

MY LIFE

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Warwick Bockett Sykes

1940 -

FRONTISPIECE AND INDEX

1. PREAMBLE
2. PAPA KURA HIGH SCHOOL
3. THE TEENAGE YEARS
4. SOUTHWELL REVISITED
5. BACK TO AUCKLAND
6. CHRISTCHURCH THE 1ST TEN YEARS
7. CHRISTCHURCH THE 2ND TEN YEARS
8. DABBLING IN POLITICS
9. SPREYDON BOOKS AND TOYS
10. THE EARLY SBT DAYS
11. NZ FIBRE MEASUREMENT LTD
12. COOK STRAIT FERRIES
13. FOREST RANGE STATION
14. CHAS
15. CARPARK TICKETS
16. DUCK CREEK
17. ISIS STOP SMOKING PROGRAMME
18. SHUTTLE BUS TRANSPORT (SBT)
19. JAMES, GEORGE (& BONNIE)
20. SIMPLY BETTER TEAM (SBT)
21. RETURN TO MOTORSPORT
22. JAMES, RIMU, ZAC
23. ALONE AT LAST!
24. PROUD MOMENTS
25. SNIPPETS
26. MISCELLANEOUS PHOTOS

PREAMBLE

1 January 2020

Now that I am in my 80th year and finally headed for retirement, it has been suggested (more than once) that I should write my memoirs – whilst I cannot see any one being interested at least until my death. But here goes anyway. My mission for the year then.

I have met some really good people and some absolute ratbags – most of whom work directly or indirectly for Government Departments. Specifically the Police (who, particularly in the area of traffic) really enjoy their role of 'bully boys'. Also IRD who whilst supposedly using their quite draconian powers responsibly in reality really relish their power.

I have endeavoured to be as factual as possible but, in reality there may be a lot of opinion in the mix. I can only apologise for that in advance. It is not my intention to offend anyone (except perhaps Holly – see chapter 19) my apologies if I do.

I have also endeavoured to be as chronologically correct as I can, but this may not be quite correct!

Also I cannot be absolutely sure of dates, names etc, but can only do my best.

Because this supposed to be 'all about me' I have tried not to go off on a tangent relating to much of what has happened to other people.

So to quote 'The Sound of Music', let's start at the very beginning a very good place to start!!!!

I was born on 5th Dec 1940 (a year or so after my mother Florence and father James were married.) at a nursing home in One Tree Hill (in Auckland), my birth certificate insists that I was not born in Auckland I was born at 'One Tree Hill'.

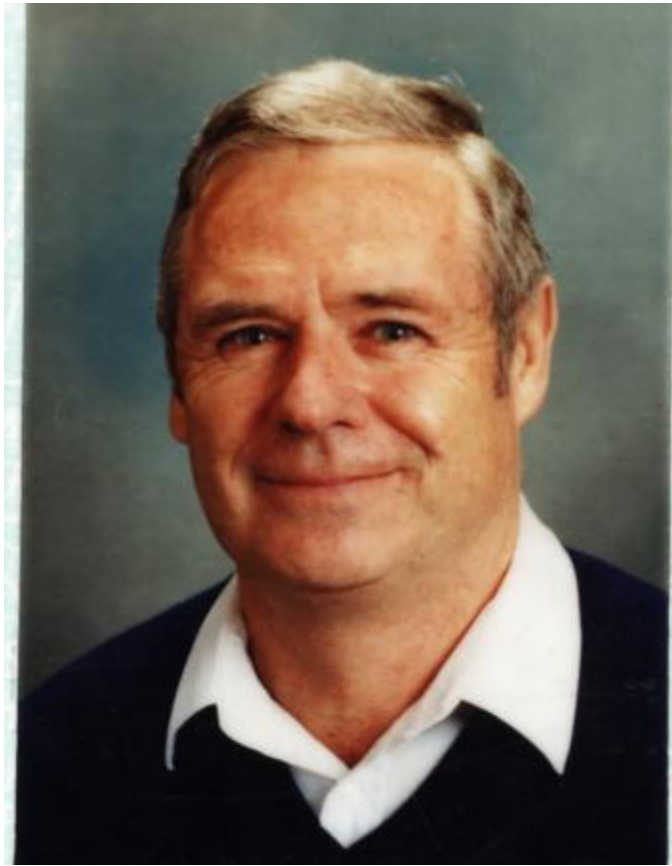
So whenever I have a legal document to fill in I have to say One Tree Hill, if I say Auckland it gets rejected!!



ME AT FOUR WEEKS OLD WITH DAD



WHAT A FINE LOOKING YOUNG MAN



AND LOOK AT HIM NOW

Parentage

Mum was the youngest of six, the daughter of Lillian Mary (Nan) and Capt Charles BOCKETT

Her Siblings oOO

Charles, always known as Jack
Arthur (a twin)
Bert (the other twin)
Dudley (died young)
Beatrice Mary (Billie my Auntie Bea)
Florence Lillian (Floss)

Dad was the youngest of four, the only boy

His Siblings oOo

Mary
Mabel
Rena
James – always known as Jim

Mum was born in Opotiki, Dad was from Bradford in England and at 13 was sent to NZ to be taken care of by older sister Mary, who by that time had married Walter and was already here in NZ
The other girls gradually followed and married and settled in various places around NZ

Unfortunately when Rena died she left behind her distraught husband Jack with 5 girls to bring up
I endeavour to maintain contact with at least some of them to this day.

Dad went off to fight during WW2 shortly after I was born and so I lived with Mum in a nice state house at 14 Massey Ave (One Tree Hill !!), and Nan and her unmarried daughter (My lovely Auntie Bea) lived 'over the back fence' in another state house in Fergusson Ave.

From all accounts I couldn't wait to go to school and once I turned 5, I went to Campbell Park school (In Campbell Rd of course).
It was just under 2 km away and I walked to school and back each day crossing any roads as necessary.

I am appalled at modern parents who take and collect their kids from school and I absolutely abhor those that actually drive them there and back by car – by school bus is obviously fine however.

I do remember having a nap each day when I got home though, in those early years.

I also recall how good Auntie Bea was taking me on outings with her tramping club and similar occasions.

It obviously gave Mum a wee break from me.





Nan and Auntie Bea – then the Southwell Days

My brother Robert (often known as Rob) was born on 30th Sept 1945 sometime after Dad returned home but was never a 'well boy' he had heart trouble (an upside down heart I believe) but he was determined to be every bit as good as the rest of us.

He went on to get married, and had two lovely children before sadly passing away in his 56th year.

Dad enjoyed his cricket but was one of those batsmen who 'never ran' it was either a four or a six, or wait until the next one.

I spent many Saturday afternoons watching him at Victoria park in downtown Auckland. Not to mention Jellicoe Park in Manurewa.

Although Dad had been a warehouseman and furniture salesman at Tylers of Anzac Ave before the war he and Mum eventually scraped together whatever money they could find and bought a drapery shop in Manurewa – so shortly after that we moved into a brand. new state house at 68 Gt Sth Rd.

(They subsequently managed to buy it some years later). This became the family home for over 50 years.

At some stage they also managed to buy an empty section in the middle of Manurewa with, I understand, the idea of building their own shop there. In eventuality though they finally sold it to Barfoot and Thompson with an agreement for them to give Dad a job.

I remember going to Wellington with Dad to collect a brand new car. An adventure for a 5 year old.

Also one of Dad's sisters died about 1946 and I went with him to Okaihau in the Far North. So even in my early years I was used to travelling extensively!!

In 1948 (when I was seven) Mum and Dad decided that I should go to a boarding school.

Some say that it was to give me the best possible start – less charitable might say to get rid of the obnoxious little shit!! (Who me ? Never)

So within a month or two of turning 8, I was boarding at Southwell School in Hamilton. An all boys school, 100 boarders and 50 local day boys. Universally known as Day Bugs.

It was a true boarding school, with a family of 100 'mates', not as it and others have become nowadays, merely a school with a hostel attached.

I was originally in Red dorm (for the littlies) but moved the next year into Blue Dorm where the majority of the boys were.

I never made it up to Orange and certainly not to the open air Green Dorm which was for seniors!

Southwell had (and still has) very strong musical traditions, is firmly rooted in the Anglican faith (we always started the day with a 'proper' service in the chapel), and its sporting prowess was at the time legendary. Rugby scores of 90 – nil were not unheard of.

Mind you I was not particularly good at sport – Rugby in Winter, Cricket in the summer and Athletics in the Spring.

Nowadays of course sport can be anything from tiddlywinks to computer games! (You will gather I do not approve!)

However I did win one running race (handicapped of course) during the Annual sports day. Dad was filming with our 9.5mm camera and I can still hear the shouts of 'Come on Sykes, and Go North – I was in North House

We were allowed 'out' every 2nd Sunday afternoon, the other Sunday we had a hike. Mum and Dad made the effort to come all the way from Auckland pretty much every 2nd weekend and we all saw each other for maybe a couple of hours.

Academic learning too was strict and thorough – our classes were Lower 2, Lower1, Middle 2 and Middle1, Upper 2 and Upper 1.

None of this year 1 year 2 nonsense etc. we had Lower School, Middle School and Upper School.

I was introduced to learning French when I was 10 (and of course came top of the class))

I mentioned earlier that I had a less than stellar career in sport – the same goes for my singing and acting in the Annual Gilbert and Sullivan Opera.

In 1949 we did Yeoman of the Guard
1950 The Gondoliers and
1951 Iolanthe.

As the whole family (i.e the 100 boarders) had to take part I was one of those in the chorus who gets weeded out a few weeks before the performance and become stage hands.

So I never made it onto stage!

Nevertheless I credit this experience with giving me my lifelong love of G&S and my subsequent front and back stage work too.

It should be remembered that at that time even the girls parts were played by boys!!

Whilst I was there my sister Suzanne as born on 20th Dec 1950 and she was subsequently Christened in The chapel – All Hallows. So she has significant ties to Southwell too.

I well remember making bricks for the future chapel extension, 7 a.m. Each morning before breakfast.

Probably my favourite Master was Garth Finch – also our house master – known as Potty (for pot guts- boys can be very rude)

My best friend was Cooper (I was, of course Sykes), we had adjacent beds in Blue Dorm and one weekend I went home with him to his parents farm not far from Morrinsville,

They kept referring to him as Peter and I had no idea who they were talking about. (As an aside many years later my son James is also often referred to as Sykes!- I approve!)

Although I would not claim this to be the best part of my life it was at the end of 1951 that Mum and Dad explained that they simply could not afford to keep me there any longer and that I would have to come back to Manurewa and go to the local public school. I was devastated but there was nothing else for it!

As it happens Manurewa Primary turned out to be not too bad – Particularly in what was form 1, I had as a teacher /Form Master one Jack Bartley.

Someone I still regard as the best teacher of all time. From parsing English sentences to solving mathematics questions to learning poems off by heart.

Of course any spelling test returning less than 100% correct was unheard of!!
In those days we had Form 1 and 2 in the same room and I suspect this helped considerably.

In my form 2 year (again with Form 1 and 2 in the same room) we had Miss Edge, competent but nothing like Mr Bartley.

And so I was ready for High School

PAPAKURA HIGH SCHOOL 1954-1956

As I turned 13 I became a foundation pupil at the brand new Papakura High School. Probably the highlight of my life to date. 300 pupils, mainly 3rd form.

I caught the school bus more or less at the gate about 8 a.m. And was home again about 4.30 p.m.

I was in 3 Latin, another mixed class (although Latin did become my only fail subject in School Cert three years later.)

Archie Campbell was Headmaster – an absolute prick of the first order.

Gus Madill	was his assistant – quite good, used to teach us Latin and subsequently got the job of Principal once Papatoetoe High School to which both Rob and Sue attended., opened
------------	--

But here again I found another one of those teachers who turned out to be a real gem.

One of those who really inspire their pupils to do their absolute best, encouragement, cajoling, whatever is necessary to extract the very best from his pupils.

Colin Atkinson was such a man.!!!!!!!!!

He taught us all 'Electricity' and I well remember his experiment of stringing wires down the side of the classroom/lab showing how transmission losses could be reduced by increasing the voltage etc.

No wonder I ended up making that almost my life's work.

He even showed us such things as how a HT distributor cap worked and similar.

I was always 'most competitive' but there was a snag.

Her name was Ann Thomas (Actually Patricia Ann) and she regularly knocked me off 1st place in the class.

She even beat me at School Cert Time .

To say we had an ongoing tussle would be a good way to describe it.

Once again I was not all that good at Rugby as a player – but as a COACH I was 1st class!

Dad was coaching the team Rob was in and had too many boys to handle so asked me (I must have been 14 by then) to take some of the off his hands and make another team.

That first year the teams were co champions (because they simply could not be separated by games won, points scored, tries etc) – James Sykes under 4 st 7 and Warwick Sykes under 4st 7 teams.



As the years passed Dad moved up the ranks as coach with Rob's teams as Rob got older but I stayed coaching the up coming under 4st 7 boys for several more years.

I insisted on 'stick to the basics' and even now my comments such as when watching the All Blacks evoke comments from friends 'did you use to be a coach?' Yep I did.

One thing I was quite good at however was singing- I had (and still have) a quite powerful bass voice

While at PHS pupils were asked who wanted to join the choir.

Thinking of my 'rejection' at Southwell my hand immediately shot up, but most boys seemed to think singing was somehow 'sissy' so we ended up with about 50 girls and us 5 boys in the choir!

Our music teacher Miss Schmidt moulded us into shape and by all accounts did a marvellous job of it

But I must relate the taking of the choir photo. (I think I may even have found a copy).

The photographer lined the girls up in 4 rows then had to work us boys in somehow.

He put a boy at each corner, then had me to worry about.

So he marched into the very centre of the girls separated two of them and said to me SIT!

SO there you have SYKES surrounded by about 50 teenage girls – oh joy.

My girlfriend at the time Janice (known as Shorty) was down the front at the end. I am not sure just what she made of it.

But she and I took dance classes together (at school) and even continued afterwards with Miss Weldon's dance school but never achieved the medal standard we were seeking.

My School Cert results were a little disappointing too, in those days we sat 5 subjects, and the top 4 counted towards the result, mine were something like

Electricity	95	Thanks to Mr Atkinson
English	85	Thanks to Mr Bartley
Maths	80	Again thanks largely to Mr Bartley
French	51	remember I had started this at Southwell
Latin	47	my fail subject

You can imagine how I felt when I discovered that Ann Thomas had beaten me by 2 marks !!!!

During my 5th form year I endeavoured to get some sort of apprenticeship within the electrical industry (pretty much all off my own bat)

In August I made the short list at NZED, (New Zealand Electricity Dept.), and in November (before even sitting School Cert) I was selected as one of the six apprentices to start on 5 January the next year. I was stoked!

THE TEENAGE YEARS

I certainly do not recall giving my parents the amount of grief that modern teenagers do, but that may be through my rose tinted spectacles.

So, on 5 Jan 1957 a month after I turned 16 I started work along with another 5 boys (another one of whom as also named Warwick – so we nicknamed HIM Mickey, I remained Warwick of course).

This required my being in Auckland city ready to start work at 7.30 a.m. each morning
This meant catching a bus at 6.20 am – something of a shock to the system as you can imagine.

It will come as no surprise then that I managed to buy my first car (a 1935 Morris 8) within a month of starting work.

Not that I could afford to use it all the time but at least I had it.

Most apprenticeships in those days were 10,000 hours but ours were for 5 Calendar years. I think I can find my Certificate of Completion somewhere if I look hard enough.

This was because of the wonderful trade training scheme we had 'signed up for'.

We were to become Electrical Fitters, which included becoming Registered Electricians – the schedule went something like this

Year 1. Workshop skills, including fitting and turning, welding, all types, riveting etc.
We sat exams (City and Guild level), until we passed as competent.

Year 2 Six months on Substation or Power station construction, and the other six months on maintenance and learning how to be an operator. Most of this time I was at

Otahuhu, but also at Penrose and Bombay.

Year 3. We had some months in the Drawing Office, some with Line Gangs (yes I have climbed power pylons) and each of us was also lent out to private contractors to learn the electrical wiring industry.

Part of this required learning to operate a full size corded telephone switchboard another skill to add to the list

Year 4 Included a stint in the Test Laboratory which I really enjoyed.

Year 5 We were allowed (required) to select the area we wanted to specialise in which was to become our life's work.) I picked Test Laboratory and was promptly dispatched to Hamilton District with their myriads of Power Stations and Substations.

I should point out that formal academic training was not ignored either.

We had a 'day release' scheme which sent us to Seddon Memorial Technical College one day a fortnight (8 hrs.) but we had to do the equivalent 4 hrs. per week at night school (in our own time).

This made for quite late arrival home some nights – either by bus or car.

This arrangement was only supposed to apply until all exams had been passed, but as I had passed all mine quite early in the piece the deal (both ways) was then extended for as long as I wished.

I already had my Registered Electrician's and Advanced Trade Cert so I thus carried on to do basic physics and advanced electronics under the scheme.

A very good employer indeed.

One of my night school tutors, Frank. (another Colin Atkinson in fact) also had a couple of other advantages,:

One he lived in Manurewa too and the other he had two teenage daughters!! One of whom (Joy) agreed to become my partner at my 21st birthday party.

It would not be true to say that girls were an 'all encompassing passion', but I can sure relate to American Pie!

I certainly do not intend to regale you with page after page of girls names, but a couple really are worthy of mention.

Beverley used to ride horses at shows and I used to drive her and the horse float on the back of her mother's 1938 Chev all over the north island.

She proved impossible to teach to drive though.

When wanting to slow down or stop she would pull hard back on the steering wheel and shout WHOA – strangely enough it never seemed to work!

Jackie (Jacqueline), was and I assume still is, a very clever girl (I attended her wedding years later).

She painted large black and white photos taken by Whites Aviation for whom she worked, turning them into works of art.- I still have one on my wall.

I also got involved with the Pickering girls (Julie and Gay) Gay married my brother Rob a few years later..

I was growing up ! I was not the only one of our group with a car, but one of a reasonably small number that did.

We undertook the usual teenage boys activities, rugby, cricket, tennis, booze and girls !!



Top – Mavis and Boyd Wedding – me third from right. Sue far right.
 Middle – Jacque's wedding
 Bottom – Pat my ex wife



SUE AT 19, THE KATHRYN AT 12

However, again probably because of my grounding at Southwell, I became very active in the Anglican Church St Luke's Manurewa, sang in the choir, was an altar boy, Secretary of the Server's guild, I also wired St David's church at Wiri etc,

It was not unknown for me to attend 3 services in one day – but I don't think I ever actually took a service while still a teenager though.

Our vicar was Canon Corbin who while he had a somewhat older wife not in the best of health, was, strangely enough a tower of strength to us teenagers.

My sister Sue married her first husband. Ian in St Luke's too some years later in 1971,

My 5th year in Hamilton was a real learning curve.

By then I was 20, boarded with Mrs Kessle in Boundary Rd could walk to work (even though I had a car) and could EVEN come home for lunch!! No more 5.30 rising catching the bus at 6.20.

The experience gained with HTL (Hamilton Test Lab) was absolutely first class.

I was involved with testing and commissioning work at Waipapa Power Station, the #4 machine at Ohakuri, also worked on virtually all the Waikato River stations, Wairakei Geothermal, did testing both High Voltage insulator testing and routine panel instrument testing.

I have worked on all the substations between Kerepehi and Opotiki as I said a really great leaning curve.

I also worked at Meremere, the correct name for which is Mercer Steam Station, the coal for which was transported from the nearby coalfield by overhead conveyors – no wasteful trucking here.

But I must confess to not being all that keen on thermal stations.

With the hydro ones if there was a system disturbance, and provided we had sufficient spinning reserve as we were trained to do, there may be a significant amount of grunting but then the extra load was taken up.

But with a thermal station any disturbance – i.e. outage anywhere on the system it says 'oh dear, I don't want to get involved in this problem' and promptly shuts down – thus adding to what may well be an already precarious situation.

By this time Auntie Bea had married a widower (with 2 children, one of whom was almost exactly the same age as me) and settled in Hamilton too.

SOUTHWELL REVISITED

Although leading a very busy life I once again made contact with my old school and became a very active volunteer there.

With my electrical skills I was now able to help John Cumming prepare and build lighting rigs for the opera, made friends with a lot of the boys and really enjoyed my time being back.

Whilst there we had the 50th jubilee with people returning from all over the world, a concert on the oval etc.

I am not sure just which year it was but the then Governor General asked if we could possibly do a 'Royal Command Performance' of the opera.

At that stage we were still using the Embassy which as a movie theatre was less than ideal requiring massive work just to convert to stage a live production.

I feel it a privilege to even be asked for my opinion.

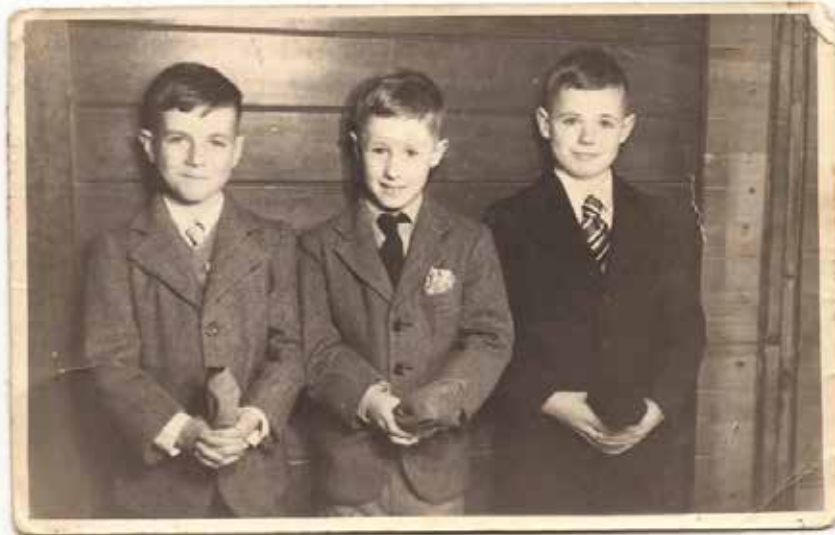
It was, however, decided that it was just too hard!

Subsequently of course we moved the opera to Founders theatre which was set up, for stage shows.

I continued to help with the operas for some years.

I think it was at about that time 3 MPs were Southwell Old Boys and even 2 cabinet ministers.

What a record for a school of 100 boys.



TOP - OUR BACH AT MANLY
MIDDLE - THE THREE COUSINS AT 10
BOTTOM - THE COUSINS AGAIN AT 21

BACK TO AUCKLAND

Mum, bless her, was always a somewhat dominating influence and so having completed my apprenticeship I was setting my sights set on a long and happy career with NZED – I was already studying the gazette for future jobs.

However Mum had other ideas!

On one of my regular weekend trips home to Manurewa Mum said now that you are qualified it is time for you to go and learn something else! I was, I think 21 at the time.

What! Not likely – I am now a tradesman – I am skilled !!

Needless to say my protestations got me nowhere.

Mum had decided that I should go for an interview for an office based job, and even arranged for this to happen that weekend!

There was no backing out.

I therefore presented myself for interview that Saturday afternoon at Alcan Industries with Mel Beaton(who was to become my next boss.)

Whilst not originally enamoured with the job of Sales Administrator as the interview progressed I felt that this might be fun, in fact more than fun.

If I got it (there were about 6 applicants all of similar age) it would mean no more overalls, I would be wearing collar and tie to work each day and we didn't start work till 9 a.m. Each day!

What rapture.

What I think encouraged me most was that one of the questions on the 6 page application form was 'What salary do you require to come and work for us?'

As a recently qualified govt trained apprentice this threw me somewhat – never having had any such option before.

So I asked what I should do. I was told that the figure I nominated was just one of the things to go into the mix of deciding the best candidate. If too much could rule me out altogether, too low probably the same. But no chance of ever complaining about insufficient salary.!

Please remember three months earlier I had been on an apprentice wage, this had doubled once qualified and here I was being asked to nominate a salary.

Mel said look simply ask for 20% more than you are getting at the moment!

Just think about the figures for a moment. The actual figures don't really mean much any more but it effectively meant that If successful I would be getting almost 3 times what I was earning 3 months earlier. And yes I got the job ahead of all the other applicants,

I then had the unenviable task of resigning from NZED, leaving behind all the other technicians and all the 'hopes and dreams' for the future.

So back home to Manurewa and the family home – we built a sleep-out for me in the back yard from the standard NZED single men's quarters plans,(of which I had a copy of course) into which I had a fridge, 2 beds, an office desk and a workbench.

Rob and Sue were still in the house with Mum and Dad,

At this stage I was still using my good old Morris 8 car, but while I had been with NZED I had been lent out for work experience with John Henderson's in Newmarket. and they used Morris Minor vans in their fleet of vehicles and ever since then I had yearned to have one of my own.

This I did – forthwith!

Whilst not new when I bought it I kept it for probably 20 years and still have photo of it on my wall.

I started work at 9 a.m. each morning a couple of kilometres away so although I could have walked I usually took the van.

The company provided lunch and we finished for the day at 4.30 p.m.

My siblings regarded this as Warwick's part time job.

I was in a nice warm comfortable office, had my own secretary, gave dictation, dealt with customers over the phone and was responsible for the detailed analysis of sales all over the world.

I also processed orders large and small. So although 'not on the road' which is what I aspired to, I was largely the face of the company for many customers.

As a company man, I was regularly late away home, went into the office on Saturdays etc.

They also allowed me to take paid time off to help with Southwell Operas

Socially I fitted right back into my pre Hamilton days, so much so that quite often people did not realise I had even been away – having a much better vehicle also helped.

I somehow got involved in motor sport around this time.

I belonged to both Auckland Car Club, Northern Sports Car Club, did timing at Pukekohe, and competed in trials throughout the area.

It didn't take long to realise that the van's 4.5 Gal petrol tank was far too small I then had a special 25 gal (something over 100 ltr) tank made and fitted.

These days, of course, this would be regarded as a modification requiring a complete recertification of the whole vehicle!

The look on the face of garage attendants when told to just fill it up was a joy to behold. Two of us, Peter and I had girlfriends in Wellington and a weekend jaunt was to take the (good reliable) van driving through the night on a Friday, spending the next two days with the girls and then driving back home through the Sunday night and going straight to work on the Monday morning.

We used to take Peter's brother Tony with us as the extra driver and thus the practice of driving for an hour, sleep for two hours has stood us in good stead throughout the years.
The special size mattress in the back made all this a breeze. By our standards anyway.

We went everywhere in that van. Michael and I did a trip throughout the South Island while I was in Auckland and we all went down to Oamaru to do checkpoints for the North Otago Car Club 1st ever week long trial.

During this time I did the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) test but have no record of just how well I did.

Although now an Office Wallah, I maintained my interest in the electrical industry, attended the monthly meetings of NZ Institute of Electricians and continued to subscribe to the magazine.

This proved to be fortuitous to say the least.

One month there was an advert calling for a 'Young well qualified single man prepared to travel extensively throughout New Zealand. advising customers on their electrical instrumentation requirements.

The minimum qualification required are having been trained in the armed services or Govt. Departments, having passed all necessary exams and also competent in preparing written quotes, undertaking sales analysis and generally dealing with customers.'

BINGO.

To me at 21 or 22 this looked to have been almost written just for me.

Needless to say I applied.

The assistant manager flew up from Christchurch to interview me, at which time he explained that their Instrumentation Specialist, (for that read Brain Box) was looking for a younger leg man to take some of the travelling load off him.

I must have made some impression as they then wanted me in Christchurch ASAP for an in depth interview (which they paid for).

I took a Friday off work to give me the whole weekend in Christchurch.

I went down on a Thursday night stayed in Cokers Hotel and presented myself for this in depth interview next morning.

George had this 10 page list of technical questions he wanted to ask me (after all they needed someone with in depth knowledge) and he apologised for that while confirming that as he was getting older he needed someone to take the countrywide travelling load off him a bit.
This sounded good to me.

Once he got to the end of the first page of this questionnaire (and I had answered them all – probably somewhat fully-) he said there is no point in continuing with this - when can you start?

But not so quick.

I wanted to know Salary (this 20% increase was another good start)

Would I get a company car – yes it's in the garage over the road I can show you

As an Aucklander I needed to know that I would get back to Auckland with some regularity.

Yes we will see you get to Auckland at least twice a year! (Yeah right it turned out it was more like twice a month! Mum left me with my own key and bed always made up.)

I also explained that my current boss was going to be away all January and I had already agreed to cover for him, and then we would need more hand over time once he returned – so we agreed on a start date of the next March 1st.

The next day I drove the rental car over the Summit Road and said to myself 'this will do me' a decision I have never regretted.

I then had another horrible job of resigning from a job I loved ,

Mel was most understanding and explained that he had been going to 'put me on the road' the next year – knowing that was what I really wanted.

Naturally I continued to give my all both while he was overseas on holiday and after he came back

I then had to wrap up the projects I was involved with before I left.

One such was installing lights at Jellicoe Park Tennis Club, of which all the family were members. Probably unwisely and ignoring all the policies of NZED I had a ladder fully extended to the top of a round pole when – yes you guessed it – I fell heavily onto the hard surface landing on my bum – then unable to move.

The boys loaded me into the good old reliable morris minor van and rushed me to hospital. Where I was eventually diagnosed with a broken pelvis.

It was not able to be plastered so I would be laid up for at least a month!

Remember I was supposed to be starting a new job down south in about that time.

Once again Alcan came to the party.

Although I had already resigned they kept me on the payroll and paid me until I was to be back on my feet.

My Christchurch job was also therefore put back a month or so

Once I could walk again I went back to work and even remember that after my official send off I still had to go back to my office to sign some letters. Dedication?

CHRISTCHURCH THE 1ST 10 YEARS

So I set off for Christchurch in 'The Van'. Over to Picton on the Aramoana then down the coast to Christchurch.

John the Alcan South Island Rep ,helped me settle in and I originally stayed in lodgings in Bealey Ave before then boarding with a relative of my old night school tutor Frank at 24 Burwood Rd

I fitted in very well with the others at E C Gough Ltd and the job was much as had been described. I travelled extensively throughout both islands in the company car (a Mark 3 Zephyr) visiting customers old and new.

Not having to return to base each week meant that I simply stayed where I was for the weekend thus my knowledge of New Zealand geography is pretty substantial.

One thing I did do though was to attend church each Sunday wherever I was, This too added to my overall knowledge.

In those days toll calls were quite expensive, countrywide RTs non existent and the same applies to cell phones.

I had a Stenograph (a dictating machine) mounted in the car, and EVERY NIGHT without fail I recorded my day's activities and mailed the tape back to the office in a special tube.

This way at least they know where I was, who I had seen etc.

I do recall one night I was at Criterion Hotel in Napier about 9 p.m. (in the bar probably) when George rang and said I needed to be in New Plymouth by noon the next day. A 7 or 8 hr. drive. This then became my life!

Over this time I do not know just how many customers I met (there must have been thousands) many of whom actually became firm friends.

Not that I was away from the office all the time – but as I had the Motor sport Calendar on my office wall most people could guess when I was going to be around or else away.

One of my work colleagues was Errol, who handled incoming orders and one day he asked if he could borrow 'The Van' to collect his sister from the Airport and take her to the Railway Station to catch the train 'back home'.

I said “Sister?.Sister?. How old is she?? 18 !!So I agreed as long as we could all spend the waiting time together. Pat and I married three years later.

In the meantime I carried on much as before working my ass off and travelling extensively.

Whilst not supposed to use my company car on motor sport events (yeah right) I still had 'The Van' and it was used considerably.

Mind you it is strange how so many events that required officials just happened to be where I was staying for work.

Whilst not entirely true, we could describe the way the company worked was that each area of the

country had its own Sales Representative who if they unearthed a big job I was called in to seal the deal.

It was typically up to eighteen months from initial enquiry to completion and payment for the job.

Not instantaneous by any means.

One product we sold was F&P Traffic counters.

This lead me to associate with Traffic Engineers throughout the country and piqued my interest in that industry – very much so.

We added other similar products to the line, created a Traffic Engineering Division and managed to include 'The Van' in our various brochures and advertising material.

I designed the SORT (Special Oval Road Tube) which had ridges across the bottom and did not roll like others did.

We also made small traffic control systems.

One of the more interesting products though was the Solartron Radar Simulators.

The role of simulators is reasonably well known, they allow training that would be pretty much impossible in real life unless disaster struck.

The commercial use (in our case) was a Radar simulator to cover the Wellington/Picton Ferry route.

It allowed a wide variety of wind direction and speed, similarly tide direction and speed etc.

It was possible for ferry masters to 'drive' the ship in either direction from one little room, and be observed by an examiner or such outside.

This was my excuse to do several trips on the bridge of the various Cook Strait ferries.

I was also given some grounding in a little 60ft 'Enterprise' the other end of the spectrum to look at (read hold on tightly) their real radar.

Although I tried many times during our installation and commissioning to manoeuvre a ship to dock in either Wellington or Picton I never actually managed to do it successfully.

The other version was for military purposes, and here we had the installation at the Navy's Navigation and Directional School at North Head in Auckland.

This installation had two rooms set up to reflect (as far as was humanly possible) those of the frigates Canterbury and Otago.

The main control room was able to 'throw all sorts of challenges' at them including enemy aircraft and similar.

Once more without putting any one in real danger, but still honing really important skills.

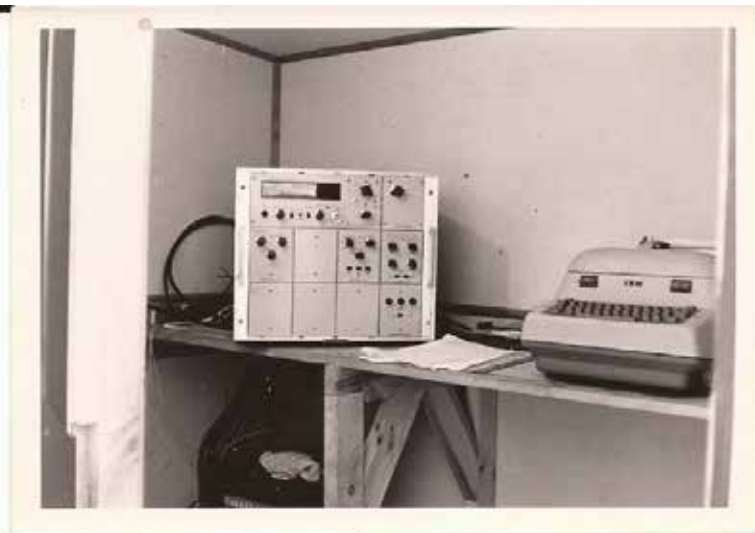


THE NAVAL SIMULATOR



THE COOK STRAIT FERRY SIMULATOR





Top and middle – THE INSTALLATION AT TEKAPO
Bottom – RIGHT INSIDE THE NEWMARKET VIADUCT

In each of the simulator installations it was not unusual for the participants to appear from the respective rooms ashen faced – the simulators being so realistic.

It was here that I learned the difference between having the radar being set to either Ships Head Up, (where you are pointing) or North Up (just like having an eye in the sky showing where you are).

Another good learning curve for me.

Another product we were very proud of was Data Loggers. These were (are?) digital versions of a multipoint recorder.

Taking data from up to 1000 points (20 was more normal) processing it and then 'printing' it out. For the installation high in the Southern Alps behind Cass (for the University of Canterbury Geography Department) it was temperature and rainfall being outputted to 8 hole punched tape.

For the installation at Tekapo, 40 temperature readings were printed out on the one electric typewriter. Strain gauges, measuring movement in bridges, to milk flow from cows – we did it all!!

Whilst Pat was training in Dunedin, that city became 'very well served' by the Instrumentation Specialists from E C Gough Ltd. Say no more.

George also had sisters there so there was always a bit of juggling to who would do Dunedin next week.

Pat then got a job at Mairehau High School (by now she was a qualified Secondary School Teacher) living in her own flat (I continued to board by this time with Mr & Mrs Bates.)

Pat and I did not live together until after our marriage

But we were organised enough to buy a section, arrange a mortgage and have a house built to suit supposedly for us to move into straight after our honeymoon – which incidentally was spent organising the Lakeland Rally to Queenstown.

This way we got company car to use and all expenses paid !!

We married at St Martins in Lincoln Rd, where I was already a 'lay reader' taking services from time to time, on Saturday 6th Jan 1968. I had just turned 27, Pat was 21, the same day as NZ Grand Prix.

And no the house wasn't quite finished.!

It was a 1200 sq ft house with 3 bedrooms on a full quarter acre opening on to a sweeping drive. Which with the double garage built by ourselves and the carport could park (and often did) at least 10 cars!!

I did the wiring of course.

I had always felt that houses had been built with insufficient power points so ours had a double power power point every six feet around every wall in the house. We ended up with a total of some 73 power points.

They were all at waist height , no more scrabbling around the floor to plug something in. I also wired a speaker system into every room.



Top – LOOK AT THE SPEEDO
Middle – EVENT PLOTTING
Bottom – GYMKHANA

Being Christchurch and having decided on a concrete floor we embedded heating cables therein. We also insulated the ceiling and had two Revo night storage heaters too.

In those days power was normally supplied to ordinary houses by overhead wires – but this was not good enough for me (us) we had 3 phase underground cabling, and incidentally one phone line feeding our PABX and a ph in each room.

Not that it was all beer and skittles once we did move in.

To say money was tight would be an understatement.

Someone lent us a little portable TV which we placed on a chair and we did not even have a couch we could sit together on.

What we did plan though was to be mortgage free by the time I was 40.

This gave us 13 years to pay off a 25year mortgage and it is something we did actually achieve,

Possibly because of our layout and there were obviously other reasons too, 42 Gainsborough St became the meeting place not only for work colleagues but motor sport and others too.

About this time I had to write an article for a magazine booklet to be entitled 'Electrical Heating of Christchurch Homes'.

It was to be 5000 words, and I just sat down and wrote it from end to end pretty much in one sitting. Finding it now may be something of a problem though!

Errol Inwood and I organised the 1970 Shell Silver Fern Rally the 1st Marathon Rally in the South Island.

And I still have the real framed Silver Fern subsequently given by Shell Oil, on my wall.

Another real highlight of our lives to date was our involvement in the 1974 Commonwealth Games.

We had been organising a VERY large Motor sport Rally covering both Islands as an associated event of the Commonwealth Games when because of the oil crises in 1973, our major sponsor Shell Oil felt it was not a good look for them to be involved with and we had to cancel.

This meant that they had shelled out thousands of dollars for no return but just the kudos for doing the right thing.

