

## **Taranaki Overnighter Round the Mountain Run**

### **13/14 June 2015**

A cold blast came through the night of Friday 12<sup>th</sup> along with rain. Oh no! Lovely for ducks and polar bears. Next morning we left from Virginia Lake carpark at 8.15 after a briefing while sheltering from the wind behind a big signboard.

Who was not dressed for the day? A male wearing shorts!

First was a wee pitstop at Patea where we gained an extra car in the pack of 13. It was a blue modern Mini with mother-in-law/mother along to check up on us maybe?

Near Eltham, Bruce Alexander's farm buildings had heaps of stuff waiting to be put together after years of hoarding and storage. He had a nice fire going for our morning tea stop and viewing of the place where he has restored so many old tractors and military vehicles. Many are displayed at Tawhiti Museum near Hawera. Bruce is now 79 and needing some of his body restored like he has been doing for old machinery.

Leaving his place we toured the south side of Egmont to find a 100 year old garden on Newell Road. The owner Mrs Williams spoke about the history and 7 acre garden there. She had converted the old woolshed to hold functions and it was an ideal place for our lunch with hot water on tap. By now the mountain had snow clouds covering it which gave many a false scene of where they were.

We continued round the mountain to visit Hurworth Cottage, home of a NZ premier Harry Atkinson, built in 1855. Some outer rooms have been taken off over the years and left is a sweet well- preserved original little white house with two rooms on ground level and steep stairs up to another room around the chimney. We made the host's day as he did not expect one visitor on a cold wet afternoon. Some of us gave his brain a workout with our questions.

The hot pool at the Flamingo Motel looked good at our next destination. Dinner was at the Treehouse Restaurant and six game folk went to see the Hurricanes beat the Chiefs at Yarrow Stadium.

Sunday morning Robin cooked hash browns, bacon, eggs and cheese muffins for an unhurried breakfast. First thing after leaving New Plymouth was fruit wine and port tasting at Sentry Hill Winery, each type introduced by Viv the appointed gong donger.

Onward inland to our picnic lunch stop at Lake Rotokare wildlife sanctuary. Terry O'Conner who farms nearby gave us a rundown of establishing the 250ha predator-fenced sanctuary. Most had lunch in the nice covered information centre but some brave well-dressed souls ate at the outside tables. The sun did come and go today so we had some good views of Egmont with fresh snow.

From there our New Plymouth members who joined us for the day headed home while the rest of us returned to Wanganui where several gathered for a farewell coffee at the Red Lion.

A most enjoyable weekend and nice driving was had by the neat folk of MG Manawatu.

Claire Brown