

The MG Manawatu's trip to the South Island.

Four cars two MGBGT's, one MGB and one MG Magnette met in Foxton on 3/4/2014 and travelled to Wellington where we caught the 3pm ferry to Picton. The weather was very calm and serene so the Cook Strait crossing was great.

First night stop at Blenheim, we walked to the Clubs of Marlborough for dinner very pleasant. Next day left at 9am for Hanmer Springs. Travelled to Kaikoura where we purchased lunch in a supermarket and lunched at the beach. We travelled a few km south on SH1, where we went through the Maori Leap Caves. This was truly a fascinating visit and well worth the stop. Have some photos of the inside of the cave. One looks like a piece of streaky bacon, the caves were discovered by accident when a tractor fell through a hole. The caves are in the side of a hill.

On the way to Hanmer we drove down the inland Kaikoura route, fabulous roads. We stopped at a junction to a no exit road to a ski resort. We all thought it was worth the visit, however it was a VERY DUSTY road and half way up a landowner had planted irrigation water hoses on the road. We did not see anything of the skifield so returned back to the main road with very dusty and MUDDY CARS.

At Hanmer we all went for a swim at the baths, lovely and relaxing, then we had a combined tea outside our motel units, a reasonably lovely warm evening. Left Hanmer Springs to travel to Geraldine. Stopped at Jo Seagar's café for lunch, the food was fantastic, we saw Jo behind glass doors doing a cooking class and some of us took her photo. Carrot cake was to die for.

Geraldine top 10 accommodaton is well located near the middle of town. We had booked in with Peter Aldous to visit his Observatory. He has a huge telescope in an observatory in his backyard. He used to own a MGB and was interested in seeing our cars but we walked to the observatory. Unfortunately we had misty rain so he showed us around then invited the 8 of us into his lounge to view his dvd's and photos he had taken of the galaxy. This turned out to be a very interesting evening. The next day we did a day trip to Fairlie to taste the best home pie in the country, then to Pleasant Point where the railway had opened especially for us to give us a ride to their main base. Very interesting, learning about their set up. Finished off with a drive past Temuka and a stop at the Temuka shop where we all helped the local economy with our purchases. Back to Geraldine and we all went to the old cinema, the film was just okay but the experience of the old theatre was great. We were asked if we would like a blanket for our legs!!!, but it was not that cold.

Left Geraldine for Wanaka, stopping at the Church of the Good Shepherd and the Mt Cook Alpine Salmon Farm. We had lunch at Omarama just before two bus loads of tourists hit the café, then took a detour to Benmore Dam. This was very interesting as Ian had worked at Benmore during the construction of the dam, this made it more special to visit. The trees around this area were so beautiful with their autumn colours.

The next day it was clear as we left Wanaka to travel to Alexandra via The Crown Range and Queenstown. We stopped at the top of the Crown Range for a photo stop and continued on to Arrowtown down the hairpin corners. Stopped for morning tea there.

The weather was so lovely we all decided to go up Coronet Peak, the view was outstanding. The brakes were working overtime for the trip back down. We then visited the Shotover River where we saw two guys taking the jetboat through the narrow passes and we thought he was training the other person but in hindsight maybe as the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge were visiting on the Friday they were checking their skill to ensure nothing would go wrong!!!. Beautiful sunny afternoon as we continued through to Queenstown for lunch. Lucky enough to find a park for 4 cars on the waterfront. We then carried on to Highland Park just near Cromwell, this is the new motortrack. It made Manfeild look like the poor cousin as no expense has been spared here. We walked around and saw some go karts racing in one area, cars racing in another area.

Arrived in Alexandra for some of the group to walk over the old bridge and see the clock on the hill. Left Alexandra on a beautiful sunny day to travel to Dunedin, this was new territory for us, what wonderful roads to drive down. Stopped briefly at the smallest Post office Chatto Creek then continued on down the Ida Valley to Hayes

Engineering on Hayes Road Otarehua. We were following the rail trail here and met quite a few cyclists who had called in to look over the engineering museum and for the coffee and food which was outstanding.

We had a picnic lunch at MiddleMarch and saw the railway station. We continued on to Dunedin and visited the Dunedin Railway Station. We stayed at Aaron Lodge and conveniently had dinner at a pub close to this location.

Next morning we left for Timaru. We of course stopped at the Cadbury Factory for a brief tour and taste of chocolate and we all again helped the Dunedin economy. Fresh chocolate there is nothing like it. We visited Shag Point on the way to Timaru, this was a very narrow road, we saw heaps of sea lions frolicking about on the rocks below the cliffs we were standing on. We continued to Moeraki, went for a walk to look at the boulders and stopped for lunch at the café there.

We stopped at Oamaru for a couple of hours to walk around the precinct and town to view the older buildings.

Arrived in Timaru 5pm ish and as this was the last night all of us were together we dined out at Monteiths, fabulous menu and food.

Left Timaru for Kaikoura for the other 3 cars. We remained with the other cars and stopped and visited the Rainbow Confectionary shop in Ashburton for more sweets!!, then had morning tea altogether and the three cars continued on their journey to Kaikoura.

We peeled off to go to Akaroa for two days, then returned to Christchurch for two days. We took the bus into town and walked around for approx 3 hours, its certainly a changed city since the earthquake. We continued on to Kaikoura for one night then caught the ferry back to Wellington on the Wednesday before Easter.

All the roads we travelled on were just fabulous, the 8 of us on the tour got on so well, discussed all sorts of problems in the world at our dinners, we saw so much, the weather was great and the beautiful autumn tones of the lower South Island made the trip something special. The MG cars were superb, nothing or no one broke down.

So thanks to Ian and Sue, Liz and Neil, Ying and Ken for the great company.

Sandy and Trev Hardy