I therefore offered the services of our team to the Games Organisers – they jumped at the opportunity to have us as an already organised team.

We ran newflash control.

We had one of our team giving verbal input from each venue (9 in all) including all medal ceremonies and anything else of possible interest.

This came back to either Errol (Pat's brother) or myself at Newsflash control and we either patched the feed through or regurgitated the information ourselves.

When we pushed the button we brought about 100 or more speakers to life throughout the city and another 700 media headphones.

We had to operate from about 8 a.m. till about midnight.

Originally we were going to use 3 people each on duty once per day. But Errol and I decided it would be better with just two – him and me.

We still had the 3 shift format so it meant one day one of us would do morning and evening the other would do afternoon. Swapping around each day.

When we were not on duty our passes got us into the event of our choice.
So we both spent our 'not on duty' time at some venue or another.

So what this meant was we were 'working' if that is the term from 8 till midnight for some 15 days without a break.

But wait there's more. We used to 'have to' socialise (read drink) with media reporters till probably 2 or 3 a.m. each morning. Yes Pat was one of the team!

Once the games were over, tired but happy doesn't even start to describe it.

This was INDEED one of the highlights of my life.

Meanwhile I continued working hard, travelling extensively. by this time I had graduated to a Mark 4 Zodiac – the nicest car I have ever had the pleasure to drive (except perhaps the brand new Toyota Aurion I had the pleasure to drive some years later from Wellington to Auckland) then later in 1974 Pat found herself pregnant.

We were not really fussed either way, not over the moon. but not worried either.
We prepared one of the bedrooms for the new arrival and all was going sweet until a week or two before due date Pat was rushed to Chch Women's Hospital and was delivered of a stillborn boy.

We named him Charles.

BUT most of you have never seen me really angry.

What the hospital did was put her in an open ward with other mothers who had had (live) babies!!!!

Not even in a room of her own!!!

I ranted and raved, eventually rang and appealed to our own GP who rushed in and negotiated that I could take her home forthwith – which I did.

It is not an experience I would recommend to anyone.

In 1976 Kathryn(Louise Lillian) was born followed in 1978 by Lucy (Elizabeth Mary).

We agonised over the name Lucy in case she found it too old fashioned so having Elizabeth and all its derivatives as another option, as a middle name seemed a sensible move.
This gave us a Kat and Goose. Names that seem to have stuck with them ever since.

I was about to move into my next sphere – Traffic Engineering



MARK IV ZODIAC



THE GANG



THE VAN



OOPS



MORE DRAMA

CHRISTCHURCH – THE NEXT TEN YEARS

So here I was going from Radar Simulators, Data Loggers, Power Factor Improvement, Flowrators and Complex Industrial Instrumentation to Traffic Signals, Parking Systems, Security Systems, Industrial scale light dimming systems and Traffic Counting as well as Radio Pagers etc..

Employed as a Senior Sales Engineer with Harding Signals Ltd in Christchurch it seemed that my travelling days were now over.

YEAH RIGHT.

At this stage there were really only two places in New Zealand that I had not been to 'on the company'.

They were The Hermitage (at Mt Cook) and Te Anau – both of which I had been to privately of course.

My first day saw my new boss and I off to The Hermitage !!

Some time a bit later I was sent to commission and sign off our hall dimming system at Te Anau College. So mission completed! NZ covered!

I continued see a wide range of customers – not only in Christchurch but throughout the South Island. Many of whom I already knew.

I was subsequently promoted to become Project and Service Manager.

Once this happened I had 12 staff to supervise, based in Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill.

Needless to say my need to travel did not decrease !!

And again our house became the social meeting point for many of the staff.

One aspect that did not worry me but sure worried my wife was that because we were on call 24 hrs a day we had one technician on call every night, but if he was on another job and a new one came in the the call came to me to deal with myself.

Like Queen Victoria, my wife was not amused!!

I regularly used to take young Kat or Goose on jobs with me, perched in the back of the company station wagon.

I also recall how some Technical Terms are not easily understood by outsiders.

On one occasion I had a guest in the vehicle with me and the office girl said over the Radio Telephone something like 'George Frederick as got a hard on can you deal with it?' perfectly understandable, one of the detectors had developed a permanent output.

But the chap I was with almost had a heart attack !!

It was sometime during this period that having changed jobs I got a new company vehicle so we sold Pat's car and she was promoted to the Zodiac.

Sure a great vehicle to drive, but it did have quirks and required quite a lot of maintenance,

On one (notable?) occasion Pat had it at school with her (a commercial and typing teacher) and it would not start at the end of school day.

She released the bonnet, hopped out grabbed a 10" spanner, whipped off the air-cleaner lid. Stuffed the spanner handle down the carb, and the engine started fine.

Apparently the watching '5th form boys were MOST impressed'. No doubt this added to her reputation somewhat.

I guess our main business (but not the only by any means) at that time was supply and installation of Traffic Signals, and then their subsequent preventative and emergency maintenance.

In late 1977 I decided to have a look at computer programming and took a night class at Christchurch Polytechnic.

To say I took to it like a duck takes to water would be another gross understatement !!

Again, a couple of first class teachers / tutors, Barry Frost and Durham McAven.

By the end of the first month I was ecstatic that this THING could make my life so much easier.

Let me explain!

As Service and Project Manager I had the annual task (among other things) of preparing maintenance quotes.

At that stage we had 126 intersections in Christchurch (more in Timaru, Dunedin and Invercargill), each with its own mix of hardware – detectors, poles, lanterns etc.

Prior to this we had to work out a nominal price to charge for maintenance for each item (multiplied by how many of each item at each particular intersection) on the individual schedules, intersection by intersection, were then typed up and eventually submitted.

However if we wanted to increase, or decrease the price for any particular item, for whatever reason then the reworking could be a week long process!!

But by using the computer, we could not only make any changes to the base rate, but then have the recalculations done in seconds and actually printed out without using the typist at all.

So within about a month of starting to learn I did the entire annual quote by computer in a matter of hours.

Subsequently I progressed to become a part time tutor in my own right. Eventually teaching 4 hrs. per week at night and 4 hrs. a week during the day!!



KAREN WAS A REALLY GOOD SPORT



During this time we decided to add another 800 sq ft to our 1200 sq ft house.

We enlarged the kitchen, added another 'good lounge', A dining room and a study (office) for me and another one for Pat. (I should add also that by this time we had also bought the section next door – and paid it off!)

Sister Sue and Ian who by then also lived in Christchurch, helped, we employed one carpenter to supervise etc. and subcontracted out anything we could not do ourselves.
So there you have it a 2000 sq ft house on half an acre of land at Hoon Hay in Christchurch.

As I said earlier I continued to regularly take Kat or Goose to work with me (just throwing them in the back of the Company Station Wagon)

My days at Hardings were coming to an end though.

How come?

Well, as the Service and Project Manager I was responsible for both sales, and seeing the project through.

At the time Hardings were manufacturing a marvellous Traffic Signal Controller the CT250.

It could be made to do anything, and that I can virtually guarantee., configurations were endless as were specific modifications to suit particular requirements.

This meant that no other manufacturer (read overseas) really had a look in to supplying traffic controllers for this market.

A couple of disgruntled ex employees had left the Hardings, formed their own company and did a deal with a major international company who had agreed to support them to the hilt and to make up any losses they might incur.

So in reality it meant that if I quoted to 'get the job' then there was no way we could make a profit on it (because they had a policy to simply quote for half the 'proper price') which they knew and if I priced it to make a modest profit then we simply didn't get the job.

So I was under tremendous pressure.

Eventually I had had enough.

I had an opportunity to move into a pure Computer Programming job – which I subsequently did.

Mind you with my agreement to 'work out my notice' I continued to work at Hardings each afternoon for the next month or so

As an aside (well not really an aside), It was only subsequently discovered that the deal referred to above had only been 'any losses incurred in the 1st three years will be made up'. So after three years they were no more !!

If I had only stuck around for another year or so I might be still there.

Mind you my wife was delighted that as a simple programmer based in Christchurch my travelling days would finally be over and so would my having to work all manner of hours.

YEAH RIGHT!

So I was off to NZ Wool Testing Authority, with its main test lab in Christchurch and Branches in Auckland, Napier, Wanganui, Wellington, Timaru, Dunedin and Invercargill.

I think it fair to say that NZWTA was probably the first serious entity to use true distributed computing in New Zealand.

We had (almost) identical computers WANG 2200, multi user minis in each location. Two terminals at branch level (with printers, modems etc.) and up to 12 in the labs,

Each place had 1200 baud (dial up) modems and at least twice a day everyone would ring everyone else, pass the data on to be printed nearest to be where it needed to be.

Yes I did by far the majority of the actual computer Programming
As time went on we also provided a 300 baud dial-up option for data direct to farmers, Such as Forest Range – more of that later.

Once more we had technical terms not quite understood by outsiders.

Most (but not all) of the operators were female, and during the (at least) twice daily phone calls it was often said, who is going down first?

And then I'll go down first.

This was because the modems all had a large lever to press down for data flow !!

I was responsible for all the programming, and also oversaw the entire data entry operation.

This proved to be a somewhat daunting task and I eventually asked if I could possibly employ someone else, when it looked like my request might get approved I went back to Christchurch Polytechnic and asked if they had any 'bright young things' who might be interested.

The very next day one of my former star pupils (Lynsey) knocked on my door and said I'm here for your job!

Hang on a mo – I haven't even had the position approved as yet – never mind I'll work for nothing until your approval comes through!!

She was not going to risk the job going to someone else.

This was the start of a friendship which endures to this very day!

There is just so much happened over the next few years that I struggle either recall it all or summarize it sufficiently.

In those days, access to the computer was difficult to obtain.

The lab worked at least two shifts each day, often three. So getting at the computer(s) when not being used was always a mission.

On one such occasion I was again in to the lab early to get the computer to myself, I was there about 4.30 a.m. (My wife was, again - not amused)

When who else should arrive about 10 mins later but Lynsey. Bloody Hell what does one have to do around here to get the computer to myself she said

We used to backup the entire system every morning before anything else happened – yes I know it should have been the night before, but data entry could have been going on till say midnight anyway, so every morning it was.

For other systems that Wang themselves managed they used to employ University Students to undertake the two (or more) hour backup from about 4 a.m. each morning.

As time went on we managed to develop auto data entry direct from the lab with tickets printed with OCR (Optical Character Recognition).

We printed these tickets ourselves with a Golf Ball typewriter. I well remember even going to Dunedin City Council (an old stomping ground of mine) to see how well their OCR system worked too.

Whilst at NZWTA I steadily progressed up the ranks, from Programmer, to Senior Programmer, to Data Processing Manager, to Manager – Communications and Data Processing etc., etc
With the company's blessing I also did lots of work for Forest Range, also Fuhrmann's and others.

I sort of became regarded as the wool industry Computer man.

I hesitate to say expert because expert comes from 'x' being an unknown quantity and spurt is a drip under pressure' say no more.

A new laboratory was built in Napier and I had to relocate (I rented a brand new house in Bay View Rd overlooking the Port of Napier on Middle Hill.)

I designed the computer system layout (still the good old WANG 2200) but now with the full 16 terminals, direct input from devices in the lab and what seemed to be an amazing increase in data storage capacity.

I also had considerable input into the design of the country wide PABX system interconnection.

We now had direct phone lines from Napier to Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

As I had a PABX extension at home that gave me free calls to these cities too.

But this too was not to last.

For reasons I still cannot fathom, the WTA decided to 'sell out' to big brother AWTA (Aust WTA).

This was not good!

They decided NZWTA should become just another branch for them, and they set about getting rid of any personnel not Australian.

Thus, Kiwis (like me), Scots (like Fred) and any other non Australians got the DCM (don't come

Monday), and despite a small redundancy payout this was an utter shock!

I registered with a number of employment agencies all of whom reckoned there would be no problem placing me – yeah right.

At this stage Derek from Fuhrmanns rang and said something along the lines of you are too valuable to be lost to the industry, what say you come back to Christchurch, you can have our downstairs office rent free for a year and we will increase our retainer so you have a base income to work with.

You can imagine it took be a hell of a long time for me to decide. About 2 seconds !!!

As will be covered later Forest Range station also came to the party.

And I was back in Christchurch!!

DABBING IN POLITICS

In the late '70s I was encouraged to join the Sydenham branch of the National Party. Sydenham was a Labour stronghold the seat held for years by Norman Kirk then subsequently by his son John Kirk.

Our party always struggled to find a good enough candidate to stand against him so one year (1981 I think) – by this time I had become Chairman of the Branch and I said that if no one better was nominated by close of nominations, I was not going to be faced with having no candidate so would stand myself.

So I stood on the platform of 'Sykes for Sydenham',

I was proudly one of 'Rob's Mob'.

I certainly recall standing on street corners – yes we still did that– arguing for National Super to be a pay as you go system, entitling everyone from 60 years of age to receive (without any kind of means testing – thus removing a large administration cost) 80% of the average wage.

I argued for this strenuously and National were subsequently elected and the policy introduced.

As to be expected, being in Sydenham, I did not get elected.

Pity that !

But now that I am fully retired (yeah right) I could live on 80% of the average wage, but struggle now that it has been slashed to 50% of the statutory minimum wage and not even payable till 65.

In my opinion both major parties have been responsible for this sheer dereliction of duty!

Some years later I did manage to spend a couple of hours or so going over this discussion document though with our local electorate MP.

The document follows in its entirety .

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

As a former electorate Chairman and Parliamentary Candidate I could no longer even vote National largely because of the whole heap of broken promises, not to say almost 'criminal' actions.

Although it used to be said that the only thing wrong with New Zealand was nine years of a Labour Government, we are certainly no better, probably much worse.

I would appreciate the opportunity to present my views, hopefully enter into 'meaningful dialogue' and perhaps eventually right some of the obvious wrongs.

INDEX

National Super

Education

Electricity

Transport/Traffic

oOo

NATIONAL SUPER.

In 1981, as the National Candidate, I stood on street corners (quite literally) expounding the virtues of National Super. These were clearly defined as

Being a 'Pay as you go scheme' paid out of general taxation in recognition of years of hard work older people had already contributed to the country.

Being Paid to ALL N.Z. Citizens from the age of 60 until death.

Being paid at the rate of 80% of the average weekly wage

Being a RIGHT, not subject to the whim of Public Servants

Being regarded as income and therefore taxed along with any other income.

You will be aware that the Labour Party at the time was promoting their scheme, which (like the more modern Kiwisaver) required both employers and employees to contribute to the NZ Super Fund, which the Government would then invest on the NZ Stock Exchange.

This very cleverly meant that after some ten years or so the Government would own at least 51% of EVERY major public company in NZ.

This was seen as 'Nationalisation' by stealth and was abhorrent to many. Not that nationalisation is necessarily bad (see Page 4 – Electricity).

The current Kiwisaver is similar but somewhat softened by having several Kiwisaver suppliers 'competing' to place funds and the danger of 'the Government owing everything' is no longer such a real threat.

It is, however, still, of course, yet more indirect (i.e. hidden) taxation.

HOWEVER.

What has happened now is that whereas the qualifying age of 60 was designed to encourage people to properly retire and thus effectively create new jobs by allowing younger people to 'move up', this was scrapped and the age made 65.

How many new jobs this cost can never be known neither can the hardship of the retirees effected be properly estimated.

It is interesting to note that France is now planning on reducing the qualifying age to 62 for the very reasons espoused above.

80% of the average wage was designed to be enough to live on, again to allow proper retirement and no doubt create more jobs 'at the bottom end'.

So what have we done now? Screwed the rate down to the extent that everyone must now 'work till we drop', just to pay living expenses.

What a way to treat our Senior Citizens.

It also seems that Public Servants are once again tasked with the job of making life as hard as possible for older folk.

In my own case every year I am quite viciously attacked in an attempt to reduce my meagre income – which although now in my 70's am still having to work part time to supplement.

Would you not agree that this really is nothing more or less than state sanctioned elder abuse?

The probing, interfering questions, the unreasonableness are, quite frankly absurd.

For example I had managed to put a little money aside and earned some \$20 interest. They demanded that I get the bank to 'verify' this – the bank required (quite reasonably I feel) the sum of \$45 to dig out the figures to do so.

Eventually the bureaucrats accepted that access to my IRD figures would suffice.

But hang on a minute, I thought that Inland Revenue dealings were sacrosanct.

It consider this to be most unreasonable.

No doubt I shall have this fight again later this year.

Mind you now that the government is happy for all govt departments to have direct access to all citizens IRD files then it seems complaining is pretty pointless.

I am also most concerned at the 'Politics of Envy' exhibited even within our own region.

If one lives in Thames, Tairua or Whangamata a so called 'Accommodation Supplement' can be claimed.

However if you live in Pauanui (which I had to in order to work) it is said that 'if you can afford to live in Pauanui you can afford to pay the rent' and the Supplement is capped at a much lower figure.

I now live in Tairua, despite the fact that some 60% of my super now goes on rent!

I would appreciate your comments on this terribly unfair attitude.

EDUCATION

The NOVAPAY disaster is a classic case of 'Big Brother Interference'.

It is well accepted that it costs some \$5000 per year to educate each child, and also that there are many good NZ written and supported payroll programs (Ace, Vip etc immediately spring to mind) each of which cope 'magnificently' with up to say 500 employees.

Why on earth does the Education Dept. not simply pay each school the \$5000 per pupil and let them organise their own affairs, including payrolls?

There is, in my view, no need for the present shambles to exist.

At the local level I am appalled at the Dept. requiring a school to re enrol what is simply a young thug who, in reality should be in what is euphemistically called a 'juvenile correctional establishment'.

They then provide money as a bribe to the school. To take him back. What nonsense !!

Surely any available money should go either to the pupils with a good attendance record or good achievement or even good effort – but not thrown at a young criminal.

Your comments would be appreciated.

ELECTRICITY

In my younger days I was part of the electricity supply industry at which time the two most important things were:

a. Security of Supply

i.e. Having sufficient 'spinning reserve' to cope with unexpected eventualities, having lines running at typically half their maximum capacity and generally following 'good housekeeping' practices.

b. Keeping costs to an Absolute Minimum.

i.e. being well aware that cost of electricity has a substantial impact on every New Zealander, not only directly inasmuch as 'home usage' but even more so as a business cost which ends up in the overall price of goods. Whilst it used to be thought that inflation was 'too much money chasing too few goods' it is now realised, instead to be a direct result of governmental charges, in particular that most insidious of 'hidden taxation'. This puts the selling price of all goods up and creates immense pressure for wage rises. It was therefore crucial that pricing be kept to an absolute minimum.

But what happens now !!!

After Max Bradford (who, as a former President of the Manufacturers Federation should have known better) set out to 'free up the industry' – yeah right, the industry has well and truly gone to the dogs, effectively allowing the government to 'screw the consumer' with yet another form of indirect (i.e. hidden) taxation, the price rising astronomically ever since.

As I understand it the 'players' now compete, not as one would expect to keep prices as low as possible, but to drive profitability up as much as possible.

When the former Meremere Power Station (correct name – Mercer Steam Plant), was sold it was conditional on its not being used to generate electricity ever again in case it became a competitor and might in some way hold prices down. (Although as a coal fired 'base load station' with a history of unreliability I am not quite sure how.)

I would have thought that this would contravene something in the Trade Practices Act.

Mind you demolishing of standby power stations, keeping brand new stations 'out of service' and similar questionable tactics all seem to be done in order to keep prices (i.e. profitability) sky high.

For example when I came up here from Christchurch some ten years ago I was paying \$80 per month for electricity, (still an inordinately high amount) but now am required to pay \$350 per month. All this with a less than 25% increase in National Super.

It is no wonder so many of us are in such dire straits.

I recently learned that Transpower (i.e. the industry arm responsible for simply transmitting electricity throughout the country) after paying all its costs, loans etc is still 'levying' (my word is screwing) every single consumer for an extra \$250 per annum each. Surely this cannot be allowed to continue.

Although not a fan of industry Nationalisation, on this occasion it does seem to me to be by far the lesser of two evils. The current fragmentation means there really is no-one truly accountable for the shambles at present existing, there is little if any control over price gouging as present carried out, and, of course, the consumer as such really is just a downtrodden pawn. Any concept of supplying a service has been replaced by a 'screw the consumer' attitude. I am appalled. You ?

TRANSPORT

This is where the vitriol really starts to flow and the language could even be termed 'abusive'. I make no apology for this as the crimes committed against the citizens of the country in the terms of this portfolio could be termed horrendous!

Firstly, the National Roads Board Act (1954) required ALL income derived from (subsequently) long suffering motorists was to be vested in the NRB for the good of said MOTORISTS.

In addition the government would contribute an additional 25% as its 'social contribution'.

So what happens now ? The government steals all the money and then drips some of it back to where it rightfully all belonged in the first place.

In addition so much is siphoned off beforehand this must be regarded as a crime.

For example some \$750 million is taken just in vehicle licensing fees.

As a part of this – when putting a new vehicle on the road there is a penalty tax demanded – but hey this is not refunded when the vehicle has reached the end of its useful life and is taken off the road again. Is this fair or reasonable? I suggest not.

I doubt very much if there is any justification for arbitrary speed limits, WOF exams, or even random breath testing.

All of which severely impinging on the rights of NZ citizens.

The old bogey of 'safety' is likely to be shouted but in reality this is just platitudinous claptrap.

But even if political correctness means that these regimes cannot be simply killed then there are two things that can and should (in my opinion) be done to improve the situation somewhat.

Firstly the level of infringement fees has to be seriously looked at.

With most being at least twice that any reasonable man would agree to. \$300 for no flag on a trailer outboard motor for example!

So called speeding infringements are also absolutely outrageous! To say nothing of WOF, registration and similar so called offences.

It is usually acknowledged that any law that automatically criminalises 80% (or more) of the population is bad law.

These fees are also so high that, for many citizens, having to pay them simply puts off further away the day when they are able to afford, repairs, re licensing etc.

The 'system' could be significantly improved if the police should simply be required to have 'just cause to suspect' and not be permitted to carry out random checks, embark on what the courts describe as 'fishing expeditions', and should have to treat motorists in the same way as they are supposed to do with the general population.

Originally there was some sympathy for the officer who was attacked with a machete. However this quickly evaporated once it was discovered that instead of stopping the car because it was stolen (which would have met the 'just cause to suspect' criteria) he stopped it out of sheer bloody mindedness.

A recent officer attack seems to be in similar vein. When will they ever learn?

As an example I quote the occasion when a truly drunk driver had been reported as 'weaving all over the road' and being a danger to other motorists (and the general public) – he went on to actually kill.

When reported to the police, their response was that they would prefer to check thousands of 'ordinary' drivers, not waste resources dealing with one. I ask you!! happily infringing on civil liberties of thousands instead of dealing with a genuine criminal.

Backed by what can only be called 'those dickheads in Wellington' they now regard every motorist as a potential (or even actual) criminal.

I suspect the reality is that when Colin McLaughlan decided to merge the Police and Ministry of Transport this gave licence to the Police to act in this way and enabled the very worse side of their characters to come to the fore.

This really has to stop.

By all means if we are going to keep this highly oppressive regime in operation then at least punish the crime – not the possibility of some so called crime perhaps being committed sometime in the future.

Speaking personally I have no doubt that the detestation, or even outright hatred of the police which some people end up carrying throughout their lifetime is a direct result of this stupid police attitude.

I now wish to comment on other related philosophical matters.

As far as excessive fuel and other costs are concerned this too directly attributable to this government.

Much is made of oil company profits but in reality most motorists costs are directly attributable to those dickheads in Wellington.

Even though virtually all consumables have a transport element in their costs this government seems to take the attitude that all motorists should be punished (severely) just for being on the road!

What nonsense!

In my own case when I came up here some 10 years ago, road user charges for my van were \$18 per 1000 km (still absurdly high) but now, only 10 years later under this government they are now \$60 per 1000 km. Six times the price !!!!

This in addition to the actual greatly increased diesel price.

Quite frankly this is ridiculous.

Now we come to the piece d' resistance.

I could NEVER vote for someone who voted in parliament to raise the 'driving' age.

And the only reason I voted for you personally was that you had not been tarnished with that brush. If Sandra had still been the local candidate NEVER as she was one to vote for this most ridiculous change.

I also consider learning to drive to be much akin to learning to swim – that is as children grow up it is just something they are taught (or learn). Once they go to high school they should get a lifetime licence.

Consider the analogy of a river gently flowing to the sea.

Once these dickheads decide to dam (or should a better word perhaps be damn) the river, hold the water back for as long as possible then finally let it go when forced to do so, it is any wonder that stupid things happen.

It could be seen to be a self fulfilling prophesy – you assume that teenagers only drive to misbehave, and lo and behold, having held them back so unreasonably long that is quite often just what happens.

All the fault of those dickheads in Wellington.

So thus with drivers. How on earth can anyone say 'you must not even learn to drive until you are 16 !' and even then what used to be available to us at 15 cannot be achieved until 18 or so (after jumping through all sorts of hoops) – again deliberately reducing employment opportunities for the young.

Any hand wringing over youth unemployment is entirely unjustified given my comments earlier

and, of course, what I am saying here.

To emphasise – my son had a chance of (admittedly part time) employment, some 6 k away from home – he could easily and safely have driven there and home again, but those dickheads said to me 'no you will have to take an hour off work drive home (20k) take him to his work, then go back to your own job!'

This to be repeated at the end of day. Despite the fact that my loss of income would probably not have been met by his earnings, and that a total of 12k has suddenly become 50k, this is what they required!! What utter nonsense.

The whole graduated licensing regime is a complete and utter disaster. How many people it keeps employed I cannot hope to imagine.

Again using a personal perspective, my son obtained his Learner's Licence the day after his 16th birthday (whereas I had obtained my FULL licence at 15), then as encouraged he logged 130 hrs. of 'supervised driving' which equates to some 5000 km, (and over \$1000 in fuel cost), some country driving, (gravel roads etc), some motorway driving, (in and out of Auckland on many occasions), long distances (sometimes towing a caravan or trailer), and generally making up for lost time.

He now has his restricted licence which is marginally more useful, but I still am really annoyed that these dickheads take the view that 'new drivers' only drive to misbehave.

I repeat my scenario above about the river flowing. They only misbehave because their normal progression has been so severely held back.

These dickheads seem determined to reduce employment opportunities for the young, instil in them what is probably a lifelong hatred of the police, and generally treat all drivers as either potential or actual criminals.

Considering we used to regard ourselves as a broad spectrum party, standing up for the rights of the individual we have certainly now fallen well short.

We really must consider the punitive cost regime too. \$100 for what is euphemistically called a 'learners licence', in reality simply 'permission to learn', another \$130 or so to sit for a restricted license, another \$80 per test too!! Is this fair or reasonable? I suggest not.

In my view a 'licence to learn' should be available (at no charge) on application, regardless of age, it should automatically become a restricted license once the person goes to high school, and then after a test at say 15 becomes a full license. I am yet to be convinced that the current oppressive regime has any advantages whatsoever, to anyone.

oOo

Finally, a word about our insidious hidden taxation – not well understood by many people and kept well and truly under wraps by politicians.

The average person pays income tax at over 30% , then despite an absolute guarantee that GST would never be levied above 10%, it is now charged at 15%, fuel cost is 50% pure taxation (and also goes into prices of everything). Electricity prices are largely hidden taxation, and encouraging

private companies to further price gouge is quite frankly utterly unacceptable. The argument of competition is quite ridiculous.

The reality is that we all spend well over 80% of any income on hidden taxation. An appalling situation.

oOo

I welcome the opportunity to present my views, I do realise that at as backbench MP (even a government one) your influence is somewhat limited (and likely to me more so as an opposition one), but the attitude, arrogance and general unwillingness to correct obvious wrongs has become the hallmark of the current administration..naturally I could never ever vote National again. As for my electorate candidate vote I reserve judgement.

oOo

One of his comments was 'I wish we had you in parliament now'!!

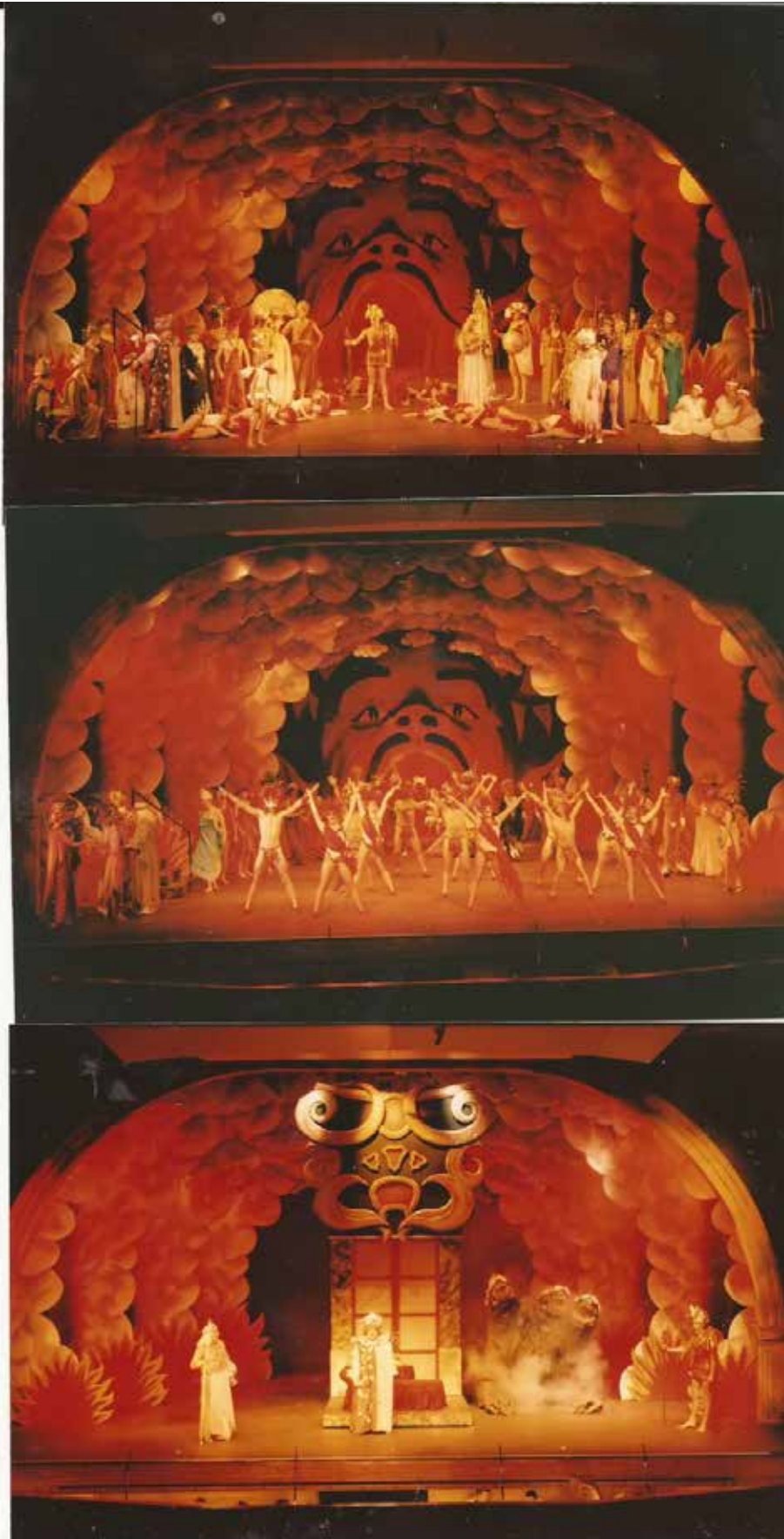
but back to the story



HMS PINAFORE – MY PRODUCTION



SINGING IN THE RAIN



ORPHEUS





MY FAIR LADY
WHERE THERE WAS AS MUCH TALENT BACK STAGE AS ON IT



MY FAIR LADY AFTER PARTY

SPREYDON BOOKS AND TOYS (SBT)

About this time we bought a shop in Selwyn St Spreydon and named it Spreydon Books and Toys (SBT).

It proved somewhat difficult to make a reasonable shop profit, but by this time I was doing quite a bit of 'moonlighting' programming for private customers, so we made this a division of SBT - SBT Computing.

Thus SBT Computing and its various subsequent derivatives was born.

Whilst I was still at NZWTA, somehow I had my interest in G&S rekindled, once more being back stage crew.

I can recall quite clearly the day Lynsey said 'you will get on well with my Mother' Yeah Right again.

Her Mum (Frances) was a 'professional' actress and we went to many shows at the Court Theatre etc together, not to mention everything she herself appeared in at Repertory Theatre.

Although Pat had little interest in theatre I did rope Kat and Goose in on several occasions.

Quite a number of G&S and similar shows that G&S society put on, including Orpheus in the Underworld, Singing in the Rain, My Fair Lady, Aspects of Love, Sweet Charity and many more.

Of these My Fair Lady was probably the best, in the sense of the hardest work but most rewarding overall.

But I must relate as much as I dare about 'Mary Poppins'.

The author Pam Travers although having sold the film rights to Disney had kept the stage rights to herself.

Canterbury Children's Theatre is not theatre by children but theatre FOR children.

Our Director, Malcolm Jones went overseas to plead with her to be allowed to do it as CCT 25th Anniversary production.

He achieved his mission, and the rumour is that it cost us only a case of Gin. Well done Malcolm!

We did this at Theatre Royal, Lynne was once more our Stage Manager, I asked for and was given the job of fly-man.

This requires a lot of effort tugging on ropes etc., pulling scenery up and down and in this show even people.

A 'strip to the waist' job is ever there was one.

The fly floor rig was actually installed for My Fair Lady in 1956 and left there because its removal would have cost more than it was worth.

It meant to use it now quite a lot of physical effort was required!

It was an almost sold out season – we usually had a 2 week season. And this year from August 29th 2001 till Sept 12th

We had a 'VIP' night on the Friday night, then the snow came !! And did it what !!!!!!!!

So the Saturday matinee, and so the Saturday night show also the Sunday show, simply had to be cancelled.

The next one being Tuesday night. But wait there's more. The actor who played Mary Poppins was instructed by her doctor not to sing for 2 weeks, her understudy was certainly not able to perform every single night either.

We did have two sets of child actors because of the strenuous schedule though.

So, the season really started on the Tuesday right through till the final weekend.

At one stage the producer came and asked us all if we could do extra shows because we had had to cancel so many shows at the beginning of the season and we had a waiting list for tickets.

Unhesitatingly we agreed so.....

We did the Friday night show, then had an all night Cast party (to which all we crew were all invited), then a Saturday afternoon show, the pub afterwards (for a meal!) then the Saturday night show, followed by another all night party (hosted by the Crew, to which all the cast were invited), we then did another two shows on the Sunday.

By this time Mary Poppins was still not singing, but allowed to speak her lines.

We had another very good singer – who had been Elisa Doolittle in My Fair Lady, but was 8 months pregnant at the time – positioned in the orchestra pit who sang all the songs.

So, we did 5 shows and two all night parties in three days. Some of the activities at the parties MUST however remain under wraps.



MARY POPPINS
PROBABLY MY FAVOURITE SHOW



MARY POPPINS HERSELF





MARY POPPINS
THE CREW



OUR FLY FLOOR TEAM

TO CONTINUE

In the mid eighties my marriage was on the rocks too, I blamed Pat, she blamed me but the upshot of it was that we didn't quite make our 20 years .together.

Kat and Goose were most upset, physically trying to stop me leaving, taking my keys, barricading the door etc.

The females all stayed in the house while I had a succession for 'grotty little flats'. I also continued to pay their private school fees and also the legally required Child Support.etc

I continued a close relationship with Kat and Goose (and their friends too)

Eventually we negotiated that Pat would stay in the house and pay me half its value.

This necessitated her taking out a brand new mortgage (about 12 times the amount of our original one), and as this only went part way to getting me into a house of my own I had to do the same!

So from being mortgage free we both became saddled with significant mortgages to service.

I bought at 127 Baker St New Brighton.

A two bedroom place with a nice office, a sleepout and plenty of space. I also managed to get a spa pool and built a room for it.

THE EARLY SBT DAYS

In 1988 I returned to Christchurch, no company car any more, and The Van had pretty much reached its use by date.

So I had to buy a (Ford) Laser Station Wagon.

Derek and Peter were as good as their word, provided a large 8 person office (at no charge) and I set about building the business up.

Customers far and wide appeared delighted that I was back, so I continued to build a customer base, and obtained another Wang 2200 to power the office.

We supplied hardware and wrote software (programs) for wool clients, large and small, throughout the South Island literally from Blenheim to Invercargill and all points in between. One customer remarked that ' You will never make NZWTA Christmas Card list' This too was a pity considering just how much effort I had put into that organisation.

Mind you I also had the 'then new' Wang PC known as the Wang Professional.

I also bought, supplied to customers, and still have a WLTC (Wang Laptop Computer).

The design brief for this was that it had to have a built in printer, an internal 'hard disk' be battery powered and readily expandable.

I seem to recall that it also had to run both Wang software and this new fangled stuff that IBM were producing.

The Wang PC was some 50% faster than the equivalent IBM Product.



MY DESK AS IT WAS SUPPOSED TO LOOK



MY DESK AS IT USUALLY LOOKED



SBT CREW



WANG NZ STAFF AT THE
WUNZ TOGA PARTY IN NEW PLYMOUTH
SINGING "WE ARE THE WUNZ"

NEW ZEALAND FIBRE MEASUREMENT LTD

The industry was not entirely happy with the services offered by my ex employer and thus with solid support from Forest Range Station, a company was formed to utilise a NIR (Near Infrared Recfractometer) which by all accounts could give us accurate yield and micron results for the 50,000 or so samples we were to test in our first year.

I was fortunate to get a number of ex WTA staffers on board, increased the computer grunt, built and managed a temperature and humidity controlled room and obviously improved communication with the actual wool growers (farmers to you) .

We also supplied sheep eartags, plastic sample bags, and of course a computer programming and hardware supply service.

But the results did not meet our rigorous standards of accuracy so sadly the Directors (of which I was one) and the shareholders had to pull the pin and close the operation down after about a year.

Very sad for all involved, as a lot of the time we had been working three 8 hr shifts every day.



NZ FIBRE MEASUREMENT LTD

COOK STRAIT FERRIES

During my time at E C Gough, Hardings, NZWTA and even once fully self employed, there was a continual need to travel between North and South Islands (usually with a vehicle).

Until the service was withdrawn I usually preferred to use the Lyttelton to Wellington overnight service with full cabin service.

It meant leaving Lyttelton about 8 p.m. And arrived in Wellington pretty much after a good nights sleep at 7 a.m. Breakfast was available on the ship.

