

Raglan Weekend

8/8/2010

BY Philip Meyer

The Start

It is 0400 hours on Saturday 7th August, the venue, a certain property just slightly south east of Whangarei. Rose is talking to Fred, who is asleep. "Fred, Fred, those cattle in the back paddock have to be moved to Paddock 76". Fred, still asleep is answering Rose "OK, that's fine, I'll do it tomorrow". Rose is now so desperate she says "Come on, I'll help you." Or something like that. A couple of hours later they were on the road, still before dawn, to rendezvous at The Pukeko's Nest café at Pukekohe at 9 a.m.

The scene now is Rodney Street, Frankton at 7 a.m. Edward is talking to Annette: "Darling, we are leaving in 45 minutes, do you want the first shower?" Annette is answering, "Yes, thank you for waking me." Or something like that and they, too, arrive with the assistance of a FORD UTE, at the rendezvous in good time for an Egg Benedict breakfast.

The scene now is Belmont, a suburb of North Shore City at Sam. John is talking to Jack, the cat, "Come. Pussy, you are going for a big ride in the car" and off they go to Fiona's, who is John's daughter and lives in Pukekawa. The cat is duly delivered and allows John to reach the rendezvous at 8 a.m. Now, you, the astute reader will know that he is an hour early, so he has the first breakfast and the first of 2 Flat Whites.

The next scene, the last but one, is Howick, an Eastern suburb of Auckland and is split between two households and the time is indetermined but certainly before dawn. Alex has cajoled the P into action with various aids, like hair dryers, blow torches and bad language and has the engine running and suitably warmed up. He has been very diplomatically though in touch with Lois, his sister, Pauline his daughter and Rob, Pauline's husband who will accompany him to the same rendezvous and to enjoy a similar breakfast.

The last scene but one (ok, so I can't count) is a Matamata address at circa 10 a.m. Elva is talking to Don, who is not listening: "Please, Don, could you put my bag in the P, yours, too, that I have packed for you and drive me to Raglan." So Don does and arrives there 30seconds ahead of the aforementioned players.

The last scene is the Meyer residence a few metres away from the rendezvous, the time is midnight Friday night. A son has arrived from Tasmania unannounced for a visit. The time is now 7.30 a.m., Judith is talking to, no bludgeoning with a clenched fist, is more accurate, Philip, who is tired after the worst (well, best perhaps) week at work "Get up!!!"

SO the Raglan Weekend has sort of started

Well, sort of. During breakfast it occurred to me that here was John, on his own, talking to himself for the weekend, so the short version is that he agreed to accompany Judy and me, in the Saab. So it was arranged that he would deliver his Honda to his daughter, Fiona's place in Pukekawa, we would follow him there and catch up with rest of the convoy at Port Waikato. However, Alex for whatever reason had decided that a drive-through of Tuakau was on the agenda. So it came about that for the first time since 1974, more than one (that is two) P76's were in Tuakau's main street at the same time and did that WOW the locals. By this time, the rain had set in. Port Waikato, in the rain, was deserted, apart from one lone surfer.

Edward, talking to Philip at breakfast: "If we are not at Port Waikato, we shall move on to a place where there are caves and a café" Philip replying, "You mean Limestone Downs". Well, we were well past Limestone Downs before the Café arrived, almost to Waikaretu, in fact. But worth it it was. Excellent training for the main event of the weekend, which, as it developed, was the art of keeping the stomach full. Home made lemon drink to die for. Tea or coffee for those whose tastes were yet to develop.

Port Waikato - Waikaretu - Raglan

It was closer to Raglan to carry on than to revert to Plan A, which was to return to Highway 23, so onwards we went, through the rain. Some drivers thought it wise to drive through most of the puddles to keep the car "washed". It doesn't work. But it became obvious why Edward had chosen to bring the Ute rather than the Monaro. Be reminded that his P is in bits, receiving its first service since its last one. I do have to say, though that the road, in spite of the horrid weather conditions is like a motorway compared with the last time that I had driven it.

And so it came to pass that we arrived in Raglan. Tiki Tour—to the end of the wharf, where the grain silo had been converted to an apartment block. It could only happen in Raglan and I remember seeing a television item on it recently. So if it's on TV then it must be true. There are no words to describe the structure; even seeing it makes you wonder if the eyes are functioning normally.

At the same time our third P joined us, Don and Elva, who had travelled directly from, as you might recall, their Tauranga start.

