the winter months - to almost the snow line.

Some 18 cars took part in the grass gymkhana with some six events on a paddock on Bernard Hughes' dairy farm in Manaia. We always made it a policy to include members from South Taranaki, even though it was one hour away.

Later in spring, (September) a road rally/trial, was held following an AGM dinner at the Inglewood Hotel in August.

A very highly successful concours was held on 12 November 1983, judged by well known Wanganui specialist mechanic, Dave Young.

**Some of the Concours cars at Pukekura Park, New Plymouth**  
**1983 and 1984**



**Maurice Cowling - E-Type (4.2l)**



**XK140 O.H.C. with Owners**



**Kevin Mills - Mk 2, 2.4l on wires**



**Tony Evans - B.R.G. 1968 420  
Winner - Restored Class  
1983 and 1984**



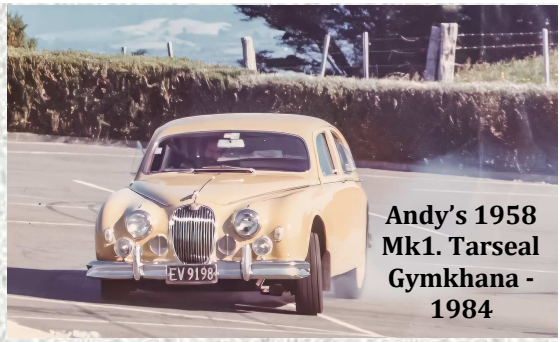
**Tarseal  
Gymkhana  
Forlong  
Hotel  
carpark 1983**



**The Concours - 1984. Pukekura  
Park, New Plymouth**



**Andy's 1958 MkVIII  
Tarseal Gymkhana - 1983**



**Andy's 1958  
Mk1. Tarseal  
Gymkhana -  
1984**

Bruce Gray of the New Plymouth City's brass band, arranged for us to use a grass semi-circle enclosed by Camellias, outside the band room and on the edge of Pukekura Park. At this superb venue, our cars looked superb - and wives and children could gather for a picnic lunch - whilst members of the public were warmly welcomed.

Although all the events described were competitive, they were also wonderful social occasions, where there was much fun, laughter and wholehearted fellowship which enabled life long friendships to be made.

The hallmark of the very successful club's launch - in 1983 and 1984 - was the gracious harmony and thorough enjoyment of being in each others company, and genuine respect for the Jaguar Marque.

**Key Taranaki Jaguar Drivers Club Executive and Committee members 1983 - 1984.**

Patron - John Armstrong

President - Andy Bryant (1983 and 1984)

Treasurer - Bruce Gray and Secretary (Originally the Publicity Officer)

Club Captain - Arthur Clark

Vice Presidents - Tony Evans (1983) Paul Ekdahl (1984)

John Armstrong - owner of a 1933 S1 was a New Plymouth District Councilor and later, a National Party MP for New Plymouth, a garage/service station owner - his office P/A did all our typing and news letters, which was a great help as a beginning club.

Bruce Gray, with his draughting skills designed the Club Crest and Grille Badge.

Tony Evans travelled for Mollers and was able to secure many valuable workshop manuals/spares/Jaguar window stickers etc.

Arthur Clark, also a source of workshop manuals, and many Jaguar books, and attended almost every event - concours, mountain trips and the 1984 Wings and Wheels event at Ohakea. Arthur was always a true gentleman.

Paul Ekdahl, a property developer, is now the Patron, 2023

Bruce Gray, is still an active committee member in 2023 with his 1997 4.2l XK8

Andy Bryant

Founding President and Life Member - Taranaki Jaguar Drivers Club.

"Roseburg" Hamilton, Sept. 2023