A similar journey was undertaken in the reverse direction.

Originally the service was undertaken by the ships Maori, and Hinemoa, backed up by the older Rangitira when annual surveys etc made one of the others unavailable, that one always had a noticeable lean.

Vehicles were hauled aboard by crane, secured to the deck and then lifted off again at the other end next morning.

Once the Picton ferries started the Maori was sent away to be converted to a RORO (Roll On Roll Off) configuration and Rangitira was called into service!!

Then Hinemoa was then converted too.

I must stress that these two ships did really sterling service, each doing a daily trip between the islands for many years.

Although my involvement was mainly because of a vehicle it was the premium way to travel between the islands (after all you got a nights accommodation as part of the deal, and still have all day available to work).

I well remember Norman Kirk travelling this way when he was Prime Minister.

The ships were getting older and thus USSCO (Union Steamship Company) bought a wonderful new ship the Wahine!!

Wrongly, in my opinion they then scrapped the old Rangitira, and sold off the Hinemoa – a move they would come to regret.

However the Wahine was, indeed, a wonderful ship, a fully enclosed bridge, the very latest radar (obviously an interest of mine) and licensed restaurants etc for passengers.

I was, by then, not only a regular passenger, but thanks to other connections also a VIP.

This meant that usually (not always) I was given an 'owners cabin'.

There were two of these both amidships one each side – port and starboard.

This meant they didn't roll, and were exceptionally large compared to other cabins. I REALLY enjoyed travelling on the Wahine !!

Then the 'Wahine Storm' of April 1968 changed all that.

The ship went down inside Wellington Harbour with the loss of 53 lives, all the cars on board etc and was, indeed a disaster.

The purchasers of the Hinemoa refused to sell it back so the service was stuck with just the Maori, USSCO pushed it to its limits doing return crossings (one night one day) several days a week but instead of a simple crew roster (nightly) their staff saw this extra work as a way of making money out of the unhappy situation and lots of problems arose because of their demands.

However the building of a new ship the new Rangitira was soon underway, but by then the disruption was encouraging more and more people to go by air or travel to Picton.

I think we were up to ARA5 by then – Aramoana was the first, then Aranui, then Aratika, then a freight only Arahanga – ARA5 became the Arahura.

Rangitira was also a lovely ship, I think modelled very much on the ill fated Wahine, but by then the writing was on the wall.

USSCO just leased it rather than buying outright and from memory it lasted just over a year – having to do the job the Maori had done since the Wahine disaster.

The Maori having been gracefully retired to give Rangitira more of the available passengers.

So once there was no more Lyttelton service I like so many others had to make the trek to Picton – thus wasting at least one working day in reality probably more.

I can still remember the announcement given when a ship arrived “Would those passengers with motor vehicles on board the vessel please proceed to the vehicle deck and seat themselves in their cars ready to drive ashore. Please do not start your engine until asked to do so, and a reminder that smoking is not permitted on the vehicle deck”

The modern version really just says the same thing – I have no idea why they changed it unless like me so many passengers could chant it in unison.

Because of my Radar Simulation involvement, I also got several trips in the ARA ships, on the bridge or the captain's day room.

I am, I think, brave enough able to relate a somewhat memorable occasion (yes it was after Pat and I had separated). I was heading for Napier and waiting to 'Proceed to the vehicle deck.....' when I was approached by what can only be described as a gorgeous young girl and asked if I had a car on board and so could she come off with me. Affirmative!!

It turned out that she was heading for New Plymouth and, of course I was heading for Napier!!

During the trip north towards Sanson I kept trying to get her to come to Napier with me and stay until the weekend when I could take her to New Plymouth.

But she really wanted to get there sooner.

She did want to know though if she did come to Napier could we possibly sleep together another affirmative !!

After all at that time we had a company flat in Napier.

But when we got to Sanson she really felt she should head to her destination, so while disappointed I agreed and let her off.

But about 100m down the road I had second thoughts , so what if I was a day or so late for work, this was an opportunity not to be missed.

So I turned around and went back for her! Just in time to see her being picked up by another car heading her way.

I didn't even get a phone no. Bugger!

FOREST RANGE STATION

In 1985 whilst at NZWTA they were approached by Russell and Jeanette who farmed a 36,000 acre sheep station (since increased to 54,000 acres) 15 km south of Lindis Pass in the Central Otago High Country.

They were looking for some support to computerise their operation, and to become quite a large customer (some 20,000 samples per year typically).

Needless to say this sort of thing was 'right up my alley'.

I helped them set up their original system (based on the Wang Professional computer), and arranged for pretty much all records from 1980 to be manually entered.

From 1985 onwards manual data entry was to become a thing of the past.

Test results were downloaded directly from the test laboratory, but birth details still needed to be matched.

This too changed once we were able to get our OCR stamped onto their Kenmor eartags!

This meant that simply waving the wand was enough to get the sheep number passed to the computer and of course matching data became readily possible.

A breakthrough came when we had the ability to clip a removable tag onto the permanent eartag do a cross reference within the computer and then track the fleece once shorn right through the system.

As it is imperative to know exactly how much wool each sheep produces (for breeding purposes) each fleece is weighed and computerisation enabled everything to be matched up and the database updated all without error.

THIS WAS AMAZING.

So much so that in October 1985 we had clipon tags being attached to the existing sheep eartags, then removed by the shearers when shearing that particular sheep, this tag then being waved in front of the wand, the fleece weighed and the whole lot then being 'recorded for posterity' in the Wang Professional in the shearing shed itself.

It may not be apparent just how leading edge this technology was in 1985 – less than 10 years after my first lesson in programming!

Whilst having a beer that night we said something like nobody, but nobody is going to believe we are actually doing this – not just talking about it.

So we had a video made (copies of which are still available – even on CD).

We could all see that while a PC in the shed was sort of fine, we really needed something with more grunt. and probably housed in a 'cleaner' environment.

So we then installed a proper Wang 2200 multiuser mini with its own data storage cabinet, streaming tape drive for daily backup etc. back in the homestead

This had up to 16 terminal capacity - we had the main consul, also the PC set up as a terminal, another terminal in the kitchen, another in the ;upstairs office;, another in the woolshed and another in the conveyor room, over which all sheep travelled several times in their lives.

There was also a dial up modem to receive test lab data, and for remote programmer access for maintenance etc.

By this time we had also developed our automatic drafting gates.

Each of the 9 gates could have appropriate criteria set, yield, micron, age,etc,etc and then by waving a wand over the eartag the correct gate would open.

Another marvellous innovation. The program to drive this follows below.

We were making waves – admittedly small ones – but the Rural Programme 'Agreport' then sent a team of 4 people who over the period of about 3 or 4 days recorded about 26 mins of video, edited down to about half and subsequently broadcast on TV1.

By this time we had detailed records of some 200,000 sheep. (This has since increased to over 500,000). The file handling system known as Katie(named after my eldest daughter) can access any record in about a fifth of a second.

I doubt if any modern computer can realistically beat that even now.

It is true to say that I am immensely proud of the file handler called Keyfile Access Technique Including Extras (KATIE) which superceded Latest Upgrade now Copes with Years of data (LUCY).

For the technically minded it uses a keyfile and a true random access data file.

When a sheep no, sex and year of birth is entered a preset algorithm calculates EXACTLY where in a the key file the matching record exists.

There is no need to scan the record is either there or not there.

If not there a message 'Sorry record is not found' is returned' if it is found the keyfile record points directly to the one and only place on the disk that all the data will be found.

This data typically includes yield and micron readings for each year of the sheep's life, all its fleece weights, its sire and dam, sometimes body weights, other features etc.

If the sheep has been sold who it has been sold to is also shown.

It can also include information about its progeny, including their number, av yield. Micron clean fleece weight etc,etc.

The actual birthdate is significant too as is the sampling and more particularly the various shearing dates.

For example if two hoggets (nominally 1 year olds – what can be termed teenagers) both produce the same weight of fleece but one was born (say) 5 days after the other then it is actually a better wool grower because it has been around for less time.

All of this is taken care of in the calculations – certainly in the matter of indexes (sure indicies for the pedantic) as described next.

Over the years the average micron – I.e fibre fineness – which pretty much determines the price eventually received for the wool, has reduced from about 18.5 mic to between 11 mic and 13mic.

The computer produced histograms showed that whilst the average micron was reducing each year so was the 'spread' thus the bell curve was much narrower.

This without reducing fleece weight i.e. the amount of wool. This has been achieved by
INDEXING.

We have had some seven built in indexes, one actually written by me – with some embarrassment on my part because of the sheer numbers of people who used it because of its simplicity.

The others were of course 'proper' each with a string of mathematical equations, which one had to have a PhD to comprehend.

The index for each sheep can be included on the screen and printout.

What we were able to prove was that the top 20% of sheep were the top 20% no matter what index was used and similarly the bottom 20% were always the bottom 20%.

It was those in the middle that had decisions to be made.

We could also prove this by running a program called INDEXES which showed the whole seven indexes for any sheep or range of sheep numbers,
For example this information was vital to decide which sheep to keep.

It is also vital information to supply for rams up for sale at the Annual Ram Sale.

2020 was the 36th time this event has been held at the property.

Originally, this was the social event of the year with up to 1000 people attending even arriving by light plane. It has settled down somewhat to more or less just those who intend to buy.

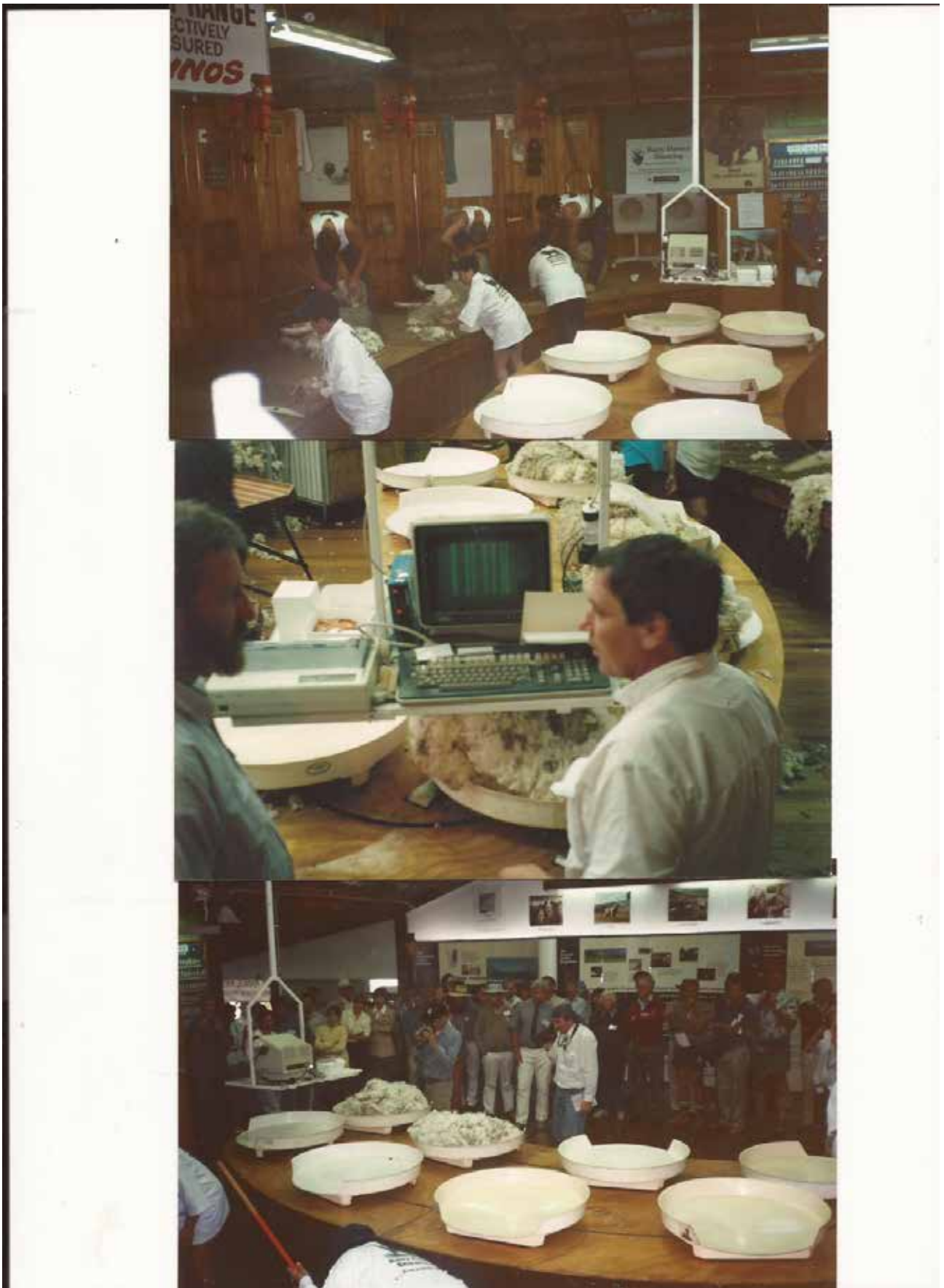
For each and every Ram up for sale we produce an individual Performance Report.

This is something I am really proud of.

It gives all the details of the particular Ram, including yield, micron (at each sampling throughout its life) the fleece weight at each (dated) shearing etc.

But (because we have data going back to 1985 – if not earlier) we are able to give details of ALL its sires (we used to include the dam's side too but that became too unwieldy).

So, we provide to every prospective purchaser, standard details for each Ram's sire (no secrets here) and its sire, and its sire right back to its Grand,Grand,Grand,Grand,Grand,Grand,Grand sire.



IN THE SHEARING SHED





These details also include the no of offspring each sire had produced, AND Av Yields, Av Mic, Av Gsy Weight, and Av Clean Weight. for all of its offspring. The actual program which produces these is also given below.

I had always had a little trepidation about fire, (flood, earthquake) happening at 'the farm', knowing that whilst their insurance company would 'happily?' replace the computer hardware in case of such an event without the data this is pretty useless.

We therefore instituted the concept of an off site back up 1000 km away. This continues to this very day.

The entire contents of their computer is sent to me to maintain an exact mirror image on both of my machines. No we don't use the cloud, we manage it all ourselves.

.

The actual program listing for the automatic drafting gates control

```
00001 REM% INDXGATE WBS 10/7/2009 LOTS !!!!!!!!!!!
00002 COM q,q$1,s2,t,t$(16),t1,t1$3,t1$(16),t2,t2$(32)8,t3$12,t6,t7$32,t8,t9,u,
      u(6),v,x$1,x1$6
00007 SELECT PRINT /005(80)
      : PRINT HEX(03)
      : PRINT AT(10,10,30);"*** RETURNING TO MAINMENU, PLEASE WAIT.....***";
      : GOTO 200

-00200 DIM l3(9),y6(9),l4(9),m6(9),l5(9),f6(9),l3$4,y6$4,l4$5,m6$5,l5$5,f6$5,
      d$(10)1,r4$2,r3$(9)3,r2$(9)4,f5$1,s6$1,y1$2,f3$1,g5$1,w0$1,r1$6,s3$4,
      x$(29)1,z$(8)1,d9$1,b$(5,5)1,s1$1,w9$1,r8$4,r9$4,r8(9),r9(9)
00210 SELECT @PART "KATIE"
      : s2 = #PART
00215 IF #ID==0 THEN SHELL "27B.EXE COM2"
00220 d9$ = "M"
      : s1$ = "F"
      : w9$ = "U"
00225 l4$ = "10.00"
00230 GOSUB '131
      : GOSUB '215
      : r4 = 99
      : GOSUB 530
-00240 SELECT ERROR > 64
      : GOSUB '215
00250 PRINT AT(2,25,);
      : IF f$=="F" THEN PRINT "    Forest Range"
      : ELSE PRINT "    Tomich"
00260 y3$ = y1$
      : IF y1$=="V" THEN 270
      : PRINT AT(3,30);"YEAR Born ";
      : LINPUT -y3$
-00270 f = POS("FT" == f$)
      : PRINT AT(2,48,30);"    Year ";y3$
      : CONVERT y3$ TO y3
      : ERROR REM
-00280 t0$ = s$
```

```

: IF s$<>"V" THEN 290
: PRINT AT(6,30);"Ram,Ewe,Wether";
: KEYIN t0$
-00290 s = POS("REW" == t0$)
: IF s==0 THEN 280
: PRINT AT(2,3,20);
: IF t0$=="R" THEN PRINT "   Ram"
: IF t0$=="E" THEN PRINT "   Ewe "
: IF t0$=="W" THEN PRINT "   Wether"
00299 IF s1$=="S" THEN 10000
-00300 s3$ = " "
: PRINT AT(3,29);"Sheep No   <0000>";
: IF w0$=="K" THEN LINPUT -s3$
00305 r5 = 0
00310 IF w0$<>"W" THEN 320
: a$ = " "
: GOSUB 840
: s3$ = STR(a$,3,4)
00314 CONVERT STR(a$,2,1) TO y3
: ERROR y3$ = "N"
00315 IF y3$<>"N" THEN CONVERT y3 TO y3$,((#))
00316 REM FOR NEW WAND -
: IF w9$<>"N" THEN 320
: s3$ = STR(a$,2,4)
: CONVERT STR(a$,1) TO y3
: ERROR y3$ = "N"
00317 IF y3$<>"N" THEN CONVERT y3 TO y3$,((#))
: IF y1$=="V" THEN PRINT AT(5,40,30);y3$
: IF y3$<>"N" THEN 320
: PRINT AT(5,40,30);"CLIPPON"
: GOSUB '205(s6)
: GOTO 240

-00320 IF s3$==" " THEN 300
: t0,r6 = 0
: CONVERT s3$ TO s3
: ERROR s3 = 0
:   PRINT s3$
:   PRINT HEXOF(s3$)
:   PRINT AT(20,40);"Any key ....";
:   KEYIN k$
:   GOTO 240

:   REM FOR WAND TESTING!!!!!!
00330 IF s3==0 THEN LOAD "START"

: PRINT AT(3,40,39);s3
: PRINT AT(2,60);y3$
00333 IF y3$<>"N" THEN 340
: PRINT AT(2,60,);"CLIPON !!"
: PRINT HEX(07)
: GOSUB '205(s6)

```

```

: PRINT HEX(07)
: GOTO 240

-00340 GOSUB '132(s,f,y3,s3,0)
: IF q$==" " THEN 360
00350 PRINT AT(20,28);"SORRY NOT FOUND"
: GOSUB '244(2,2)
: PRINT AT(20,28,);
: GOTO 300

-00360 RESTORE
: FOR x = 6 TO 20 STEP 2
:   UNPACK(##.##) STR(t7$,x,2) TO z
:   ERROR z = 0
00370   IF z==20.2 THEN z = 0
:   READ d3$
:   PRINT AT(x,2);d3$,z
:   IF x==6 THEN y2 = z/100
:   IF z==0 OR x<10 THEN 380
:   t0 = t0+z
:   r6 = r6+1
-00380   IF x==8 THEN m4 = z
: NEXT x
: PRINT AT(22,3);"Av Clean Wt ";ROUND(t0/r6*y2,2)
: IF STR(t7$,30,1)=="D" THEN PRINT AT(7,33);"Dry"
: a3 = ROUND(t0/r6*y2,2)
: IF r4==0 THEN 450
: GOSUB '132(s,f,y3,s3,20)
: IF q$==" " THEN 390
: PRINT AT(10,55);"No More details yet";HEX(06)
: GOTO 500

-00390 UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,6,2) TO z
: PRINT AT(6,55);"Steel Tag",z;
: PRINT AT(8,55);"Feat",STR(t7$,8,6);
: UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,14,3) TO s9
: ERROR s9 = 0
00400 IF s9>0 THEN PRINT AT(10,55);"Sire ",s9
: UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,17,3) TO d8
: ERROR d8 = 0
00410 IF g5$=="S" THEN STR(t7$,30,3) = STR(t7$,14,3)
00420 IF d8>0 THEN PRINT AT(11,55);"Dam ",d8
: UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,20,2) TO r5
: ERROR r5 = 0
00421 IF r5==0 THEN r5 = 9999
00430 IF r5>0 AND r5<9999 THEN PRINT AT(13,55);"Rank",r5
: FOR x = 22 TO 28
:   UNPACK(##) STR(t7$,x,1) TO z
:   ERROR z = 0
00440   IF z==20 THEN z = 0
:   PRINT AT(x-7,55);"BDY";x-21,z;
: NEXT x

```

```

-00450 IF r4==0 THEN STR(t7$,30,1) = HEX(00)
      : UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,30,3) TO r1
      : ERROR r1 = 0
00460 IF r1>0 THEN PRINT AT(22,55,20);"Ram  ";r1
00470 IF f3$<>"Y" THEN 480
      : PRINT AT(22,30);"Features";
      : LINPUT -STR(t7$,8,6)
-00480 IF g5$<>"Y" THEN 490
      : PRINT AT(22,30,40);"Ram  ";
      : LINPUT -r1$
      : HEXPACK STR(t7$,30,3) FROM r1$
-00490 GOSUB '233(s,s,t7$,1)
      : IF q$<>" " THEN STOP
-00500 IF g8<1 THEN 300
      : GOSUB 760
00510 PRINT AT(21,33);HEX(0E);"GATE  ";m
      : GOSUB 925
00515 IF d9$=="A" THEN GOSUB 660
      : SELECT PRINT /005(80)
      : GOSUB '205(s6)
00516 REM KEYIN k$
      : GOTO 240

00520 DATA "Yield %","Micron ","Gfw 1","Gfw 2","Gfw 3","Gfw 4","Gfw 5","Gfw 6"
-00530 GOSUB '215
      : PRINT AT(5,10);"HOW MANY GROUPS DO YOU WANT TODAY <0 - 8> ";
      : INPUT g8
      : IF g8<1 THEN 540
      : IF g8>4 THEN 535
-00533 PRINT AT(6,10,);"Full Display or Scroll Details  <F/S>  ";
      : LINPUT -s1$
      : IF POS("FS" == s1$)==0 THEN 533
-00535 FOR g = 1 TO g8
      :   GOSUB 600
      : NEXT g
-00540 GOSUB '215
      : PRINT AT(5,10,);"Forest Range/Tomich or Variable"
      : KEYIN f$
      : PRINT AT(5,50);f$
      : PRINT AT(6,10);"Ram/Ewe/Wether or Variable";
      : KEYIN s$
      : PRINT AT(6,50);s$
      : PRINT AT(7,10);"Year  or Variable";
      : LINPUT -y1$
00545 IF POS("FT" == f$)==0 OR POS("REWV" == s$)==0 THEN 540
00550 PRINT AT(8,10);"Will You be entering Features <Y/N>";
      : KEYIN f3$
      : PRINT AT(8,50);f3$
      : PRINT AT(9,10);"Entering Ram group <Y/N>";
      : KEYIN g5$
      : PRINT AT(9,50);g5$
      : PRINT AT(10,10);"Wand or Keyboard"

```

```

: KEYIN w0$
: PRINT AT(10,50);w0$
: IF w0$<>"W" THEN 570
00560 GOSUB 790
-00570 PRINT AT(11,10);"Gate OPEN time secs ";
: INPUT s6
00580 PRINT AT(12,10);"Auto or Manual Drafting <A/M> ";
: LINPUT d9$
00585 PRINT AT(13,10);"Usual or New WAND    <U/N> ";
: LINPUT w9$
00590 RETURN

-00600 PRINT HEX(03)
: GOSUB '215
: PRINT AT(3,28);"Gate No ";g
00610 l3$ = "40.0"
: y6$ = "95.0"
: PRINT AT(9,0);"Lower Yield Limit ";
: LINPUT -l3$
: PRINT AT(9,50);"Upper Yield Limit ";
: LINPUT -y6$
: CONVERT l3$ TO l3(g)
: CONVERT y6$ TO y6(g)
00620 l4$ = "10.00"
: m6$ = "29.99"
: PRINT AT(10,0);"Lower micron Limit";
: LINPUT -l4$
: PRINT AT(10,50);"Upper Micron Limit";
: LINPUT -m6$
: CONVERT l4$ TO l4(g)
: CONVERT m6$ TO m6(g)
00630 l5$ = "0.00"
: f6$ = "999"
: PRINT AT(11,0);"Lower Clean Fleece ";
: LINPUT -l5$
: PRINT AT(11,50);"Upper Clean Fleece ";
: LINPUT -f6$
: CONVERT l5$ TO l5(g)
: CONVERT f6$ TO f6(g)
-00640 r2$(g) = "ALL"
: PRINT AT(12,0);"Ram Group    ";
: LINPUT -r2$(g)
: r4$ = " "
: PRINT AT(12,50);"Year    ";
: LINPUT -r4$
: IF r2$(g)=="ALL" THEN 645
: IF r4$==" " THEN 640
: CONVERT r2$(g) TO r2
: CONVERT r4$ TO r4
: IF r4==99 THEN r4 = 0
: PACK(##) STR(r3$(g),,1) FROM r4
: PACK(####) STR(r3$(g),2,2) FROM r2

```

[illegible]

```

: x$(2) = HEX(23)
: x$(3) = HEX(32)
: x$(4) = "?"
: x$(5) = HEX(05)
: x$(6) = HEX(00)
: x$(10) = HEX(0C)
00830 REM SETCONTVECT
: $GIO#6 (HEX(4402 A000 440C),g$)x$()
: REM STARTRECEIV
: $GIO#6 (HEX(4408),g$)
: REM RECEIVE
: $GIO#6 (g6$,g$)
: RETURN

-00840 REM% ACTUAL READING OF CLIPON OR WHATEVER
-00850 GOSUB 890
: KEYIN k$,860,880
00855 REM PRINT AT(22,30);HEXOF(z$())
-00860 IF v<6 OR z$(6)>HEX(00) THEN 850
: GOSUB 900
00870 STR(i$,6) = STR(t1$(),6)
: FOR x = 1 TO 6
: IF STR(i$,x,1)>HEX(7F) THEN STR(i$,x,1) = SUB HEX(80)
: NEXT x
: a$ = i$
: RETURN

-00880 PRINT AT(3,40,10);"All tag Characters";
: LINPUT -STR(a$,6)
: RETURN

-00890 $BREAK
: REM READSTATUS
: $GIO#6 (g1$,g$)z$()
: v = VAL(z$(4))
: RETURN

-00900 $BREAK
: REM TRANSFER
: $GIO#6 (g7$,g$)t1$()
: RETURN

-00925 REM% MAJOR REWRITE TO GIVE BIG NUMBERS - PASS VARIABLE 'M' I.E. GATE
NUMBER
00950 b$() = ALL(HEX(8B))
00980 ON m+1 GOSUB 1000,1100,2000,3000,4000,5000,6000,7000,8000,9000
00990 RETURN

-01000 REM% '0'
01010 b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4) = " "
01020 b$(3,2),b$(3,3),b$(3,4) = " "
01040 b$(4,2),b$(4,3),b$(4,4) = " "

```

```

01099 GOSUB 9999
: RETURN

-01100 b$(1,4),b$(1,5) = " "
01200 b$(2,1),b$(2,2),b$(2,5),b$(2,4) = " "
01300 b$(3,1),b$(3,2),b$(3,5),b$(3,4) = " "
01400 b$(4,1),b$(4,2),b$(4,5),b$(4,4) = " "
01999 GOSUB 9999
: RETURN

-02000 REM%'2'
02200 b$(2,1),b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4) = " "
02400 b$(4,2),b$(4,3),b$(4,4),b$(4,5) = " "
02999 GOSUB 9999
: RETURN

-03000 REM%'3'
03200 b$(2,1),b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4) = " "
03400 b$(4,1),b$(4,2),b$(4,3),b$(4,4) = " "
03999 GOSUB 9999
: RETURN

-04000 b$(1,2),b$(1,3),b$(1,4),b$(1,5) = " "
04100 b$(2,3),b$(2,3),b$(2,4),b$(2,5) = " "
04200 b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4),b$(2,5) = " "
04300 b$(3,2),b$(3,3),b$(3,5) = " "
04500 b$(5,2),b$(5,3),b$(5,5) = " "
04999 GOSUB 9999
: RETURN

-05000 REM%'5'
05100 b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4),b$(2,5) = " "
05200 b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4),b$(2,5) = " "
05400 b$(4,1),b$(4,2),b$(4,3),b$(4,4) = " "
05999 GOSUB 9999
: RETURN

-06000 REM%'6'
06100 b$(1,1),b$(1,2),b$(1,3),b$(1,4),b$(1,5) = " "
06200 b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4),b$(2,5) = " "
06400 b$(4,2),b$(4,3),b$(4,4) = " "
06999 GOSUB 9999
: RETURN

-07000 REM%'7'
07200 b$(2,1),b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4) = " "
07300 b$(3,1),b$(3,2),b$(3,3),b$(3,4) = " "
07400 b$(4,1),b$(4,2),b$(4,3),b$(4,4) = " "
07500 b$(5,1),b$(5,2),b$(5,3),b$(5,4) = " "
07999 GOSUB 9999
: RETURN

```

```

-08000 REM%'8'
08200 b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4) = " "
08400 b$(4,2),b$(4,3),b$(4,4) = " "
08999 GOSUB 9999
      : RETURN

-09000 REM%'9'
09200 b$(2,2),b$(2,3),b$(2,4) = " "
09400 b$(4,1),b$(4,2),b$(4,3),b$(4,4) = " "
09500 b$(5,1),b$(5,2),b$(5,3),b$(5,4) = " "
09980 GOSUB 9999
      : RETURN

09989 STOP
-09999 FOR x1 = 1 TO 5
      :   FOR y1 = 1 TO 5
      :       PRINT AT(15+x1,34+y1);b$(x1,y1);
      :   NEXT y1
      :   PRINT
      : NEXT x1
      : RETURN

-10000 REM% 1ST ATTEMPT AT SCROLLING!
      : GOSUB '215
      : REM FOR NOW!
-10100 PRINT AT(14,0,);
      : PRINT BOX(10,79);
10250 PRINT AT(14,20,);
      : IF f$=="F" THEN PRINT "    Forest Range"
      : ELSE PRINT "        Tomich"
10270 f = POS("FT" == f$)
      : PRINT AT(14,44);y3$
      : CONVERT y3$ TO y3
10290 PRINT AT(14,48);
      : IF t0$=="R" THEN PRINT "Ram"
      : IF t0$=="E" THEN PRINT "Ewe "
      : IF t0$=="W" THEN PRINT "Weth"
-10300 s3$ = " "
      : PRINT AT(15,30,);"Sheep No <0>";
      : IF w0$=="K" THEN LINPUT -s3$
10305 r5 = 0
10310 IF w0$<>"W" THEN 10320
      : a$ = " "

      : GOSUB 840
      : s3$ = STR(a$,3,4)
10315 REM FOR NEW WAND -
      : IF w9$=="N" THEN s3$ = STR(a$,2,4)
-10320 IF s3$==" " THEN 10300
      : t0,r6 = 0
      : CONVERT s3$ TO s3
      : ERROR s3 = 0
      :   PRINT s3$

```

```

: PRINT HEXOF(s3$)
: REM WAS STOP
10330 IF s3==0 THEN 10300
: PRINT AT(15,42,10);s3
10340 GOSUB '132(s,f,y3,s3,0)
: IF q$==" " THEN 10360
10350 PRINT AT(20,28);"SORRY NOT FOUND"
: GOSUB '244(2,2)
: PRINT AT(20,28,);
: GOTO 10300

-10360 RESTORE
: FOR x = 6 TO 20 STEP 2
: UNPACK(###.##) STR(t7$,x,2) TO z
: ERROR z = 0
10370 IF z==20.2 THEN z = 0
: READ d3$
: PRINT AT(11+(x/2),2);d3$,z
: IF x==6 THEN y2 = z/100
: IF z==0 OR x<10 THEN 10380
: t0 = t0+z
: r6 = r6+1
-10380 IF x==8 THEN m4 = z
: NEXT x
: PRINT AT(22,2);"Av Clean Wt ";ROUND(t0/r6*y2,2);
: IF STR(t7$,30,1)=="D" THEN PRINT AT(7,33);"Dry"
: a3 = ROUND(t0/r6*y2,2)
: IF r4==0 THEN 10450
: GOSUB '132(s,f,y3,s3,20)
: IF q$==" " THEN 10390
: GOTO 10500

-10390 UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,6,2) TO z
: PRINT AT(14,55);"Steel Tag",z;
: PRINT AT(15,55);"Feat",STR(t7$,8,6);
: UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,14,3) TO s9
: ERROR s9 = 0
10400 IF s9>0 THEN PRINT AT(17,55);"Sire ",s9
: UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,17,3) TO d8
: ERROR d8 = 0
10410 IF g5$=="S" THEN STR(t7$,30,3) = STR(t7$,14,3)
10420 IF d8>0 THEN PRINT AT(18,55);"Dam ",d8
: UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,20,2) TO r5
: ERROR r5 = 0
10421 IF r5==0 THEN r5 = 9999
10430 IF r5>0 AND r5<9999 THEN PRINT AT(19,55);"Rank",r5
-10450 IF r4==0 THEN STR(t7$,30,1) = HEX(00)
: UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,30,3) TO r1
: ERROR r1 = 0
10460 IF r1>0 THEN PRINT AT(22,55,20);"Ram ";r1
-10500 GOSUB 10760
10510 PRINT AT(22,33);HEX(0E);"GATE ";m

```

```

: REM NOW TO GET BIG NUMBER!!
: GOSUB 925
: REM ADJUST THE PRINT POSITION
10515 IF d9$=="A" THEN GOSUB 660
: SELECT PRINT /005(80)
: GOSUB '205(s6)
: REM GOTO 240
10600 REM NOW THE TRICKY BIT TO SORT OF SCROLL.
: PRINT AT(13,1);
: PRINT TAB(m*15);s3
: PRINT AT(24,1)
: PRINT AT(13,1);
: PRINT BOX(-0,-80)
10620 PRINT AT(0,1);"Group No    One        Two        Three
      Four"
: PRINT AT(0,15);
: GOSUB 10800
: PRINT AT(0,30);
: GOSUB 10800
: PRINT AT(0,45);
: GOSUB 10800
: PRINT AT(0,60);
: GOSUB 10800
10650 PRINT AT(23,0);BOX(-0,-80)
10700 GOTO 10100

-10760 REM% This is MOST important - it determines GATE !!!!
10765 FOR m = 1 TO g8+1
:   IF y2*100>=l3(m) AND y2*100<=y6(m) AND m4>=l4(m) AND m4<=m6(m) AND
      a3>=l5(m) AND a3<=f6(m) AND r5>=r8(m) AND r5<=r9(m) AND r2$(m)==
      "ALL" OR r3$(m)==STR(t7$,14,3) THEN 10770
: NEXT m
10766 IF m>g8 THEN m = 0
-10770 RETURN

-10800 PRINT BOX(13,6)
: RETURN

```

And now the Performance Report one

```

00001 REM% PERFRPRT 20/11/2013 -SQUEEZED UP
00002 COM q,q$1,s2,t,t$(16),t1,t1$3,t1$(16),t2,t2$(32)8,t3$12,t6,t7$32,t8,t9,u,
      u(6),v,x$1,x1$6
00007 SELECT PRINT /005(80)
      : PRINT HEX(03)
      : PRINT AT(10,10,30);"*** RETURNING TO MAINMENU, PLEASE WAIT.....***";
      : GOTO 200

-00200 DIM s(20),d(20),p$(20)2,s$(20)1,y$(20)1,p1$(130)1,p2$(130)1,b(14),p$1,
      s3$4,y3$2,d0(12),g0(12),s1$(3)8,m(12),d1$(50)8,d4$(20)8,f1$3,m$(10)3,
      s0$(10)3,c2(3),w(6),g$(10)
      : SELECT ERROR > 64, @PART "KATIE"
      : s2 = #PART
      : GOSUB '131
      : d4 = 0
00201 GOSUB '239(4)
      : GOSUB '130(4,"RAMSF2LE","310")
      : IF q$<>" " THEN STOP
00202 c9$ = HEX(1B) & "&k2S"
      : c0$ = HEX(1B) & "&k0S"
      : c8$ = HEX(1B) & "(s5H"
      : REM IF @p$<>"D13" THEN 205
00203 c9$ = HEX(0F)
      : c0$ = HEX(12)
      : c8$ = HEX(0E)
00205 p$(),p1$(),p2$() = " "
      : s() = ZER
      : d() = ZER
      : s = 0
00210 GOSUB '215
      : s3$ = " "
      : PRINT AT(2,30);"Sheep No ";
      : LINPUT -s3$
      : IF s3$==" " THEN LOAD RUN
00220 CONVERT s3$ TO s3
      : IF s3<1 THEN END

      : t9$ = "T"
      : PRINT AT(3,25,150);
      : IF t9$=="F" THEN PRINT " Forest Range"
      : ELSE PRINT " Tomich"
      : y3$ = "11"
      : PRINT AT(4,30);"YEAR Born ";
      : LINPUT -y3$
      : f = 1
      : IF t9$=="T" THEN f = 2
      : CONVERT y3$ TO y3
00230 s1$(1) = "RAM"
      : s1$(2) = "EWE"
      : s1$(3) = "WETHER"
-00240 PRINT AT(5,30,);

```

```

: t0$ = "R"
: s = POS("REW" == t0$)
: IF s==0 THEN 240
: PRINT AT(5,30,30);
: PRINT " ";s1$(s)
00245 f1$ = "--M"
: STR(f1$,1) = t0$
: PACK(##) STR(f1$,2,1) FROM y3
: GOSUB '239(5)
: GOSUB '130(5,"SAMPF0RN",@p$)
: IF q$<>" " THEN STOP
: GOSUB '232(5,5,f1$)
: IF q$<>" " THEN STOP
: m$() = STR(t1$(),u,32)
: STR(f1$,3,1) = "S"
: GOSUB '232(5,5,f1$)
: IF q$<>" " THEN STOP
: s0$() = STR(t1$(),u,32)
: GOSUB '239(5)
00246 d1$(),d4$() = ALL("/")
00247 FOR x = 0 TO 8
:   y = x*2+1
:   HEXUNPACK STR(m$(x+2),,1) TO STR(d1$(y),,2)
:   HEXUNPACK STR(m$(x+2),2,1) TO STR(d1$(y),4,2)
:   HEXUNPACK STR(m$(x+2),3,1) TO STR(d1$(y),7,2)
:   HEXUNPACK STR(s0$(x+2),,1) TO STR(d4$(y),,2)
:   HEXUNPACK STR(s0$(x+2),2,1) TO STR(d4$(y),4,2)
:   HEXUNPACK STR(s0$(x+2),3,1) TO STR(d4$(y),7,2)
00248   IF STR(d1$(y),,2)=="00" THEN d1$(y) = " "
:   IF STR(d4$(y),,2)=="00" THEN d4$(y) = " "
: NEXT x
00250 GOSUB '132(s,f,y3,s3,0)
: IF q$==" " THEN 270
00260 PRINT AT(20,27);HEX(07);"SORRY NOT FOUND"
: GOSUB '244(1,1)
: GOTO 200