The mainly Waikato supporters (changing the subject ever so slightly to rugby) spent the afternoon in the pub enjoying a "Waikato" or three and the sight of the Auckland team receiving their just deserts. And so it came to dinner. We had, of course booked into the Sunset Motel upon arrival, just a couple of minutes walk away from the pub where they served the previously mentioned "Waikatos", so we didn't get too wet from the rain as we made our way there.

Waikato: Auckland + rugby: Raglan

And where our repast awaited us. I use the term repast advisedly, for there are no other words in the English language that describe our repast better. During the course of this repast, I was honoured with the privilege of marking the significant event of a significant birthday of my wife, Judy, in what I thought was a fittingly significant manner: there was a birthday cake, an absolutely significant gift and a significantly well rendered version of that old (pun intended) favourite "Happy Birthday To You". Some in our group may have other recollections of the event, but their memories are totally unreliable. And so it came to the after match function, reverting to that previously mentioned activity, rugby and a certain test match AB's versus the Enemy, live on the Big Screen in the Public Bar. Which also happened to be the place that, the two million local inhabitants of Raglan happened to be gathered. At half time, with AB's already in a comfortable lead, I took the opportunity of checking the Sunset Motel conference room, where the big screen was tuned in and being hogged by the only other single unaccompanied guest.

Australia comes Second!!!!

Back to the Pub. "Follow me..."

Via the liquor Store, one six-pack later, Aussie second. You Beaut!!

And so to breakfast at the Black Sands Café. Some had Big Breakfasts (peasants), others with more refined tastes, enjoyed things like Maple Pikelets and Cappuccino's. Anyway, back on the road to Kawhia. This road brought back great memories of the Rally NZ 204)1, the first event that my P76 did, however I was able to enjoy the scenery while marvelling at the high quality of the road at a sedate pace, when previously I had been going full chat over it and never completely certain that the slide would end before, after or during the corner, OH YEAH!!, and the photo opportunity alongside the harbour. I was again reminded that— by crikey, we do live in Paradise.

Kawhia

Ultimately, of course the stomachs took control once more of the proceedings and we arrived in Kawhia where there was more food, more coffee, but it was all made with those special no- calories ingredients so the damage to our bodily profiles would not alter by more than 1mm in any direction. And of course it was "Lunchtime". John made acquaintance with one of his close neighbours in East London, where they were both born, one of course several decades after the other.

I enjoyed Kawhia and have decided that it is a place that I need to visit again in the near future (read summer).

During this part of the weekend, those of us who were tuned in to him. Were able to hear Edward muttering about Geoff, Rob, Targa and Honokiwi and banks and conrods and lots of other technical matters. The photos tell it all, eh Rob!!



(Left: Three P76's parked outside the Honokiwi Garage. The best place in NZ to break down -or fall off the road as Geoff and I found out in the first Targa Rally.)

So, once more, proceeding onwards in the by now 50/50 weather (comparing raining/not raining) we arrived at our next scheduled "occasion", the Kiwi House at Otorohanga. Our arrival happened to

coincide with the first 50 part of the 50/50 weather arrangement and not one person (the writer excepted) was prepared to get out of their vehicle to pay homage to the Nation's iconic symbol. Shame.

Anyway, the party started to fall apart from here, the Maunders had to get back to Paddock 76 to check their stock, only a 5-hour journey, while Don and Elva had Tauranga firmly set in their sights, but once more the stomachs ruled the actions of the stalwarts and Pirongia it was for, you'd never guess, yeah, coffee.

Wot? More Coffee...

However after that it was serious stuff, to head for home, load up Tom-Tom shortest route, quickest route, avoid congested roads, avoid accidents, avoid roadworks and go for it.

So ended a thoroughly enjoyable weekend. Or for those who attended. Most thanks have to go to Alex for his passion in getting the whole deal together.

Followed closely by those who were able to attend. And especially those firstly from the near far North, who were able to travel in their P's. But not forgetting that the two (three counting John) who brought their "second" car (or ate). It was a memorable weekend.

Now the Pictures

(Right: L to R at dinner Don Sutherland, Rose Maunder, Fred Maunder, John Rossen, Ed Tubman, Annette Purcell.)





(left: Those same 3 P76's with just a wee bit of Saab down the end of the row.)

(Right: On the previous page We saw the same 3 P76's with just a wee bit of Holden 1 tonner down the end of the row.)

