

National Rally/AGM Taumarunui 2019

Kay and Tony De Luca



We flew into Auckland on the Thursday afternoon 14th March and while signing up for car rental we were intercepted by the Humphreys family who had just landed from Brisbane. They were being met by Ed Tubman and travelling to Hamilton over-night, whilst Tony and I had booked a Motel in Half Moon Bay on the NE suburbs of Auckland. Half Moon Bay was very pretty with a very large marina and nice restaurants along the promenade adjacent to the water. We enjoyed a wonderful fish dinner while overlooking the last glimpses of the bay before sunset.



Next day we were southbound for the trip to Taumarunui for the weekend get together. We arrived around 3pm to be met by Andrew Larsen and Rob Jones from the NZ P76 Club. They made us very welcome and we settled into our room, being met by others as they arrived.

Friday Night was Pizza Dinner poolside and we had a chance to meet and chat with the 50+ people in attendance. It was a friendly gathering, with the NZ members very welcoming towards us and Neville Humphreys and his family.

Saturday morning saw the convoy of P76s head off to the north-west for the Medieval Festival at Ohura. An interesting little country haven with lots of home-made goodies and cakes to be had while watching the jousting going on in a nearby paddock!!



The Boot Sale on Sunday morning was successful for us, as we sold quite a few items of merchandise and took orders for our Car Club Jackets. After the Boot Sale, we were off on another convoy to visit two car collections in the area – the first was not far from Taumarunui where the owners have an acreage with a very large shed containing some nice American wheels (*above and right*). Rob Jones sent me the photo below taken from atop one of the sheds nearby – nice photo of 16 P76s!!

Following this short visit, we drove a bit further out of town to a place that seemed like we were walking back in time to the early part of the last century!!! Old car bodies hiding under bushes and broken buildings, rotting away in the long grass with mushrooms and blackberries growing around them. The group gathered here for a photo before heading back to town and lunching at the RSL Club.



After lunch it was time to cruise down the Forgotten World Highway to where we would commence our Rail Cart Trip – a 3.5-hour journey riding modified golf carts, zipping through tunnels, over viaducts and through landscape inaccessible by road. This was a fantastic afternoon, Tony and me being driven along by Ed Tubman, who gained the nickname “Barney Rubble” because that’s who he looked like, zipping along the rail tracks in the Flintstones Car.





Sunday night's dinner was held again at the RSL Club and we enjoyed chatting with everyone – so many stories exchanged about P76s and club stuff. Goodbyes were exchanged and prizes awarded before it was time to hit the sack – most people were driving south to Whangamomona on the Monday morning, but we were going our own way southeast to Napier.

Over the next few days, we travelled through picturesque countryside to Napier, then north to Rotorua via Lake Taupo. We visited a Maori Village in Rotorua with its bubbling mud pools and geothermal activity. Then back to Auckland for the flight home—a good flight with lots of spare seats – gotta love that eh? A great week away, sharing time with lovely people and looking at wonderful scenery along the way.

Rob's Observations of Taumarunui

And now to the 2019 National Rally and AGM held in Taumarunui and around the district. You will have to use your inbuilt GPS to follow the layout, but it shouldn't be too difficult. At the Rule's little shed full of mainly Chev's and Ford's (see earlier photos) and a fascinating road roller (*see right*). Photo antics were exhibited by several people including Neville, Paul and Jan, all aiming for the shed roof, although I'm not sure where Jan is aiming here? (*See below*) Paul won out. There is a sample of the shed contents and from Kay, a rear-end picture, something she always tries to get to keep the record in balance, or at least pointing in another direction. (*See below*) We should have put a car from the front into the back row to give us a complete line up of louvre wearing P76's. Now I notice! That's nine cars with rear louvres attached, is this a NZ record?



Without doubt, the largest P People Photo put together in the New Zealand' Club history, by my quick count 39 people including our host, Don Barker, on the left, shown earlier. This meant a few others were taking photos at the same time I guess but that's a big group. We explored his sheds and open stored exhibits and marvelled at some of the cars. Dave and I inspect a 1935/7 Nash which both Paula and Jan expressed future interest in (and Rob can no longer find). That 1952 De Soto garden ornament would make a mate of mine in Masterton cry. His burgundy minter is a sight to see! See a nice '46 Chevrolet ambulance below.



Above: Main Street Taumarunui I don't think has looked like this before.

