

KAI IWI BEACH TO KAIRAKAU BEACH – A COAST TO COAST MG TRIP WITH A DIFFERENCE!

Two weeks before this planned coast to coast, the Manawatu Gorge suffered a rock fall, closing the road – thus diverting all traffic over the Saddle Road - a route which I had chosen for my planned Kai Iwi Beach to Kairakau Beach run.



Figure 1 Time for a muffin at Kai Iwi before the start of the journey

One week before, the weather took a turn for the worse, with falling temperatures and rainfall after a long and dry summer/autumn period. The rain was welcome, but I was rather doubtful of cooler temperatures pending my trip with a line of top down MGs.

Still Sunday dawned beautiful and sunny, and despite early morning fog in Wanganui and, for our trip to the bay – the Gorge was open again, leaving the Saddle Road devoid of heavy traffic. Thanks to

John Eames propensity for abbreviating the trip to the “Kai to Kai trip”, I decided to go with the theme and muffins were served at Kai Iwi Beach on a sparkling early morning where the sun glistened on the sea as it peeped over the hills and the dew sparkled on the grass. The end of a very successful run was celebrated with a wine and fish bite finale at Kairakau Beach as the sun slowly dropped over the huge limestone cliffs which dominated the beach and yet the sea still glistened. A morning tea stop at The Herb Farm Café, lunch time stop at Junction Wines, which included a wine tasting, was the perfect introduction to that wine, a worthy accompaniment with the fish bites at the end of the lovely day. Yet as I planned these extras to the trip, I discovered Gay has done the real research: in the Maori language “Kai” has a different interpretation in different contexts: Kai Iwi means “strange people” and Kairakau means “a body of men skilled in arms”! Oh well – I guess we can leave the food interpretation out in any possible repeats of this trip!!

Autumn colours hadn’t entirely displayed their best yet, but that autumn light which glowed over every hill and valley providing that special hue that only autumn can achieve as we travelled along rural roads less travelled. We marvelled at the constantly changing landscapes as we toured hills and dales, mountain tracks and river valleys, classic of this gorgeous country of ours.

We began at Kai Iwi Beach at 8.30am with 12 cars, meeting a further 6 cars at the Herb Farm Café where we relished in it’s tranquillity and fine food, then on to the Junction Winery where we enjoyed the warm hospitality of John and Jo Ashworth , and while a few of us decided not to complete the journey through to Kairakau Beach, those of us who did, celebrated the remainder of the trip well worth taking and for many the discovery of yet another stunning coastal retreat.

For me, I was proud to have organised a successful trip on a beautiful day, albeit it without the full company of Robert as he left the group temporarily to get his tyre properly inflated, and another momentary halt with Robin’s car complaining at the stress he was putting it too, and to show many of our group an otherwise unknown seaside hideaway – wasn’t it just gorgeous?