```

-00270 REM WE HAVE THE 00 RECORD SO LETS GET WHAT DETAILS WE NEED i.e.
hogget

```

      yield & micron also greasy fleece wgts
00280 $TRAN(t7$,HEX(00FF))R
: k = 0
: FOR x = 6 TO 8 STEP 2
:   UNPACK(##.##) STR(t7$,x,2) TO z
:   IF z==20.2 THEN z = 0
:   k = k+1
:   d0(k) = z
: NEXT x
: k1 = 0
: FOR x = 10 TO 20 STEP 2
:   k1 = k1+1
:   UNPACK(##.##) STR(t7$,x,2) TO z

```

```

: IF z==20.2 THEN z = 0
: g0(k1) = z
: NEXT x
: REM yld & mic in do(, gsy wgts in g0(
00289 GOSUB 9000
00290 REM will have to get sampling and shearing dates but leave that just
      for now
00300 REM now to get what 20 info we have.
00310 GOSUB '132(s,f,y3,s3,20)
: IF q$<>" " THEN STOP
00320 FOR x = 8 TO 13
: IF STR(t7$,x,1)<" " OR STR(t7$,x,1)>"z" THEN STR(t7$,x,1) = " "
: NEXT x
: UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,14,3) TO s9
: ERROR s9 = 0
: REM this gives us the sire
00330 UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,17,3) TO d8
: ERROR d8 = 0
: REM this is dam
00340 b1$ = " "
: IF STR(t7$,12,1)=="2" THEN b1$ = "Twin"
00350 d3 = VAL(STR(t7$,29,1))
: ERROR d3 = 0
: REM THIS ACTUALLY is the birthdate
00351 b8$ = "BORN 19" & y3$
: IF y3$<"80" THEN b8$ = "BORN 20" & y3$
: d3 = d3+98
: IF d3<150 OR d3>350 THEN 370
00355 m(1) = 30
: m(2) = 28
: m(3) = 31
: m(4) = 30
: m(5) = 31
: m(6) = 30
: m(7) = 31
: m(8) = 31
: m(9) = 30
: m(10) = 31
: m(11) = 30
: m(12) = 31
: FOR x = 1 TO 11
: d4 = d4+m(x)
: IF d3-d4<=m(x+1) THEN DO
: m = x+1
: x = 12
: END DO
: NEXT x
00360 REM this will become a katie routine in due course - to extract date
      from this one byte
: b8$ = "--/--/" & y3$
: CONVERT d3-d4 TO STR(b8$,,2),(##)
: CONVERT m TO STR(b8$,4,2),(##)

```

```

-00370 REM now to get the 30 info - this has the subsequent yield/micron
00380 GOSUB '132(s,f,y3,s3,30)
: IF q$<>" " THEN 400
: FOR x = 6 TO 16 STEP 2
:   UNPACK(###) STR(t7$,x,2) TO z
:   k = k+1
:   d0(k) = z
: NEXT x
00385 FOR x = 22 TO 28 STEP 2
:   UNPACK(###) STR(t7$,x,2) TO z
:   k = k+1
:   d0(k) = z
: NEXT x
00390 REM this code is not correct - it will be used though for its parent
      details
-00400 REM D0(5)=D0(1)
: REM REMOVE TO USE CORRECT YIELD
00420 PRINT AT(20,30);"Big/Little/Here ";
: KEYIN p$
: PRINT AT(20,30,);"Printing....."
: GOSUB '216(p$,130)
: PRINT HEX(0F)
: PRINT c0$;HEX(0A)
00425 REM DID HAVE PRINTING DATE HERE
00430 PRINT c8$
: PRINT TAB(10);"FOREST RANGE STATION"
: PRINT c8$;TAB(9);"RAM PERFORMANCE REPORT "
00440 PRINT c8$;TAB(3);"SHEEP No ";s3;"      Born 20";y3$
: PRINT HEX(0E)
: REM WONT WORK FOR RAMS BORN PRIOR TO 2000
00450 REM IF y3$<"79" THEN PRINT TAB(30);"BORN 20";y3$ ELSE PRINT TAB(30);
      "BORN 19";y3$
00455 PRINT c0$
00456 PRINT HEX(1B72 30);
00460 PRINT TAB(31);"PERFORMANCE DETAILS"
: PRINT TAB(28);"-----"
: PRINT "DATE      FIBRE DIAMETER  YIELD      DATE SHORN  CLEAN
      FLEECE WGT"
: PRINT "----      -----      -----      -----
      -----"
00470 j = 0
: k1 = 1
: FOR x = 1 TO k STEP 2
:   m4$,y2$ = " "
:   x2 = MAX(x,x2)
:   IF d0(x+1)<>0 THEN DO
:     CONVERT d0(x+1) TO m4$, (##.#)
:     CONVERT d0(x) TO y2$, (##.#)
:     y2 = d0(x)
:   END DO
:   REM KEEPS THE LAST KNOWN YIELD FOR CLEAN FLEECE CALCS
-00475   c6$ = " "

```

```

: IF STR(d1$(x2),4,2)<"08" AND STR(d1$(x2),4,2)<>" " THEN 480
: k1 = k1+1
: CONVERT g0(k1-1)*y2/100 TO c6$(#.##)
-00480 IF d1$(x2)<>" " AND d1$(x2)<>"/////////" THEN 481
: IF c6$<>"0.00" AND d4$(x2)==" " THEN d4$(x2) = "Latest "
: IF c6$<>"0.00" THEN 481
: x2 = x2+1
: IF x2>19 THEN 490
: GOTO 475

-00481 IF d1$(x2)=="/////////" THEN 490
00482 PRINTUSING "#####   ##.#   ##.#   #####
      ##.##",d1$(x2),m4$,y2$,d4$(x2),c6$
00485 IF c6$=="0.00" OR c6$==" " THEN 486
: CONVERT c6$ TO c7
: c8 = c8+c7
: j = j+1
-00486 d1$(x2) = " "
-00490 NEXT x
: PRINT TAB(59);"Av ";ROUND(c8/j,2)
00491 FOR x1 = 1 TO 1
: STR(f$,4) = p$(x1)
: STR(f$,5,1) = HEX(40)
: UNPACK(##) s$(x1) TO s0
: UNPACK(##) y$(x1) TO y0
: UNPACK(####) p$(x1) TO s3
: GOSUB '132(s0,2,y0,s3,40)
: IF q$<>" " THEN 495
: GOSUB '40(x1,0,1)
00492 PRINT c9$
: PRINT ,"      No of Offspring   Av. Yield   Av. Micron
      Av. Gsy Wgt   Av.Clean Wgt"
00493 FOR y = 6 TO 14 STEP 2
: UNPACK(##.##) STR(t7$,y,2) TO b(y)
: NEXT y
: PRINTUSING "          #####   ##.##
      ##.##   ##.##   ##.##",b(6)*100,b(8),b(10),b(12),
      b(14)
00494 p1$( ),p2$( ) = " "
: GOSUB '245(1)
-00495 NEXT x1
: REM PRINT c0$;HEX(0A)
00500 PRINT TAB(32);"SIRE REPORTS"
: REM PRINT TAB(32);"-----"
00580 GOSUB 9140
00595 PRINT HEX(0C)
00600 LOAD "PERFRPRT" 200

-09000 REM SUBROUTINE TO SETUP FAM TREE TYPE THINGS
09010 y = y3
09020 GOSUB '132(s,2,y,s3,20)
09030 IF q$<>" " THEN STOP

```

```

: t7$ = STR(t1$,u,32)
: UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,14,3) TO s(1)
09040 PACK(##) s$(1) FROM s
: PACK(##) y$(1) FROM y
: PACK(####) p$(1) FROM s3
09050 FOR x = 1 TO 9
:   y = INT(s(x)/10000)
:   y1 = INT(d(x)/10000)
:   s1 = MOD(s(x),10000)
:   IF y1==20 THEN y1 = 0
:   REM   IF S1<1 THEN 9090
09060   PACK(##) y$(x+1) FROM y
:   PACK(####) p$(x+1) FROM s1
09070   GOSUB '132(1,2,y,s1,20)
:   IF q$==" " THEN 9080
:   GOSUB '132(4,2,y,s1,20)
-09080   IF q$<>" " THEN 9090
:   s$(x+1) = HEX(01)
:   t7$ = STR(t1$,u,32)
:   UNPACK(#####) STR(t7$,14,3) TO s(x+1)
09085   IF s(x+1)<>s(x) THEN 9090
:   s(x+1) = 0
:   x = 9
-09090   GOTO 9130

:   REM IGNORE DAMS TO CONCENTRATE ON SIRES ETC
-09130 NEXT x
: RETURN

-09140 p1$,p2$() = " "
: PRINT TAB(6);"SIRE";
09150 GOSUB '40(2,6,15)
: PRINT TAB(20);p1$()
: PRINT TAB(18);p2$()
: p1$,p2$() = " "
: GOSUB '41(2,7,14,30)
: PRINT TAB(18);p2$()
: p2$() = " "
: p1$ = " "
: x1 = 2
: GOSUB 9310
09155 FOR g = 3 TO 10
:   REM IF S(G+1)=0 THEN 9170
09160   GOSUB '40(g,10,10)
:   IF p1$()==" " OR STR(p1$(),10,4)=="0000" THEN 9170
:   PRINT c0$
:   REM ; ADDED TO SQUEEZE
09164   g$(3) = "GRAND SIRE"
:   g$(4) = "G GRAND SIRE"
:   g$(5) = "GG GRAND SIRE"
:   g$(6) = "GGG GRANDSIRE"
09165   PRINT TAB(3);g$(g);

```

```

: PRINT TAB(25);p1$()
: PRINT TAB(23);p2$()
: p1$(),p2$() = " "
09166 GOSUB '41(g,7,14,30)
: PRINT TAB(18);p2$()
: p1$(),p2$() = " "
09169 x1 = g
: GOSUB 9310
: NEXT g
-09170 RETURN

09180 DEFFN '40(s,x,y)
: s4 = 0
: UNPACK(####) p$(s) TO s1
: UNPACK(##) y$(s) TO y0
: UNPACK(##) s$(s) TO s0
09190 IF s1==2020 OR y1==20 THEN 9210
09200 IF s1<9999 THEN CONVERT s1 TO STR(p1$(),y,4),(####)
: ELSE CONVERT s1 TO STR(p1$(),y,5),(#####)
: STR(p1$(),y+5,1) = "/"
: CONVERT y0 TO STR(p1$(),y+6,2),(##)
-09210 IF x>0 THEN GOSUB '41(s,x+1,y-1,0)
: RETURN

09220 DEFFN '41(s,x,y,r)
: UNPACK(##) s$(s) TO s0
: IF s0<>4 THEN s0 = MIN(s0,2)
: UNPACK(##) y$(s) TO y0
: UNPACK(####) p$(s) TO s9
: GOSUB '132(s0,2,y0,s9,r)
: IF q$==" " THEN 9230
09225 GOSUB '239(4)
: GOSUB '130(4,"RAMSF2LE","310")
: IF q$<>" " THEN STOP
: s0 = 4
: GOSUB '132(s0,2,y0,s9,r)
: IF q$<>" " THEN 9300
-09230 UNPACK(##.##) STR(t1$(),u+5,2) TO y3
: UNPACK(##.##) STR(t1$(),u+7,2) TO m
: CONVERT y3 TO STR(p2$(),y,4),(##.#)
: STR(p2$(),y+4,1) = "%"
09240 UNPACK(##.##) STR(t1$(),u+9,2) TO c
: ERROR c = 0
09241 IF r<>0 THEN 9250
09242 UNPACK(##.##) STR(t1$(),u+11,2) TO w2
: ERROR w2 = 0
09243 UNPACK(##.##) STR(t1$(),u+13,2) TO w(3)
: ERROR w(3) = 0
09244 UNPACK(##.##) STR(t1$(),u+15,2) TO w(4)
: ERROR w(4) = 0
09245 UNPACK(##.##) STR(t1$(),u+17,2) TO w(5)
: ERROR w(5) = 0

```

```

09246 UNPACK(###.##) STR(t1$( ),u+19,2) TO w(6)
: ERROR w(6) = 0
09247 w(2) = w2
-09250 UNPACK(###.##) STR(t1$( ),u+11,2) TO w2
: ERROR w2 = 0
09251 IF r==0 AND s<4 THEN c2(s) = w2
09255 IF r<>30 THEN 9260
: y3,c,m = 0
09256 GOSUB 9400
-09260 CONVERT c*y3/100 TO STR(p2$( ),y+14,4),(#.##)
: STR(p2$( ),y+19,3) = "Cfw"
: STR(p2$( ),y-7,6) = "Hogget"
09265 IF r==30 THEN STR(p2$( ),y-13,12) = "AverageAdult"
09266 CONVERT y3 TO STR(p2$( ),y,4),(##.##)
: STR(p2$( ),y+4,1) = "%"
09270 STR(p2$( ),y+10,3) = "mic"
: CONVERT m TO STR(p2$( ),y+6,4),(##.##)
: IF s>1 THEN 9300
: f6,w1 = 0
: FOR x = 9 TO 17 STEP 2
:   UNPACK(###.##) STR(t1$( ),u+x,2) TO c6
:   ERROR c6 = 0
09280 IF c6==0 OR c6>10 THEN 9290
:   f6 = f6+c6
:   w1 = w1+1
-09290 NEXT x
-09300 RETURN

-09310 PRINT c9$
: PRINT , "      No of Offspring   Av. Yield   Av. Micron
      Av. Gsy Wgt   Av.Clean Wgt"
09315 REM GOSUB '245(1)
: REM ADDED 15/12/2003 TO SPREAD OUT
09320 STR(f$,4) = p$(x1)
: STR(f$,5,1) = HEX(40)
: UNPACK(##) s$(x1) TO s0
: s0 = MIN(s0,4)
: UNPACK(##) y$(x1) TO y0
: UNPACK(#####) p$(x1) TO s3
: GOSUB '132(s0,2,y0,s3,40)
: IF q$==" " THEN 9325
: GOSUB '132(4,2,y0,s3,40)
: IF q$<>" " THEN 9350
-09325 GOSUB '40(x1,0,1)
09330 FOR y = 6 TO 14 STEP 2
:   UNPACK(###.##) STR(t7$( ),y,2) TO b(y)
: NEXT y
: PRINT USING "          #####      ###.##
      ###.##      ###.##      ###.##",b(6)*100,b(8),b(10),b(12),
      b(14)
09340 p1$( ),p2$( ) = " "
-09350 REM PRINT c0$

```

```

: RETURN

: REM REMOVED C0$ TO SQUEEZE
-09400 REM NEWSTYLE AV ADULT READINGS
09480 k = 0
09580 FOR x = 6 TO 16 STEP 2
:   UNPACK(##.##) STR(t7$,x,2) TO z
:   k = k+1
:   d0(k) = z
: NEXT x
09585 FOR x = 22 TO 28 STEP 2
:   UNPACK(##.##) STR(t7$,x,2) TO z
:   k = k+1
:   d0(k) = z
: NEXT x
09600 c,k1 = 0
: FOR x = 2 TO 6
:   IF w(x)==0 THEN 9699
:   c = c+w(x)
:   k1 = k1+1
-09699 NEXT x
: c = c/k1
: k = 0
: FOR x = 1 TO 9 STEP 2
:   IF d0(x)==0 THEN 9700
:   y3 = y3+d0(x)
:   m = m+d0(x+1)
:   k = k+1
-09700 NEXT x
: y3 = y3/k
: m = m/k
: RETURN

```

PRODUCES THE FOLLOWING REPORT

PERFORMANCE DETAILS

DATE	FIBRE DIAMETER	YIELD	DATE SHORN	CLEAN FLEECE WGT
04/10/16	12.5	72.9	07/11/16	2.25
01/04/17"	14.0	62.0		
29/08/17	13.8	68.9	25/09/17	2.75
				Av 2.5

SIRE REPORTS

SIRE

0059 /13				
Hogget 71 %		12.6mic	2.1 Cfw	
AverageAdult 69 %		15.1mic	3.3 Cfw	
No of Offspring	Av. Yield	Av. Micron	Av. Gsy Wgt	Av. Clean Wgt
181	68	13.2	2.1	1.3

GRAND SIRE

0944 /11				
Hogget	77 %	13.4mic	2.3 Cfw	
Average Adult	71 %	14.7mic	2.7 Cfw	
No of Offspring	Av. Yield	Av. Micron	Av. Gsy Ygt	Av. Clean Ygt
76	70	12.4	2.2	1.3

G GRAND SIRE

0497 /08					
Hogget	71 %	12.3mic	1.7 Cfw		
AverageAdult	66 %	13.4mic	2.7 Cfw		
No of Offspring	Av. Field	Av. Micron	Av. Gsy Wgt		Av. Clean Wgt
256	73	12.6	2.2		1.6

GG GRAND SIRE

0537 /04					
Hogget 68 % 12.9mic 2.1 Cfw					
Average Adult 64 % 13.7mic 2.7 Cfw					
No of Offspring	Av. Yield	Av. Micron	Av. Gsy Wgt	Av. Clean Wgt	
739	70	13.0	2.3	1.6	

GGG GRANDSIRE

0041 /01					
Hogget 68 %		12.7mic	2.0 Cfw		
AverageAdult 61 %		14.1mic	2.5 Cfw		
No of Offspring	Av. Yield	Av. Micron	Av. Gwy Wgt	Av. Clean Wgt	
238	71	13.3	2.5	1.7	

0247 /96				
Hogget 78 % 14.4mic 2.5 Cfw				
AverageAdult 68 % 15.9mic 3.4 Cfw				
No of Offspring	Av. Yield	Av. Micron	Av. Gwy Vgt	Av. Clean Vgt
286	69	14.8	2.7	1.8

0575 /91				
Hogget	71 %	15.6mic	2.2 Cfw	
AverageAdult	71 %	16.8mic	3.9 Cfw	
No of Offspring	Av. Yield	Av. Micron	Av. Gyt Wgt	Av. Clean Wgt
848	72	15.7	2.5	1.8

0927 /87				
Hogget 66 %		16.6mic	0.0 Cfw	
Average Adult 65 %		17.9mic	5.5 Cfw	
No of Offspring	Av. Yield	Av. Micron	Av. Gyr Wgt	Av. Clean Wgt
679	73	16.9	2.7	2.0

On 6/11/2011

CHAS

(COMPUTERISED HOTEL ADMINISTRATION SYSTEM)

I was also asked to take over the maintenance and expansion of another big Wang installation, so although not having written the original software, I did manage to fulfil this obligation too.

It meant that I was also able to sell new systems (admittedly a bit smaller) to other accommodation providers throughout the country, notably Blenheim, Napier etc and most importantly Duck Creek Farm and Holiday Resort – more of THAT later.

One thing we did at that time in addition to having direct dial in modem access to the computers for troubleshooting, was, I believe one of the first entities to pay employees via direct connection to the company's bank.

In those days, the VIP (Very Impressive Payroll) program was run and then a 5” diskette (a true floppy disk) was physically driven (or walked) to the bank where it was loaded into their computer.

This diskette, of course, contained names, bank a/c numbers etc of some hundred or more employees, together with the amounts to be paid to each.

Sure this is 'old hat' these days, but was really cutting edge when we first did it.

This meant that as well as being a 'leading light' in the wool industry we were also becoming somewhat well known in the hospitality sector too.



THE TEAM @ PETERBOROUGH ST

CAR PARK TICKETS (and miscellaneous printing)

While at Harding Signals we used to supply the 'blank' tickets required by car parking machines, Twice a year we required our customers to order their requirements, we then amalgamated them, placed a big order (to get the best possible price) and supplied them.

From the customers point of view this was, however not ideal.

While at NZWTA I had discovered a really good, flexible, and easy to work with printer (Cliff Press Ltd) from whom we obtained the 'blank' tickets we then printed our OCR on with the IBM golf ball typewriter.

So on becoming self employed, I approached them about printing blank car park tickets – I still had pretty much all my Traffic Engineering contacts of course.

I sold an initial run and managed to price them a bit under what Hardings were then charging, but with the flexibility of not having to order and pay 6 months in advance Although we did encourage forward orders the tickets were only charged for once delivered.

This found tremendous favour with customers and over the next few years I estimate we probably gained well over 60% of the NZ market.

At one stage the printers had almost a year's worth of orders stacked up, but was still small enough to be able to cope with urgent requests, even as short as a week.

I became known as 'the ferret'.

Any time I drove or walked past a car park (with a machine) that I did not recognise as one of our customers I stopped, found out who in their organisation ordered the tickets, his/her contact details and then I followed up – personally.

This shows how I operated (and in reality still do). I much prefer to sit in front of customers and discuss things – email and ph calls are fine but in my view you can't beat face to face meetings.

In some cases this was also an entree into another computer system sale!

In 1997 newer car park machines were coming into the market which required a magnetic strip to be included., we were not (then) able to do this in NZ, even Aust was not really able to do so economically.

We did however manage to find a Hong Kong supplier who claimed to be able to do so, using a factory in China to actually make them.

Whilst a bit suspicious about this we planned a week long trip to Hong Kong, with a visit to the actual Chinese factory as part of the trip to see for ourselves.

I found Hong Kong to be hot and dirty, but strangely enough quite mesmerising. The pavements were, in fact, so hot that the soles of my feet blistered even through proper business shoes, socks etc. Once back in New Zealand it was still hobbling quite badly – having got these hot feet the day before we left to come home.

After several meetings with the Sales Rep (in Hong Kong itself) we then all got visas to visit China.

We went up on the train – to Shenzhen I think it was, where we were met by representatives of the actual factory.

They took us out to lunch, then a tour of their factory – the whole works!

We were staying at a golf resort – complete with armed guards at the entrance gate, notices warning not to drink the water (or even brush teeth) but very pleasant nonetheless.

We had arranged a formal meeting for the morning of the next day, but for the evening 'we are going to entertain you! Yeah Right again!

There were about 20 or 30 people altogether we sat around an oval table for a Chinese banquet.

Behind each of us was a waiter with red wine in one hand and white wine in the other.

We each had two glasses in front of us (one for red and the other for white) and as soon as one was 'not full' even if just by a mouthful it was instantly topped up.

By the end of the meal, I and most of our party had had our fill of both food and booze and were keen to get home to bed when the limousines arrived to take us back.

But wait there is more (much more in fact)!!

“Now we are going to entertain you”
and how!

They took us to an entertainment centre, we walked in past a row of BEAUTIFUL young girls - it must have been after midnight by now – up to the VIP room which overlooked the dance floor.

A short time later there was a bit of murmuring among our gathering and I caught a whisper of 'the ferret is usually up for anything, ask him'.

Shortly our host approached me and said that one of the girls had asked if I could go down and dance with her.

There was lot of raucous laughter and comments like 'go get her Warwick'. I could hardly back out - even if I had wanted to.

So I was escorted down to this table of 4 lovely girls the 'forward' one had a smile on her face just like the cat that got the cream!

There was something of a language barrier (but remember I had been drinking all night).

So we danced – well sort of – and then the band started playing something slow (I don't think it was a waltz, but who knows) and I insisted that she joined me on the dance floor.

I then 'taught' her to dance properly!! She actually did very well – and gradually, very gradually,

everyone else on the dance floor just melted away and left us to it.

I could see my supposed 'friends' up in the VIP room who seemed to think this was hilarious.

Whilst I could not hear them I could certainly see them through the glass.

For the rest of the evening the dance floor remained empty unless we took to the floor whereupon the floor gradually filled up.

Eventually I managed to break away and go back upstairs to my so called 'friends'.

Raucous comments again, of course.

By this time I was really happy (if you know what I mean) so I suggested to our host that perhaps my new friend would like to spend the rest of the night with me back at the golf club.

He set off to organise it!

BUT he subsequently advised that this was not possible tonight, it has to be prearranged, she has school in the morning!! I make no further comment.

Needless to say I had no idea she was only 18 !!!

So back to the golf club, formal meeting in the morning – a bit bleary eyed of course – back to Hong Kong by train then heading home (via Australia) by plane.

It was whilst in Australia on our way home that we learned of the death of Princess Diana.



JAMES



AUNTIE BEA AND JAMES

DUCK CREEK FARM AND HOLIDAY RESORT

One day in 1992 I was staying with my Auntie Bea, who was by then living in Whangamata, she and her husband Jack having moved there from Hamilton when he retired.

My office rang and said there was an enquiry for a CHAS type system 'just up the road' (at Pauanui).

As you can imagine the very next day I presented myself (in person of course) to see how we could help.

But first I have to relate the (only?) other occasion that made me really angry.

My favourite aunt (o.k my only aunt – but still my favourite) as she got older did need to spend some time at either Thames or Waikato Hospitals.

I always endeavoured to visit her on these occasions.

I did have her Power of Attorney, which before agreeing to take it on sought legal advice which was basically that any decisions I had to make had to be in HER best interests.

This role I took very seriously.

One one occasion she had been in Waikato Hospital and was MOST unhappy, I was never really able to get to the bottom of just what it was, but the upshot of it was that she REFUSED point blank to ever go back to Waikato – Thames sure, but would rather die at home rather than be forced back there.

Unfortunately she subsequently ended up with an infected big toe which turned gangrenous and it needed to be removed. Thames could not do it so the only option was Waikato.

Not likely – I'll just die at home then (remember I had to act in her best interests).

Both her doctor and I both tried very hard to convince her – dying at home was becoming a serious possibility.

So eventually she agreed to go to Waikato provided she never had to go anywhere near Ward 14.

So off she went (and I went too) and she was put in Ward 9 (I think it was) the surgeon explained what they were going to do and WHY.

At this stage she was being very well looked after.

BUT while she was away in theatre I was told that when she came out they would be putting her in Ward 14!!! *Oh No You Won't !!*

I was, as you can imagine even more angry than I had been with Pat in Christchurch.

I said to my friend, does you phone take photos? Not all phones did in those days – no.

So please ring both TV1 and TV3 and tell them that I am going to lie down in front of the trolley to ensure they could not 'break the contract'.

“Ward 14 is the general surgical ward and that is where she should be. We only put her in 9 as a special favour.”

I said if she wakes up to find herself in Ward 14 she will die and I will personally see that each and

every one of you is charged with murder – it cannot be called an accident you have been warned.

Don't forget I have a loud, booming forceful voice particularly when I am as angry as I was then.

This brought all the rats (read Managers) out of the wood work.

“ Ward 14 is one of our busiest wards and sometimes patients don't always get the attention they think they deserve. What upset her last time?”

I just said let's wait until the news media get here eh?

This didn't find favour at all. All this carried out in my firm but fair (loud) voice!

The upshot of this was that they put her back in Ward 9, the operation was a success, and I don't think my lovely Auntie Bea ever knew just how much drama there had been!!

Incidentally my Cousin Barb, who at the time was in charge of Wellington Hospital A & E dept, when told of my antics instead of praising me as I had expected, said you are just the sort of family member we can well do without. Sorry Barb - TOUGH.

But back to Duck Creek itself.

This started a long involvement with our 'Little bit of Paradise in New Zealand'.

I was shown around the operation and determined that a genuine Wang 2200 system could be implemented pretty easily with only three terminals to start with but with plenty of room to expand as the operation grew.

Later that year daughter Kathryn (Kat) and I installed the system.

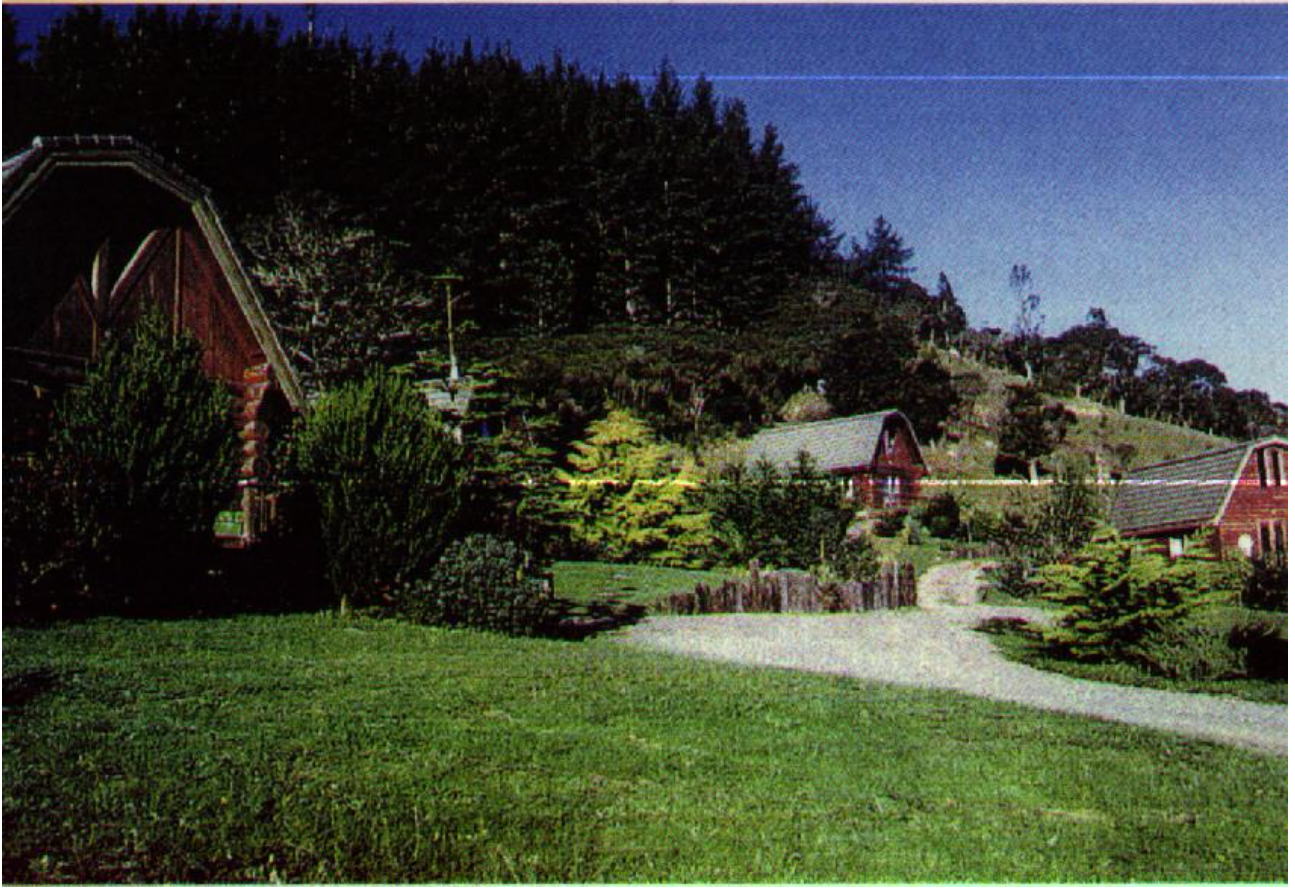
At that stage there were 5 'Swiss style' chalets, and also 7 'Spanish Rooms' – each with 4 generous bunks – shared kitchen and toilet facilities and a social room.

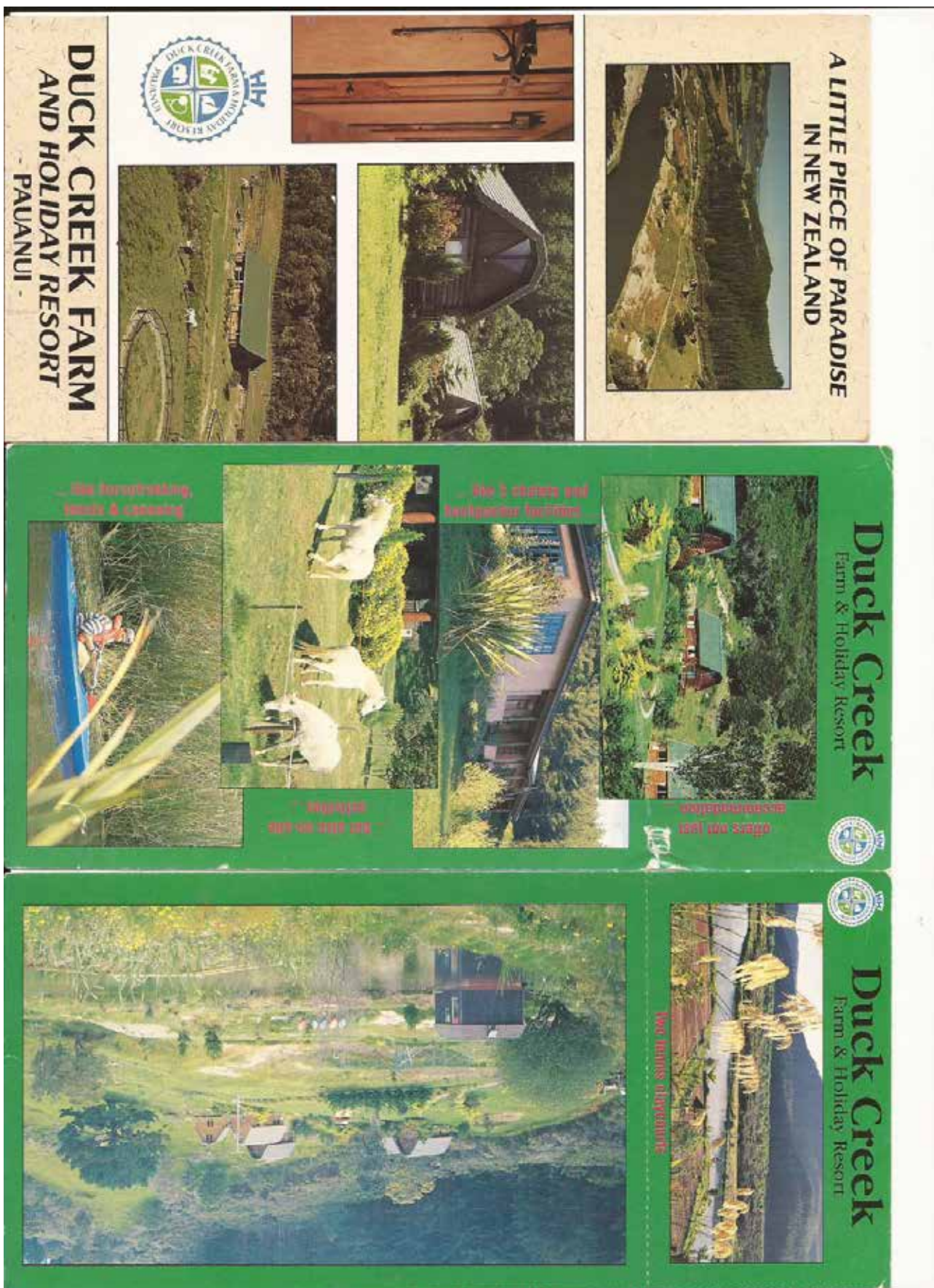
There was also a stunning houseboat moored on the man made lake.

A 'tennis house' overlooked the two clay type tennis courts.

There was also a horse trekking operation based on the property.

CHAS took care of all bookings, checking in and out and all the ancilliary tasks.





DUCK CREEK BROCHURES



Top – HARRY AND ME
 Bottom left – THE OFFICE
 Bottom – AMANDA AND ME AT DUCK CREEK INN

Over the next couple of years we built a licensed restaurant, added a 'witch house' (so called because of its witches hat shape) and a heated indoor swimming pool – the only one on the eastern side of the peninsular.

We also added 12 canoes to the mix rented them out by the hour and encouraged the paddlers to go upstream on the Tairua River towards Hikuai rather than risk being lost at sea if they went towards Pauanui. I am pleased to say we didn't lose anyone !!

All of this necessitated increasing the number of terminals and general grunt of the computer system – needless to say no problem.

So we ended up with terminals 'all over the place; including in the Duty Manager's so called flat!

By this time I had gradually become its General Manager, but based in Christchurch.

I then persuaded one of my programmers, who had done his apprenticeship as a greenkeeper to become Duck Creek's duty manager.

At that stage I used to come up each July, require all staff to take their holidays etc, and would often be the only person on the 250 acre property.

I would then come up again mid December – when were really busy – and stay until after Auckland Anniversary weekend at the end of January,.

Because the computer system was basically the same as ours back in Christchurch whenever I was away my office girl used to clear the p o. box twice a week, and put the entire contents in a big envelope and mail it up to me.

I trust you will see from the above just how well things were going and how well we were organised.

Yeah right- again.

Late 1996 the husband and wife owners separated and she wanted her equity out. Disaster!

Harry (the husband) then tried to get a business partner to invest to allow this to happen – it proved much more difficult than was expected.

The whole property was therefore put up for sale and was eventually bought in 1997 by a couple who wanted land to build an International Style Golf course.

They had no real interest in running the resort as such and in 1998 simply closed it down.

I did have the job of tidying up the loose ends once the sale was sort of completed – but Harry was able to keep ownership of half the resort lots not yet built upon. This has been an on going saga.

At this stage it looked like my continuing involvement with Duck Creek was well and truly over. Yeah right – again.

A stress related health scare in 2003 persuaded my doctor to lay it on the line.

“If you don't give up you may well not be here this time next year, Sell up, give it away if necessary, and get out of Christchurch completely – do you know anywhere you could go?”

You guessed it back to Duck Creek again.

Whilst not ENTIRELY true to say that the place had gone to the dogs, in reality it had.

I managed to rent one of the chalets from its new owner – another friendship which lasts to this very day.

I also managed to get a job driving the local school bus which I did for nearly 10 years.

But by this time I had both James and George living with me(see the chapter on James and George) and the Chalet wasn't really ideal for the three of us, so we moved to Pauanui itself

After a couple of years that house got sold so we were back to Duck Creek.

Once I gave up driving the school bus daily we were able to move to Mt Paku in Tairua until there the owners eventually wanted their house back too , so back to Duck Creek, different chalet this time (and I am still here).

The reality is that being 2hrs from Auckland, 2hrs from Hamilton and 2 hrs from Tauranga makes it pretty much ideal for me.

ISIS STOP SMOKING PROGRAMME

Never having smoked I was pleased to have the opportunity to purchase the Isis Stop Smoking franchise, originally for 'North of the South Island' but subsequently the whole of the South Island.