Right: This was taken while we visited the Rail Action Centre which I recommend. A small but full exhibition of railway and local domestic history.



Left: Main Street Ohura has never looked like this before.



Left: Alex and Karl pose in Ohura. The Ohura Medieval Festival and the town were just great. The museum and catering and fighting and music and Leyland admirers, what a day!

And we welcome Karl to the Leylanding world, deep end stuff Karl. Karl, one of Alex Reid's sons in law accompanied Alex after the shock passing of Robert McCallum, one of his other sons in law. Thank you, Karl, for ensuring Alex didn't miss out, it was great to meet you and wonderful to have you both along. Hopefully, we will see you on the East Cape Safari.

We also see one of the Knights with his Princess, axe and body armour. The patterns on their helmets are not patterns at all, they are dents from sword, mace and flails. It was a brutal and realistic display and injuries did occur, but all the fighters looked like they were having a ball, or maybe that came later with a feast and lots of quaffing of ale. Princess has a cell phone! Sorry, I just can't locate the photos of the fighting at present. Maybe later!

There has to be a page of dignitaries and we had a few with visitors from Australia including our guest speaker Tony De Luca and his assistant Kay. Tony entertained us with anecdotes of the auto industry back in the '70s. Much has changed it seems, but admin decision making doesn't appear to be one of the areas benefiting from time past! And of course, that main man of Leylanding in Australia Neville Humphreys brought his partner and kids over to experience the high life in New Zealand. Taumarunui, Whangamomona, Ohura and the like! Really Neville?



Above we see the group recently arrived in the form of Travis, Lucinda, Marcus, Neville, Edward the chauffer and Tony. Kay took the photo.

Kay and Tony had their own hire car and Neville borrowed Ed's Jeep GC.

Other dignitaries are those members who win a trophy. We saw Jan Moore's car on the last cover, but we have yet to see the unbeatable winner of the Piston Broke Trophy, Ron Butler. Poor Ron experienced ignition switch

failure/breakage whilst out and about in Taumarunui and had to suffer the ignominy of being taken back to the motel, on the back of a recovery truck. It was just on dark, hence the poor quality of the rushed photo. Undaunted he was back on the road the next morning, albeit not in the pristine state he had arrived in. However, he has been a good sport and built an extension onto the trophy as we had run out of room to add the winner's names so that you can have your turn next time. He tells me his name is on the cup three times!

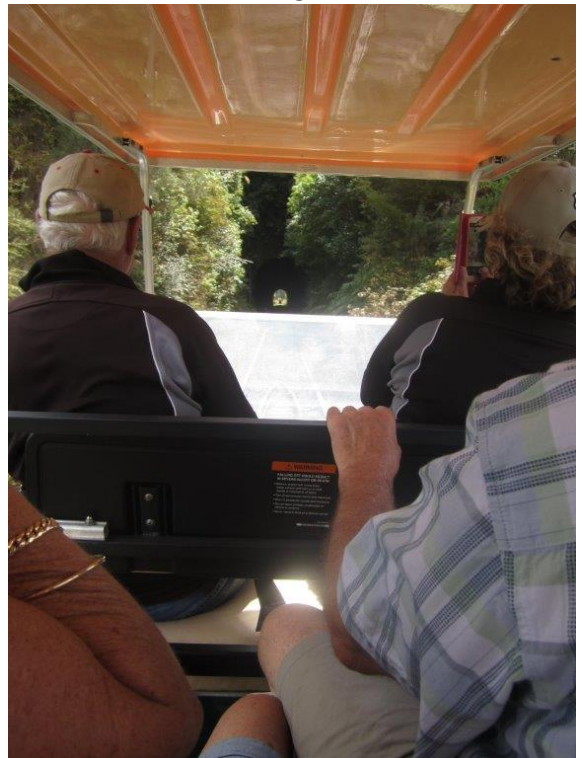
One of the great experiences Sonya and I had looked forward to for months was riding the Rail Trail and we



were not disappointed with the trip. This was just good fun. Scenery history tunnels roadside rail bridges tunnels. I may be able to get some more photos but many of the tunnel shots are pretty much black with a light oval shape at the end!

Right: Brian and Colleen driving us towards a tunnel.

