

MG KIWI

or
Always have a battle plan and be prepared to alter it

Roger and Pat Mayo



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It was four years ago we first met MGOC members John and Viv Eames when they visited this country from New Zealand. Whilst visiting Britain, they took in MGB 50 and several other events before coming to Devon and staying with friends in Exminster near Exeter.

Whilst in the area, John and Viv contacted our club to see whether there were any MG events going on. As it happened, Exeter MGOC had a Sunday run and lunch organised, so we invited them to join us for the day, Viv accompanying my wife Pat in our MGF and I took John in our MGB. We showed them some of the delights of Devon and lunched at The Riverside in Bovey Tracey on the edge of Dartmoor before returning to our home for tea in the garden.

We remained in contact and whilst visiting our daughter and son-in-law who live in North Island, New Zealand in 2014, we met John and Viv for lunch in Taupo.

2016 is a special year for us, our daughter and son-in-law announced that they were expecting a baby in February so in March we made arrangements to fly to NZ to see our new granddaughter, Mary. We contacted John and Viv and told them that during our three week stay we would drop in on them to say hello during our middle week. A swift email came back to say there was club run on the Sunday and as it was an early start, why don't we drive down to them on Saturday, stay overnight and do the run on the Sunday. Sounded a good idea so we emailed back and arranged it.

We met John and Viv at a local cafe car park late Saturday afternoon in our Mazda 3 hire car (never mind) and John was waiting there in his lovely red MGF and escorted us to their home high up on a hill with stunning views. After a good dinner of lamb (John is a sheep farmer) we retired to get ready for the early start on Sunday.

After breakfast we were ready for the off. John opened up

his large outbuilding and there were two MGFs, an MGB, a GT and half of an MG Midget. "You take the green F and treat it as you own". Wow, what a surprise, we had thought we were going to ride as passengers. So, Pat and I, John and Viv and John's sister, Helen, who had joined us in her MGF, set off to meet up with nine other members of MG Manawatu in a layby outside Ashill. Robert, one of their members had arranged the run and we all set off in convoy in various MGBs, BGTs, MGFs and a lovely MG Magnette. We felt very privileged driving an MGF on the uncluttered roads of New Zealand, what an adventure.

First stop, Dannevirke, and a visit to John Hall and his collection of vintage automobilia, including a 1920's Rolls Royce, various old Austins and Fords and a Caterham car with a Ford engine that he used to roar around his garden. What a character John was and he enthralled us with his stories about how he came to be in NZ.

Finishing our visit we were off again. John said, "We are off to the bach for lunch". A bach is a beach house and after a scenic drive we ended up at the magnificent beach at Herbertville on the SE coast. What a treat! It was absolutely beautiful. Sun shining, hoods down and lunch by the beach. We parked all the MGs on the front lawn and spent a pleasant couple of hours lunching and chatting about MGs. Soon it was time for us all to depart, only to learn that John and Viv had booked the beach house for the night and wow, we were staying. We watched the sunset over the beach before evening dinner in the local hostelry.

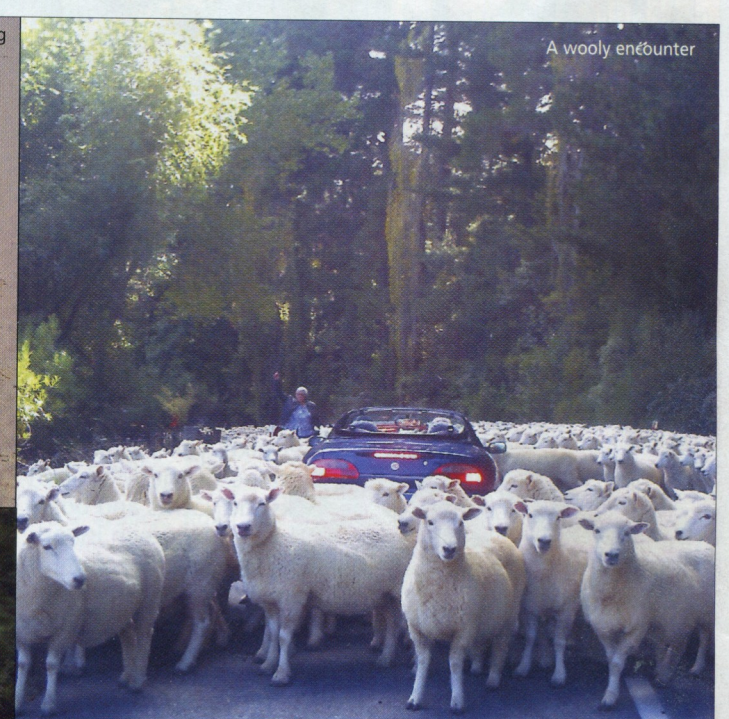
In the morning after breakfast, "What are we doing now?" "We are going to drive the coast road to Napier up through Waipukurau". So off we set driving the magnificent country roads. Whilst on this run we were mobbed by a herd of 3,000 sheep, that was quite an experience. We also passed Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateapokaiwhenuakitanat ahu (no, we can't pronounce it either (it's the longest place name in the world and it beats the one in Wales).

We arrived in Napier mid afternoon and checked into the Edgewater Motel on the seafront. We dined that evening in the RSA (Returning Servicemen's Association), really good food and we can highly recommend it, before retiring for the night. Rising in the morning, we find that John had already been down the town and got breakfast, eggs and bacon. The rooms had only a

microwave for cooking, so John and Viv improvised and conjured up poached eggs and bacon on the terrace overlooking the promenade. Great! "What's going on this morning?" "We are having a short walk around Napier town before driving the Gentle Annie".

The Gentle Annie is a 50 mile stretch of B road from Napier to Taihape, running through the Kaweka Forest Park, probably one of the best MG-ing roads we have driven, sweeping bends, long straights, hills and valleys and hardly any traffic, is there anything better in an MGF. Have we gone to Heaven? Almost!

We arrived back at their farm late afternoon to a cold supper of lamb salad and so after 4 days on what we thought was a Sunday run we said goodbye to John and Viv on Wednesday morning.



Some Sunday run, 400 miles of absolute bliss.

John and Viv gave us a real treat MG-ing in New Zealand, it surpassed all our expectations and although we have entertained visitors from home and abroad many times to show them our wonderful Devon countryside, we could never match what John and Viv and MG Manawatu did for us in NZ.

Our thanks go to them both and their club members for making a four day Sunday run so special.