

JAGUAR XK 120 - Part 3

By Neville Barlow

(Apologies to Neville - This should have been in the January magazine)

A New Zealand XK 120 Surprise

2012: A rather Quick 1953 XK 120. A Jaguar Race Car with a Quad-Turbo V12 engine.

This custom Jaguar race car was built by Sam Lyle for owner Warwick Hickling who was one of the earliest members of our Jaguar Bay of Plenty club. The carbon fibre and fiberglass body is based on a 1953 Jaguar XK 120 and sits over a custom tubular chassis.



Warwick Hickling (On the left)

The engine is a 5.3 litre V12 from a Jaguar XJ-S H.E. that features a XJ-S Pre H.E. heads, forged pistons, cylinder liners, custom intake manifolds and a five-stage dry sump system. The engine makes 788 BHP at the wheels (remember this 12 years ago!) thanks to a turbo system that features four turbo chargers, four intercoolers, and four throttle bodies.

The drivetrain consists of a five-speed manual transmission with a custom-built flywheel and a triple-plate clutch and a Jaguar XJ-S rear end. The suspension featured XJ-S steering rack and hubs and QA1 shocks and Eibach springs.



Warwick Hickling's XK120 Race Car

In September 2012 the car raced at Manfield. The first race it overheated so was called in. In the next race oil overflowed onto a turbo and caught fire. Fire put out with little damaged said Warwick and in the last race the car started from the back of the grid. Twenty- three cars in front. At the end of the race only two turbo Porsches were in front. Another lap and we would have had them, said Warwick.

When the car came in after the third race the whole spectator stand stood and cheered, clapped and punched the air. I can find very little about further races but have seen a mantle full of cups and other trophies. I do know the next race at Hampton Downs in January 2013 was not successful because of car trouble. If anyone has further results, I would be very grateful to receive such.

Standard Racing XK 120's in New Zealand.

The first XK to reach these shores and to race here, left the Jaguar factory in October 1949 and was imported by Eric Shorter of Auckland. The car was an aluminium bodied roadster, painted bronze, with chassis 660009. After a year it was sold to A Roycroft for his son Ron Roycroft to race. It was the first XK to race in NZ but in its first race in December 1950 it retired with tyre trouble.

In February 1951 at the Mairehau track, 100- mile event, Ron's second event, with the XK, he won outright with the fastest lap. In March 1951, at Ohakea in the 70- mile Trophy Race he finished first on handicap and second on the road. J. Tutton driving a similar XK was third. In the same month at the Wigram 100- mile Race Ron was second. This was with a standard XK but racing against ready- made race cars. Ron recalls the biggest fault was lack of brakes when racing. By the end of most races, he ended brakeless.



Ron Roycroft's XK 120

On 24th February, at the Paekakariki Hill climb Bob Gibbons drove his XK 120 fast and neatly winning in record time. It was a steel bodied car and had arrived on 4th October 1950 in a box. On the 24th of April at the Kairanga flying and standing kilometre two new XK 120's appeared driven by E Hamil and E

Liverton. The Hamil car was only the second aluminium car to come to NZ.

On 21st July at the Horokiwi Hill climb B Gibbons in his XK 120 broke the record. On 18th November Peter Harrison in his XK 120 was placed second in both the Open Club Championships and the Sports Car Handicap. On December at the Brighton Beach J Tutton was 4th in the 70 mile South Island Championship, 3rd in a 15 mile scratch and 4th in a 15 mile handicap event.

The first year of competition for the XK 120 was a remarkable successful one. It is thought that 50 to 60 XK 120' were imported to New Zealand up to 1960 with many being raced successfully by such prominent drivers as Ray Archibald, Angus Hyslop, Bruce Cook, Dave Silcock, W Brownlee, Irvine Hayes and of course "The Jaguar Lady, Sybil Lupp" who won several races beating the men during 1953 and 1954. This not a full total of all the drivers who raced XKs, but I have a complete list if anyone is interested.



Ray Archibald's XK120

However, an interesting tale I came across was about one of our very early club members, Harvey Kingston. He was also a member of the Taranaki Jaguar car club, where he lived.

In 1956 he bought the ex- Jack Tutton, Sybil Lupp and Moffat XK 120. He used it not for racing but for pleasure motoring.

Because he lived in an area with several long straight roads, he would occasionally venture out on moonlight nights and really put his foot down!

Apparently, the local traffic officer got to know of this and one night lay in wait. He was so overawed by the melodious and intoxicating sound of the exhaust note that he forgot to take chase. Little hope, as the XK 120 often hit over 130mph.



Sybil Lupp's XK120

Harvey's father was told, "I will get him next time". Unfortunately, Harvey is no longer with us.

Amazingly many XK 120's were still raced competitively up until 1968. There after they seemed to be used in club and classic car events. Today If you are lucky enough to see an XK 120, it would now be between 70 and 75 years old.

The total production of XK 120's from 1949 t0 1954 was 12,061, a far cry from the loss leader Sir William Lyons had thought it would be.

Neville



Harvey Kingston