On the way to Whangamomona, Andrew took us upcountry if you can believe it. A live animal strewn metal road of the type to make Ron cry (but he did it). Can you believe we got remoter than Whangamomona! We arrived at what turned out to be Tangarakau to find the Pouatu Apiary, closed but inviting so we all parked around the building. The look on the faces of the two blokes who returned to the "office" was something to behold. After explaining the who why where they invited us in for a wee tour and an explanation of the business undertaken. Purchases of quality honey were made as was a donation to their beer fund I assume, for their troubles and everyone left happy and better informed. Meanwhile outside Paul was befriending sheep as he does with most animals, an old abandoned Bedford was much photographed and some of the ladies marvelled at the long drop! Tangarakau is a stop on the Rail Cart Ride if you are coming from the opposite end to where we started.





Seeing as we are doing main streets, I guess we shouldn't miss Whangamomona out, so we have the main street like it hasn't looked before. We have never had this many P76's in town before! A fascinating little town with some restoration going on and a couple of buildings/businesses open to us and others. Of course, we were booked in for lunch and refreshments of which there was a great choice of both. Very much enjoyed by the many of us there.

Below: Main St, Whangamomona



Tell your friends they should make the journey. You get marvellous scenery, a great drive, good food, meet all sorts of people and enjoy the company of your club mates if you are in such a group.



Sadly, we have since lost Tony DeLuca, a huge loss to the Australasian Leyland/BMC community and John Rush in a car accident returning from a car show in his 56 Chevrolet as I recall. Thanks must go to the several photographers who have supplied shots for this adventure including Sonya Jones, Paul Heath Ed Tubman, Jan Moore and probably a couple of others and to those whose photos have been used in Penzed and now cannot be found in the Editors files. Look for a further instalment on this trip to follow.

The Road to Taumarunui

From Ron Butler

It all started with Brian Francis and I discussing the AGM at one of our central group car shows and how we were going to get there, it didn't take long for us to agree on the Parapara's from Wanganui as we have all done state highway one many times "boring". Going through the Parapara's is twenty kms less than SH1 but probably not faster, and as our old mate Ken McKenzie had not travelled that way he was keen to join us. He in turn got on the jungle telegraph and before too long we had Paula & Roy, Don & Helen and Jan Moore interested.

Ken arrived at my place in Paraparaumu 6-30 ish Wednesday evening where we celebrated with a few reds then went to the beach restaurants. It was quite late when we enjoyed a Italian meal, next day we had a look at classic cars that were to be auctioned that coming weekend at Southwards Car Museum and hit one of the local pubs for lunch and the obligatory pint to wash it down, nice meal too.

Late afternoon we had arranged to meet Paula & Roy who were staying that night with Brian and Colleen in Levin for drinks and dinner at the Cossy Club. There an enjoyable time was had by all then we drove 30 minutes back home. Before we left I suggested that we should have a look at Michael Hill's new boat that had just been launched on the Foxton River as we were going past the next day.

Friday, Ken and I met up with the Francis & Buchanan cars in Levin so we had two Bitter Apricot one Crystal White and a French Blue P76 in convoy. Brian & Colleen where going direct to Sanson where they were meeting Jan Moore who had stayed with a friend in Palmerston North, while we went to the Foxton River to have a look at Michael Hill's Battleship Grey boat it took a bit to find it as I had never been there previously, we did eventually find it and took pics of our cars with the boat in the background.

Next it was up the Foxton straights to Sanson to meet Jan Moore in her very nice Dry Red P76 so then we had five P76's. We didn't spend too much time in Sanson as we had arranged to meet Don & Helen in Wanganui where they had stayed the previous evening and we knew they were patiently waiting with their Peel Me a Grape Executive P76.

I was ahead of the other cars so stopped for a quick chat and to tell them we would stop in Raetihi for lunch before the others drove past as there was no room to park all six cars where Don & Helen were waiting, so going out of Wanganui we drove along the river passing the river boat, Waimarie, paddling up the river. The same boat we had a very enjoyable cruise on a few years previously.

All too soon we had six lovely Leyland's line astern, we were up in the hills and down into beautiful valleys and more hills before we got to the volcanic plateau and on to Raetihi where we found a nice cafe for lunch with all the cars were parked together. We even had a couple in a Ford Capri park with us.

We sat over lunch for about one and a half hours, good to catch up, really enjoyable.

