

National Rally/AGM

March 11-13 2008 in Reefton

BY Clive Cottle



(Above: Reefton Workingmens Club. Thirteen P76's outside the watering hole and meeting venue. Great beer here.)

We set off on March 11 to catch the Bluebridge ferry to Picton, as we wanted to explore Nelson on our way to the REEFTON AGM. We visited the Cathedral and Pioneers Park and toured around Nelson in an Austin Charibang to find out where all the special places were. It took two days to explore Nelson and then we were off to Murchison and out to Karamea.



(Left: A photo of the timber mill at Waiutu. It was noted that each dwelling had a separate outhouse.)

Karamea is one of those places one must visit in ones lifetime. Another tick on the map.

We overnighted in Westport at Carter's Beach, having dinner at the beachfront café with the locals. Of course, it was licensed, and we had a good night.

The next day we pointed our P38 towards the Reefton Autolodge to join the P76 group.

That evening we all converged on the Reefton Workingmen's Club for a welcome light meal and cooling liquids. In the morning we congregated down by the river for photo's (these appeared in the Greymouth paper) then drove up to the RWC to have our photo taken outside the premises (a copy of this photo will be supplied to them for display in the bar). Then everyone set off to Greymouth for a look around the town before heading out to the Recreation hotel for lunch. After a long lunch stop we headed north to visit Waiutu Village in miniature, and Reefton in an even smaller scale. It got very hot there and the ice-cream counter was rushed by most of the group. (I still owe you \$2 Clive)

Blackball was our next destination. The road in had just been resealed. It only made sense to me after getting home to find that the Labour clan was holding a commemoration of the miner's strike there a few weeks later.

But the local, the Blackball Hilton does look impressive, especially with two really nice Spanish Olive P76's parked outside.

(Right: George Weigel's Super and Andrew Eady's Deluxe gracing Blackball's main street.)

We returned to Reefton via Atarau Road, a very good country highway well suited to Leyland's, except for the herd crossings, which were a bit squelchy. (Biggest herd of cows I've seen)

Having cleaned up and refreshed we went up to the RWC for the AGM. It appears that Status Quo is preferred as no positions changed on the executive. You can't beat a good team. Cups and awards were presented, and general business carried out.

We then returned to the Autolodge for dinner, birthday cake and drinks before retiring for the night.



Ed Tubman, founding member and Mark Biddle, most recent P76 owning member in attendance cut the cake. The crowd then sung happy birthday to the Club, led by Betty Biddick, cake baker and President Rob Jones aided by daughter Abby who insisted on being with Daddy while he was standing up in front of everyone.

A trip to the open cast coal mine was organised for Sunday but we opted to carry on tripping around. Goodbyes were exchanged and we headed for Haast. We stopped off at Franz Joseph to look at the glacier and found it to be much regressed since our last visit in the seventies.

On we went in our Triumph 2000TC, arriving at Lake Hawea for a night in their excellent chalets, overlooking the beautiful lake. We refuelled next morning and headed to Roxburgh to meet up with some old friends. We were a day early and had to out to their hunting lodge at Taieri east, a most pleasant alternative. That afternoon we went in search of the roaring stags on the ridge above the son's house, in a Mazda. Luckily, we didn't find them as we were only armed with our cameras. Udo, our host cooked us a venison dinner that night and as they were leaving to go to their new fruit farm in Roxburgh the next day we headed north to Oamaru, after refuelling at Waikouaiti. (There is a P76 Club member there) We had a wonderful stop at the wharf area in Oamaru, looking at the old gold store buildings and sand stone carvers' wares. (I have just learnt that this area is a world-renowned historical precinct well worth visiting) We then proceeded to Ashburton, where we saw our fellow member, Paul Heath taking our picture as we crossed the railway. After a short time watching him snap some interesting looking trucks, we headed off to Yaldhurst and our next bed.



The next day was a drive up to the ferry but on the north side of Kaikoura we visited the Donegal Pub as it was very hot, and they have a nice cool pub and treed deck area. When we went to leave, we had no clutch! Just a trail of fluid where we had come in!



(Left: Here we see Mark Biddle's car that had brought him from Whangarei to Bluff so Mark could go on a hunting/fishing trip on Stewart Island. His family joined him later after flying down to meet him.)

We pushed the car back and put it in first gear, started the car and headed for Picton. On the outskirts of Blenheim, I stopped the car as there was a busy roundabout and Give way sign further up the road. We phoned

the AA who sent a recovery truck to us whereupon we loaded the car with us in the cab and he transported us all the way to the Picton Bluebridge terminal. (Was the view good?) Here they got us to offload the car in the hold and push it back into a corner, out of the way of other vehicles that would be loading shortly. After arriving in Wellington, shortly after 10.00p.m. we pushed the Triumph back and repeated our performance of starting in gear, getting off the boat and heading for home. We prayed that each set of lights would stay green on the way home.

The car is now home with a new slave cylinder and working, as it should. All in all a unique trip and many thanks go once again to the P76er's for a great time down south.

Thank you from Clive, Carol and "Nicky" our P38.



(Above: Down by the river. Fourteen P76's this time in a photo shoot situation for the Greymouth newspaper. We were a bit of a big thing to hit town especially as a NZVCVC rally was also touring around the district. We finally caught up with them on the last day and they had some interesting cars on tour.)