This was (and is) a wholly psychological based programme, based on group dynamics and enables participants to give up completely over the period of only one week!

The course (which was always run by a qualified director – yes I became one) had been developed at Otago University and worked really well.

It started on a Tuesday, with the first of the two hour daily sessions covering all the techniques to be taught over the next week.

This session was free without pressure on participants, at the end of the session they decided if the course was indeed, for them.

Wednesday started in earnest, participants were given a book full of information and description of the techniques to be taught.

A cassette tape was also part to the package. Daily reduction cards were a vital part too.

Thursday we taught meditation (actually my first experience of it). One side of the tape is a really good meditation too.

Friday night we all 'went to the pub' because for so many smokers their most 'difficult' time is when out drinking – to show you can go drinking without smoking was most successful.

This night was often the highlight of the whole course.

For the weekend we not only set up 'buddy' systems, but a short targeted walk (out and faster back) was set as 'homework'.

Monday was the final 'wrap up' by which time about 80% would have achieved the goal, the others may need another day or so to do it.

Certificates were supplied as a continuing reminder of their achievement

Needless to say this whole operation was completely computerised, from sending all the necessary promotional material, through to managing registrations, and the all important statistics.

We had our own seminar room (seated about 15 people) but also did courses on Company's premises, and for out of town communities too.

At one stage I was taking a Company course during the morning. Somewhere else in the afternoon and yet another in the evening – either at our own base or somewhere 'out of town'.

I still have my manual, and a copy of the tape but have been unable to locate a copy of the book as yet.

So with Isis being so good why has it not become 'the next best thing'?



A couple of reasons.

Firstly the medical profession did not back us because there were no drugs involved.

Secondly you will have heard the phrase that 'if it seems too good to be true it probably is', this counted against us too. With an 80% success rate over a week, authorities (who were aiming for between 5 - 10% over a year) simply wrote us off as 'charlatans' ?

I endeavoured to counter these allegations, but our costs kept rising and numbers gradually fell away.

I also endeavoured to contract to run the stop smoking Quitline but again was not successful.

It would, in my opinion be really good if this programme could 'come again;



ISIS TEAM

SHUTTLE BUS TRANSPORT (SBT)

Some time during the 1990s I met a lady (don't ask how!) who actually owned a shuttle run between Picton and Christchurch.

This was a seven day a week commitment and she shared this with her son, but in reality it meant that they could never go out, or for that matter even spend any time, together as one or the other was always working. Typically nine hour days!

She suggested that I should perhaps study for and somehow obtain my 'P' endorsement to enable me to carry paying passengers in a Passenger Service Operation. Thus having me as a 'relief driver' they could at least have time off together.

This I did – not TOO difficult but not a 'piece of cake' either.

Unfortunately, although I did one or two trips she then sold the business so I was 'no longer required'.

This did not worry me too much as it was really only going to be a 'hobby'.

However, back in the real world, despite having several income streams – by this time we were running as SBT Business Centre - one month we had a 'bad month' and I said to the others that perhaps I should get a driving job to add more income.

The comment was made that 'we certainly don't need you here all day every day, now that everything is running so well.'

There was an advertisement by a newly founded Shuttle company calling for drivers.

I attended an interview and explained that I didn't want a full time job (after all I already had one) but was happy to fill in when necessary.

This was not acceptable to them as they wanted full time fully committed staff – I understood entirely!

But at the very end “hang on a mo, would you be prepared to do our night shift though?”

I agreed (remember this was a startup company) saying I would commit to doing this for six onths. I therefore worked 6 p.m. till 3 a.m. virtually each night.

This was not a particularly happy time though but I did keep at it.

During this time (being me) I reckoned I could run the company in a much better way!
Yeah Right.

I spoke to one of the other night shift shuttle drivers and suggested that 'we' should buy a van together, one of us driving it during the the day the other at night.

What a bloody good idea?



Once my six month commitment was over I managed to obtain a PSL (Passenger Service operators License) something I still have, and set out to set up Shuttle Bus Transport!!(SBT)

We did, indeed start with one van doing Airport and charter work, but also had the opportunity to take over and run a daily return service between Christchurch and Dunedin, again on a 'door to door' basis.

We also ran the 'All Nighter'.

This was, as the name suggests, a bus service taking revellers home from the city after a big night out, at less than half the price of a taxi. But right to their door – thus these buses had to be suitable to use on residential streets.

Yep you guessed it we needed more than one van – actually we gradually added, more vans, and three buses – obviously more drivers were needed, as were dispatchers, full 25w Radios in each vehicle, even a bus cleaning crew.

We had base radio sets both in the office and at my home office at Baker St.

By running a 24hr operation we ended up with a staff of about 25 (part and full time).

When I sold off and closed down in 2003 we had some 12 vehicles. A mixture of vans and buses.



DUNEDIN BRANCH



DUNEDIN RECEPTION



BUS WASHING CREW



JAMES, GEORGE (&Bonnie)

In 1995 I met James' mother (Amanda) and he was born in November 1996.

She already had older children, in particular George, who about 18 months older had been born after his father had died. Amanda always regarded herself as a widow (even though never actually married) she was truly in love with George's dad (also named George).

We were supposed to be co-parenting, but I have always claimed that 'I have had James almost since birth', not quite true but pretty much so!

He lived with me most of the time – he had his own single waterbed and a set of bunks for when friends stayed.

But a couple of things stood out – long before he went to school he had to come into the office and did such tasks as reformatting floppy disks (had his own desk even).

His main job was to make our coffee though.

We had a coffee machine, a little stool for him to get up to it and the fridge for the milk and to get coffee all any of us had to do was to hold our cup up in the air and say 'coffee please James' .

He really was a most useful member of the staff!!!

He also came with me on many, many jobs, often sleeping on the floor at the very front of the bus or van.

George also joined us on occasion, but not on a regular basis.

I enrolled James at primary school in Christchurch too.

Amanda simply left it to me to arrange and do, but we decided that he should stay with her during the week because Linwood Ave school was, indeed, so close and George was already there.

I used to collect him after school each Friday, have him at home Fri, Sat and Sun nights then drop him at school by 9 a.m. on the Monday morning.

As I was still working full time, and sometimes through the night – there was really no option but for him to come to work with me again.

I well remember the phone regularly ringing about 2 a.m. with an urgent job for me to do and calling out “Passengers James” to which he would reply (in a somewhat sleepy voice) I'll get my sleeping bag!!

Quite often regular passengers would say 'have you got your boy sleeping up there?'

It was not unheard of for people to give me a tip to 'give this to James', even on days/nights that he was not there.

Quite happy times actually!!

When disaster struck and I had to get out of Christchurch, what to happen with James raised its ugly head.

Amanda and I agreed that he would continue to stay in Christchurch, live with her and continue with his schooling.

But I would (at my expense) bring him up to Duck Creek for all school holidays.

This I managed to do. But return airfares 4 times a year really was a struggle financially particularly until I got my part time job.

On one such visit James said I really wish George could see how good it is here. My reply was that I was having enough trouble paying for one boy let alone two but I would do my best.

A month or so later though through a windfall of sorts I did manage to fund a '2 boy return trip' for the next holidays.

So in May/June 2005, I went to Auckland Airport to collect them.

The hostess said chattily, ok boys see you at the end of the holidays!
Their reply 'oh we are not going back home, we are staying here with Dad'. Yeah Right.

After a few days I sat them down and tried to get to the bottom of things.
James was 8 by now and George about 18 months older.
James said something along the lines 'you did say I could go to school here, isn't there a school bus at the gate? ' Cheeky bugger he knew who drove the school bus.

I therefore rang their mother who said, 'oh yes they said they weren't coming back'!!!!!! 'But can you cope with them both?'

I had no idea, but as I was turning 65 later in the year we agreed that I would cope somehow until then.
She would come up for my big party, we would then sit down and seriously discuss our collective future.



So I had two boys to enrol in different classes at Hikuai School (our local primary with just under 100 pupils), got uniforms, school supplies etc.,etc.

I am thrilled to say that at Hikuai School each pupil was required to swim to a certain standard before leaving.

With extra lessons after school if necessary, this has, no doubt stood them all in very good stead over the years. So many schools have abdicated teaching what I see as a vital skill.

I drove their school bus each day.

I also had to enrol them in the local library, local medical centre etc.

We all lived in Chalet #2, I set up their room with 2 bunks for them and another bed for any friends who stayed.

This made me a school parent as well as the bus driver.



THE ORIGINAL HUMPHREY #9

HOWEVER

As my 65 birthday (and party) drew closer Amanda became harder and harder to contact. Needless to say she did not show. (I had become resigned to having to pay her airfare). I had stopped paying child support (as I had both boys with me) but neither was I getting support from her or any other outside source.

On the day of my birthday party I sat the boys down and explained the situation, and said, 'looks like it is just us'.

Their reply 'Great'

The party itself was indeed great, held at the Duck Creek Inn (now closed) with friends attending from throughout New Zealand (and Australia). Plenty of Ngahere Gold beer, South Island wine etc.

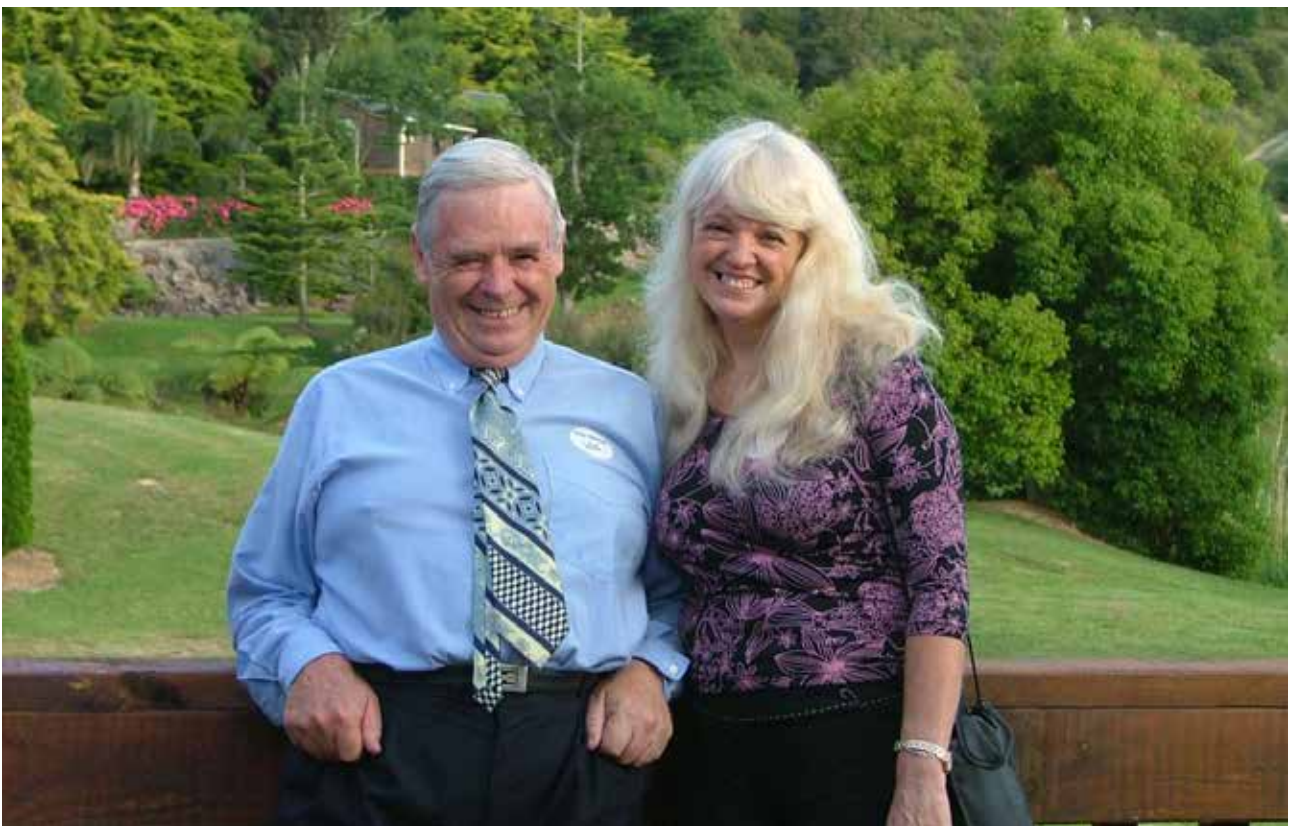
I had written a speech to bring everyone up to date, aiming to make it 10 mins long but it turned out to be somewhat longer.

I arranged for George (who by now was calling me Dad too) to have a devil's staff threatening to poke anyone who went to sleep.

I have tried, and tried to find it to include in this book but so far without success.



THE BOYS AND ME



WITH SISTER SUE

The kids (James, George, Elish etc) sang my favourite song 'Lets go fly a kite' as my birthday treat.

Eventually George progressed to attending Thames High School, where it seemed he got mixed up with some people I still do not approve of, James still at Hikuai.

One thing George was exceptionally good at was Surf Lifesaving.

Not only did he fit in very well, but was extremely competent, and was always up for extra shifts. By this time we were living at El Dorado Leader in Pauanui so he walked to the beach on his own.

George was also a budding cook or chef – he was able to match the Gordon Ramsey challenge and I was quite proud of him.

I did manage to get Amanda up to stay and spend time with her boys from time to time – we remained good friends until her death in 2013, and by this time she had had another child – Bonnie.

We had Bonnie's birthday party at Coroglen Tavern one year and we all felt quite sorry for the situation her father (Pete) and her mother found themselves in.

After one such visit it was suggested that Bonnie should join her brothers with me, but this never eventuated. Eventually, Haydee (the oldest sister) agreed to take Bonnie on.

This worked out really well. Haydee lived close to the local Kaukapakapa school, arranged after school care for Bonnie and did all the right things!

One thing we did do at that time was that about once a month we would all meet at Happy Days Restaurant at Manukau – an hour or so drive for her and about an hour and a half for us.

Afterwards the three kids ran around like mad things at the local park and really enjoyed themselves.

This was working really well – when enter HOLLY, anything else I say is likely to be libellous.

As Pete's eldest daughter, she paid for him to go and snatch Bonnie from school, so she herself could have a 'ready made' family.

What a bitch! The argument was that as the father, he was entitled to have Bonnie's benefit to pay his mortgage This meant that Haydee was devastated. - so was I.

She had done nothing wrong but had had Bonnie snatched away. CYPS basically agreed that Pete and Holly had a better claim to Bonnie than Haydee, George, James and I did.

However Holly soon tired of being a solo mum and Bonnie was put into care – Haydee having, by now having had enough of the whole saga..

I have not seen or heard from Bonnie ever since.

This utopia with James and George was not to last however.

After getting summoned to the Headmaster's Office at Thames on an almost daily basis, and similar misdemeanour I at 69 really could not cope any longer.

George now says that I let him down, I can't help agreeing with him I too feel I did let him down. Quite badly in fact.

His 'support person' (Mary) had to uplift him and arrange for him to rejoin his mother in Blenheim, where his grandmother also lives, and he finished his schooling there.
But I still maintain as much contact as I possibly can.

This meant that James and I were on our own.
It is not true to say that all was sweetness and light, we certainly had our moments!!
But at least there was now only one boy to worry about.

James subsequently also attended Thames High School, with much less drama, I am happy to say.

He showed some interest in Theatre work and for a while it looked like this would be his hobby.
SIMPLY BETTER TEAM (SBT)

By this time I was not driving the school bus every day, but just relieving as necessary.
But I was also driving for Tairua Bus Co (TBC) on quite a regular basis.
One regular run was to Hamilton and back each Friday and again on Sunday, there was also quite a bit of charter work.

Almost without warning TBC management discontinued the Hamilton run so as its regular driver I was well and truly lent upon to 'do something about it'.

After exploring all possible options, I resurrected my Passenger Service Operators licence and originally used rental vans to provide the service.

This proved to be an expensive way of doing things so I bought an eight seater van (and another one as its backup).

However, passenger numbers were such that we often had to use both vehicles, which meant an extra driver etc.

I therefore bought 'something bigger' yep, a 50 seater Hino which also allowed 16 standing pax too.

This proved a bit hard to fill, and with the ridiculous road usage charges (\$300 for 1000 km) made it uneconomical except for really big charters.

We also undertook to provide the same service to Auckland.
For this we used a big vehicle as far as Kopu, where Auckland passengers were put on a van and the others continued to Hamilton.

I was then able to purchase a 22 seater Izusu named 'Humphrey' I have been tempted to write a book about the adventures of Humphrey but have not done so as yet.

This proved to be just about the right size.

Not just for the Passenger Service, but also for our many Motor sport activities. (See a subsequent Chapter).

With this variety of vehicles it meant that we could (and did) use just the right size of vehicle for either the Hamilton/Auckland runs or all the charter work we were now getting.



FRANCES AT A HILLCLIMB



JAMES SERVICE CREW



JAMES COMPETING

A RETURN TO MOTORSPORT

At 14, James had expressed an interest in driving and competing in hill climbs or similar, but I would not agree until he had 'served his time as a volunteer official for at least a year.

Once he had done this we bought him a little 1987 Toyota Corolla.

Way back in Christchurch I personally had competed in trials, and volunteered and organised speed events.

In particular had assisted Errol Inwood in organising the 1970 Silver Fern Rally. These things do go in cycles and I had not been involved in motor sport for many years when in 2004 the call went out with the question would anyone, competitors, officials or anyone else be interested in recreating the marathon rallies of yesteryear – such as the Silver Fern Rally ?

At that stage I had both boys so I said ' count us in'.

So it was that in 2006, while the boys were still at Hikuai School we took good old #2, Ace the Hi ace and did program selling.

The headmaster at Hikuai agreed that they and (Johann- another friend) could have time off

provided they EACH wrote a write up every day saying just what they had done that day so it could be emailed back and read to their classmates next morning.

This they pretty much did and it has started a procedure which I have continued until this very day.

Some of that information is repeated below too.

My write up for each rally since follows..

A little bit of history!

I have been involved in motor sport for probably nearly 60 years -once rallying became the norm I, as a trials driver, felt that speed was not really my thing and moved into the administration and organisation side of the sport.

Hence my involvement with the original S.I. Silver Fern in 1970 (the plaque of appreciation still hangs on my wall).

These things do tend to go in cycles and for a number of years I took no active part in the sport.

However when the call went out back in 2004 or thereabouts, for people interested in recreating a marathon rally like the original Silver Ferns my hand shot up!!

By this time I had (have) teenage boys who, I suggested might like to get involved.

This then is why we have been part of the Silver Fern team in 2006,2008,2010, 2012, 2014,2016,2018 during which time we were trained to step into any place that became short staffed for whatever reason.

In reality it meant that we did rock clearing and block marshalling as required, more recently timing too.

As mentioned above my teenage son (James) was very keen to compete at car club level (we belonged to Marathon and Thames Valley Car Clubs) but I would not let him compete until he had served his apprenticeship by helping out as an official on many events.

Although he now does compete in club events we (all) still enjoy being part of event organisation.

Specifically we have been part of Russell Mann's finish crew for

**2011 Rally NZ (Waikato)
2011 Rally Whangarei
then
2011 Rally of Gisborne (this time with Donald Welsh)
2011 Rally of the North
2012 Rally Whangarei (this time with Glen and Deb)
2012 Rally NZ (with Daniel Vincent)
2012 Rally of Gisborne (again with Donald Welsh)
2012 Rally of the North
2012 Rally of Maramarua
2012 Silver Fern Rally**

The SBT Tairua Stage Timing team was now pretty much at full strength, i.e. 9 people.

Personnel do change around a bit but in general we were by this time becoming a fairly well oiled machine.

We therefore also marshalled and timed for several local car club as well as invitational and international events.

At this time we lived at Tairua on the Coromandel, and happily travelled the country

The reality is, of course, most of the team were all mates of James, not mine , a really good bunch of girls and guys.

In 2015 Targa were looking for more volunteers so guess what? Yep we have been closely involved with Ultimate Rally Group (promoters of Targa) ever since.

Silver Fern Rally 2012

2012 SILVER FERN MARATHON RALLY.

In 2006, 2008,2010 we have assisted in various ways during the running of the Marathon Silver Fern Rally - always held in the South Island.

This year it was being run in here in the North island from Sun 11th November thru to Sat 17th November - official information, results and videos are available on 'www.silverfernrally.co.nz', a marvellous website with a wealth of information.

This missive is simply 'our story'.

**The Tairua Boys this time were:
Warwick, James, Zac, Devon, Quinten.**

**The Tauranga Team
Donald, Brian, Scott, Jake.**

Because of the dates it was not going to be possible for us to do the whole rally this year, so many of of the Simply Better Tairua Timing Team are still at school and sitting NCEA exams that week so we were reduced to working Day 1 (Sun) and the Day 7 (the following Sat).

Unlike so many rallies which (because officials have to be on site 2 hours before the first car is due) often has us up at some ungodly hour in the middle of the night) we did not have to be at our Maramarua stage until 8.30 a.m. which meant an 'out the gate time' in good old Hiace #2, our 9 seater van,of just before 7 a.m. - oh rapture what bliss.

(Mind you for our Tauranga based contingent it may well have had to be somewhat earlier!)

We met at the forest, dished out instructions, uniforms, umbrellas, hi vis vests, chairs, eats and drinks to each of the nine marshalls, dropped each at his appointed intersection and 'did our jobs'.

As James now has his learner's licence he was able to do the lion's share of the driving but with me next to him.

We all did our jobs as required, and then proceeded through our two stages detaping (removing the safety tape, which had been installed by another crew three or more hours before the stage start time).

However during this process, we managed to hit a rock or something on the forest road (with James driving, probably at speed) and managed to split the sump!!

Mind you subsequent investigation suggested that this wasn't the first time, just the final straw that broke the camel's back !!

This meant we were losing oil as a great rate. We got to the end of the stage though (after all the show must go on!) and then bought more oil which with judicious filling got the van to Dales Auto Repairs at Kopu, where there was another of our cars to take us home.

The next morning we discovered that not only had the sump 'dumped its contents', but the raditaor had 'sprung a leak'. This was not near the bottom as we had surmised, but a hole in the radiator quite close

to the top.

After their exams the boys had the job of taking the sump off, which was, nothing like 'simply dropping the sump', as even after removing all the screws, it still wouldn't come out !!!!

The only way to get it out was to 'lift the engine itself'.

They then had to undo the lower engine mounts yeah right!!!

Then remove the seats, install a lifting bar, lug the engine block etc.

What a job.

Once achieved, we lifted the engine itself, it only had to be lifted an inch or so to allow the sump to be dropped.

They then replaced the sump with another one, (purchased locally) lowered the engine and redid the engine mounts.

All seems good now. Mind you it is amazing just how low the sump bung protrudes down so I am not surprised at what had happened.

We really will have to do something about a sump guard - but not this week.

The water problem has been 'fixed' with a special radiator leak stopper - even if it doesn't last all that long it is hoped that it should get us through the weekend.

At this point I REALLY must thank Dale Chittenden of Dales Auto Repairs, for his unstinting effort even putting other customers work back somewhat so he could help us. Thanks ever so much Dale!

So on Friday 16th, we hitched up our (quite large) 6 berth caravan (recently warranted and registered) onto the back of Ace (the good old Hiace #2), checked oil and water (all o.k.) collected the rest of the local team and headed south towards Mangakino where we had the two first final day stages to marshal for the next morning.

So yep we were set for another 5 a.m. wake up.!

But being 'on site', having the caravan and two vans to sleep in made the whole thing something of an adventure!

At 6 am or so, James distributed the marshals for special 39, then once the stage was finished worked his way back, collecting team members, and detaping again. Brian did the same for SS 40, our SS39 team then proceeding to SS40 start, working through the stage picking up marshals, and detaping until we met Brian and his team doing the same thing coming back.

This meant that effectively our work was done, the Tauranga boys headed home we went on to Te Kuiti for 'fish and chips' and, of course LPG, back to Mangakino to re hitch the caravan - yeah right.

Since leaving only a few hours earlier our 'campsite' was now under water, and retrieving the caravan became 'something of a mission'.

I am not sure how Zac's bare feet are still intact!!!!

But we made it, and I drove home!

We got here safe and sound about 7 p.m. tired but happy.

**Still to unhitch the caravan, and check oil and water again in Ace
the hiace but am not expecting any problems really.**

But WAIT there's more!!!!

We have agreed (probably foolishly) to do it all again next weekend

!! In some ways easier but in other ways harder!!

I AM LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

**as this time the Tauranga Crew have to provide a start and finish
crew (6 min - pref 9 bods) and Simply Better Tairua Team the same for
the 'other end of the stage at Golden Cross, Waikino.**

I AM LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS

**Don't all shout at once - but I promise that it will be the
last time this year**

Rally of the North 2012

Our Experiences with Rally Of The North Based in Paihia

Firstly a little bit of background.

For R.O.T.N last year (2011) Warwick, James and Zac were block marshals and agreed to 'do it again' this year.

When asked how many I said we could provide 4 bods. as time progressed the Chief Marshall, Luke Carpenter had some difficulty in getting sufficient marshals and asked just how many we could provide.

So even though it was not stage timing - start or finish, or regroup and service etc I said we would provide him with 9 people (i.e. a van full).

This should have been 'no problem' (yeah right), but such was not the case - ended up really casting the net wide and eventually managed to put the team together (i.e. 9 of us). You will perhaps recall that pedantic old me believes that 9 is a standard size team and hope to always keep it that way.

However, a bit like Gisborne, Luke had been let down by others so asked if he could 'pinch' a couple of the SBT team all day, and one for half the day - so be it.!

I really do want to place on record my appreciation of all the team especially Ben who was only asked a few days before the event and immediately said yes. While not officially representing Thames Valley Car Club this time we were 'sort of' by association.

The Team ended up as (with nicknames in brackets)

**Warwick (Boss)
Amanda (Mum)
Chase (Chef)
James (Sheldon)
Zac (All Talk)
Quinten (Apple as in Crisp)
Toby (Substitute)
Johann (Mr left behind)
Ben (Good Guy).**

I try to have only one 'newbie' each time, so we can train but not be swamped by inexperience.

Being school holidays meant we could leave during the day and stooge up quietly (well as quietly as one can with 6 teenage boys in the back of the van), after stopping for Burger King just north of Auckland, we collected Ben from Whangarei getting to our hotel at Paihia about 5 p.m., in theory just in time for our marshal's meeting (yeah right).

About 6 we learned that Luke was still an hour away so it was 'fish and chips for 9 please!!'

At the this stage the weather was still 'very pleasant' but it wasn't to last!

Our Marshall's meeting was finally held at about 10 p.m., that night

the organisation not being all that impressive, at that stage Johann and Ben were allocated to another crew.

**Sat morning dawned wet and miserable!
However we still had to be out the gate before 6 a.m. and it was still dark.**

After some perigrination (i.e. I turned one road early in the dark and rain) we eventually found where we were supposed to be and dropped each person (with, chair, umbrella, hot or cold drink, and snacks) at each appointed intersection.

Except for the Boss (of course) who had the van as his base at the finish of stage 2.

Watching a 'short staffed stage finish' was something of an eye opener.

There was no tent, no ezyup, no spring top, a post chief doing at least three jobs and inexperienced people trying to do calculations.

If there was a car missing the radio operator had to get out and go and ask the various drivers if anyone had seen the missing cars.

Give me a full strength team every time, with minimum newbies !!!!!!!

There were rarely less than 5 cars queued up, at the finish control, usually more like 10. It was helped only marginally when the chief timing marshal turned up and joined in to help.

For the rest of us well We all just got wet!!

After the sweeper had been through, I returned to collect 'my various staff' although we were held up for nearly half an hour at a crash site while a 'very badly damaged car' #17 was being hauled back onto the road.

We then proceeded through Moerewa (pies for 7 please), and another full tank of LPG too and we headed to Weber Rd -Stage 6.

Hey, once again we turned one road too early because although the GPS indicated that this was the shortest way a bridge had been narrowed down to 'foot traffic only' size, oh bugger here we go again!

On our way to drop the various bods we were called back to help a (what turned out to be a private) vehicle out of a ditch on the stage.

My van simply could not shift it, so it was winching and boy (and girl) power to the rescue.

This, of course put us 'somewhat behind time' (again).

By this time though the rain had stopped to be replaced by gale force winds.

My job at this finish was 'down the road', ensuring that nothing came back to the finish control from the 'main highway'.

Sweet, piece of cake!.

We then visited Stage 8 start (minimally staffed too), where James was helping out, waited for the sweeper and then headed back to Paihia.

For meals that night some of us had a 'full sized' pub platter, some went for Chinese. We also had a beer or two.

Next morning we aimed to be 'out of the gate by nine', and were only a few minutes late.

**Dropped Ben in Whangarei, and headed for a service station to refill
our LPG AGAIN.**

Oops (yes you know what is coming don't you).

**The van died with no LPG about 3 km from the station, so an AA callout
had us on the end of a towrope. It is not surprising really that with all the hills and
driving the stages that the consumption was as could be said 'somewhat higher than one
would like'!!!!!!!**

At Manurewa, 8 full size pizzas to take away please.

**Back to Thames (another full tank of LPG please), dropping off two of
the team, over the hill to Pauanui, dropping more people, Hikuai
another one, then then final three at Tairua - arriving just in time
for the 6 p.m. news. 1500 km in 2 1/2 days - home again tired but happy.**

**The next one was the Silver Fern where once again we are supplying 'a
van full', for the first day and again on the last day. I am seeking
volunteers!**

Rally of New Zealand 2012 (WRC)

Our Rally New Zealand Experiences.

**We are just back from stage timing for Rally of NZ. (Using good old
#2, ACE the HiAce, which has now done 1017000 - 1 million 17 thousand
kms).**

**There were the four of us, James , Zac
and Quinten and myself Warwick of course.**

**I got the boys off school for the Friday with proper 'leave of
absence' and we were 'out of the gate' here about 6.30 a.m., drove to
Raglan and had to set all the gear up for the midday service at
Raglan Airfield.**

**We decamped there about 3 p.m.(after dismantling the towers, the ezyups
and all then other drama).**

**Drove to Auckland through 5 p.m. traffic and set everything up again
at the Viaduct Basin (in the dark I might add) .**

**At 9.p.m. we dismantled and decamped from there and went up to stay
at a camping ground at Orewa arriving just after 10 p.m.**

**Next morning (Sat) we left there at 6.30 a.m. and drove to Whangarei
where we setup AGAIN.**

After the cars left at 3 we decamped (again) and drove back to Viaduct Basin and setup again!

**We dismantled and decamped again just before 10 p.m. and went back to
the camping ground.**

**Next morning (Sunday) we had to be back 'on site in Auckland' at 5
a.m., so the boys got up at 3 a.m. so they could have showers before
we left at 4.15 a.m.**

We setup again at Viaduct basin, timed cars in (and out) three times

that day - dismantled and decamped just before 5 p.m. but instead of heading straight home I shouted the boys dinner at Happy Days.

We got home about 10 p.m. Sunday night and it would be true to say that I was 'somewhat tired'.

Monday morning when I took James down to the bus he said "you might as well go back to bed Dad - I'm going to sleep on the bus".

I thought I might just have a 'lie down; but did actually go back to bed.

Poor old James he had a Maths test thrown at him 1st period !!!

An event like this is one where we look forward to it eagerly but boy are we glad when it is over!

We shall be doing Rally Gisborne at the end of August, and are already committed to doing Rally of the North in October!

Rally of Maramarua

I do want to thank all the team for the efforts at Maramarua (representing, as we were Thames Valley Car Club). Please notice that as Post Chief I had a 'standard size team' of 9 people.

Thanks for all you and we collectively did at Maramarua yesterday.

Maramarua was a one day event yesterday (Sat). I did my Hamilton run Friday night, had the six of us here Friday night had us all out of the gate here at 4.45 AM yesterday morning although I do believe Donald had to be out his gate by 3.30 am. yuk, met the other 3 guys at Maramarua School at 6 AM. But my 'backups' did not make it unfortunately.

We had been promised that the rain would be pissing down all day, but although we did stage start timing for four stages there were really only a few spits of rain.

So I had my team split into the two 'halves' (in control, and actual start), 4 people each so I could just ponce around like Capt Peacock !!!

I had our entire team in uniform with name badges, James, Quinten, Zac, Toby, Chase. Donald, Scott, Brian and myself.

We had Chase as our Food/Sustenance and drink officer.

He did bacon, eggs and sausages for breakfast and ham, tomato lettuce and mayo for lunch.

We had the jug, frypan and microwave set up in the van to assist in this effort so hot and cold drinks were available for us all pretty much all day.

It was a fairly long day as having been out the gate @ 4.45AM, breaking camp @ about 4.45 PM then driving to Hamilton for the 'after match function, then the two hr drive back home (arriving at 9.30 p.m.) just in time for me to watch the All Blacks game.

It was, however, 'warming' to be told at the after match that we were by far the best start crew.

It is little things like that that keep us interested.

The next event is the interclub hillclimb that James is competing in on 30th Sept (we shall no doubt be marshalling), the Rally of the North on 13 October where we are supplying a team (small I hope) of block marshalls, then Silver Fern 1st day 11th Nov, where I have committed a team of 9 then the last day a team of 8.

Gisborne

The latest missive from the "Simply Better Tairua Stage Timing Team"

Although competitors have a lot of organising to do so do those 'officials' who actually allow an event to happen put what can only be described as 'a hellava lot of effort'.

The team (6 of us) left Thames Valley about 1 p.m. on the Friday, and after a 'late lunch' at Tauranga, headed for Gisborne arriving about 7 p.m

After distributing the 6 of us among other teams, and reallocating the accommodation, it was agreed that we would need to be 'out of the gate' just after 5.30 a.m. next morning.

Between us that day we did (or assisted with), service park/regroup, stage finish timing, stage starts.

One of our team, a former rally driver expressed his amazement at the amount of effort, enthusiasm and commitment these volunteers exhibit.

We 'organised' the park ferme at The Ford agents Garage Sat night then were up and at it again for the Sunday.

After doing starts/finishes for another two stages, we regrouped, headed back home, the boys had school again on the Monday.

I have a (not usually agreed with) view that officials are the life blood of the sport. So many competitors are 'simply not interested' in 'helping run events', they certainly do not appreciate the effort volunteers put in. Even in our own club all the publicity and thanks goes to our competitors. (I specifically exclude Michelle from this allegation as at prizegivings she goes out of her way to thank her marshals) - BUT this is obviously not shared by the membership at large.

The next event is the Maramarua Forest Rally (run by Hamilton Car Club) at which we are actually representing Thames Valley car Club. It would be good to have some appreciation from our Club itself, that this effort is in any way appreciated.

Quine RD Hillclimb 2012

**James was competing this day, so we were 'out of the gate' at 6.30 am
(although with daylight saving having come overnight it was really
only 5.30 am - yuk)**

**We put his car on the back of the van and then 'did our thing' as
marshals on 'point one'.**

**There were just the 4 of us this time, so after the prizegiving we
took James (and his car for a meal and then on to Hamilton where he
is working as a camp leader for the rest of the week.)**

The rest of us were home about 9.30 that night.

**We have now been required to provide 9 bods for Rally Of the North on
13th October.**

Providing a bit of a challenge, but no doubt we shall cope.

Rally of Hawkes Bay 2013.

On Sat 1st June the Simply Better Stage Timing Team went down to Hastings to provide both a starting team (8 people) and a finish timing team (should be 9 bods, but we had to make do with 8).

Over the last several weeks we had put together a really good team, a mixture of experience (some 10 people) and another 9 'newbies'.

Then guess what:

**3 days before the event one experienced guy pulled out
2 days before the event another experienced
1 day beforehand another experienced
and one of the newbies too.**

None of the 16 year olds let us down I am happy to say.

So,

**Out of the gate at 9 a.m. One van with me driving collecting another 3 bods, the other van with James driving another 9 - giving us a total of 14 from Tairua/Thames.
After a regroup at Tirau we had a lunch meet at Rangitaiki with Donald and Malcolm from Tauranga and headed to Hastings.**

After collecting the gear from the Car Club, We had 'dummy runs' in the pub car park - setting up laser beams, synchronised clocks etc.

Then the 'highlight of the weekend'. The 16 of us went out to dinner at Restaurant Indonesia - a really beautiful meal.

**Up at 6 a.m. drove up to the start and finish of SS2. Set up at each end and timed the 52 cars.
At the start Post Chief Donald had Zac, Nathan, Christian, Richard, Quinten and Nico and Jake.**

My team worked the finish, including providing a board - something the competitors seem to appreciate.

Once cleared, we proceeded back through Napier and set up again for SS8 this time a somewhat longer tarseal stage.

So fast that the distance between the Flying Finish (manned at each stage by Rimu and Toby) and the finish control, manned by James and Malcolm on calculations, the road team comprising Kaelon (cards), Daniel (pink slips) and Devon (board), was twice the normal distance.

**Needless to say, once again, I was able to just ponce around like Captain Peacock!
Well sort of - one of the R.T.s between the flying finish and finish control ended up with a flat battery. There was a lot of walking backwards and forwards - yuk.**

Once cleared and gear returned we all went out to dinner again this time at the Hot Chick !

Next morning (Monday) we were once more out of the gate 9 ish, I made the boys all 'do the steps'

**That is clamber up the steps up to the house I used to live in when I was in Napier.
I then took them to have a look at Bluff Hill lookout then headed quietly back to Atiamuri when we had another regroup, swapped people between vans, then Richard took the 11 of them to Thames and I took the rest of us to Tauranga and home from there.**

1200k in each van over the three days.

Rally of Tauranga 2013

On Sunday 21st July 2013 the Simply Better Stage Timing Team went to Tauranga to provide a finish timing team for the Tauranga Rally.

Once again we had several 'pull outs', but at least this time it happened in 'plenty of time' (yeah right), rather than 'just before they are due to come' which is what has been known to happen.

So instead of the 9 bods required for a standard finish crew we ended up with only 6 - bugger.

Managed to get all the crew here the night before so we could be up at 5 a.m. then out of the gate at 6 a.m.

One van(Chalkie) with me driving collecting another and James in his own Corolla (Rolly).

After collecting the gear from Rally HQ we found our stage finish and then set up.

We did SS2 and SS5 (both at the same spot so we didn't have to move).

**Toby and Nathan in Rolly as the flying finish car and at finish control, James and Rimu on calculations, Richard doing road cards, and I did the board, pink slips as well as being Post Chief.
(Mind you we did manage to commandeer our radio guy's assistant to do pink slips as the day wore on!!)**

Needless to say, that this time, I was not able to just ponce around like Captain Peacock!