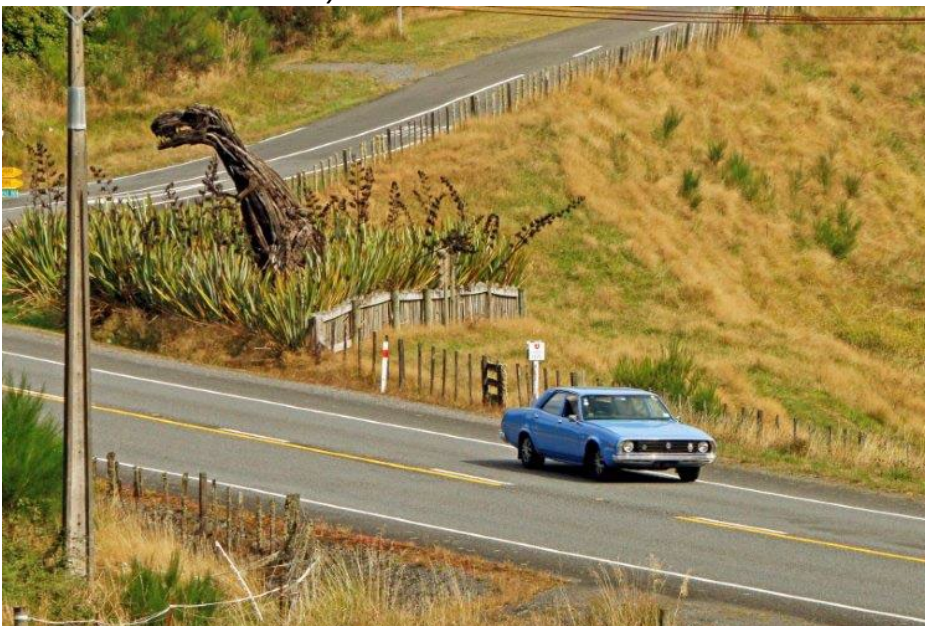
One other reason for going the way we chose was that we would go right past Smash Palace, so it made sense to call in that day rather than come back down the next day. We spent a few hours there. They had one P76 there, the staff pointed out the general direction, but I couldn't find it and is it any wonder as there are thousands of wrecks there.



We went past where the last spike was driven in the main trunk line then carrying on to Makatote Viaduct, a bloody big rail bridge where we stopped to take photos and as we did another P76 rumbled in, it was Paul & Linda, so that made seven P76's travelling together. Next up of interest was the Raurimu Spiral where we found a Clayton's viewing platform where you couldn't see a bloody thing so that was it on to Taumarunui. But they did see a P76



Above: Ed and Rob and Sonya view the viaduct later in the weekend.



[Left: Unbeknown to us at the time Paul captured the AEB D6 passing Raurimu. Notice the dinosaur sculpture in the background.]

After a while I thought it may be prudent to refuel both the car and myself i.e. supermarket grog shop. Driving into town after filling the tank I stopped outside the Cossie Club where some people were standing outside, asking them directions to the supermarket they told me that they had just closed the Cossie club for good and gave me directions to the supermarket so I started the car, put it into gear and

let out the clutch, moving back the steering wouldn't turn. I immediately knew I was in deep poo.

Got out the shoe phone and called up Ken asking him to bring Eric with him to give me a hand. They arrived a few minutes later and realizing there was bugger all we could do there we called the AA

I told Ken & Eric that that they should get back to the festivities as there was no point in them hanging around. A half hour later a tow truck turned up and we both agreed that a flatbed truck would be more practical, so another half hour wait for the flatbed truck. It took a while to manoeuvre the car and truck so I could drive on.

Once on and strapped down we drove back to the motel where we unloaded the car, *(see photo in earlier story)* signed the paper work for the AA and had a beer or two and by this time some very cold pizza but the conversations were warm and humorous and I think some of us went back to Ken's room and I do remember Bronwyn's hysterical laughing.

Saturday I was up at a sparrows fart and out to the car. I intended buying tools from Mitre 10 next door to the motel, but next thing David Timms turns up with a couple of toolboxes and in no time at all he had the instrument cluster out.

That was the easy part to get to the two bolts and two or three screws that hold the steering lock to the column you have almost remove the complete dashboard. It is designed that way to prevent theft but with a bit of ingenuity and plenty of brute force we were able to remove the lock and bolt the column back to the frame leaving the starter switch dangling down on its wires. We left the instrument cluster out, but I could start the car and turn the steering but didn't have any wipers or lights and no speedometer, but I could drive it thanks to David Timms. It would have taken me all day to do what he did in a couple of hours

By this time all the others had left to have breakfast in town and travel to Matiere and then on to Ohura were there was to be a display with the King Country Vintage Car Club so David and I set off at a blistering pace to catch up and by the time we arrived at Ohura all the cars were nicely angle parked in the main street. It was quite a wide street with a grassed island in the centre. I must have blinked as I didn't see any vintage cars (where did they get too?) but I did see the medieval battles i.e. guys dressed in tin suits belting the crap out of each other with axes spikes and swords, bit boring really but the local hall was selling food at very reasonable prices and as I hadn't had breakfast I ate well.

