

Road Trip to the South Island P76

National Rally/AGM

March 2011

By Rosalie

We once had a story entitled 'Fred and Rosalie go on a long journey' or similar This surpasses that by many miles. This is the story of their Road Trip from Whangarei to Bluff.

Rosalie calls it Our 2011 Road Trip to the South Island P76 National Rally/AGM.

After deciding not to take our P76 south to the National Rally we readily accepted an invitation from Ed and Annette to travel with them on a road trip to Blenheim via Invercargill. Sharing the driving, expenses and the searching out of museums and model shops meant we were able to properly check out the towns in which we stayed,

At the last-minute Ed decided not to take his P76, instead opting for his latest acquisition, a Ford Territory. It did offer some advantages on the journey.

We left Whangarei on March 4th and stayed with Ed and Annette in Hamilton before departing for Waikanae in the rain the following day. We stopped in Whakamaru, Turangi then Taihape for lunch. The rain stopped in Hunterville and we stopped in Bulls for Ed to check out a model shop - it was closed. The tractor collection in Otaki was not closed and both Ed and Fred enjoyed that. We stayed in Waikanae for the night but popped down to Paraparaumu for coffee with club member's Ron and Colleen Butler.

An early start saw us on the ferry, over the water and having lunch in Picton. Onto Kaikoura for the night and a sightseeing tour of the town. We drove up or down every street, something you do when touring with Ed!

The next day we travelled on SH70 to Culverden, then back onto SH1 at Waipara (did you miss the vintage cars at the winery?) and onto Leithfield to photograph an old pub there -yeah right. Moving onto Yaldhurst to meet family we lunched at the tavern and then visited the museum. This is an essential stop on any tour. The museum has almost everything imaginable, old cars, really old cars, trucks, fire engines, motorcycles, horse drawn vehicles, stationary engines and a lot more. We said our goodbyes and headed out to Geraldine (great secondhand shops and museums there) Fred and Ed took a half hour jet boat excursion up the Rakaia Gorge before we "toured" around the town and settled there for the night.

On the back-road heading to Pleasant Point, at Waitohi we saw a replica of Richard Pearce's first aeroplane mounted atop a pole. There were two men up the pole giving it a new coat of paint. The Courthouse and Train Museums in Pleasant point were both. closed, as compensation we found a car racetrack and drove in for a look around.

On SH8 heading to Timaru we found Caroline Bay, so we toured around the port and warehouses, very interesting. Ed found a model in an antique shop and another museum to visit. Back on SH1 briefly, we branched off to Waimate to photograph the old Waihoa Hotel. Don't tell me he missed the big model shop in central Waimate!

Back onto SH1 for Oamaru, we arrived for coffee at a nice cafe that just happened to house a car museum as well. Better look at this one too. We did our usual sightseeing tour and then retired in Oamaru for the night.

The next day we set off down SH1 for Palmerston then turned down SH85 for the Dunbuck-Macraes Flat Oceana Gold Mine. A huge mine so deep you could put the Skytower in it with another one on top. It is New Zealand's largest gold mine being both open cast and below ground. Exhaust from the underground mine was shooting up through the air!

On through the back roads we came upon a group of old cars at Macraes Flat waiting for some others to catch up. We admired those waiting but carried on to Middlemarch before the others arrived. Through Pukerangi and then to Mosgiel for two nights. We went over to Dunedin to inspect the railway station and book our trip on the Taieri Gorge

Express. The railway station is a beautiful building deserving of its international renown. Both the station and the train trip are worth experiencing and yes, it is bloody frustrating to find the Historic Museum closed. It reopens in about February 2012 when the vintage vehicles and fire engines should all return. Been there done and missed that! Did you miss the butterfly house in the Regional museum across the road?

After a sightseeing tour around the city Ed and Fred went for a Speights Brewery tour while Annette and I checked out the shops and then waited in the sunshine in the park for their return. We were kept well amused by university students practicing their juggling and one boy putting on makeup. He did a good job making a remarkable change to his appearance! I hope none of these students was Megan!

We had to be at the station at 9 for a prompt 9.30 departure on the Taieri Gorge Express. This travels from Dunedin to Pukerangi and back Travelling out through Mosgiel along the Taieri Plains we saw farmers making hay in the sunshine. The climb up the gorge is spectacular with sheer cliffs of rock on one side and sheer drops to the winding river below. The train stops at Hindon for photos (an amazingly isolated spot where Sonya and I want to drive to one day) before continuing onto Pukerangi where the engine is swapped end for end for the return journey to Dunedin. A lovely journey completed by about 1.30 pm.



(Left: Here we see the train crossing one of the many viaducts through the gorge. This is an absolute must if you are in Dunedin.)

We decided Port Chalmers would be good for lunch and then returned to Dunedin by the direct route following the harbour north then going inland through the hills until we met SH1 again and went south back to Dunedin. We went for another tour around the city and Ed drove up a very steep street

(Probably Baldwin Street, the steepest street in the world!) We came across a car that had lost traction on a very sharp corner, one of its drive wheels had come off the road owing to the extreme camber change. He rolled back and waved us past. It was a horrible street!