Once cleared and gear returned we all headed for home - arriving well before dark.

The next one is block marshalling for Rally of the North at Paihia on Sat Aug 17th.

Any volunteers?

Rally of The North 2013

In 2011 Warwick, James and Zac were block marshalls for Rally of the North -(ROTN) and we supplied 9 bods to do block marshalling for the 2012 event.

This year (2013) we were asked again, but largely because we no longer have our good old ACE the Hiace (having already done one million and 30,000 km) as it had now reached the end of its useful life, we could only take 8 of us.

Finding this number was not quite as hard as it could have been, including Ben who was only asked a few days before the event and still helped out.

The Team ended up as (with nicknames in brackets)

**Warwick (Boss)
James (Sheldon)
Zac (All Talk)
Rimu (Crash2)
Devon (Figment)
Toby (Substitute)
Kaelon (Tops)
Ben (Good Guy).**

No newbies this time - everyone had worked before, if not as point or block marshals then as part of a proper stage timing team.

Not being school holidays this year, meant we had to leave after school so this also meant that we had to fight our way through Auckland peak hour traffic, this added about an hour to the journey time - great !!

After stopping for Burger King again, just north of Auckland, we collected Ben from Whangarei getting to our hotel at Paihia about 10 p.m.

The organisation this time was 'superb'.

Proper stage packs for each and every marshal, bibs, descriptions and everything necessary.!

Sat morning dawned a fabulous day!

However as we had to be out the gate before 6 a.m. it was out of bed at 5.30 a.m. - oh joy. We easily found where each person was supposed to be and dropped each person (with, chair, umbrella, hot or cold drink, and snacks) at each appointed intersection.

Except for Boss (of course) who, once more as a tribute to his advancing years had the van as his base at his appointed intersection.

After the sweeper went through, I returned through the stage backwards (always a somewhat risky manoeuvre) to collect 'my various staff'.

We then proceeded to Kawakawa (pies for 8 please), and another full tank of petrol. Then headed towards stage 5.

By this time the weather was deteriorating rapidly.

This time the various bods were dropped in position working backwards through the stage before road closure.

This too was a somewhat 'heart stopping' journey, especially as it did seem at one stage that I wouldn't actually get to my position (at the start) before road closure time!!

Never mind I made it with a few minutes to spare.

After being cleared by the sweeper I proceeded through the stage to collect the team.

Yeah right.

By this time the rain had been bucketing down for an hour or more and some of the road could only be described as a quagmire.

The mud must have been at least six inches deep in places - I was grateful for the 4WD capabilities of CHALKIE(the Toyota Estima - replacement for ACE)

but by the time the whole team had been collected the sides and rear of the van were completely covered in mud - seeing out of windows was well nigh impossible.

**Back at the hotel we endeavoured to wash as much of it off as possible,
a task only partially successful.**

**Fish and chips for 8 that night, a beer or two for the hard working troops, and off to bed.
Sunday morning a regroup in the carpark, out of the gate about 9 a.m., dropping Ben back at Whangarei, then to Happy Days at Manukau for lunch for the rest of the team.**

After dropping people at Thames, we got home about 4.30 Sunday afternoon.

**A word of thanks to Clive Mosen for driving my Friday afternoon run,
and Grant Brooks for doing the Sunday.**

Without them we simply could not have been free to do the rally at all.

RALLY OF NEW ZEALAND COROMANDEL GOLDRUSH SAT 23RD AUGUST 2014

With this years Rally of New Zealand being held on our doorstep this year we were, of course keen to 'do our bit.

After offering our services for some months we were finally asked to tape, block marshal and detape the length of the Tapu Coroglen road.

This suited fine, the theory being that we could 'double up' if we ended up with too many people. Yeah Right.

We were then asked to deliver letters to residents living more or less on all the roads being closed for the event.

This we were happy to do - James,Zac,Devon and Quinten delivered a hundred or so the Saturday before the event.

Then just over a week before we were asked to provide a finish crew for the spectacular special special stages along Joan Gaskell Drive in Whitianga itself.

Oops - so here we go again. James was away on his Wintec block course the whole week before the event so Zac ended up doing much of the personnel organisation.

SO once more we ended up with a 'houseful' on the Friday night, 'out the gate' time a much more reasonable 7 a.m. - mind you the taping crew lead by James was well away by then.

So we provided manpower (and girlpower) to block marshal the start, finish and camp ground entrance for SS3 and SS5.

After SS3 was finished Warwick with his crew headed straight to Whitianga for SS7 whilst James and the rest of his crew headed the long way round through Coromandel, again to Whitianga.

At the Spectacular Special Stage a reasonably standard flying finish (let's not mention Rally Safe Timing gear), but we were unable to give the standard 300m to the actual finish stop control - more like 100m

This meant that from a typical 170kmph cars had about 100m to come to a complete stop. Something of a mission for the drivers!

So between SS7 and SS9 we moved the stop control tent, vehicles etc as far away as we could to to give cars longer to stop

With cars taking only about 45 secs for the whole stage the action was well and truly 'frenetic'.

It was good that we had a really good full sized crew for this event (only one pull out just before the event) (and no-one left in a toilet en route)

Crew List as follows

WARWICK POST CHIEF

James - Letter deliverer, taping crew, technician, finish control calculator.

Zac - Letter deliverer, personnel organiser, gear collector, block marshal, detaper

Tara - Block Marshal, detaper

Devon - Letter deliverer, gear collector, block marshal, flying finish

Toby - Block Marshal, flying finish

Christian - Block marshal, flying finish

Quinten - Letter deliverer, block marshal, detaper

Kaelon - Block Marshall, detaper

Emma - Taping, Block Marshal, finish control logwriter

Jack - Block Marshal, finish control - road (cards)

Luke - Block marshal, finish control board

Steve - Block Marshal, detape, finish control paddle

Aiden - Block marshal, finish control Pink slip runner

Dale - Block Marshal, detaping.

**It was about this time that I finally resigned from Thames Valley Car Club,
for whom we had provided a goodly number of officials for most events over the last few
years.**

**The club had said that 'The membership at large has no interest in what you do – they only
want to follow drivers and their service/support crews' Bah Humbug!**

**The final straw was after Goldrush when the President
(who should have known better) wrote that 'with only one member competing our
involvement with this event was minimal'**

MINIMAL ????

We had provided 20 people, 6 vehicles, timing teams and block marshals.

**The week before the event the boys had driven almost 300 km hand delivering letters to all
residents along the rally route.**

What nonsense !!

We all smirk now when we note that events have to be cancelled because of lack of officials.

Karma?

Rally of the North

11th October 2014

For the last few years we have supplied ROTN (based as you could expect at Paihia, with stages up toward Kaitaia) a goodly number of 'block marshals', between 3 and 9 in fact most years.

This year we were asked if we could perhaps also provide an experienced Stage Finish Timing Team too, so we then set about 'getting the numbers', we estimated twelve or thirteen would be the required number of people.

However before we had managed to gather the troops it was suggested that perhaps we could do a Stage Start as well !!!

This meant that more like 20 would be required, bugger.

This also meant that (providing we could actually get the numbers) we could actually take 3 cars, and all 'do' the same stage, i.e. Start Crew, Block Marshalling throughout it then the Finish Crew - flying finish, finish control etc.

Seemed like a good plan, just had to get the 'bods'.

It then transpired that they really needed us to cover 4 finishes, so could we do 2 finishes each rather than 2 starts and 2 finishes?

This we agreed to do, even though it meant that we now needed 4 cars (a finish requires 2 cars, a start 1).
Oh Joy.

Although now becoming a bit of a mission, once more Devon (our Post Chief in training) stepped up to the mark, with Zac as his assistant, more of the makeup of our teams later.

So we finally ended up with our total of 23 bods, 5 adults and the rest teenage boys and girls, virtually all of whom had worked before so we did not have a significant 'newbie' problem.

The event was on Sat 11th October, and with so many of the team(s) members having to work during the school holidays we collected most over the day or so beforehand and ended up with some 12 or so teenagers staying here on the Thursday night.

That night the Post Chiefs 'picked their teams',

Devon having 1st choice, so he picked James first so I then picked Emma.

The actual final crew make up appears later.

Friday morning vehicles were despatched in all directions to collect the others and then we did what has been called a SBT regroup at Burger King at Dairy Flat just north of Auckland.

Warwick in Chalkie (all our vehicles have names as well as numbers), Dale in Homy, James in Goldie and Jack(off) in his own car and Steve in Utey. Yes I know this is more than our 4 car minimum, but was sort of necessary.

The only real fly in the ointment so far (more to come though) was that a policeman had seen one of our people standing up in one of the vans, no doubt changing seats stopped the van and gave him a ticket for not wearing a seatbelt. (When we do the Silver Fern we shall take a vehicle that doesn't need seatbelts anyway - this will hopefully avoid the problem.)

As has so often been said, the law is an ass, enacted by dickheads, hijacked by bureaucrats then over enforced by stupid donkeys !!

We all arrived pretty much on time, collected the gear necessary for the Finish Control stages, then had Fish and chips for tea - well those of us that got any did!!

We then had 'staff training' in the use of the Rally Safe Timing gear. Until now, in all of the five rallies we have worked on, where it has been in use it has never worked successfully, but always willing to do our best with it we nevertheless felt we had to be really sure that our backup 'bomb drop' timing with results radioed to Finish Control was indeed working perfectly.

We all had to be 'out of the gate' at 6 a.m. the next morning, Devon's team for SS2 and ours for SS3.

Other than having no cell phone coverage, and the fact that our Rally Safe Surface Tablet was rapidly running flat both teams managed to set up the Rally Safe beams without too much effort, we put the signs out, got the crews in place and timed the cars

Both teams also 'did a board' - something we always do (not all finish crews do though). This shows each competitor the stage times for every car in front of them. This does seem appreciated by the vast majority of competitors.

It would be true to say that on the whole we were extremely happy with how everything went.

Except I should point out that on SS2, the car we were using for Flying finish (Jacks Corolla), got stuck - no real problem, a recovery vehicle to the rescue, then lo and behold replacing it with Homy meant that it too had to be rescued.

Now, a few words about Rallysafe. Most will be aware that we have probably been one of its harshest critics, at least to date.

SS2 & SS6.

The boys tell me that apart from some difficulty on setting up the beam, and the fact that despite being fully charged at the start of the

day, the tablet went flat 'just after the last car'.

If we had been
able to keep it charged then the system 'worked like a dream'.

High praise indeed from a highly critical crew.

SS3&SS7

This was 'our' team. Here again we had 'some' difficulty setting up the beam, but for each stage Dale managed to make it work.

Our tablet showed 49% charge at the start of the day - this rapidly dropped to virtually zero, so we had no tablet times at Finish Control - my thought was 'here we go again'.

However when I sat down at the end of SS3 and asked Rally HQ by radio whether they wanted me to give them finish times, or stage times from our 'pink slips' I was told that everything had come through correctly and they didn't need anything.

Oh joy, what rapture!

At SS7 we thought we had everything under control, the beam was set up, our 'bomb drop' backup seemed to work exactly as it should, and based on our experience earlier in the day we foresaw no real problems occurring.

However, several competitors were complaining that the stage times we were giving them were incorrect.

We rechecked our operation (several times) and could find nothing wrong.

When cleared by the sweeper we were then asked to gather all the 'slips' and deliver them 'post haste' to Rally HQ so they could be audited.

This strongly suggested that 'something hadn't worked'.

We really don't know - but everything did seem fine at our end.

It was when we regrouped at the end of the day that we I discovered that after the sweeper had re opened the road after SS2 and the boys were collecting the signs, a local 'boy racer' decided to make the most of the closed road and try and set his own 'rally record'.

He managed to crunch our nicest van, either with his dangerous driving, careless driving, illegal racing or simply not being able to stop within half the clear distance ahead (our van was stopped well before he hit it !!).

Although still driveable (we drove it home after all) the matter is in the hands of our insurance company - I have asked that it be fixed rather than written off but we shall but see.

That night the 5 adults went out for Chinese meal and the teenagers 'entertained themselves' Yeah right.

Sunday we headed home 9 am or so, regrouped at Happy Days, Manukau (our favourite restaurant)

where they kindly put us in a special private room.

We then headed home, delivering people to various homes, including two of the girls to

Hamilton.
All teenagers being back in class at their various schools on Monday morning.

The teams were (Adults names in CAPS)

Devon - SS2 & SS6

Zac
James
Savannah
Toby
Nathan
Jack

WARWICK SS3 & SS7

Emma
DALE
Rimu
Tara (J)
Quinten
Ben
Luke

Block Marshalls

STEVE
TINA
CAROL
Tara (T)
Johann
Nico
Kaelon

**Another fun weekend even if managing 20 teenagers is not the easiest task in the world - after
all I am supposed to be retired !!!**

**BUT this said, what a great bunch of boys and girls - all the adults are proud to be associated
with them all.**

**Our next event is the Silver Fern Rally, Picton to Queenstown 8th till 17 Nov - not all that far
away.**

Silver Fern Rally 2014

Hi EVERYONE !!

This is a 'warts and all', blow by blow description of the 2014 event

I did a 'preview' then a daily write up then the Epilogue

In 2006 when the boys were still in Primary school, they were granted the time off to 'do the rally', as long as they wrote a report every night, to be emailed back so it could be read to their classmates the next morning.

This they did (well sort of), and I added my own comments throughout the trip - that year we did 5000 km in something under 10 days.

This practice has more or less continued throughout our rally involvements until the present day when James is now 18, virtually left school, and we now have what appears to be some 12 or 13 teenagers (boys and girls) joining us this year.

We leave tomorrow night at about 7, for the 2014 Silver Fern Rally, for which we are providing '8 block marshals, for each of the 8 days', a somewhat larger undertaking than the 3 or 4 of us that have formerly been involved.

For this first '10,000 word missive', I lay out what we are expecting to be doing for the next 10/12 days. I shall attempt to do a writeup each night and send it off (without relying on the boys/girls, to contribute very much).

If you know of anyone who might be interested, then do please either forward the emails, or give me their email addresses so I can include them on the list.

SO, Tomorrow (6th Nov 2014) we leave here (Tairua on the lovely Coromandel Peninsula), at about 7 p.m. we should have 12 or 13 teenagers, plus Connie and myself.

(Connie came on the 2010 event and is really looking forward to this year's event - as indeed we all are.)

Several of the team have never even been to the Mainland before, let alone doing the 'whole nine yards' that we will be doing.

In theory we won't be taking any newbies though, everyone has been a member of the SBT Stage Timing Team on some previous occasion.

This time we are not doing any really technical work, even though Block marshalling is actually a vital part of the operation (being a mixture of security and public relations) .

Most of the the team regard it as 'glorified spectating' rather than any real work.

After collecting everyone, we plan to drive through the night arriving in Wellington before daybreak and go over on the Interislander @ 8.30 that morning.

We intend to spend the Friday night with James' grandmother in Blenheim.

Might even catch up with George !!

The Rally proper starts in Picton on Sat - but oh joy, we don't actually have to work that day.

Sat night we will be in Nelson, as we have the 8 points to block marshal on Sun morning.

Sun night at top ten holiday park in Greymouth.

Monday block marshalling out the back of Lake Brunner then arriving in Christchurch sometime in the afternoon - descending as you might say on my best friend Bob.

At that stage we also pick up the next 'adult' member of the crew, Lisa, who despite her protestations, she is not a 'newbie' as she has been a member of the SBT Stage Timing crew before - flying finish 'bomb drop operator' no less.

She will be with us for the rest of the event, probably leaving us on our return to Christchurch.

Tuesday morning, up bright and early working out on Banks Peninsula - I have horror memories of Bossu Road, but James seems quite happy to drive it.

That night we are in Timaru Top Ten.

Wednesday the cars go out Kurow way, then over Dansey's pass - we end up at Waiholo camp ground (about half an hour south of Dunedin).

Thursday inland from Balcultha (Pomahaka or whatever), we end up in Invercargill - whether we get to Richardsons Motor Museum or not I am not sure.

Friday up through Central Otago, we will be staying with our friends at Forest Range station, 'situated 15km south of Lindis Pass in the South Island high country'.

Another likely early start on Sat morning has us in Thompson's Gorge, Philips Rd and getting to Highlands motor sport park.

The event winds up that day with the finish being in Queenstown that afternoon and after the 'after match function' we once more descend on the good folk at Forest Range - well if we have managed to perusade them to join us for this last rally day they will already be with us.

But wait there is more !!

Sunday we have to get back to Christchurch to put two of the boys on a plane to Auckland so they can be picked up and transported back to Thames so they can sit exams on the Monday!!!!

The rest of us, have to be in Picton by noon on the Monday, and will decide just how far we are able to drive once we gat back to Wellington that night - heading back home hopefully 'tired but happy'.

There is likely to be a charter that Tues 18th but if so David has agreed to do it for me - I am likely to be in 'no fit state'.

So there you have it.

Our plans for the next two weeks, real appreciation of my other driving colleagues, especially David, who is coping magnificantly with the bookings and admin - no mean feat I assure you - Daily updates I hope.

The bus we will be travelling in has GPS tracking fitted - so if you want to follow our progress just ask and I can give you the website, the login ID and the password.

Day 1 Good and bad!

We did leave Tairua near enough on time (Thurs 6th) 7 p.m. collected the rest of the crew and headed away.

I drove as far as Taupo then James drove the rest of the way to Wellington - arriving in plenty of time to catch the ferry.

He did REALLY well driving through the night, over the desert rd, with a significant amount of heavy trucks going in each direction to cope with.

In Wellington we had the absolute pleasure of meeting Nick, my grandson for the first time - thanks ever so much to Kate and Sean for bringing him down.

James drove both on and off the ferry We caught up with George during the afternoon. It was during the trip down that we discovered that the bus heater, which we knew was 'not very good' in fact was useless!!

So we had about 12 almost frozen bodies when we got to Wellington. But a lovely crossing, happily esconsed @ Lorraines, 3 tents in the back yard, collected our running instructions, hi-vis vests etc.

The adults went out for a meal - the event itself starts tomorrow (Sat)

But this is where the bad news starts.

I am (again, still, or whatever you want to call it) Absolutely disgusted with Vodafail. We have no actual wireless internet access today, but never mind, we have our Vodafail sticks (2 of them in fact), but not only will Vodafail not let me connect (even though I have done so many times before) but neither will they let me know the 'ph no' so I can either complain loudly, or do something else about it.

It suspect that 'get stuffed Sykes must be one of their standard phrases.

Anyway - I'll send this as soon as I can get access- Even dial up.

Warwick And

Connnie

James

Zac

Rimu

Tara

Tara

Devon

Jack

Kaelon

Luke

Christian

Quinten

Hi all,

For the first time so far, a rift is appearing between management and staff !! Some behaviour has been obnoxious to say the least, and unhappily led by those who should know better.

Right to the stage of one or more likely to be left at one of our overnight stops and having to make their own way home.

However, with a mutiny being organised I have succumbed to the fact that I need them more than they need me and simply cannot fulfil my obligations without them- there is, therefore

something of an uneasy peace.

Anyway after a pleasant night with Lorraine, we watched the start of the rally in Picton then proceeded quietly to our camp ground in Nelson.

Connie and I had Burger King, the rest had McDonalds, we refuelled Humphrey with diesel and then prepared for our first real 'day of work'.

For those tracking us it should be a most interesting day !!

Hi all, Well what can I say ??

There was good bad and disastrous !

The Good, the fact that all the crew were up in time for us to meet our 'out of the gate by 8 deadline!

It was also good that we were at our appointed place in plenty of time.

Also under this heading was the fact that we successfully dropped (not literally) all our marshals in their correct places.

But then there was a tree trunk across the road at one point which was high enough for cars to pass under but not good old Humphrey !

We did realise that we would always need to drive the whole rally stage (twice in fact, once dropping marshals and once collecting them),and, seeing the target time for the rally cars was over an hour, then it was likely to be nearer two hours in Humphrey(each time).

With the tree problem a detour added another 30 mins or so.

When we went to collect our crew I turned around on the detour 1 point too early, Zac didn't tell me I had done so until some half hour later we discovered we were missing two !!!!!

Oh Bugger - another hour on the stage !!!

For those of you tracking our progress this must make interesting traces.

So, now some 2 hrs behind what we would have wished we headed for Greymouth - even though the cars went to Westport (so we would only have to get out of the gate at 6 - not rather earlier as we will no doubt have to after tomorrow night.).

BUT some 111 km from our destination there was a resounding bang from the nether regions of Humphrey, and yes - we had a blowout on the inner dual of the left hand tyre !!

We limped to Greymouth and are hopeful it can be fixed tomorrow morning.

The behaviour of some of the crew leaves lots to be desired, the mess they have in the bus is incredible but it looks like we shall 'get there'.

Thanks again to David for holding the fort back home - it is good to know he is coping so well. Tomorrow (Mon) we block marshal 3 more stages,(and hopefully get a new tyre too) then over the hill to Bob's place.

More from me then!

Hi again, A better day today - well sort of.

Three stages to ,marshal today.

Out the gate by 6, dropped 1st two marshals, at various points on SS13, then more in SS14 and SS16 - all with the bus with a shredded tyre.

We then went back into Greymouth, had the shredded tyre replaced, and guess what the inner on the other side was also flat - and needed to be replaced!!

Expensive, but necessary.

James drove from then on!, collecting the people we had dropped earlier, then took us over Arthur's Pass, (and more to the point Porters Pass), arriving at Bob's ON TIME.

Fish and chips for tea. Then a Nga or two for Connie, Lisa and myself.

We are all out of the gate at 6 in the morning.

Hi all, WOW What a day !!

Two stages today, the 1st of the day (Bossu Rd), and the last of the day out the back of Geraldine.

Bossu Rd, I remember from years ago - it has not improved .

I am trying to get some photos to send, but suffice to say - out of the gate (Bob's) at 6 a.m., 2nd (or perhaps 3rd gear) all the way up - eyes GLUED to the road.

Scary is a mild word for taking a 7 tonne bus up there!!

Anyway, mission achieved- those of you tracking us must have found it really interesting.

We then moved (post haste) to the back of Geraldine - where we needed 9 marshals.

As previously explained, we have to drive each stage, dropping people off at the nominated points, complete with chair, umbrella, drink, chips etc.

Then after the road is opened and keeping a sharp lookout for wayward boy racers driving BMWs, we drive backwards (well not really, but in the opposite direction) collecting them again.

Unfortunately on this last stage of the day Brent managed to have a substantial 'off' and,as a result the stage had to be abandoned - always very disappointing for those competitors already finished. Humphrey continues to 'work really hard'

Do remember to check chrissport.co.nz for up to date information. Since leaving Tairua on Thursday night we have travelled 2195 km.

Well - what can I say !!!

Here we are at Lake Waihola (just south of Dunedin!)

This morning we had to lend 3 marshals to another team, they were out the gate just after 7.(am)

The other 11 of us were away before 8.

All was going swimmingly, we were well on time to be where we had to be at the appointed time when lo and behold, we got another flat tyre !!

Not on a gravel rally stage, but on a nice piece of straight tarseal road !!

The team got the spare wheel off, got the jack out and the large wheel brace etc - Note there was, of course no cell ph coverage on any network, oh bugger !

The problem showed itself when we simply couldn't get even one of the wheel nuts loose - and no it wasn't a left hand thread problem !.

. We managed to flag down a car, got a message to Carl the Rally Manager, who arranged to shuttle these 11 marshals to their posts, while we attempted to deal with the problem!!

People came from far and wide to help, but all to no avail, even when we had all the tools available in a couple of 40 tonne rigs.

It still wouldn't shift. We used a pipe extension and simply bent it. I jumped on the bar, but even my 100kg couldn't shift it.

One helper got an enormous socket set, with a power bar and a 1 metre long extension - still no use !!

We had already tried squirting CRC on the threads to no avail when one of those helpers there went and got some "PB Penetrating Oil" - guaranteed to shift anything !

Yeah Right!!!! Still no joy !!

But wait there is more- reading the can (when all else fails read instructions) it said to wait 5 mins _ seems an age)

but lo and behold, one at a time the nuts did undo, with long pipe extensions applied.

This meant that we could 'simply' change the tyre,(which we did) and proceeded quietly to the start of the stage - wait for the road to be opened the go and collect everyone (well 10 of them) as I had had to stay with the bus (obviously).

Waimate for lunch, tyre unable to be repaired or replaced.

Off to Oamaru, main tyre shop had none of our tyre size in stock, sent us to another who fortunately did.

We then drove here, arriving just after 6, tomorrow we are 'out the gate' about 9.

Invercargill tomorrow night. I might get the team down to Bluff, just so they can say they have been there!

We do have some photos

Here we go again

Today we were due to have 7 marshals in the stage, and because it was the 1st stage after lunch, it meant we didn't have to be 'out of the gate' until 9.30. a.m.

Oh rapture what bliss !!

Yeah Right - at about 9 p.m. Carl rang again to say that we also had to do a morning stage - this meant we had to be out of the gate by 8 a.m. after all !!

Anyway this we did, arriving at the appointed place at the appointed time.

Dropped 4 marshals in the first stage, then the second 7 in the next stage, after lunch collecting them all and heading for Invercargill -well actually particularly for those who have never been here before, down to Bluff and the southernmost point on the south island - if you get a chance to see the photos taken please do.

We then managed to get Humphrey all the way up to the lookout.

. Tomorrow we are due 'out of the gate' at 9.30, but wait there is more !!!

We have just learned that we also have to do a second stage , but at least our out of the gate time is no earlier and it also allowed us an effective 'night off' in Invercargill

This meant that the 'boys' had their night out and Connie, Lisa and Steve Luscome, (who used to work with me at SBT in Chch and who will now work for me over the Christmas break in Tairua,) and his partner, and I had our own 'adults night out'.

Eventually Steve drove us all home in Humphrey and we are still looking for an out of the gate time of 9.30.

We have only been away from home a week (and only a month since Rally of The North,) but it sure seems a lot longer !!

We are now up to nearly 3000k since leaving home.

I'll regale you all with the 'saga of the tyres' in due course.

So Fri, we were out of the gate at 9.30, heading for Pyramid, somewhere out the back of Gore

Once more, Carl needed some of our crew to man another stage, so we dropped (James driving again), 9 of us, the rest with Carl on to SS43, Connie and I then went all the way back to Gore, for fuel and food for the troops.

Then back to drive SS42 (I drove - of course), collected the team, then through SS43 again .collecting the rest.

We then headed for Forest Range Station)which really deserves a complete 'edition' to itself), arriving just a bit later than hoped.

Lovely meal, lovely beds, lovely tour of the station etc.

It is hard to believe that I have been associated with this magic place for some 30 years, Lisa for 25 !!

Anyway we are out of the gate this morning by 8. Meeting Carl at the start of a SS ,then on to Highland Park this afternoon, finishing in Queenstown Sat evening.

Well, the rally itself is now over ! And what an experience it has been.

Not the least managing and controlling a dozen or so teenagers, a mixture of boys and girls, thanks to both Lisa and Connie for helping in this undertaking.

But 'wait there's more!' We are little more than halfway through the exercise.

Having now done some 3500 km in the week since leaving home we are now faced with another 1300 or so to get back home - yes I know I have a charter to do on Wednesday. too!!

Anyway back to the story - Friday night we stayed at Forest Range Station, (thanks ever so much Russell and Jeanette),

out of the gate before 8 on Sat morning, down to the Thompson George Special Stage,

whereupon, the troops
(except Kaelon who was, for some reason, still sleeping despite being prodded), were shifted into a 4 wheel drive hiace to be dropped through the stage then eventually brought back after it had finished.

We then headed to Highlands Motorsport Park at Cromwell, a venue that just has to be seen to be believed.

Another absolutely marvellous facility but which apparently has such onerous resource consents restrictions placed upon it that it can only be used once a month.

What absolute nonsense.

We then headed for Queenstown, where the boys (and girls) had the night to themselves (well at least until 10.30)

whereas I had forgone drinking anything myself so that I could drive them back to Forest Range,

arriving not too far after midnight.

Another good sleep, not only for the adults, but for the crew too, out the gate at 8 heading for Christchurch and Bob's place again.

More news tomorrow !

Yes I know, the Rally is over, but we still have a long way to go.

Out of the gate at Forest Range at 8 a.m., up through the high country

, stopped at Tekapo for photos,

at the Church etc, loo stop at Fairlie then on to Chch Airport to drop Devon and Christian so they can catch a plane to Auck so they can sit exams tomorrow (Monday).

The rest of us then dropped Lisa off then headed for Bob's place (again), what the neighbours think of the bus with a dozen or more teenagers arriving at an old aged pensioner's newly rebuilt house can only be imagined.

We sort of went our separate ways for the afternoon, meeting up with our friend Brian who joined us for our meal at Bob's tonight.

I will confess to having managed a few Ngahere Golds !!!!

Tomorrow is another out the gate time of 7.30, whereupon we proceed (quietly?) to Picton, cross over on the ferry and then head home driving through the night arriving in Tairua before daybreak Tues morning.

Thanks for following our adventures, and a special thanks to those who took the trouble to follow our GPS tracker which showed where we were every 10 secs throughout the journey

I shall no doubt do a summary of the event in the next few days, but right now I am 'rather tired' and am off to bed.



SILVER FERN 2014 – MEMORIES















OUR WHEEL NUT PROBLEM

EPILOG.

So, we are all 'back home'.

Left Bob's with an out of the gate time of 7.15, (James driving), getting to Picton at 12.15.

Paid and checked in, then enjoyed a reasonably leisurely cruise on the Arahura.

Off late afternoon into the Wellington 5 p.m. traffic, (say no more),

James then drove until his 5 1/2 hrs were up then I took over for my 5 or so.

Dropped several of the boys as we proceeded home , then Connie at Duck Creek.

Zac is already away to the first day of his new job,

James is heading for Hamilton again for his next interview with the army recruitment people,

thus leaving Rimu, Tara and I to do something about restoring Humphrey to a state fit to carry passengers - this will be a mission and a half,

as I have a charter in it tomorrow (Wed).

Now I thought a few words about just what we have been doing.

For a couple of years SBTSTTTT (SBT Tairua Stage Timing Team) have been doing rally stage finishes, quite technical, reasonably difficult and certainly a task that requires the utmost accuracy in all things.

Silver Fern had enough timing teams on offer but we were offered 'Block Marshalling', a task almost universally known as 'glorified spectating'

This is, actually a most important job though.

Legally, it is a safety and security function - being there to stop ANY unauthorised vehicle getting on to the road whilst it is actually legally closed.

A block marshal is required at each and every intersection

The task is sometimes easy sometimes not quite so easy - ask Lisa !!

.In reality though it is also a public relations function. Block Marshals become 'the face of the organisers', interacting with the general public

at these vantage points and usually striking up significant rapport with spectators.

In practical terms it means that the mother ship (Humphrey on this occasion) has to be driven through each stage, dropping a marshal at each intersection (complete if possible with chair, umbrella, drink and snacks)

some 2 hours before the first car is due.

Then on the run through the stage say an hour after the last car, they are once more picked up and on at least one occasion then carted off to do another stage later on the day.

Is it any wonder we are regarded as masochists!

Who else would sit on the side of a dusty (or muddy) back country road for 3 hours or so, then when having a beer at the end of the day - say yep that was fun!

(And then do the same thing again the next day !!)

– All this for no pay, just the honour and glory of being part of such an exciting event.

Well done to the crew which this time was

Warwick (of course) - Wazza

Connie

Lisa

James

Tara J

Rimu

Tara T

Zac

Jack

Kaelon

Quinten

Devon

Christian

Luke

TYRES

Yep, we had tyre problems.

**If you have read my earlier missives, you will note that we ended up
with three new tyres,(this really shot our budget) strangely enough,
not on the rally stages as one might expect but on good flat, level tarseal roads.**

**I guess there may have been some weakening of the 'equipment' during the stages though.
BUT our investigations showed us that most rally cars service crew carried about 20 tyres for
each car - 4 brand new, and another 16 in various stages of wear.**

**So I guess it was inevitable that, as so much of our time was spent driving the various rally
stages that our Light Truck tyres might decide to call it a day at some point**

I thought the following blow by blow description might be of interest.

6th Nov

Collected the troops and drove through the night to cross over to Picton on the 8.45 a.m.

Friday 7th

**Caught up with George, then stayed the night with Lorraine - thanks Lorraine. Tents all over
her back yard, a nice room for Connie the rest of us bunking down on the floor or whatever.**

Sat 8th

Start of the rally proper.

We stayed at Maitai Valley Motor camp in Nelson

Sunday 9th

We marshalled BIGBUSH Drive in the Golden Downs Forest near Glenhope- A VERY rough

**forestry road, which (with detour) we did three times
some marshals had to wait a VERY long time.**

**That night we had our first blowout which contributed to our being somewhat late arriving at
Greymouth holiday park.**

Monday 10th

**Out of the gate at 6 a.m. Dropped Marshals at three stages, had tyre(s) replaced
then back to collect the marshals, then 'over the hill' to stay with Bob. Just returned to his
newly rebuilt home the day before and yep he ended up with 14 of us there**

I hate to think just what the neighbours thought was going on!

Tues 11th Nov

Out of the gate again at 6 a.m. Bossu Rd on Banks Peninsula - WOW. But wait there's more.

**Once collected from there we then had the last stage of the day to do too - out the back of
Geraldine.**

That night at Timaru Holiday park.

Connie, Lisa and I had a 'self contained unit' the rest had their tents and the bus to sleep in.

Wed 12th Nov

**This was our next tyre mission - well actually frozen on wheel nuts -
but the Rally Manager ferried the troops to their points then once mobile again we collected
them once the stage was finished.**

**That night we stayed at Lake Waihola Motor Camp just south of Dunedin - Connie had a
cabin, Lisa and I had bunks, the rest tents, the bus and the camp lounge.**

Thurs 13th Nov

**Out of the gate at 8 (as it turned out it could have been later), block marshalled on the
Pomehaka Stage**

**(well those that Carl hadn't pinched to help out elsewhere did) then on to Invercargill that
night.**

**A visit to Bluff, including the lookout, caught up with a good friend Steve for a meal, stayed at
Invercargill Holiday park - which actually was the dearest camp we stayed at.**

Friday 14th Nov

**Out of the gate at a much more respectable 9 a.m. - well would have been if it wasn't that Carl
once more needed some of our team to man another stage!!**

**So once more we dropped people at the stage near Otama, then rushed back to Gore to get
food and sustenance for the troops, collected them and headed for Forest Range.**

**I have waxed lyrical about this magic place for nearly 30 years, Russell and Jeanette did not
disappoint.**

I am sure the troops will carry lifelong memories.

**Connie, Lisa and I had separate rooms in the house itself. The team bunked down in what is
known as the 'cook shop'.**

Sat 15th Nov

The final actual rally day - yeah right!

We HAD been allocated the Philips Rd stage but as this only needed 2 block marshals it was decided to shift us to Thompson Gorge which needed 13 !!.

However it seems that the gradient, width and surface of this road was likely to be too much for Humphrey so the team were ferried in, in a 4 wheel drive Hiace.

Once collected we then headed to Highland Motorsport Park (see my writeup for that day), the rally finished in Queenstown, the team had the Sat evening off in Queenstown then at 10.30 I drove them all back to Forest Range.

Same accommodation arrangements as the night before.

Sun16th Nov

Out of the gate before 8, drove back to Christchurch, put two of the team on a plane bound for Auckland, (where they were picked up by Dave and taken to Thames) as they had exams to sit on Monday.

We then stayed the night with Bob again, caught up with Brian (the birthday boy) and slept the sleep of the innocent!

Monday 17th

Out the gate before 7.30, James drove back to Picton, arriving at checkout almost exactly at the appointed time, over on the ferry, then drove through the night getting here just after 3.

A MARATHON INDEED.

I am sure that even if they don't appreciate it right now - looking back on the experience in years to come I think everyone will remember it with fond memories.

Rally of Whangarei 2015

Once more we had extreme difficulty in getting the numbers
Eventually, Warwick and Ben worked for Donald Welsh on his start crew.

Rally of Gisborne 2015

Once more we had some difficulty in getting the numbers
James and Sophia worked for Donald Welsh on his crew at the start of the mighty Motu.

Rally of Tauranga 2015

On Sunday 22nd July 2015 the Simply Better Stage Timing Team went to
Tauranga to provide a finish timing team for the Tauranga Rally.
James organised the troops

COROMANDEL GOLDRUSH

SAT 22nd AUGUST 2015

With the Rally again being held on our doorstep we were, of course happy to help.

We had an 'out the gate' time at a very much more reasonable 10 a.m. !!

**The Spectacular Special Stage is reasonably standard,
and this year we were able to give the standard 300m to the actual finish stop control**

**It was good that we had a really good full sized crew for this event
So much so that even though we were more than a little worried about numbers even a
couple of days ahead, we were actually able to lend Rimu and TaraT to Russell's team**

Crew List as follows

WARWICK POST CHIEF

Dale.

Zac

Tara

Kevin

Toby

Tim

Trent

Willow

Aiden

Darryl

Rally of the North

12th September 2015

For the last few years we have supplied ROTN (based as you could expect at Paihia, with stages up toward Kaitaia) with a goodly number of 'block marshals', between 3 and 9 in fact most years.

In fact, last year we were asked if we could perhaps also provide an experienced Stage Finish Timing Team too, and perhaps we could do a Stage Start as well !!!

This year we were initially asked if we could 'do the same again please' but the reality was that this was no longer really be possible I did offer a 'van full' of block marshals of say 10 people.

I left it to Devon (our Post Chief in training) to get the numbers, which could include myself just as one of his team.

**This he did really well and ended up with some 13 or so people - double ups coming up!!
Yeah right**

**Just over a week before we were then asked to PLEASE at least do a stage finish !!,
This meant a real 'scramble' for me to get a finish team together.**

I leaned on everyone I could think of, called in all my favours and pulled myself and Tara J out of Devons list of willing helpers.

Effectively all the boys have to work now, so although 'my team' could leave during the day on Friday, the 'van full' would not get away until 5 or after so a Paihia arrival of 11 p.m. was on the cards.

**This meant that by now I had a finish crew of 6, and Devon was down to 11 or 12.
Pretty good going actually.**

The actual final crew make up appears later.

Whilst in Hamilton collecting Tara (R),& Rimu, with Myself, Brian (from Christchurch), Kevin (from Whitianga)- I told you I had leaned on people from far and wide - I also managed to get Tara T to join us so we were going to have a finish crew of 7 - ideal!

Then disaster.

A message from Devon that 'they were short'.

Yep, short all right - his 11 or 12 had dropped to 5. Six or more when the van arrived to collect them had decided not to come. I WAS NOT AMUSED - and STILL AM NOT AMUSED.