From there we headed back to Taumarunui where those of us who hadn't been to Horopito wreckers the day before went back to the motel where more socializing took place and we had plenty of time to shower shave and dress respectfully for dinner that evening.

While the northern members and others who hadn't had the chance the day before went down to Horopito. See earlier photos.

The AGM was held before dinner and all went well and as it has been reported on previously we will go straight to dinner which was very good and plentiful, nice red vino, what more could a man want.

Then a few of us ended up in Ken's room again "What is it with this guy whenever there is a booze up he's the instigator'. Anyway more tall stories and lots of laughs, a great night.

Sunday first thing a car boot sale, this time there seemed a lot more sellers than previously.

Then we had breakfast at the motel and after that we all drove to the old railway station where they had a brilliant display of enlarged old photographs of rail logging and sawmills in and around Taumarunui. That's when men where men and not a bunch of snowflake poofters that get around today. From there we headed south to have a look at some nice American cars in a great shed workshop combo and also have our cars photographed together.

From there we went further inland to Kakahi to what had been a farm at some stage with many old wrecks and some good ones laying around. It looked to me like "I'm going to fix that one day" and we all know that day never comes. While there we took a group photo which is a good idea. I can't remember ever doing that previously and the photo



appeared in the last Penzed. Leaving there we headed back to Taumarunui to the RSA for lunch where Ken and I were the first to the bar "funny that" to be greeted buy a very well dressed barman black trousers white shirt red waist coat and best of all he called us young men, seeing Ken and I were born while the second world was raging we thought that a bloody good description of us. After a nice lunch we all went back to the motel to get ready for the rail carts were we were picked up by bus and delivered to the rail cart base.



I shared a cart with Rosalie and Fred Maunder for the 32km trip to Matiere and at Matiere the local residents put on afternoon tea for us and there was a craft shop open.

As we were about to drive back our cart was rammed by a crazy woman driver behind us as I was sitting in the rear and got rather nervous and when we all stopped to be told of the local history I made sure I was well out of the way of the crazy lady drivers behind us. There were five tunnels in that 16 km part of the track back to base. One was quite long but all too soon we were back to the bus and the motel just in time for a quick shower and change before dinner at the RSA. The worst steak I have ever had but they did offer to cook me another one which I declined. This was Sunday night and most of us were still there, I think we filled up two long tables. Back to the motel for an early night as we had a long drive home the next day via the Forgotten World Highway to Stratford and down through Wanganui to home.

Next Day Monday we had breakfast at various cafes around town before heading off to the Whangamomona historic hotel for lunch. It was a great drive, twisting up and down with alternating landscapes, very enjoyable until we got to the Tangarakau Gorge. Fourteen kilometres of gravel road, rough as hell, although it was okay where the sun hadn't reached as it was damp and flat but most of it was dry corrugated and dusty, bloody dusty, but the bush was untouched and beautiful. No sooner had we got back on the sealed road we were off down a side road to the old Tangarakau Village that wasn't, well it was a village for the construction of the Stratford to Taumarunui railway line and now it's no longer there, just a honey factory and one or two farm house's. See earlier photos. By this time the tummy was rumbling again so of we went to Whangamomona through a strange looking tunnel round a bend and

we were there with our cars covered in dust we parked right outside the pub and took photos of the cars parked right down the street.

Below: The cars heading to Whangamomona, check out the bush behind.



After all that dust beer was the first thought then food which was very nice, can't remember what it was though. Don Learmonth had invited us to have a look at his car collection in Hawera so he skipped lunch and headed off home to get ready for our arrival later.

It was a good hour's drive from Whangamomona to Stratford and then another 30 mins to Hawera where Don has his cars stored. I won't say what they are as these days you have to be careful re the description and location of vehicles, I even worry sometimes re the security of my P76 but we really enjoyed the viewing, thank you Don. From there on it was a race to get home to Paraparaumu before dark we just made it. I left my car at home and went with Ken to get Chinese takeaways. Ken stayed the night and caught the ferry south the next day where he was to meet up with Paula, Roy & Jan to sort out the accommodation and itinerary for next year before they all returned to their respective abodes.

