



## International Caravanning Fellowship of Rotarians (NZ) Inc

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*3-10 February 2012  
Pirongia Lodge  
10 - 13 February 2012  
Raglan Kopua Hol. Park*

### Websites to view

[www.icfr.rotarysouthpacific.org](http://www.icfr.rotarysouthpacific.org)  
[www.rotarianscaravanning.org.uk](http://www.rotarianscaravanning.org.uk)  
[www.rvfr-aus.org.au](http://www.rvfr-aus.org.au)  
Reporter: Rae Innes  
Photos: Jean Dillon, Andy Duncan,  
Morris McFall, Stewart Wright,  
Graphics etc: Gil Cooper

### Rae Innes writes . . .

We arrived at the camp about 3pm on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> to find about 20 vans already on site. Although the weather was overcast with light misty rain (and cut grass) we soon settled in, some more than others as the Bulluss's and Innes's were on ground that settled under them and they had to shift a couple of days later – nothing to do with **our** weight of course!

After Happy Hour and dinner, we welcomed Kate Parr, the Custodian of the Lodge who gave us a talk on the development and setup of the property. Morris McFall who took a very important role in the whole project, added to Kate's talk by telling of the involvement of the Te Awamutu and Kihikihi Rotary Clubs and the many other organisation etc



"Fiddler on the roof" [Morris]



who assisted.

This Forest Park is the only one in N.Z. where, while the Lodge is administered by a Trust, it is actually on DOC land. As there was still light misty rain, most of us retired to our vans as the cloud came down the mountain and we could honestly say we had our "own heads in the clouds".

Next day and as more vans arrived, including a couple of Brits, Maddy & Geoff Bell from ICFR UK, we were anxious to explore some of the shorter tracks and generally get to know



Maddy Bell (our English visitor) nearly came down head first after losing her balance at the top. Fortunately she was already harnessed up.

the area. After Happy Hour and dinner, Mrs Barbara Walker from the Pirongia Historical Society, gave us an interesting address on the history of the area which was called Alexandra and began life as a Military Redoubt.

On Sunday, a group travelled to the Nikau Track on Limeworks Rd, while others went to the village and some checked out the Confidence Course at the Lodge. At this stage we numbered 37 vans and 75 members present including Bev & George Brennan in their beautiful new van. In the afternoon some intrepid souls tried out the abseiling wall –



With the aid of those who had cars, we travelled to Lake Ngaroto. This was the area where Morris had grown up and farmed. A number of the group walked right around the lake which the noticeboard stated would take 2 – 2 ½ hours. Gary Bates must have run most of the way as he arrived back in just over 1 hour with Jean Dillon chasing him close behind!

While having a picnic lunch, Morris gave us many interesting facts about the area. It was originally full of peat and huge tree stumps but is now pleasant looking farm land. We were then guided to a beautiful stand of [white pine] kahikatea known as Yarndley Bush. It is pleasing to know that there are these pockets of native bush still available to visit. Stewart Wright explained that many of these are administered by the Queen Elizabeth Trust. Some of these stands have been donated to the country by generous farming families.

With Tuesday dawning fine and clear, we prepared for the Te Awamutu & Kihikihi Rotary Clubs to visit in the evening for a BBQ. Early afternoon was an opportunity for Flying Fox exponents to show their skills. Barry Benton had to be specially trained so he could operate the apparatus. [Thanks OSH.] George Brennan and others volunteered to be “catchers” and while Gary managed an extra half ride because he forgot to release the rope – Irene





went one better and flattened George. No harm done. Happy Hour and our guests started arriving. It was a lovely balmy evening and we mingled outside with them.



D9930 District Governor Raewyn Kirkman (Waikato Sunrise club), Pres. Ian Wards (Kihikihi club) and an original Trustee, Peter Robinson who is still Secretary of the Lodge Project were all present and gave short addresses. We had an extra bonus – an extra-ordinary coloured eastern sky with beautiful red clouds and a double rainbow enhanced our evening. After a lovely meal of BBQ patties, sausages and camp-oven cooked potatoes plus a great variety of salads, we were entertained by the “Mountain Man” [Keith Prendergast] and his singing partner Jan to some enjoyable music [our sort]. Coffee/tea with finger food sweets brought the evening to a close.

Thanks to all helpers, especially Roger who cooked the potatoes, Neil and Stewart who BBQ-ed the sausages and patties and all who set up the tables and chairs – peeled potatoes, did the dishes and served the tea and coffee.

Next day we visited the Clydesdale Museum and had wagon rides after which some visited the village and other district attractions. What a sophisticated “*Bush camp*” this has been. We have been really spoilt by having the use of this wonderful Lodge and grounds and we cannot thank Hilary & Morris, Jean & Neil enough for making this happen.









## RAGLAN

**Friday.** On Thursday we had received the sad news that our old friend Bob Darlow and long-time member of ICFR had passed away. He has not been well for some time and in recent years has not been able to attend many rallies. We will miss him. He was honoured by the group on Friday night by standing for a minute's silence. It was announced that Jeannie Parr had a bad fall and was in hospital. Jeannie and Peter were original foundation members of I.C.F.R. and we hope she has a speedy recovery.

Friday and Saturday were free days and some people explored the town, shops and district. Barry and Kay Benton braved the elements and had a swim. Unfortunately, our camp sites are rather scattered as the camp proprietors made a double booking. We were able to use the pavilion on Saturday night for a catered dinner.



### **FUTURE RALLIES**

#### **2012**

13 - 20 Apl

#### **NORTHLAND RAMBLE ->->**

- 13/15 Caledonian grounds, Waipu *[not Waipu Cove!]*
- 16/17 Matauri Bay Hol Park
- 18/19 Whatuwhiwhi Top 10 Hol Park
- 20 Apl – end of ramble – members make their own decisions from hereon.

18 – 20 June

#### **MIRANDA HOT SPRINGS Hol Park**

11 – 13 Aug

#### **Mt MAUNGANUI BEACHSIDE HOL PARK *[Pilot Bay side]***

25 – 27 Sep

#### **OMOKOROA THERMAL HOL PARK**

9 - 11 Nov

#### **AGM KARAPIRO ROWING CENTRE**