The reality is that block marshalling is IMPORTANT, on the long stage for which we were supplying 10 of the 14 marshals required, without marshals it may well need to be cancelled.

This caused consternation, and pandemonium as can be imagined!!.

The upshot of it was that we lost two of our Finish Control team (so down to 5), the chief marshal managed to find another few at VERY short notice I still get annoyed at the thought of what might have ensued.

We were first to arrive, in Chalkie, for Finish Control then Ben on his own car for Flying finish (thanks Ben)

There was no staff training, but when the van (with Zac driving - thanks Zac) Arrived we allocated team members, the marshals being out the gate about 5.30, The rest of us 7 a.m. or so. And guess what Rally Safe worked a treat. we had Ben and Rimu at flying finish and Tara and Tara in the van at Finish control.

Once the Flying Finish beam was broken the Surface Tablet positioned between the girls popped up with Start Time, Finish Time and Stage Time. Just like it is designed to do

**We also 'did a board' - something we always do (not all finish crews do though).
This shows each competitor the stage times for every car in front of them.
This does seem appreciated by the vast majority of competitors.**

We did not need a 'pink slip runner as we had our own big radio back to Rally Control

It would be true to say that on the whole we were extremely happy with how everything went, well if it wasn't for those rude people who let us down at the very last minute.

Now, a few words about Rallysafe.

Most will be aware that we have probably been one of its harshest critics, at least to date.

I really should say that the system 'worked like a dream'. High praise indeed from a highly critical crew.

It always used to be that even with the Surface fully charged, the only way to make it last had been to have a 12v/230v inverter in each van, then to keep charging it 'from the wall socket'

However from what I can learn the battery drain problem was really because of all the background 'crap' the Surface was running.

Once all these unnecessary tasks were stopped the battery life trebled.

As I say, for us it worked like a dream

That night the 4 adults went out for a meal and the teenagers 'entertained themselves'

Yeah right.

Sunday we headed home 9 am or so, regrouped at Happy Days, Manukau (our favourite

restaurant) where they kindly put us in a special private room.(again)

I took Brian to the Airport so he could fly back to chch - we were late so Brian has his own tale to tell

We then headed home delivering people various homes including two of the girls and Rimu to Hamilton

The teams were (Adults names in CAPS)

WARWICK

Zac

BRIAN

KEVIN

Devon

Rimu

Tara (T)

Quinten

Kaelon

Tara (J)

Christian

Ben

Targa Rally 2015

Hi EVERYONE !!

Despite all the 'shit' going on in my life at present, I refuse to turn up my toes and die.

I have, therefore, agreed to help with Targa Rally all next week.

This means that David will do the Hamilton run on Monday 26th (Labour Day), - thanks Dave, Mike will do my Pauanui run Tues, Wed, Thurs and Fri morn, then the Hamilton run on Friday 30.

Thanks very much Mike too. Should be in Trannie the Transit, backed up by Glennie the Hiace.

As has been my 'wont' I'll do a Prologue before we start on Monday morning explaining what we are expecting to do, then a write-up each night and then a final Epilogue once we have finished.

Although somewhat short on numbers, the team this time will comprise:

Warwick

Toby

Dale

Kevin

Zac

Luke

Prologue

Our 'out of the gate time' tomorrow Monday 26th is 6.30 a.m., two stages tomorrow at Plantation, not far from Te Kauwhata, staying in Hamilton tomorrow night.

Tuesday morning we do the first stage of the day out the back of Te Awamutu so it will probably be another 'out the gate time; of 6.30 a.m. Another stage - the last of the day - then staying at Autolodge New Plymouth.

On Wednesday we do a couple of stages out the back of Mt Egmont staying at Autolodge again.

Thursday we head for the forgotten highway and do two stages in the vicinity of Whangamomona, the cars stay at Palmerston North that night, we are at Feilding though.

After a 'Gentle Annie stage or two, we end up in Napier for the night.

Saturday Tui Brewery at Mangatainoka, then once the Rally itself is finished we head back home. (Tired but happy?)

Day 1 - Monday 26/10

Out of the gate at 6.30 a.m.

Dale and Kevin in Chalkie, Zac, Luke and Toby in Torry and myself in Townie.

We did a Timing Team regroup at Plantation Rd, Dale and Kevin setting up the Timing

(TIMY) gear, at the flying finish also teaching Zac and Luke at the same time.

Toby and I meantime set up the finish control, I did road cards, Toby did everything else. Cards, writing up log sheet, criss cross sheet, receiving times from Kevin at Flying Finish etc. Mind you I still had my normal Post Chief duties to perform.

Some, not all, the cars got close to the 200kpmh target, quite a few knew 'us' from previous rallies too.

After the 1st stage Zac and Luke, having had a crash course in operating the timing gear they had never seen before, headed away to do their own Flying Finish for Stage 2

Meanwhile halfway through the second prologue run we ended up with a VERY long gap between cars (something like 5 mins, instead of the usual 1 min).

This we learned had been caused by a competitor 'taking out' a power pole, causing the stage to be abandoned.

This is not as simple as it sounds, but the upshot of it all was that after the lunch break the regroup seemed to work fine and everything was back on track.

Tonight we are staying at Microtel Backpackers in Hamilton.

Day 2 - Tuesday 27/10

Out the gate at 6.30 again !

Zac and Luke in Tory, heading for their own stage and Dale and Kevin in Chalkie and Warwick and Toby in Townie.

On site at ss3 pretty much on time, but Dale and Kevin had what can only be described as a 'tunnel vision view' on the cars at Flying Finish

which meant that whilst they could 'readily' get the time, the speed at which the cars were travelling meant that reading the numbers was well nigh impossible.

This meant that once the cars had actually stopped at Finish Control we needed to relay the actual car number back so it could be entered into the system. Messy but worked.

We had a lunch break at Te Kuiti, after which Townie decided to do its overheating trick again!!!!

After several agonising minutes Dale determined that the thermostat wasn't actually opening and after consultation with the nearest (other) mechanic, obtained a product to help 'unstick' it.

This has worked so far to date. Fingers crossed.

As part of this problem we arranged a 'Plan B' which had Zac and Luke joining our team for the afternoon stage

and having the whole six of us (a full strength team you might say), made it MUCH easier.

There was one car that had to be pushed over the flying finish line, but otherwise the only real point of interest was that the stage was 38 km long and cars were taking between 15 and 18 mins for travel it. You do the sums.

We then headed for Autolodge New Plymouth which I used to be heavily involved with.

Anna is still managing it, Ruth is still very much the matriarch, and at 85 is still as 'sharp as a tack'.

It was actually Anna's birthday party tonight so they were somewhat preoccupied.

The six of us had a few drinks at the bar, and then a meal in Juliana's Restaurant.

Tomorrow Zac and Luke are out of the gate at 6.45a.m.

Kevin, Dale, Warwick and Toby say 8.30.

The stages tomorrow are all around Mt Egmont, we are back at Autolodge tomorrow night !!

Day 3 - Wednesday 28/10

The halfway point of the rally.

No REAL Dramas today.

Zac and Luke were out of the gate at 6.30 a.m.

Their only real drama (but a real one) was that they simply did not get breakfast, or lunch, or daytime snack, so were ravenously hungry by 5 p.m.

After the very expensive "Silver Service " meal at Juliana's last night it was back to earth with Burger King tonight.

As for Dale, Kevin, Toby and me it was a much more leisurely out the gate time of 8 a.m.

Once again with only two of us at Finish Control it became a bit of a mission particularly when the 'problem' reared its ugly head - we commandeered one of the block marshals to do 'road cards' for us for a while.

Normally the cars, which are set off at one minute intervals, arrive more or less at one minute intervals and everything works as it should. our 'problem' occurred when 6 (yes six) arrived together,

it was simply impossible, to read the car number, 'stop the clock', and enter the number then restart before the next car. The six crossed the flying finish line in less than a second !!!! This required some working out I can assure you.

Not related to the 'problem' the stage finished (having started late too) over 30 mins late. This meant that even though we more or less skipped lunch, we still had to refuel the vehicles so we were half an hour late for our next stage (the last of the day). yes both vans were worked very hard getting there if you know what I mean!!

Once more we had small problem, with 2 or 3 cars arriving at once but got it sorted.

So back to New Plymouth, Burger King for dinner, refuelled all the vehicles (to the brim) as tomorrow we all travel the 'Forgotten World Highway' some of us twice.

We were somewhat disappointed the the spa pool was 'out of action', but these things do happen.

We are 'out the gate at 6 am (yes 6 a.m.) tomorrow. It looks like being a long day !!

We eventually end up in Feilding for the night..

Day 4 - Thursday 29/10

Another day. A double dip of the "Forgotten Highway.

Out of the gate by 6 AM, out to Whangamomona by to be there by 8.

Did our stuff, bought a pie each from the Hotel and found that we had no comms coverage either.

No Cell ph, no Rally comms, no result link etc. even when a full wavelength aerial instead of the quarter wave aerial was tried. Great

BUT,

An hour later we at least managed to get some comms back to Rally Hq. from our Finish control Fleetlink radio - oh joy.

After that stage was over. we then packed up and set up the finish again at what had been the start.

This meant that we had to drive the 40k stage twice - quite fun.

However when stopping at the midpoint comms link (where there was reasonable comms coverage) my own cell phone went mad with texts, missed calls, and even some actual calls all of which made life just that more difficult.

The weather then packed a sad and although I had taken an umbrella, it really was cold and wet.

During this stage we lost 3 cars, no personal injuries but some cars are very much worse for wear !! Written off even .

We then drove some 200 km to Feilding where we are staying tonight, Out of the gate at 6.30 tomorrow morning, a local 40 km stage then over Gentle Annie to Napier.

More from me tomorrow, right now I need my beauty sleep.

Day 5 - Friday 30/10

What a day !

Out of the gate at 6.30, coffee and pie for breakfast then set up for our first stage an hour or so away.

BUT,

Boy was it cold!

Toby was in the van (Townie) so that wasn't too bad,

but I was doing Road cards (and post chief duties) and although wearing a singlet, flannelette shirt,

a Rally Whangarei fleecy jacket, and my lovely mustard coloured jersey, (with the post chief hi-viz over it all),

the wind still decided not to go around, but straight through me. I would be stretching it a bit to say I turned blue, but it really was cold.

No major disasters, so headed for Taihape for lunch (guess what, another pie and a coffee), then on to Gentle Annie stages. to get where we had to go we had to drive both stages - enough said !!

Our finish was at the end of the second stage, and as we had several 'offs', or mechanical failures, once more we had to rope in one of the block marshals to do the road cards so I could do my post chief duties.

We noted the particularly good team work at both the Flying Finish (with Dale and Kevin), and Finish Control, with Toby and Warwick.

As far as we can tell not a single mistake - all day.

Tomorrow we are out the gate at 5.15 doing 3 Stages, 28, 30 and 34.

Home VERY late tomorrow night !

Day 6 - Saturday 31/10

Again,

I note that last night I did not explain that we stayed at Kennedy Park Holiday complex, and then I took the team out to dinner at Restaurant Indonesia as a real thank you for all their efforts.

So today - out of the gate at 5.15 am, not so cold today just on an hour to our first of three stages.

Set up, with a really long 'slow down between Flying Finish and finish control.

We were scared that the range may be beyond the range of our hand held radios, but nope all was well..

Two stages without having to move, oh joy!

Another hour or so to our final stage of the rally!

No problems - another flawless performance on the part of all of our team.

Once cleared drove through the Square at Palmerston North, to drop Toby because the teenagers were heading all the way back to Thames to go to a party while the grownups quietly headed for Dales' place at Tirau.

An epilogue in a day or so.

Epilogue

So, the rally is all over.

A number of firsts.

The first time we have been involved with Targa.

The first time we have actually done timing for a Marathon Rally, other Timing jobs have been for one or two day events. For marathon rallies we have always done block marshalling etc.

The first time we have had to work with a finish team of only 2 on flying finish and 2 (including the Post Chief) at Finish Control.

The first time we had provided a Flying Finish team for another team.

The first time we had electronic trackers on all our vehicles.

Probably the first time we did the lion's share of the work. With 36 stages, and 4 timing teams that's an average of 9 stages per team. We did 13 !!!!!

In Summary

Day 1. Out the gate 6.30. Timed the 'Plantation; stages, stayed at Microtel in Hamilton.

Day 2. Out the gate 6.30 again 1st stage out the back of Tokanui, then after lunch at TeKuiti the van did its overheating trick again.

Next stage at Awakino, then stayed that night at Autolodge New Plymouth.

Day 3. Out of the gate 8 ish , the first stage that we had 6 cars arriving together, a late departure from that stage meant we had to travel (very fast) to the last stage of the day.

But still arrived (just) before road closure. Back to Autolodge that night.

Day 4. Another early start, out to two stages on the Forgotten Highway. Afterwards a long drive to our stop that night at Feilding.

Day 5. The stage with the 'lazy wind' .

Boy was it cold - sometimes back in Christchurch we used to say 'that wind was straight off snow' I guess as we were quite close to the Ruahine ranges it probably was.

Our next stage was the second one through Gentle Annie,- the Taihape to Napier road.

I have driven it only twice before but it has improved quite a lot since then.

We stayed at Kennedy Park resort, and went out to dinner at Restaurant Indonesia

Day 6. Another VERY early start- We had to be at the 1st of our 3 stages by 6.10 and it was nearly an hours drive away.

After doing the last stage of the day,- Zac/Luke had to do the last stage of the rally - we all drove home.

Analysis shows that our two vehicles, Townie and Chalkie each did 1850 km from Monday to Sat and Zac did nearly 2000km.

The difference likely to be that we pretty much always headed straight to our finishes, usually using mainly main roads, Zac however usually went to each start so he could drive through the stages.

NOW !!!!!!!!!!!!!

Without in any way making light of the technically competent and even more so the operational competence demonstrated by Dale and Kevin (and I guess Zac and Luke), as our Flying Finish teams, I have been VERY impressed with what my right hand man TOBY AUSTEN did throughout the event.

As there were only the two of us at finish control his duties included:

1. The night before helping work out the best route and time to leave to get to where we had to be next morning.

2. On arrival at the stage, set up the 25w radio aerial etc.

3. Unpack the numerous signs, stands etc.

4. Supervise and help the (local, inexperienced) block marshals set up the equipment including the chicanes.

5. Targa doesn't use 3,2,1 signs just a 'slow down' sign roughly equivalent of our usual '3' sign, Toby often had to walk just to place it. We wished we had brought a little motorbike, a skateboard, a scooter or even a bicycle!!

6 .But once the stage started his effort was amazing.

The time from flying finish was radioed, written down on the log sheet.

With quite a long FF to FC length usually there were two or more car times radioed before the car actually arrived at Finish Control.

This means that he then had to locate the correct time on the log, from the car number, write it on the competitor's card, often confirm the number back to FF.

All the time coping and dealing with incoming information, often with exceptionally - noisy rally cars about 5 feet from his ear hole!!!

The criss-cross sheet to mark off start orders also had to be filled in as he went along.

But quite often he had to radio the actual car number back to FF when they hadn't managed to read it anyway.

But wait there's more - when I had to do Post Chief duties, which included talking to each driver when chasing missing cars etc.- he also had to get out of the van, get the card from the driver etc, work on it and then give it back again.

Older readers will no doubt recognise the phrases 'flat out like a lizard drinking', or - even 'looks like a one armed paperhanger with an itch' !!!

7. Once I got clearance to close. He then had to pack up, including packing away all the marshals signs, get the 'slow down sign, although the FF boys were often press-ganged to help with this..

8. On some occasions we did, indeed need to drive the rally stage whereupon he took on the role of 'co-driver' or 'navigator' reading the turns and cautions from the road book. On other travels he just used the supplied maps to get us where we had to be.

TOBY YOU ARE A STAR.

A real pity that so many people would not help - even another 4 would have let us provide the two full finish teams asked of us - as I say a real pity.

Targa Rotorua 2016

Hi EVERYONE !!

Having done Targa 2015 and then not being needed for Targa Bambina 2016, we did offer to help for Targa Rotorua 2016 after all as Darryl lives in Rotorua this might be a good base. However they were all sorted for people so it seemed we would not be needed again.

YEAH RIGHT!

With the two day event running Sat 14th and Sunday 15th May, starting and finishing in Rotorua, it was only two days before that I received a 'cry for help' from URG. This caused something akin to consternation as you can imagine. Darryl came on board almost immediately, (thanks Darryl), as did Zac, Luke and Jack.

Well done team!

Toby (the star of Targa 2015) also put his hand up so did Viv. Dale was overseas, and Kevin wasn't feeling up to it.

This was all arranged within about 12 hrs. of being asked.

As I said: "WELL DONE TEAM".

This meant that I had to go to Auckland to collect the gear on the Thursday, did my Hamilton run on the Friday then 'into it' on the Sat.

Being the last ring-in team we only had one stage to do out the back of Matamata with an 'on site time' of 12.30 pm oh joy.

Not quite the same as being #1 timing team and doing first AND last stages every day of the rally. (as was the case with Targa 2015!!)

Zac collected Luke from Tokoroa, and Toby from Hamilton, I collected Viv and Stevie from Paeroa then Darryl from Cambridge after getting him on a bus from Rotorua.

We all found our positions without too much difficulty being the middle of the day made life just a bit easier

BUT having been supplied a plug-less aerial for Zac's TIMY gear and our gutter grip aerial not gripping the gutter radio communication was less than ideal.

Neither did we have hand held radio comms between FF and FC - bugger.

Anyway we did our best and I was able to do my (minimal) post chief duties, chat to the stewards etc. without worrying too much.

**At flying finish we had Zac, Luke and Jack
at Finish control**

we had Darryl on road cards, Toby on Cards, Viv on Log Writing and Stevie doing Start order criss cross sheet.

I was, as they say able to just 'ponce around like Capt. Peacock'

A few beers at home that night, return Toby to Hamilton, then Darryl to Cambridge to catch the bus back. Another trip to Auckland to return the gear later in the week..

Our collective thanks to all the team which comprised:

Warwick

Toby

Darryl

Viv

Stevie

Zac

Luke

Jack

Pretty much a full crew even though we had just over a day to arrange!

Rally Of Gisborne 2016

Hi Everyone !!

**Once again this year we provided a Stage Finish Timing Team for Rally of Gisborne. Saturday
2nd July 2016.**

**We had just a little difficulty getting the numbers, but fortunately Donald Welsh was able to
spare Mike (and his daughter Georgia) - who I had worked with (for) previously.**

**Dale had a 'newbie' friend and with the our own 'solid base' of support it looked like we
would be all right.**

**Mike and Georgia made their own way there on Friday, Dale collected Darryl from Rotorua, I
collected Devon and Tyla from Thames and we all arrived more or less at the same time in
Gisborne Friday night.**

**We had two stages to do, (without moving - oh joy), and did not have to be 'on site' till mid-
afternoon - but, no doubt you can see this coming - this meant that we would be doing the last
stage of the rally and PACKING UP IN THE DARK. (Not quite so joyous!!!)**

**A wee bit of a baptism of fire for Devon and Tyla in the Finish control van, and with Rallysafe
not being used on our stages (not functioning?) we did cope, just.**

**HOWEVER, we could not get any Post Chief comms and the 'radio guy' could only get a spot
'some distance away'. This meant that our pink slip runner really did have some running to
do.**

**I was really good to have Mike and Georgia, with their extra experience, thanks to the rest of
the team too.**

We all made our way home quietly on Sunday,

The team this time was:

Warwick

Dale

Darryl

Mike

Georgia

Devon

Tyla

Well done team

Goldrush Rally 2016

Well, what can we say?

PLENTY of bods, at one stage it looked like we could have had something approaching 19 people when a full sized team is 9 !!!!

HOWEVER, With the inevitable people pulling out we still managed a full sized team including a couple of 'newbies' both of whom proved well worthwhile - one particularly so.

This time we has 3 stages to do (but again did not have to move), for those staying at Duck Creek an out of the gate time of 7 a.m. (thanks everyone for complying), met Zac and his crew, and Dale and also Viv and Rimu at our 'timing crew regroup' point on the 309 rd corner. All there at the appointed time. Well done.

This time we were using Rallysafe AND beam/printer and bombdrop. Dale and Zac set up the two beams, with Indiana, Luke and Viv, all up at the flying finish point.

After getting the EZIUP set up at Finish control, we used Rimu and Levi (who has proved to be a real find) together with Tyla in the van.

With the numbers we had it was possible to have someone on the paddle, as well as the road runner, pink slip runner AND we did a board. John Holland questioned why we were doing a board, BUT it has been my experience that competitors really do appreciate it as it shows them what times drivers in front of them have achieved.

Needless to say Rallysafe did not work reliably, Very frustrating because when it does it really is a marvellous system.

I also had a problem in that for the whole of the last stage my Post Chief's radio could receive but not transmit, having to pass messages via our Radio Guy or other official cars.

All of the team were invited for a burger at Coroglen on the way home, but not all were able to make it.

The team this time was:

Warwick

Dale

Zac

Luke

Indiana (new)

Viv (& Stevie)

Rimu

Levi (new)

Devon

Tyla

Christian

Quinten

and sleepy Kaelon

Well done team. The next one is Targa 2016 12th till 16th Oct, and then the Silver Fern 2016, Chch to Chch from 27th Nov.

Targa Rally 2016

Hi Everyone !!

Tue, 11 Oct 2016 Targa 2016 - Prologue

Having worked for Targa 2015), our special stage timing team is once more working for Targa 2016.

As has been my custom for almost 10 years I shall do this prologue (showing our intentions) then each day do a write up as to what we have actually done that day.

As always we will need two vehicles one for the Flying Finish, and the other one for Finish Control.

Chalkie (the Estima) has been set up with the equipment for Flying Finish. Townie (the Townace) as the Finish Control van.

We have installed the 25 W Fleetlink Radio in Townie (with magnetic aerial)

We have (with some difficulty) installed the TIMY gear, and roof mounted aerial in Chalkie for use at FF. At the moment it occupies the front passenger seat.

The following people have been allocated: Dale, Zac and Kris at FF, Warwick, Rimu and Philipp at FC. James and Sophia are also joining us just for the weekend.

Rimu will take Chalkie from here on Wednesday night, collect Zac at Pipiroa Road at 5 p.m. and head for our first night at Otorohanga,

Meanwhile, I shall collect Philipp and Kris in Townie when they finish work, collect Dale from Tirau, and also head for Otorohanga.

We do 2 stages on Thursday and end up staying at Raetihi Thursday night.

On Friday we'll do another 2 stages and stay at Taihape Friday night.

One stage on Saturday, south of Taihape, then to get to our stay at Napier we shall need to drive over the Napier/Taihape rd (Gentle Annie). We'll stay at Kennedy Park Holiday Park Saturday night and I am hoping we can all go out for dinner that night!

Another stage on Sunday then quietly head home on Sunday afternoon.

There will be trackers in each of our two vehicles, if you want to follow us then let me know and I'll give you the website address, ID and password.

If you know of anyone else who might like my daily write-ups, do feel free to pass them on or let me know and I'll add them to the list.

On the other hand if, for any reason. you do not wish me to send them to you, again, just let me know and I'll remove you from the list.

Day One - Raetihi

Here we are at Raetihi.

Last night, as planned, Rimu and Zac headed over in Chalkie, I collected Philipp and Kris and we then got Dale from Tirau and all met at roughly the same time at the holiday park at Otorohanga.

Against my better judgement I took the boys out to burgers at McDonalds - I do NOT like drive-thrus.

Out of the gate at 6.30 a.m. this morning for our first stage on Old Te Kuiti Rd. A bit new to our newbies, and even the old hands just a little bit rusty. But apart from having some six or seven 'missing' cars at one stage we did cope.

We all knew that getting to the next stage would be tight! Not helped by our managing to flatten the battery of Chalkie, my jump starter not having enough grunt and then having to grovel under Townie to get jumper leads onto its battery. But success at last. But by the time we left SS2 we were already due at SS6. - No Toby I didn't get the tracker into bright red either.

SS6 had a considerable downhill between FF and FC but no real problems except that we eventually found out that our TIMY had not actually been transmitting the whole stage. A replacement unit has been found for us to use tomorrow.

A two and a half hour drive to get to Raetihi, we have eaten at the local takeaway place and checked out our 1st stage tomorrow - so it will be another out the gate time of 6.30 a.m.

One down three to go !!!

Day Two - Taihape

Well we are at Taihape (Rusty Nail Backpackers). Fish and chips for tea.

Out the gate at 6.30 at Raetihi this morning our first stage about 10km away. A short stage but very twisty and bumpy!

Our flying finish van (Chalkie) was within sight of FC - the only real drama was that there was a real downhill run towards FF and one particular car came down the hill so fast that Chalkie, despite being positioned well off the road, was in real danger of being badly damaged or even written off. This was really frightening !!!

Once more the wind was 'right off snow'. Philipp was doing road cards and I was waiting for his bare legs to turn blue. I was freezing and I actually spent most of my time in the van (Townie).

Once cleared we headed off to our next stage out the back of Fordell near Wanganui. This required driving the Parapas. Kris drove Chalkie and Rimu drove Townie!

Even though it was an almost 2 hr drive we did manage to get on site almost exactly on time. By now the two 'teams' are shaking down quite well.

Dale and his crew, - Zac and Kris - got the TIMY sorted out and place the necessary signs.

Rimu and Philipp meanwhile got FC setup together with all the block marshal equipment assisting them as necessary.

This was a much longer stage(nearly 40km) which meant many more things could go wrong.

It was also the first stage where it was raining. Once more Philipp had the outside job !!!!

This stage our handheld radio (for vital communication between between FF and FC) ended up with a flat battery. This despite their having spent the last night on charge.

Chalkie was VERY low on fuel - and we had to drive the stage to get out but by having the vehicles in tandem we made it. Just!!!

It also meant that none of us (on any network) had any cellphone coverage I was able to receive texts from time to time but replying or sending out was completely out of the question. Stopping at one point through the stage got me one 'bar', but still not really good enough !!!

I had a couple of 'issues' though. Zac being his normal demanding self, and Rimu playing what he calls music (but what is really just noise) on his phone to the detriment of radio conversations. HOWEVER both are performing their duties admirably (I guess I should say brilliantly) so I really have no cause for complaint.

I am expecting James and Sophia to join us later tonight. Meanwhile I can hear the teenagers playing up enjoying themselves !!!

Tomorrow we have to be on site just after 10 a.m. and it is only a short distance away. Restaurant Indonesia for the troops tomorrow night!!!

Day Three - Napier

Here we are at Napier - staying at Kennedy Park Holiday complex. We have just returned from our night out at Restaurant Indonesia.

Last night I had considerable problems with some of the teenagers, who were yelling and screaming till the early hours of the morning, then quietened down to just talking at the top of their voices for the rest of the night. Their excuse? We are younger than you!!! I was NOT impressed, and am still not!!

Anyway James and Sophia joined us today and as hoped James did 'stage time calculations' and Sophia actually wrote up the board - it does seem that competitors do appreciate it.

Mind you, it was another occasion with the wind right off snow - oops there actually was snow for a brief time. Cold again. Not actually as bad as last year but maybe that is because Phillipp was the road card person !! (I was pretty snug in Townie).

We all stopped at BP Taihape and had our usual 'coffee and pie', then joined the queue of officials, service vehicles, recovery vehicles (and I guess general public) to drive through both Gentle Annie stages to get to Napier. Rimu drove Townie, Zac drove Chalkie.

As I said restaurant Indonesia tonight - we are out the gate at 8 a.m. in the morning for our last stage of the rally.

Home tomorrow night!!

Day Four - Back Home

Back home safe and sound !!

As explained last night we all went out for dinner and I am happy to report the boys' behaviour was very much better - in bed by 10.30 or so rather than 4 a.m.!!!!

Out of the gate at 8 a.m., pie and coffee for breakfast, on site for our last stage of the rally at 9 a.m., the appointed time.

Dale, Zac and Kris at FF, and Warwick, Rimu and Philipp at FC.

At finish control we also had James and Sophia doing sterling work!!

With sufficient people for the last two days we were able to 'do a board'.

This is not standard for Targa, it is standard for WRC and even for lesser Rally NZ Events.

With the longer 'slow down' length with Targa, what it meant was that James could hear the actual finish time radioed by Zac, then was readily able to 'guess' the start time, do the calculations in his head then give Sophia the nominal stage time which she wrote on our pre-prepared board and had it available for competitors to see.

What was quite exciting was that often the stage time was up on the board even before the car actually arrived at Finish Control!!

And SOMETIMES, before leaving, competitors could actually see the time of the car behind them!! Well done James and Sophia.

Once cleared just after 1 p.m., James and Sophia headed back to Wellington, Rimu took Dale and Zac home, and Kris, Philipp and I stopped at DB Taupo for a soak in the hot pools then a burger at Burger King at Tokoroa.

I still have a van full of gear which I need to get back to Targa later in the week.

Don't forget Silver Fern Rally in about a month !!

Tue 18 October 2016 Targa 2016 - Epilogue

So, the rally is all over. A number of things; A bit different this time..

We had 4 experienced people (or six if you include James and Sophia for the weekend). Plus our 2 newbies - who turned out to be great.

In Summary:

Day 0/1.

Rimu collected Zac after work and headed for Otorohanga. Warwick, Philipp and Kris collected Dale and headed there too. Stayed at Otorohanga Holiday Park.

McDonalds for dinner. Out the gate 6.30. next morning timed the Hangatiki stage, then the one out the back of Piopio. Once cleared headed for Raetihi. Stayed at Raetihi Holiday Park. Fried Chicken for dinner.

Day 2.

Out the gate 6.30 again. 1st stage just down the road towards Ohakune, then a long drive to the next stage near Fordell, out the back of Hunterville. Stayed that night at Rusty Nail Backpackers, very nice if several of the teenagers had actually behaved like civilised beings, Fish and Chips for dinner - and a few beers. James and Sophia drove up from Wellington to join us at this point.

Day 3.

Out of the gate 9 ish (just as well as there had been VERY little sleep) just one stage today - the same one that Zac and his team had done last year. It was cold again and believe it or not what we thought was rain was actually snowflakes !!! Not for long but very soft snowflakes.

Having James/.Sophia enabled us to do a board. After the obligatory 'pie and coffee' at Taihape we joined the queue of cars to go over Gentle Annie (Taihape/.Napier Rd). Like last year we stayed at Kennedy Park Holiday complex.

I would vote it our best accommodation on the whole event. Restaurant Indonesia 'dinner for eight' - Enough said.

Day 4.

Out of the the gate at 8 for our last stage of the Rally. Glengarry, with our finish at its junction with SH5. Once more we did a board - much appreciated by competitors. This meant that

once cleared we could head home to Tirau/Ngatea/Pauanui and James/Sophia back to Wellington.

IN SUMMARY - Epilogue 2

The GOOD !!

ALL our 'out the gate' times were met. Therefore all our 'on site' times were also pretty much met.

The two newbies fitted in very well. The whole team did, in fact, perform brilliantly.

As far as I could determine there was not a single actual mistake made on our part.

Any technical issues were not of our making but with goodwill and assistance from everyone involved were resolved satisfactorily.

Doing a board impressed competitors no end.

Now the NOT so Good.

Despite performing their duties adequately, getting concentration and quietness (to allow radio communication) from the boys was difficult to say the least.

The language from their mouths and their phones left a lot to be desired.

The local boys behaviour on the Friday night was simply unacceptable in any civilised society. Yelling and screaming till the early hours of the morning then talking at the top of their voices till almost daybreak was, as I said not acceptable. I do understand that alcohol played a part but not as much as the girls they had picked up. A real blot on the copybook of those who should have known better.

However overall well done team.

It looks like this year we only did just over 1200km.

Regards to all

Warwick Sykes#3 Post ChiefTarga Rally 2016

Silverfern Rally 2016

Hi Everyone !!

PROLOGUE

I am sure you will remember that In 2006 when the boys were still in primary school, they were granted the time off to 'do the rally', as long as they wrote a report every night, to be emailed back so it could be read to their classmates the next morning.

This they did(well sort of), and I added my own comments throughout the trip - that year we did 5000 km in something under 10 days in good old ACE the Hiace approaching its million kilometre mark. This practice has more or less continued through until the present day when James is now 20. Zac turns 20 next month and Rimu 20 in January 2017.

After the epic 2014 event I said I wouldn't do that again, but instead would restrict our involvement to a 'van load' i.e. 8 people max!

YEAH RIGHT!

URG (Ultimate Rally Group) who are organising this year's event asked if I would put together both a Start and Finish Stage timing team. As you can imagine this sort of put the 'cat among the pigeons' as you might say.

It meant that I had to find at least 11 people (preferably 12) and at least 3 vehicles (preferably 4) !!!!!

Not being able to get my Start Post Chief in training, to come meant that I was likely to have to do it myself and get another Post Chief for the finish of the stages.

Strange as it seems I DID (sort of) finally manage to get the 11 people most of whom had experience of some kind. This was indeed a mission in itself. Eight from the North Island and three from South Island. Provision of Vehicles was still likely to be problematic but at least we had the numbers.

We were then asked to 'simply' do block marshalling - a much easier, but still very important role.

I jumped at this and said that we had these 11 people confirmed

. YEAH RIGHT! (again)

Almost immediately I started getting withdrawals, and because I had cast the net as wide as I possibly could, getting replacements was well nigh impossible!!

It got to the stage that I was down to seven (including me) and asked URG if that could possibly be enough.

I was devastated to learn that they had been counting of our provision of the eleven mentioned above

and had intended to ask me to increase to 15 or even 16.

To say this caused lots of sleepless nights would be an understatement!!

With excellent work done by various of my 'right hand men/women' I am pleased to say that we seemed to get the numbers.

8 from North Island and 7 from the south.

That meant that we could still use Chalkie the Estima, 8 seats, air con, 4 wd, automatic, power steering a towbar and easy access to the battery (often very important).

However there is many a slip 'twixt cup and lip and so it happened.

With another couple of South Island withdrawals meant we had to take more from here . We are therefore in Glennie, 11 seats, no air con. column change manual, Armstrong steering and rear wheel 2 wheel drive.

Oh bother.

We leave tomorrow night at about 5, for the 2016 Silver Fern Rally, for which we are providing '2 teams of 7 block marshals, for each of the 8 days'. For this first '10,000 word missive', I lay out what we are expecting to be doing for the next 10/12 days.

I shall attempt to do a writeup each night and send it off (without relying on anyone else to contribute very much).

If you know of anyone who might be interested, then do please either forward the emails, or give me their email addresses so I can include them on the list.

SO, Tomorrow (25th Nov 2016) we leave here (Tairua on the lovely Coromandel Peninsula), at about 5 pm,

collecting more at Paeroa, then Tirau, then Putaruru, on to Tokoroa, then back to Rotorua, then to Turangi

- then driving through the night to Wellington.

This time we are taking some newbies but are not doing any really technical work, even though Block marshalling is actually a vital part of the operation (being a mixture of security and public relations)

The team regard it as 'glorified spectating' rather than any real work.

We go over on the ferry at 8.30 a.m and then drive the long way round to Christchurch and once more descend on my friend Bob.

It could be a bit of a squash !!

We collect gear on Sunday, also our three West Coasters (coming by bus from Greymouth) and the other 2 (or 3) from Christchurch itself

Monday night we will be in Oamaru.

We then head south and stay at Lake Waiholo for pretty much the rest of the week. Using this as a base and having to travel considerable distances each day - but at least we have a base to come home to each night.

We are doing up to 5 stages a day (remember we have two teams).

Sunday the event finishes in Christchurch.

The Christchurch contingent are, of course then home, the West Coasters go back over the hill and the rest of us, have to be in Picton by noon on the Monday,

just how long it will actually take us is an unknown factor.

On arrival in Wellington we will probably drive through the night again getting back home hopefully 'tired but happy'.

I do want to place on record those who have agreed to come and work:

Warwick

Dale C

Luke

Philipp

Dale

Mary

Poko

Leigh

Dinny

Denise

Fiona

David

Jordon

Nicole

Nathan

One real disappointment was that of all the teenagers I (we) took last time only Luke agreed to come

and the rest really were no longer interested.

After all our efforts last time eh??

**So there you have it. Our plans for the next two weeks,
real appreciation of my other driving colleagues, especially David,
who is coping magnificently with the bookings and admin - no mean feat I assure you - Daily
updates I hope.**

Day -2 - Friday 25th November 2016

**Ensured Glennie, had had a proper A Grade Sevice, extra key cut etc. At 3 p.m. we had our
numbers, oh joy.**

**Looked like everything was going to be fine. I had planned to Collect Phlipp, when he finished
work nominally between 4 and 5p.m.**

1st Disaster (there are going to be many more).

3:15.Two people pulled out - note: less than an hour before we were due to leave!!!

**Hurried consultation with Dale followed and we decided that after all we should change the
vehicle back to Chalkie,**

the 4WD automatic Estima,

and change everything.(Still with a trailer though)

**Anyway, Philipp, was on time (as would be expected) - early in fact, and , because we didn't
have to collect anyone at Paeroa anymore**

we got to Tirau for Dale nice and early, then to Putararu for Leigh, then Tokoroa for Luke,

Rotorua for Poko and then Turangi for Dinny and Denise.

This gave us a full van of 8 people, and as has been our practise we then drove through the night getting to Wellington for the ferry before 6 a.m. - We shared the driving !

Day -1 - Saturday 26th November 2016

We had quite a nice breakfast on board and the trip was not too bad at all. Some of us even tried to catch some sleep!!

Off the ship just after midday, so after food at Blenheim, drove the long way round via Murchison and Springs Junction - some 500k !

It really is a long way round.!!

Arrived at Bob's, met our Christchurch contingent, Nicole and Nathan and had a meal at Chats.

Day 0 - Sunday 27th November 2016

Collected our gear from Silver Fern Headquarters, and also our West Coast contingent, Fiona, David and Jordan.

We had a quick visit from Brian, then a full briefing at 5 p.m. after which we had a beer and burger each.

Allocated people to each team W1 headed by Warwick, (Nicole, Nathan, Leigh Denise and Jordan) and W2 Headed up by Dale (Poko, Fiona, Dinny, David, Philpp and Luke) using a 10 seater van (5 speed, column change manual), lent by Targa!

Day 1 - Monday 28th November 2016

Out the gate at 5.30 a.m., headed for our 1st stage of the day (and the 1st Stage of the Rally) out the back of Hanging Rock,

than another one near Ngapara by Oamaru.

Meanwhile Dale's team was up at Mt Nething. Our team clicked really well - at least on the surface - Dale also we very pleased.

