

## MG Manawatu - Hawkes Bay Weekender 16th and 17th September 2023

### Part One - Saturday 16th September

The day dawned clear and sunny for the beginning of our trip. Morning tea meet and greet of 13 participants in 8 vehicles was held at the Herb Farm near Ashhurst at 10.00 am. It was great to catch up with our organiser Sue Forde, who had put together the itinerary for our weekend. This had been revised to now include travel on SH50 to our lunch stop and a later start time for our evening meal.

Upon departing from the Herb Farm, we travelled through Ashhurst to take the journey over the Saddle Road, passing the Te Apiti Wind farm and the giant turbines. The view, once we were over the other side, was of endless blue sky and not a cloud in sight!

Taking the back road by-passing Woodville, we re-connected to SH2 passing through Dannevirke, until reaching the SH50 turnoff, just opposite the Junction Winery, which had featured in a memorable MG run in the past.

Arriving at the Sawyers Arms Hotel, Tikokino, for lunch, we were joined by 8 more members, 6 from Wellington and our 2 Mangaweka stalwarts. The meal options were many and varied and eaten with a sprinkling of catch up conversations.

Making the most of the fine weather, "tops" were given a back seat before heading away to our next venue for the afternoon. At this stage, 2 vehicles headed home and a contingent of 10 vehicles carried on.

Roads travelled carried us through farmland, vineyards and orchards, leading us to join the coastal road towards Clifton and the Clearview Estate Winery to partake in wine tasting and afternoon tea. During this time Sue gave us a brief summary of the history of Clifton Station, which was also featured in a book she had brought along, titled Historic Homesteads of Hawkes Bay, written by Angus Gordon who is the 5th generation owner of Clifton Station.

### History of Clifton Station

Scotsman James Gordon purchased 13,500 acres of land here in 1859, when the Maori were selling vast tracts of land. The land included the dramatic coastline stretching from the mouth of the Maraetotora River, to the beginning of 6 miles of sheer cliffs, leading to Cape Kidnappers. Following that, James returned to India, where he had a jute business and purchased teak timber to be shipped to the Hawkes Bay property in a pre-fabricated form. The intricately carved Indian furniture, is still in the current homestead, having been floated ashore at the beach and the property he named Clifton, after a famous beach in Karachi, India.

James second son, Thomas, took over the running of the newly acquired land. While James son Frank managed the property in 1899, he and his family were returning back from a trip to England, the house burnt down, but thankfully all the

furniture was saved. Frank commissioned Walter Finch, an architect from Napier, to design the elegant two storied house with rimu and matai harvested from the land. Kauri Timber was also shipped down from North Auckland and delivered to Clifton Beach, where the Kauri, Matai and Rimu were buried in the beach sands for a season, to be conserved before the house was built.

Fifth generation, Angus Gordon, inherited Clifton in 1984. In 1999 he opened a large cafe and function centre by the beach now called Hygge.

During our wine tasting and afternoon tea, we were able to peruse the Historical Homestead book, in particular, photos showing the inside of Clifton Station Homestead.

Hoping our wine tasting didn't take us over the legal driving limit, we headed away to check in to our overnight accommodation, returning later to meet up at our evening meal destination of Deliciosa, Havelock North. Our sumptuous three course meal ended a perfect day, even though some of us had tummies that doth protested too much!

To be continued . . . . .

Liz Morris