PS: I had never been to Taumarunui before but I quite liked the place. Thanks to everyone for making it a very enjoyable occasion.

As you will have picked up by now "Rob's Observations" obviously fell short referencing all of the trip, not mentioning our visit to Horopito, a first for Sonya and I, our two previous efforts being washed out on the day and the kind invitation from Don to visit his collection, a very worthwhile detour. Horopito is one of those places you should visit, we didn't find the P76 or the DX Vauxhall's were hoped to see but hey, there was so much else and the members left their mark in the form of \$\$\$ at the counter. At least I remembered to take a few photos along the way. The statistical report (sort of) follows along after this.

Facts figures statistics and other stuff from the Taumarunui National Rally and AGM

Earlier you have seen a report from one of our esteemed Aussie visitors and a local member, however, your Editor generally compiles the above information which doesn't get mentioned in reports and many (well some) find interesting.

The important cars: there were 16 of them in nine factory colours and two in our Kiwi accepted alternatives of RF, Steve Learmonth and PS, Paul Heath and Linda Graham.

The most plentiful this time was...

- CW with 3, Don Learmonth, Brian and Colleen Francis and Mike King and Carmen Pallesen.
- BA with 2, Roy and Paula Buchanan and Ken McKenzie
- B as B with 2, Gordon and Jan Gruebner and Alex Reid and son in-law Karl.
- FB with 2, Ron Butler and Peter and Michaela Venning and 1 each of
- DR, Jan Moore, AEB, Rob and Sonya Jones, PMAG, Don and Helen Prouting, ON, Ed Tubman and N, Eric and Lesley Connor

There were 3 Executive, 6 Super, 4 Deluxe and 3 modified models of now indeterminate origin being the cars of Ed, Steve and Ron. You all know them. Missing from the mix due to unforeseen circumstances and other stuff ups were another B as B, AEB, HOTO and CB which resulted in the appearance of a Mazda 6, Toyota van – such luxury, Opel, Nissan X Trail, Honda Accord and of course the Aussies travelling in a hire Toyota and Ed's Jeep GC.

This assortment were piloted by Andrew and Debbie, David and Maria, Fred and Rosalie, Hugh and Bronwyn, Jim and Richard, Tony and Kay DeLuca and Neville, Lucinda, Travis and Marcus, the Humphries party.

Generally everyone was well behaved, especially us and our car, no more Piston Broke trophy for my shed. The AEB D6 ran like a clock for all of the whole of our indirect trip.

As usual we took the backroads to Taupo to visit my grandson Blake and his family, attended a fete at a local preschool and threw cream pies at Bo, Blake's mother, bought yummy cakes and Sonya enjoyed a lovely foot massage. We enjoyed our trip around the top of the lake and were in the first few to arrive in Taumarunui. We fuelled our car and fridge and settled in briefly before the usual chaos occurred. There were some outside factors adding to this as you know.

I should note here that the medieval fighting at Ohura was a pretty powerful and damaging display. I hope you recovered from this spectacle without too much impact, you will recover quicker than some of the participants!

And thank you to all who joined us in Whangamomona for the Monday lunch, a grand sight so many Leyland's gracing this historic spot, not to mention the photo ops along the road to get there and the diversion Andrew took us on where we discovered an apiary beyond the middle of nowhere. Many of us are still enjoying the honey purchased.

Sonya and I again enjoyed our visit to Bushy Park on our way home, the accommodation, cuisine and company were just great. You should try it out sometime. Our stop at Busy Park coincided with the arrival of a helicopter which may have meant we couldn't park up near the homestead but as they and we were the only guests on the night we were allowed to park away from the chopper.

It gave rise to this rather poignant photo, remembering this was the weekend of the Christchurch massacre. The P76, the chopper and the flag at half-mast. Our host was ex-military and felt compelled



to share in the shock of those events and show support the best and most respectful way he could. Hence the flag at half-mast.

Sonya and I did wonder which celebrities we might sharing the homestead with. It turned out to be two celebrity helicopter spray operators but they were nice blokes and fun to have a beer with.

We left on Thursday, got home on Tuesday and had a ball with the only possible exception of me becoming Treasurer again and of course the shocking news out of Christchurch. Oh yes, I have to write up the meeting minutes too!