It was raining as we drove down SH92, the inland scenic route to Invercargill where we stayed for two nights. This means Ed must have missed the model shop at Green Island -shame on him! We visited the Bill Richardson Truck Museum, a private collection of some 200 trucks, most in very good condition. This was a great museum as you can see to the left.



After lunch Annette and I looked through some shops while Ed and Fred visited what they say is the best stocked Mitre 10 shop anywhere and it just happened to have a display of old motorcycles including the worlds' fastest Indian, and they didn't know about them did they? Below we see Ed and Annette in a classic NZ scene, probably one of the most photographed signposts anywhere. I think it's at bluff, but I've not been there myself.



We dined in Bluff and in the morning headed for Tuatapere and onto Nightcaps to view the Central South Machinery Club collection of tractors and farm machinery. This collection was very interesting and included two locally made trenching machines and a face shovel. Onto Winton for lunch and then across country on SH94 to the Croydon Aviation Trust north of Gore to view the great collection of both model and real planes with a steam locomotive outside for interest's sake. A departure from the norm saw us at the Hokonui Moonshine Museum (no cars/trucks/planes) but Ed and Fred still had to sample the wares. There was interesting reading to be read on the Scottish Settlers in the area.

Back to Invercargill to prepare for the next leg, going up to Wanaka. Travelling on the road to Moa Flat the countryside changed from flat to rolling to very steep. Ed's granny with her five children came down here to house keep for a farmer. Over the hills and down into Roxburgh we found where Ed's aunty had lived in a nice stone house and the hotel his uncle had ran. After morning tea in town, we went up to the cemetery to visit some of Ed's late relatives.

Leaving Roxburgh for Cromwell we stopped for a photo of the old pub and carried onto the old Cromwell Village, a good set up to visit. On our way into Wanaka we stopped at the National Transport and Toy Museum, hoping for lunch but we missed out, but we had a good look around a very good museum. Even found a P76 there. GS8379. This is the ex-Ian White/Don Alexander Executive V8 in ON. Into town, check into our motel, have dinner and then drove around admiring the grand homes on display. Is this where the other half lives?

On our way to Arrowtown we stopped at the Cardrona Hotel, that iconic pub built in 1868 that is an automatic photo stop. It doesn't require repeating here! We drove up the Giffel Range for more photos from the summit: On the way down, we were stopped for about fifteen minutes by workers tar sealing the road. It was here I saw a black ferret run across the road then back again. In a short while it was up by our car having a look around then it was gone and so were we, back on the move. Arrowtown was full of tourists, Annette decided to watch them over coffee while I went shopping and the men went to Chinatown.

On our way back to Wanaka we called into the Airplane Museum, but it was shut for renovations (that was two) so we went to the Puzzle House. This was really great; they have a Hall of Following Faces, a Hologram Hall, Tilted House, Small and Big Ames Room, Puzzle Centre, a Great Maze and a cafe with a Roman style toilet! We also drove out to Albert Town to inspect a new subdivision with dozens of new houses going up.

On leaving Wanaka Ed drove too fast over a humpback bridge and we all swear all the wheels came off the ground the bump was so big!

Heading over Haast Pass to Franz Joseph we drove out for a look at the glacier before returning for lunch. On our way to Hokitika we stopped at the old Pukekura Pub for a photo shoot. We stayed in Hokitika and did a bit of shopping for Jade (Greenstone or Poumanu) and Possum Pelts and walked on the rugged beach. In the morning we headed for Shantytown where you ride the train, inspect the sawmill, take in the gold sluicing demonstration and then walk down to the historic village and enjoy the great cafe.

Shantytown is a must-see place, upon leaving turn right and head into the hills to discover the Chinese gold mines, now you are seeing something special. Ed turned left and went to Punakaiki or Pancake Rocks, an equally spectacular place to visit while touring the West Coast, unfortunately it was raining too much for us to go out onto the rock formation. While we ate lunch, we had Weka running around our feet under the tables.

Another photo shoot at the Cape Foulwind pub before heading into Westport for a couple of nights, sadly it was still raining. We went to the Coaltown Museum for an hour or so. This was really interesting and encouraged us to drive

out to historic Denniston, an old coal mining town/ operation undergoing a lot of restoration. It was 518 meters straight up to the pit head. We drove around and could see where the buildings had been. It is very rocky and a horrible place, I don't know they lived there. As the cloud cleared, we could see back to Westport but after descending we went north to Karamaea for lunch and photos at the old Karamaea Hotel and then drove to the very end of the road so we could say we had. We encountered very heavy rain going back to Westport.

Next morning it was off to Blenheim with a compulsory stop in Murchison for tea and photos of a coach and stables building. Onto Kawatiri Junction and down SH63 for a look at the beautiful Lake Rotoiti. 50 k's out of Blenheim we drove over narrow bridge on the highway, did a U turn, crossed the river on a concrete ford and then got back onto the highway, because it was there Ed said. It must be for overweight loads that can't take the bridge.

