

ICFR Roving Rally Saturday 29th October to Wednesday 2 November 2016

We started out with 17 vans/motorhomes and had two more couples join us at Stratford.

Saturday 29th; we arrived in the afternoon at PioPio College grounds, a tight entrance for a couple of us, but all parked up and it was great to catch up with all as they arrived. See's was going to be up at the



covered area by the offices, but a very dedicated cleaner was busy with a hose & washed the area and seating



down, so it was decided to sit in the sun which was lovely . Neville gave us our orders for the next day & where we were heading.

Sunday 30th October – Travelled Aria Road to Mapiu where we stopped for morning tea. Then SH 4 to Mangatupoto & SH 40, which we almost missed, stopping at Ohura, the old Prison. This building was originally a Hostel for Coal Miners then turned into a prison, then a B&B and now a Healing Retreat. It was very run down and the new owners have a huge task in front of them. It was decided to not lunch there but stop in the main street of Ohura instead. We then travelled down the “Forgotten Highway” through 14Ks of metal roads and a tunnel to Whangamomona Camp Grounds. See's in the old school room, then down to the Pub for dinner, where one of the owners gave us a talk on the history of Whanmamomona.

Monday 31st – Travelled the remainder of the “Forgotten Highway” over a few good saddles & hills to Stratford & the Showgrounds Camp. Kev & Gail went from there to Hawera to the Tawhiti Museum (Joan Bailey recommended) this was a very worthwhile visit and they both enjoyed it, while others grocery shopping and relaxed. Some of the fit ones with bikes attempted to bike the Whangamomona trail but found it was too wet and boggy so had to give up and return back to Camp for a clean-up before travelling on to Stratford.

Tuesday 1st November – We all left and didn't travel together as Neville advised it would be best some of the roads were narrow. We travelled via Mokau up the Coast SH 3 to Awakino, then up Manganui Road, most stopping and travelling out to Waikawau Beach to see the manmade tunnel which was cut through the rocks to bring stock in



and out by barge from the sea in the old days. We travelled some more gravel roads and arrived at Marokopu Camp Ground. John & Jan had the



unfortunate luck and blew a tyre, which they changed at Waikawau then carried on to Camp. We were all invited to the local hall for the Melbourne Cup night, where we put on a few sweepstake bets on the Cup. Some of us were winners but most just donated to the local cause. Some stayed for fish & chip dinner and a few drinks afterwards.

Wednesday 2nd November – Marokopa to Pirongia. After morning tea most travelled up to the Taharoa Beach where the iron sands are pumped out to ships anchored off shore. Then along the Kawhia Coast to SH 31 back inland to Pirongia and the Clydesdale Café where we all parked up in the paddock next to the Café. Neville arranged for dinner & drinks at the Café for us for the grand finale. Nick Van Der Sande gave us a talk on his involvement with the DB Clydesdales and how they now still have the blood line of those horses. Nick & wife Jill still use these Clydesdales

for pulling around the farm, weddings and other functions. Kevin Upton was persuaded to get the guitar out for a short sing song, but most were ready for bed and the owners were also ready to shut up the Café.



Thursday 3rd November

All met for morning tea and farewell, thirteen of us took advantage of the opportunity to have a ride on the wagon pulled by the Clydesdales along the road & around a few of the historic sites before heading back to the Café. Most of the team were heading off to the Papamoa Rally starting Friday. This has been a great Rally, lots of fun and we travelled some very interesting roads and countryside.

Great big thanks to Raewyn & Neville Bell who organised this great trip for us

Words and pictures by Gail Upton