

Our Wonderful Weekend in Wanaka

November 16th 2012

by Jenifer Alexander



(Above: L to R welcome Adrian Crequer N E, Don Alexander AG E resplendent in its new paint, John Warren N E, Ken McKenzie BA S, Murray Hatchard, PMAG E, Roy Buchanan BA D, and welcome to Russell and Joy Keen SO S to both Penzed and their first club outing after several years membership.)

Wow! Our Wonderful Weekend in Wanaka exceeded our expectations! Sixteen people and 7 Leyland's enjoyed a full-on weekend and even the weather was kind (well for 2 days out of three.)

On Friday 16 November 4 Leyland's and one modern set off from the Cookie Time factory and were shortly after joined at Burnham by Murray Hatchard, Muriel, Fleming and Betty Biddick in Murray's "Peel Me a Grape" Executive. Passing through Geraldine which was abuzz with a street market day, we were joined by Paula and Roy Buchanan from Methven in their Bitter Apricot Deluxe. Next stop was the pretty country town of Fairlie where we found a beaut bakery so made this our lunch stop. There were about 10 varieties of mouth-watering homemade pies which could not be faulted. On to Lake Pukaki which provided the most spectacular views of fluffy clouds and snow-covered mountains reflected in the still waters of the lake. Magnificent! Our next view was Lake Tekapo which afforded its usual picturesque vista so well known to most New Zealanders, well Southerners anyway.

The Lindis Pass with its unusual scenery of dry spotted hills took us through to Omarama where we stopped for a welcome cup of coffee and a poke through the museum like gift shop which also had a collection of old cars around the back. Arriving in Wanaka we were joined by far South members, Russell and Joy Keen from Winton who arrived in their Spanish Olive car. After a good dinner at a local pub, we said good night after a very enjoyable day.

Saturday was raining so it was a good day to visit Gerald Rhodes Toy Museum and car and plane collection. The late Ian White's Omega Navy Executive was among the cars on display, and apart from a bit of dust, was looking as good as when it was retired there. It took all morning to look at everything; such is the size of the complex now. Then some of us drove to the historic Cardrona Hotel for lunch while others remained in Wanaka and patronised the lunch bars there. At night, we had dinner at the Hawea Hotel, which is situated at the end of Lake Hawea, another visual gem.



Sunday's breakfast was held in the cafe of the new Warbirds and Wheels Collection, after which we inspected the aircraft, classic cars and visual arts displays. There was a RNZAF Skyhawk fighter jet, Strikemaster, Vampire, Hurricane and WW1 SE5A. The cars seemed to be mainly Packard's.

An example of the beautiful scenery experienced on this trip.



Leaving there, we travelled up the Lake Hawea Rd, on to the road skirting Lake Wanaka to a delightful picnic spot where Sandy and Betty unpacked a tasty picnic lunch for all. Once back in Wanaka, we donned our glad rags and a minibus took us to the Lone Star Café for dinner. Enough said.

Monday morning was time to say goodbye to the Keens who were travelling back to Winton, then the rest of us headed home along the same route again. First stop was Omarama for coffee, and then Ken decided we should see the "Clay Cliffs" so off we went. The Hatchard party decided not to join us as they wanted to stop at the Sahnnon farm and stock up with the goodies from there. It was a wise move as the Clay Cliffs proved to be a real fizzer! Lots of k's over dusty roads then confronted with a locked gate and notice saying that the \$5 per person fee was to be paid at Omarama! We decided to flag that. Our next stop was Lake Pukaki where we had lunch and gazed at Aorangi/ Mt Cook at the end of the lake with not a cloud to impair our view. It is possible to be in this area and not catch a glimpse of Mt Cook; however luck was with us this time. Another coffee stop at Geraldine where we said goodbye to the Buchanan's as they headed home to Methven whilst the rest of us drove on to Christchurch and our respective homes.

A special bouquet to our events co-ordinator, Sandy for arranging such a great weekend for us all.

Brickbats * Ken McKenzie having dinner at Lake Hawea hotel then walking out without paying! (He returned the next day as we passed on the way to the picnic. Good one Ken!)

- Don Alexander - whose wipers failed on the very rainy Saturday which meant we had to cadge a ride in the back seat of another Leyland. On arriving home, when he looked under the bonnet he discovered a can of engine start which had jammed the wiper mechanism. (What does he need that for?)
- The Clay Cliffs - why isn't there a notice in Omarama saying payment to be made here?
- The Lonestar Café - cold seafood chowder which did not resemble the description in the menu, thin watery liquid and where was the seafood? Sent back of course. Cold buffalo chips and cold plates. Guests given the wrong meals. Someone was having an off day.

This Leyland line up is unusual in that I think it welcomes two cars to Penzed for the first time and includes four Executives, a rare majority indeed.