We saw a paddock full of big model aeroplanes, so we stopped to watch them fly but they dithered about so much we lost patience and carried on. On the way into Blenheim we passed the Argosy Restaurant with the big Argosy freight plane outside. Ed and Fred looked over the plane while Annette and I looked over the menu, but we decided to go into town for lunch and then to join the rest of the Leyland people at the motel. Many had already arrived and more came in during the afternoon.

The evening dinner was held at the Clubs of Marlborough, a new complex combining 2 or 3 service clubs into the one modern entity. It proved its worth in providing the first of a few excellent meals. This started the organised programme for the weekend.

Saturday we were all back at the Argosy for a BIG breakfast with many photos taken of the cars in front of and beneath the plane as you can see below. Photo by Philip Meyer.



After breakfast we left for a drive around Queen Charlotte Drive, a beautifully scenic trip which a convoy of Leyland's would have made even more so. A drive of 1000 corners!

Arriving in Picton we all stopped to view the Edwin J Fox museum and the ship herself undergoing a major restoration. This was a stunning exhibit and the presentation of the museum was excellent. We spent some time here taking it all in. The Edwin J Fox was a small ship crammed with immigrants to New Zealand from England. In its' 3-month long journey the people experienced many terrible hardships.

These memories were sweetened somewhat by our next visit to a countryside chocolate factory that produced fine chocolate creations sampled by all and taken away by most of the members. I took some too and spent some time outside the factory trying to explain the P76's to a group of Spanish tourists!

We lunched at Shelly's Cafe which was nice and happened to be near a fudge shop so I bought some to complement the chocolate I'd bought earlier and then it was off to where the boys really wanted to go, Brayshaw Park where we were to see the Marlborough Vintage Farm Machinery and Vintage Car Club exhibits. After a quick trip through the

museum, which is part of the large complex, we made our way down to the main attractions. Alas the VCC was not open! The MVFMC was soon opened by some of the members who were working on their machines and the elderly Scotsman on the door was informative, friendly and happy to take our entry fee.

We had a good look through the tractor collection. Fred thoroughly enjoyed himself.

The Hart - Parr 12/24 tractor seen to the right is actually owned by member Murray Bown and his brother along with at least one other unusual model there. Photo by Rob Jones.



We planned to go back the next day when the VCC would be open to view. In the meantime, it was back to the Clubs of Marlborough for the AGM and another overly abundant meal which was delicious. And then we came back again for breakfast the next day!

The Sunday trip was to Omaka Aviation Heritage Museum where we were given a guided tour by very helpful and informative guides. I cannot describe how good this museum is - you need to visit it yourself. Outside there was an old Bristol Freighter on display and the cars were all lined up in front of it for another classic picture by Paul Heath, taking standing on top of the billboard at the front gate! Eleven Leyland's in total at Omaka. See web link.

It was from here we said our goodbyes and thank you to Murray for such an enjoyable weekend. I find the South Island scenery spectacular, the people friendly and the traffic light.

We had lunch before heading back to Brayshaw Park where we found a man about to take his 1923 Model T Ford home from the display. This space would be where Murray Bown was going to park his Morris Eight later in the day. He has a variety of vehicles it seems!

We were offered a ride in the old Model T and we jumped at his offer. We had a lovely quiet smooth ride for such an old car and really appreciated it Quite an experience!

We also watched the model steam train getting up steam before giving rides to kids of all ages throughout the afternoon. There is a really nice miniature railway in the park along with everything else. We had to have another look at the sheds of farm machinery out behind the museum. There are literally acres of them housing tractors, balers, harvesters, ploughs, trucks, bulldozers and many other implements too numerous to mention!

Eventually we again said our goodbyes to the many members who had returned to see the VCC display, leaving for the 4.30 ferry from Picton.

We had a very smooth crossing arriving in Wellington at 9.25 p.m. then driving up to Waikanae for the night. Then it was off through Bulls, Waiouru and through National Park, stopping at Raurimu Cafe for tea and lovely muffins. We arrived at Ed and Annette's in Hamilton at 2.30, had a cuppa, loaded our car and headed for home. It started to rain at the northern end of the motorway tunnel. We had to make a detour due to an accident at Wellsford but still arrived home at 7.00 p.m. having had a wonderful holiday with Ed and Annette.

Facts and Figures Fred and I travelled a total of 5269 km's. Travelling time from Hamilton to Hamilton was 79 hours at an average speed of 58 kph. This covered 4705 km's and we achieved 12.0 L per 100 km fuel consumption. Not too bad in a new car with four adults and a lot of Leyland paraphernalia to carry around the country.

Thank you for the story of your road trip Rosalie. I have added some comments and photos to fill in some extra detail for readers, and a few more follow.

I stayed at the VCC grounds all afternoon and enjoyed an old time musical show put on by the Orphans Society and relished my long ride in a 1926 Vauxhall 14/40 tourer all the while having the P76 on display with the VCC cars. I

didn't get to ride in the Model T as it failed to start after you alighted and it took a long time to get it to go again! I'm still sad about that