

MG Manawatu – East Coast Beach Run, Sunday 20 March 2016

After experiencing a couple of cold and blustery days prior to Sunday, we were welcomed with a warm, sunny day and hardly a cloud in the sky. A great day for those who could put their “tops” down.

Eleven cars gathered at the Ashhurst Bridge car park, including visitors Roger and Pat Mayo, from the Exeter Area MG Owners Club who were staying with John and Viv and able to borrow an F for the day.

After a quick welcome to our visitors and appointing the “comms” operator of the day, we all headed out in convoy, through the Manawatu Gorge with a petrol stop for some at Woodville.

Moving on, it was follow the leader, passing through Dannevirke, to turn off to our first destination, the residence of John Hall at Matamau. On our arrival, we duly travelled down the gravel drive to park our cars, being a little unsure if we had the right place, as our host was nowhere to be seen. Suddenly we were approached from behind by this man in a hurry to tell us, yes he was the John we were looking for, but unfortunately he had been kicked out of this house by his family (I think that was how it went) and now living next door, so could we please follow him back this way and yes, our cars will be ok parked here. At this stage we were providing some light entertainment for the stock in the paddock across the road! For some reason, all eyes were on us!

Our host John was really excited to see us and proud of his little collection of vehicles, which all had a story to tell. And tell them, he did!

The first to draw the attention of any car enthusiast was a Lotus replica which he had built himself. After starting and listening to how the motor run, John, with his faithful dog in the passenger seat, then proceeded to give us a demo of its performance, round and round the paddock, being careful not to hang the back out too far!

A little Morris Minor next captured the attention of some members and the tale of how this little beauty was saved and restored was told with gusto.

This was followed with the piece de resistance, a vintage Rolls Royce! As the story goes, John and his dad found this completely buried in mud, in Africa. They dug for days to find **every little piece!** It has now been fully restored with everything you would expect to find in a vehicle of this calibre. It certainly was very comfy as several members could attest to.

After thanking John for his hospitality, we headed for our lunch time destination of Herbertville, via some charming back country roads. This giving our English visitors a truly Kiwi experience.

Suddenly, half the convoy of MG's came to an abrupt halt! An F was trailing a mist of steam! Radio contact with the front vehicles was rather hit and miss due to the terrain, so a couple of MG'ers went on ahead to let the others know

what was up. The “bonnet” (at the back) was lifted for inspection. The ‘experts’ gathered round and conferred. The radiator header tank was nearly empty! Carefully releasing the cap to let out the pressure, it was determined (after deliberation) that the problem probably was not a leaking head gasket, but possibly a malfunction of the thermostat. Being the good boy/girl scouts that we were, some of us did come prepared with thermos flasks of hot water, for just such an occasion! After about 30 minutes it was decided that we could head away and so we duly arrived at the holiday home that had been made available to us, for the afternoon.

After our appetites had been satisfied, it was time to have a bit of a walk down to the beach with a chat amongst ourselves along the way. Unfortunately the cool wind did spoil it a bit for a dip in the ocean, but some did brave a paddle at the water’s edge.

Soon home time loomed for those who were not staying the night and it was decided, with the help of four of us, to ‘nurse’ the ‘sick’ F home. Just keep an eye on that temperature gauge! With thermos flasks replenished, five cars headed off, hoping all would be well on the homeward stretch. Unfortunately, not to be! After about an hour and half into our journey, the F pulled over; the gauge had jumped up suddenly! After another inspection and discussion, the tank still appeared to have sufficient water, so what was going on here?

Turning on the heater fan to help cool the engine and with another little top up, it was homeward bound again, without any mishap!

Thank you Robert for organising a great day out and a thank you also to the owners of the beach property for allowing us to spend the afternoon there.