Dale, Poko and Fiona cooked a lovely BBQ for dinner - after all they had only done one stage and were back at camp (Waitaki Waters Holiday Park) well before us.

A couple of beers again and it was not until later in the evening that everything unravelled.

The bad news tomorrow !!! Tomorrow night we are at Lake Waiholo Camp ground.

Day 2 - Tuesday 29th November 2016

What a disaster!

After what had seemed a really good 1st day, we woke up this morning to find that four of our 13 had decamped during the night and 'gone home'!!!

In my 10 years or so of doing this sort of thing this is the VERY first time I have lost people during a rally.

Sure there have been occasions that people have reneged on their commitments a few days beforehand but NEVER during an event.

We were already tight for numbers but this has really upset the apple cart.

To get through Day two, we swapped vehicles, re-allocated those 'good guys' we have left and

set out trying to make the best of a bad situation.

**This left us with Dale and myself, Poko and Fiona, Philipp, Luke, Dinny, Denise and Leigh.
To add to the complication Leigh was needed for another job' so we lost him for the day too!!!**

Anyway, Dale and Poko headed way up country in Chalkie, I had the others in the van, 1st stage out the back of Oamaru, a lovely meal of Fish and Chips at Palmerston, then way up past Middlemarch for our next,

**We are now at Lake Waihola Holiday Park where we shall base ourselves till Sat morning.
Venturing out each day to do the job then returning each night,**

Tonight we again have what can only be described as a fabulous meal at the 'on site' restaurant.

Tomorrow Team 1 does 2 stages (15 and 20), Team 2 does one (18).

We meet back here tomorrow night.

Day 3 - Wednesday 30th November 2016

A much more pleasant day. Out the gate at 7.30.

Our team had 2 stages to do. The first in Berwick Forest, the spot I drew can only be described as freezing.

Carl lent me a 'Fishermans Type' waterproof jacket, and although it didn't actually rain it was exceptionally cold.

I was shivering most of the time, but thawed out once I got back into Chalkie with the heater on full.

We then did Scroggs Hill out of Brighton and back home.

**This stage was when we truly did a block marshal job,
parking Chalkie straight across the (main) road, to ensure NO cars could intrude onto the rally course.**

Meanwhile Dale's team did the stage into Brighton.

Our reduced numbers are creating 'something of a problem' (How is that for an understatement??)

Another nice meal back at Waihola tonight, tomorrow is a big day with several stages each to do, and the consensus is that it is worth making the effort to go down to Bluff once we have finished at Maitua

late in the afternoon.

It will be a late night back tomorrow night !!!

Day 4 - Thursday 1st December 2016

All in all not a bad day. One team did a stage at Hillend, not far from Balclutha, then another very close to Maitua.

The other had one not too far from Hillend, then the next near Clydevale and a final one inland from Gore.

After a marshalling team regroup at Maitua we did a peregrination to Bluff (including Stirling Point and Bluff Hill) really just so everyone could say they had been there.

After a meal at Burger King in Invercargill we headed back home to Waihola getting there a

bit before midnight!

But wait there is more!!!

Tomorrow (Friday) our schedule says Both Teams Taping all Day!!

But determining just exactly where we had to be, how many people, and at what time proved exceptionally difficult to work out, even with GPS co-ordinates, descriptions of roads etc this became quite a mission.

When we finally got to bed about 1 am Friday morning we had determined that we had an out the gate time of 5 AM, as we had about 150KM to go and be there by 7 a.m.

I'll let you know tomorrow how we get on.

Day 5 - Friday 2nd December 2016

WHAT A DAY !!!

After not getting to bed until after midnight we had to be 2 hours away no later than 7 AM.

You guessed it out of bed at 4 am then out the gate at 5.

We almost made it - about 5.05 a.m. I think it was. Making up late departure time is virtually impossible, particularly when we really do not have a definitive spot to meet, no cellphone (of course) and more worrying no 25W Fleetlink RT communication either.

However, because of the work Dale and I had done working late into the night, the night before, we ACTUALLY did manage to meet Carl more or less at the appointed time and the appointed spot !!!

This day was spent taping - that is EVERY gate on the route has to be secured with Rally Tape to ensure that they can't be opened 'accidentally; and allow vehicles onto the actual stage - as an aside we have done stage timing before, also block marshalling and also detaping but this is our first time actually doing 'leapfrog taping'.

We stop wherever there is a gate and then (both) sides of the van burst open and 'guy' (either sex) charges out, secures the gate in question then back into the van (say 20 secs later).

We assisted with 2 stages, then I pleaded to 'give us a break', and we were released just after midday.

This allowed the teams 'some time to themselves', for the first time in the rally !!!

I am sure I will have recurring dreams of 'gate on right', 'gate on left', two gates on left - oh shit actually 3', oh bugger a driveway 'have we got enough tape' etc, etc.

The team had their 'thank you dinner' Friday night and head north again tomorrow (Sat)

So far Chalkie has done 3700 km in the week since leaving Pauanui.

More news tomorrow night !!

Day 6 - Saturday 3rd December 2016
Well,another GOOD, BAD and sort of all right Day.
The Good.

I left Lake Waiholo at 7.15 with Fiona on board, headed straight up Highway one to Christchurch to allow her to catch a bus back to Greymouth to prepare for work on Monday.

The bad

Meanwhile Dale and the rest of the team headed off to marshal their stage, and afterwards were to detape another two stages totalling some 65km.

They then had what was termed a 'medical emergency'!! Whoops.

The first problem was with Denise, and then poor old Luke had to be carted off to Timaru Hospital after collapsing.

As it turned out the diagnosis for both was heat exhaustion, brought on by dehydration - but it did mean that we could not fulfil our detaping obligations

The 'Sort of Allright'

From what I can determine. ALL the team, Leigh, Pilipp and the rest did EXACTLY what was required of them - (obviously with Dale in overall charge).

The hospital eventually discharged Luke and they drove back to Christchurch, arriving just after 10.

Tomorrow we are out of the gate (again) before 6 a.m. More tomorrow night !!

Day 7 - Sunday 4th December 2016

Well, the last day of the Rally. Once more our lack of personell raised its ugly head again. With the disasters of yesterday it meant that we needed at least 1 more person to allow us to fulfil our commitments

but as you can perhaps expect, I tried 5 different people in Christchurch, just to get 1 more for the 1 day - but got turned down by everyone.

More juggling between teams, meant that Leigh and I were on the road back to the other side of Cave about 5.30 a.m. and the others were away about 8 also heading for the MacKenzie country.

Our stage had a water ford a foot or so deep, a few cars drowned but all got through eventually. After having lunch we got home mid afternoon,the others arriving 5 ish.

We returned the white van, our radio, and other gear and had a few Ngas tonight.

Pieter helped Leigh and I to change our website server - I am hopeful it will be properly up and running again in a day or so.

Tomorrow we, once more undertake the long trek back to Picton, over on the ferry then through the night back home. Epilogue in a few days.

Day +1 - Monday 5th December 2016

Here we go again !!!!

**The rally is now OVER, and despite our various trials and tribulations we did, indeed, fulfil
virtually all our commitments.**

**We did have a booking for the van,. trailer and 8 people on the Interislander on the afternoon
of today, but decided that to make it via the 'long way round' would mean that we would have
to have another 'out the gate' time of between 5 and 6 am.**

**Quite frankly we were getting sick of these.!!! I was therefore fortunate in managing to
change the booking to the (one and only) evening sailing which required a checkin time of
NOLATER THAN 5.45 p.m.**

**This meant that we could leave Bob's at a much more respectable 10.00 am and still make it in
plenty of time**

- YEAH RIGHT !!!

**We did realise that arriving in Wellington somewhat after 10 p.m. was 'not ideal' but we felt
was the better of the two evils.**

YEAH RIGHT again.

**Our practice by this stage was to swap drivers hour by hour, i.e. someone would drive for an
hour (either during the day or through the night), then another driver would take over for an
hour.**

**All went swimmingly until Murchison (pies and coffees for 8 again please) and another \$90
petrol then for some unknown reason the driver and navigator (who I guess should both be
kept nameless for now) decided that 'Picton via Nelson' was a better option than 'Blenheim
direct'.**

**This added almost two hours (and how many miles?) to the journey!!!! Yes you can gather
that I WAS NOT AMUSED !!!!!!!**

**However, after taking over the driving I managed by stint of sheer skill and willpower to 'get
us to the boat on time'. Oh Joy!!!**

**The ship was somewhat late away because of the number of rail wagons (locally loaded I
assume) had to be got on board, so we arrived in Wellington about 10.30 p.m,**

whereupon once more our 'drive for an hour system' was put into place.

A stop (toilet) and petrol, and pie and coffee at Waiouru.

**Yet another (unnecessary?) toilet stop at Taupo and then dropping Poko off at Rotorua, then
back to Tokoroa for Luke, then Leigh at Putaruru then Dale at Tirau.**

**At this point Jane (Dale's wife - thanks Jane)thought the drivers left (Philipp and myself)
should really get our heads down for a couple of hours - which we happily complied with.**

**Late morning we proceed back to Duck Creek/Pauanui/Tairua, juggled with vehicles, I did my
afternoon school run, Phillip emptied the van AND trailer, and now I am unashamedly having
a Nga!!**

As I said earlier epilogue in a couple of days!!

EPILOGUE

Well not one of our better events!

Memorable perhaps, but for all the wrong reasons.

The good news is probably that despite the tremendous difficulties put in our way we pretty much fulfilled our obligations. PHEW.

The saga as it unfolded: We needed a team of 14, but this wasn't confirmed until about a week before the event.

The day before we we due to go we 'got our numbers' 15 actually.

Then 3/4 of an hour before we were due to leave two from up here pulled out, leaving a total of 13. 8 from North Island, 3 from West Coast, and 2 from Christchurch.

Still looked like was going to be O.K. if a little light.

Phillip finished work early so he and I headed for Dale's place at Tirau (not having to call at Paeroa after all), then collected Leigh at Putaruru then Luke at Tokoroa.

Through to collect Poko at Rotorua then Dinny and Denise at Turangi

James came to the ferry to say 'hello' and after breakfast aboard we went to Chch - the long way round. Lisa dropped in to say hello /good luck. and Nicole and Nathan joined us for beer and pizza at Chats.

Next morning we collected Fiona, Dave and Jordan from the West coast bus - giving us 13 (of the 14 we really needed)

Also collected our gear and the second van - made sure the 25w Fleetlink radios worked. Allocated people to teams - 6 to me in Chalkie, and 7 for Dale in Ferny (the white TARGA 10 seater van).

Beer (Nga !!!) and burgers at Bob's for tea

Monday - Out of the gate at 5.30, an almost 3 hr drive to Hanging Rock for the 1st stage of the rally. Stayed at Oamaru

Tuesday - Our disaster (more about the dropouts later), required rejuggling of people and vehicles, I had Ferny (for numbers), Dale took Chalkie (complete with our fully loaded trailer) over the Old Dunstan Rd. Good luck with that. Made our base at Lake Waihola Holiday Park for the rest of the rally.

Wednesday - Much more pleasant day - but freezing, also did a genuine BLOCK marshalling job with Chalkie parked right across a main road!

Thursday - The day we headed to Bluff once finished for the day - not as good as last time. but at least the team have all been there now

Friday - Taping all day After working out just where to go which took us till well after midnight, we had to be up again at 4 to be out of the gate for our 2 hr drive by 5 a.m.

Taping was new to us all. we have done detaping. which is a LOT easier and FASTER.

Saturday - I was happy to take Fiona back to Chch to catch the bus back to Greymouth so she could start work on Monday.

Dale therefore had the rest of the troops (and the fully loaded trailer). He also had the 'medical emergency' to deal with. Arrived at Bob's LATE

**Sunday - Leigh had drawn the short straw and came with me 'out the gate' 5.30 ish.
Another 3 hr drive.**

The others out the gate (sans trailer) by 8 a.m. That afternoon returned gear and van, Bob had arranged a flagon on NGA - priceless !!!

Monday - Had had enough of 'out the gate' times of 5.30 a.m. or earlier so rebooked the ferry to the evening sailing.

It was indeed a pity the driver (at the time) and his navigator decided to take us via Nelson adding almost 2 hrs to the journey

Once in Wgtn (10.30 pm or so) drove through the night dropping people. home again.

Tuesday - Once back home on Tuesday I did my afternoon school run, and have been sort of recovering ever since.

(Mind you two trips to Hamilton, and a trip to Auckland -with an out the gate time of 5 am since getting home have not helped a lot!!!)

SUMMARY

There is no doubt in my mind that what we still see as the a disaster can be placed squarely at the feet of those that pulled out. There seemed no concept of commitment. A deal is a deal, or the show must go on.

Mind you those that remained did get stuck in and did their best to cover as required and really did go the (necessary) extra mile.

If those had stayed (even those that got as far at Oamaru at the end of the first day) would have meant that things would have worked pretty much as planned. Me with my six, Dale with his seven.

Each sort of independent, and shaking down into good working teams - but having to rejig, chop and change people and vehicles every single night was certainly less than ideal. It is not as though (as far as I could tell) there were serious emergencies - which could be understood.

But 'I don't feel well - and have left my pills at home', or 'I had better go and look after her', not to mention 'I really should get back to work' and the daddy of them all 'I don't really like the sleeping arrangements' does not fit my criteria of an emergency !!!

To say this stuffed us up well and truly would be putting it VERY mildly.

(Note: after the initial defaulters, the whole eight from the North Island stuck it out - WELL DONE! and I hope they enjoyed it - more or less)

I do want to record our collective appreciation of the final team

Dale

Denise

Dinny

Fiona

Leigh

Luke

Phillip

Poko

Warwick

Needless to say I have nothing but abhorrence for those that let us down.

FEEDBACK

A little break from tradition here as I include this Email from Poko, Dinny, Denise, and Leigh which I received after coming back home:

Good Evening Warwick!

A wonderful warm Thank You to Yourself,Dale,Luke and Phillip from Myself, Dinny,Denise and Leigh for taking us on board with your Team we were very blessed and privileged to have been a part of Simply Better Team (SBT)

You spoilt us you looked after us and we were a part of the team in every way.. Thank You...

Dale wonderful man very patient..

Phillip Lovely I hope he enjoys the rest of his stay and wherever he travels hope he stays safe...

Luke what a very caring young man.

As for you Warwick we did not want for anything..very blessed we were..for that I am very grateful to You..

Yes a great pity about the ChCh and West Coast groups except Fiona a lovely lady she kind of kept our boys in line I tended to get a bit grumpy with them but that is me..

Had the south island crew stayed they would have thoroughly enjoyed their time but unfortunately they did not give it a chance...

The trip was absolutely wonderful and we all enjoyed every minute..

Pity about your birthday young man but they were genuine wishes..

Bob what a lovely lovely gentleman very warm and welcoming and to have us in his beautiful warm home

The Host with the Most...Very Special Blessings to Bob

Another thank you...

On that note please keep us in mind for your team for 2017...

Promise I will be a better navigator hehehe!!...

Thank you so much again...

Stay in contact..look after yourself..

Take Care Be well Stay Well

Kind Regards,

Poko, Dinny, Denise, Leigh

Targa Rotorua 2017

Hi EVERYONE !!

This year we supplied both a finish crew and a start crew.

It was a fully Rallysafe operation but with paper based handwritten logs.

Dale and I had collected our 'gear' at Rallysafe training, and had subsequently installed our 25w Fleetlink radios.

A number of pull outs (one caused by sickness 'on the day' and another being called back to work), set us back a bit, but once again those that remained really did step up to the mark and we managed to fulfil all our obligations.

We had 4 vehicles (2 start and 2 finish), Toby and myself (Toby driving) from Pauanui/Thames, Dale from Tirau/Tokoroa, Dinny from Turangi and James and his crew all the way from Wellington.

Dale left home about 3.30 pm on Friday afternoon, collected Luke and then the Rallysafe gear from Novotel, we left a bit later (because of other commitments) and Dinny and his team headed over from Turangi in time for us to all meet at Darryl's just after 7. James team arrived a bit after 8pm.

We allocated people between start and finish teams and determined that the start team headed up by Dale would all stay together, and the finish team together at Darryl's.

Sat morning we all needed to be out the gate by 6.15 a.m., but we each were able to go straight to our appointed positions, without the necessity to drive the stage.

Oh joy!

Although we each did two stages on Sat it was the same stage repeated so we did not have to move and were, in fact, finished by lunchtime.

It was interesting to note that the Rallysafe tablet had 'no times' for us for some 18% of cars. this percentage remaining the same for both stages.

Our team had lunch at Atiamuri Road house, the Steak and Egg burger being the biggest I have ever seen.

A remark that 'I don't think I can get my hands around that let alone my mouth ' was greeted by the well known ' that's what she said' -

A joke that has been around for yonks.

The 'younger members of both teams did their own thing, knowing that we had to be 'out the gate' by 7 a.m. next day

I just had a nap - yes I know I am getting old - but a nap is just what I needed!!!!

Late that afternoon came the news that our morning stage had had to be cancelled.

This meant that our 'out the gate' time could now be a much more reasonable 11 a.m. or so.

A pie and a coffee for Brunch (now where have we heard that before) and on to our next (and final) stage.

A small detour by turning one road too early (again?) but still set up in plenty of time. Although we had settled on a Finish crew of only 5 (five) we still opted to to a board - something the competitors really do appreciate. Thanks for the double duty Sophia.

**This time Rallysafe worked 100%.
Once cleared about 4 p.m. James/Sophia and Roger headed back to Wellington arriving about
11 p.m.
The rest of us went back into Rotorua to de-install the radios, and return all the Targa gear
including the Rallysafe equipment.
Toby then drove back to Thames and I got home about 8.30 - as we keep saying 'tired but
happy'.**

Once again many thanks to all those who helped.

START TEAM

**Dale (Post Chief) his 1st time and did it admirably
Poko
Dinny
Aroha
Luke
Darryl**

FINISH TEAM

**Warwick (Post Chief)
James
Sophia
Roger
Toby**

The next Targa event is Hawkes Bay 20/21 May.

Rally of Whangarei 2017

This year we had been asked to supply a finish crew for Rally of Whangarei.

It was a Rally NZ style paper based system although it also had Rallysafe as a backup.

Because this crew were all pretty new to this way of doing things we planned to go up on the Thursday to give us time for some staff training, and to do the shakedown stages on the Friday morning.

Once more we had a number of pull outs (one as late as the morning of our departure).

So despite efforts of everyone remaining we were 'short' before even leaving home.

We took 2 vehicles (Townie) for FC and Chalkie (for FF). Dale left home on Thursday morning, collected Poko Leigh and Luke, meanwhile I took Viv and Steve with me from here.

Happy Days was fully booked AGAIN. so lunch was at Burger King,

That night we collected the gear and settled into Whangarei Falls Holiday Park.

We had to be at the shakedown stages on the Friday morn. Dale and Poko were our FF team and Leigh, Luke, Viv and Steve with me were at FC.

Because we were actually short of people the organisers had managed to find a local chap, Alexander ,who indeed fitted in to the team very well indeed.

He did our board , very efficiently too.

Friday afternoon we went to confirm exactly where our stage(s) were, Pizza (delivered) for tea that night.

We had to be on site about 8 a.m. Sat morn - but to say it was WET was a real; understatement.

We did have professional support from Russell (Chief Training Officer) and Craig (Timing Officer) but even with their welcome assistance it must be said that it was not our best effort - it could be claimed to be a shambles- something of an embarrassment as you might say.

Dripping wet we handed the gear in .that night then had take away roast for tea,

We had no stage to do on the Sunday. I took Poko home in Townie, the others went home in Chalkie, and spent some time watching other stage(s),

Once again many thanks to all those who helped.

Warwick

Dale (My right hand man).

Poko

Luke

Leigh

Viv

Steve

Alexander

The next Targa event is Hawkes Bay 20/21 May.

Targa Rally Hawkes Bay 20/21 May 2017

Hi Everyone !!

This time we had agreed to allow Dale to sit this one out!!.

But having had confirmation that James, Sophia and Roger would come up from Wellington it seemed that our commitment for one finish crew should be a 'piece of cake'.

Particularly as it was to be a fully Rallysafe operation but with simple Targa style paper based handwritten logs for backup.

It had been intended that I should collect Leigh and Luke on the way from here giving us 6 people, all meeting at Kennedy Park Holiday resort in Napier Friday night.

I had collected the 'gear' from Targa a week or so previously including the 25W Radio (which has subsequently installed in Chalkie), but no Rallysafe gear was not going to be available until the 'night before the start of the rally' !!!

Oh Bugger - here we go again.

I had asked that we be given a proper tablet at Finish Control, but was disappointed to learn that it was, once more going to be the silly little thing we had to put up with at Whangarei - more of that later..

. Once Luke decided not to come we 'had a problem'.

But Dinny promptly stepped up to the mark so we were back to our 6.

I left home late morning on the Friday, collected Leigh at Putaruru then Dinny from Taupo (where he had bussed from Turangi)

We arrived late that afternoon, Dinny and Leigh collect the silly rallysafe gear from Havelock North then we went out for dinner at 'hot chick', not quite what Leigh was hoping for I must say.

James, Sophia and Roger arrived later that night.

But guess what! We had been allocated the first stage of the rally (and then again the 1st stage after lunch) so we had an out the gate time of 5.30, and we had not managed to actually find the site in daylight the day before.

But oh joy we found the FF and FC marked on the road just as it should be- and in fact was for the whole of the rally.

**With this so called 'new improved Rallysafe operation',
the display at finish control gives only minimal information at Finish Control!**

It gives ONLY the car number and its Flying Finish time. Nothing else!!

No start order, no start time, no stage time.

So we were back to calculations!

James/Sophia at FF, Roger doing road cards, Leigh on Calculations, Dinny on Log Writing and me as Post Chief manning the radio most of the time.

The team worked really well.

We were in plenty of time for our next stage - so some wanted fed. James and I (wise old hands) said 'no, we are saving stomach space for tonight'.

As is, indeed, our wont. when in Napier (where I used to live some 30 years ago) I usually take the crew out to Restaurant Indonesia - a very nice top class place - as a sort of thank you for all their efforts.

I was a little disappointed that for the first time ever we didn't manage to eat everything provided. (Well James and I did, but the others seemed to just 'pick', What a pity!!!)

Sun morning we had to be out of the gate at 6.30 to get to our 1st stage of the day only a minute or two late. But otherwise all sweet

The second stage of the day just out of Woodville (I think it may well have been where Dale/Kevin/Toby/and myself did Targa 2015.

Once cleared James/Sophia/Roger head back to Wellington, Dinny/Leigh and I headed over Saddle Hill Rd back home.

Dropped Dinny at Turangi, then Leigh at Putaruru then had the final 2hrs driving on my own.

Arriving home as they say 'tired but happy'.

Delivered the gear back to Targa the Wednesday following.

Once again many thanks to all those who helped.

Leigh - really proving himself now

Dinny - stepped up at REALLY short notice

James

Sophia

Roger

All of whom came up from Wellington

And, of course myself as Post Chief

The next event we are committed to do is Far North Rally(the old Rally of the North) on Saturday 17th June.

Rally of the North 2017

I really didn't think we would be asked back to help with this event, after we had let them down so badly in 2015 - see my write-up of Rally Of the North 2015 - which I believe let indirectly to the 2016 event being cancelled.

Also our Rally Whangarei this year was not our best effort, but a month or so before the event we were asked to provide either a start or finish crew.

I settled on finding a finish crew (surprise, surprise)

I managed to get the (reduced) numbers 2 people from Whangarei itself, another from Turangi and the other from Putaruru. With me this would have the five we needed, and with a full Rallysafe operation (with only Targa Style paper backups) this should be enough - yeah right!!

Dale is having a well deserved rest from rallies for a month or so.

Four days before the event we had one of the Whangarei Team pull out which created (another) problem.

As not only were we a person down but also a flying finish vehicle, eventually we settled on taking covered trailer on the back of Chalkie for the FF team.

As the Rallysafe beam has its own battery, we were able to do without actually having a vehicle there.

Denise put her hand up at this very short notice and obtained permission to join us - little did she know the abuse she would cop later on - see below obnoxious Locals'

Dinny and Leigh bussed to Bombay, where I collected them, then collected Denise at Manukau.

We did not do our usual 'Timing Team Regroup' at Dairy Flat, but headed straight to Whangarei to collect Alexander.

We arrived at Paihia just before 8 Friday night.

Although we knew we were doing SS2 (and SS6) it was not until we got maps, schedules etc and the other gear that we found we had to be 'on site' by 6 15 am, and this was some 1 1/2hrs away!!!

Oh joy a 4 am rise, and an out the gate time of no later than 4.30 !!

Let me repeat an out the gate time of 4.30 AM.

I had had one small victory though. I have been exceptionally critical of the silly little Finish Control Rallysafe display we had had at Whangarei and Hawkes Bay, and expressing this (politely of course) at gear pickup, Buck said 'you can have a tablet if you prefer' I MOST CERTAINLY did prefer - a small but highly significant victory.

We arrived at our appointed spot in sufficient time, settled the boys in the trailer and set up in the usual way.

No problems (and the Tablet/Rallysafe worked pretty well)

But once more see the item below under obnoxious Locals'.

Partly because of them the stage did run late so we were late away and again had 'lack of fuel issues'.

Chalkie is thirsty anyway, having the trailer doesn't help. and driving stages makes it even worse!

We did therefore have to detour for fuel and got to SS6 late 'with no time to spare.

We did the job nevertheless and once we were cleared we headed back to Paihia to drop gear, then Fish and Chips for tea (then the Maori All Blacks on TV and, of course Coronation St for afters).

Sunday morning - out the gate by 9 am, dropped Alexander at Whangarei, the rest of us Happy Days for lunch, bus for Dinny and Leigh and home for me.

PERSONNEL

Dinny - Flying Finish (Trailer Based) SS2 and SS6

Alexander - Also Flying Finish SS2 and SS6

Leigh - becoming another Toby at Finish Control SS2 and SS6

Denise - Road for SS2 and log writing for SS6

Warwick - Board and Post Chief for SS2, Road and Post Chief SS6

Although only five of us SS6 worked best with Leigh doing cards and Denise doing Log Writing.

OBNOXIOUS LOCALS

I am not sure what is up with residents of this area - in 2015 a Boy Racer, driving an unwarranted, unregistered BMW tried to make use of the 'unexpired' road closure time, and managed to completely write off our best van. This time it was worse !!

Shortly after setting up SS2 and with the Road Closure in effect we were visited by what can only be described as a 'big fat Maori bloke', probably drunk (at 7.30 in the morning) and with language that had to be heard to be believed.

To say he was threatening would be an understatement!! He was driven in a car (Rego HDA 64), and was determined to cause as much mayhem as possible.

From what I can gather he claimed ownership of 'all the land around here - and we don't want you here.'

I tried to defuse the situation by saying 'just go away' but he then tried to kick our door in,

I intimated that I might have to get the Police to which he replied 'When they arrive I'll smash all their fucking windows'.

He then picked on Denise for associating with 'these fucking whities'.

It seemed obvious that it was a pre-planned attack.

**He waited till we were all set up ready to go, when he manoeuvred
Past the chicanes for his morning fun. How obnoxious can you get????**

**He was EVENTUALLY driven away and I reported to Rally Base that the
situation was resolved.**

But WAIT there is more !!!

**Just before the first Rally Car was due to enter the stage (but with
official cars already en route) we encountered a 'bloody woman'
driving Rego JLZ177 who claimed to be going through to the marae!**

**From what I can determine this just an intimidatory 'password' to
cower any officials she encounters.**

THIS WAS SERIOUS.

I explained that the road was closed!!

**I explained why the road was closed - namely that she could well
meet an oncoming car at 180 km/h who was not expecting anyone coming
the other way.**

**Unlike the occasions when residents have wanted to just 'go to my
house up there' she was determined to create as much havoc as
possible.**

**Sure there was a possible option for me to lie down on the road in
front of her car but the rest of my team felt that she would probably
quite happily driven right over me and carried on.**

**This time Rally base stopped the stage (well in reality held the cars
back) warned the officials already on stage and despatched the
police.**

**When the police arrived they gave me to understand the 'her car has
been neutralised and she is helping the Police with their Enquiries!**

**The Police also gave me a copy of the Road Closure Permit - but I am
quite sure that waving this in front of her would have made no
difference.**

**I do consider that this too was preplanned, and could have created
carnage.**

WHAT IS UP WITH THESE PEOPLE ????

**The next event is Gold-rush on 26th August and then Targa NZ 24th
October - Starting at Hampton Downs, finishing in Wellington the
following Sunday.**

Goldrush Rally 2017

Hi all

For the fourth time we were, once more helping with this year's Goldrush Rally of Coromandel.

After severely fluctuating numbers we ended up with eight people (including two newbies, both of whom proved to be worth their weight in gold!!)

Dale collected the gear on the Friday whilst I did my Hamilton run, during which I collected Dinny and Kaia (who had bussed from Turangi) and Denise (who had bussed from Auckland).

We also collected Sarah (who was part of another team) from Cambridge.

Because we had been given the Spectacular, Special Spectator Special Stage which is only just over 1.0 km long (and with an average speed of 101 km/h) we didn't actually have to be on site until 2 p.m. - not the 4,30 am we had for the last event!! - Oh joy.

Dinny, Kaia and Denise stayed here on Friday night, we collected Jack on the way and met Dale, Kelvin and Poko in Whitianga.

Once more we had 'some' difficulty erecting the tent!!

But at least it was in the middle of the day as opposed to the middle of the night.

Then what did we find?

The organisers had changed the stage direction to be the opposite of the last three years. Bugger!

This stage has a lengthy spectator vantage point for the 1st 300m or so, and having Haydon Paddon and Greg Murphy competing just added to the excitement. The event was basically a Rallysafe one but with an additional beam and RNZ equip for this stage anyway this meant that we did not need a pink slip runner.

The team performed exceptionally well, with duties allocated as follows:

Warwick	Post Chief once again. Just call me Capt. Peacock
Dale	My right hand man and Flying Finish guru
Dinny	Dale's assistant
Poko	Flying Finish too
Denise	Card Calculations
Kaia	Log Writer
Jack	Road Cards
Kelvin	Board and paddle. Once more the board proved to be very welcome. I think
...	(but can't be sure) that we were the only stage crew to go to this extra effort.

As I said hats off to Jack and Kelvin (our newbies) who looked like they had both 'been doing it for years'

A meal at Coroglen and watching the All Blacks at Coroglen on the way home

Once home Dinny, Dale and I had a 'few' Ngas

Well done team.

Our next big event is Targa NZ (what we tend to call Big Targa) starting Tues 24th October, finishing in Wellington 29th October. Hands up those who are prepared to help!

TARGA RALLY 2017

Hi Everyone !!

Prologue - Mon, 23 Oct 2017

Having worked for Targa 2015 and Targa 2016 (click each for details), our special stage timing teams are once more working for Big Targa 2017.

As has been my custom for over 10 years I shall do this prologue (showing our intentions) then each day do a write up as to what we have actually done that day.

This time we have had to provide both a start and a finish team which has necessitated bringing people in from all over the country i.e:

- **George - from Blenheim**
- **Alexander from Whangarei**
- **Phil from Stanmore Bay**
- **Dinny, Aroha, Dale. Leiton and Marama from Turangi**
 - **Kevin from Whitianga**
 - **Dale from Tirau**
 - **Poko from Helensville**
 - **Connor from Hikuai**
- **and Warwick from Pauanui**

As this time we need vehicles for both start and finish crews

we are using Glennie (the Hiace)and Cruisey (Dale's Land Cruiser) for the start and Chalkie(the Estima) and Townie (the Townace) at the finish.

Glennie has a big Radio installed for 'start' duties..

Chalkie (the Estima) has been set up with the 'finish' big Radio and the other equipment as the Finish Control and Townie (the Townace) for Flying Finish.

Allocation of people to duties will be done on Tuesday.

Warwick and Connor are 1st to arrive in Hamilton about 6 p.m. Monday night. Phil and Alexander about 7 p.m. We then arrange to collect the RallySafe gear from Buck.

We stay in Hamilton that night.

Just after 7am Tuesday morning George, Dinny, Aroha, Leiton, Dale and Marama arrive too.

Dale and Kevin bring the vehicles at 8am, at which time Donald helps us out with more gear.

We collect Poko at Huntly on our way to Hampton Downs Raceway to collect final documentation.

We do SS1 the first stage of the rally (obviously) then head for Matamata for the night.

Two stages on Wednesday then head for Otorohanga for the night.

Another two stages on Thursday and stay at Stratford Thurs night.

Our stage on Friday is before the Forgotten Highway starts so we have plenty of time to get to Carterton where we stay Friday night.

One stage on Saturday, then quietly head back home dropping various crew members on the way. (Yes I should be able to do my standard Hamilton run on Sunday, but will not, of course, be able to do Friday)

There will be trackers in all of our vehicles, if you want to follow us then let me know and I'll give you the website address, ID and password etc.

If you know of anyone else who might like my daily write-ups, do feel free to pass them on or let me know and I'll add them to the list.

Day 0/1 - Tue, 24 Oct 2017

Here we go!

Both Start and finish teams at Matamata backpackers, Heaps of KFC for dinner

The week did not start well!!!

Leaving Pauanui (Hikuai) at 3:45pm on Labour Day (Monday) we got as far as the top of Kopu Hikuai without problem, then at the very top of the west side passing lane the traffic was queued right back from Kopu!

Yep, over 30 mins either completely stopped or no more than 10 kmh.

The normal 35 min trip took well over 90 !!

What was annoying was that the manual traffic control at Kopu was letting virtually all the SH26 traffic through at will - completely ignoring the 15 km queue on SH25A

Needless to say we were in Hamilton well over 1 hour late - but guess what?

The Buses fighting their way through Auckland holiday traffic were also over 1 hr late too, once Alexander and Phil did arrive we all went out to dinner then a reasonably early night.

George had made it to Wellington but when he boarded the bus a sleeper bed (which I had paid for) was not available for him - he therefore had a very uncomfortable trip.

At about 4 A.M. Dinny sent a text saying they were 'short' and had missed the bus anyway. I was seriously thinking of my blood pressure tablets!!

However Poko rang to confirm she would be on her bus, and Dinny has managed to arrange an extra vehicle, so because of Connor we were actually pretty much back to full strength.

George arrived pretty tired but safe and sound, Dale and Kevin arrived in plenty of time and Dinny and his crew also, so we were able to have our Timing Crew regroup at the Transport Centre.

We also allocated people to each team and collected Poko at Huntly.

Final documentation was at Hampton Downs, but still unable to get Buck to let us have a tablet for finish control duties - so we are back to using the silly little 3 line display.

We timed SS1, even with our surfiet of 'newbies'. My finish crew seemed to take to it like a duck takes to water. (Alexander/Dale at FF, Phil, Connor, George and of course me at FC)

RallySafe appeared to work fine.

We did not do a board but will probably attempt to tomorrow.

As I say we are all here safe and sound and have to be out the gate by 9 a.m. tomorrow !

Two stages tomorrow, then staying at Otorohanga. More then!!!

Day 2 - Wed, 25 Oct 2017

A reasonable 'out the gate time' of 8.30 a.m. or so, saw us at the Hobbiton stage in plenty of time. No problems - the team is shaking down very well. Just an obnoxious farmer who objected to our Flying Finish van being parked outside his place even though the road was, indeed, legally closed.



PUNCTURE

Once cleared though it was very tight timing to get us to the next stage, over the Waikato River (I have absolutely NO idea what they are doing to the Karapiro Dam) and our other stage of the day.

We made it only a few minutes late though but once more had 'no time for lunch'.

Our big Fleetlink radio had reception problems so although we could

(just)

communicate with Targa Base in Auckland it had the utmost difficulty contacting our Stage Manager which made things a bit difficult to say the least.

Once cleared both start and finish teams made their way to our accommodation at Otorohanga.

Fish and chips for dinner tonight.

The start crew are out the gate at 6.30 a.m., tomorrow and finish crew a little later at 7am.

Our first stage is 'just up the road', but the second is almost at New Plymouth.

Tomorrow night we stay at Stratford.

Day 3 - Thu, 26 Oct 2017

Well, what can I say!

Started off badly, with losing one of the team, but once more those that remained really did step up.

So after something of a later start than we would like we found our spot and set up - a good 600 m between Flying Finish and finish control, but STRAIGHT - so we could keep the cars in view the whole time.

No problems - RallySafe worked a treat - even if only the silly three line display.

We (our finish crew) then headed for Awakino and did the same stage we had done in 2015. The only problem here that raised its head at that point was that a tour car 'had an off', and was then 'rear ended' by another!!

So far we have not lost an actual rally car we know from start orders and with no cars missing we can relax.

As planned Dale had to scarper after the 2nd stage today (family wedding of all things), and Dinny has taken over as Post Chief Start!

We all headed in convoy to our prebooked (and paid for) accommodation at Stratford Holiday park

1st problem my Navman decided to take us on a ridiculous round about route, which cost heaps of time, and then to top it Glennie had a puncture!.

It was amazing that we had a jack, a wheel brace and a spare tyre that was properly inflated!!!!

Combination of the above factors conspired to have us arrive VERY late (well after the reception was closed) to find that the mixture of beds supplied did not really suit our 11 single people, but we did (largely thanks to George - thanks George) finally get it sorted.

Pizza for dinner.

We are out the gate at 7:15am, one stage to time then off to Carterton for the night

Day 4 - Fri, 27 Oct 2017

Friday we 'only' had one stage out the back of Stratford - Not on the forgotten highway, but the stage before.

We managed to lose three cars through mishap on this stage but apart from having to change the aerial back to the old one all went swimmingly.

Alexander and Dale set up the flying finish equipment in under two mins and with the four of us (including Post Chief) at Finish Control George was able to do both 'road' and 'Board' - shades of Sophia - well done George.

Although I had been looking forward to an easy 4 hrs run to Carterton for the night, this was hampered somewhat by the necessity to deal with last night's puncture,

New tyre was actually needed - oh bugger, then with a but of mucking around we were late leaving Stratford by almost an hour

(Subway for those foolish enough, and Fish and Chips for the rest of us).

We lost almost another hour at Palmerston North, owing to some miscommunication between two vehicles, but arrived in Carterton well before dark.

Chinese takeaway for dinner, and a few beers to thank the team for all their efforts over the week.

Tomorrow we have an 'out the gate' time of 10.00 a.m. and once cleared will be heading home



- likely to be a mission in itself !!

More tomorrow night!!

Day 5 - Sat, 28 Oct 2017

As we did not have to be on site until 11.40 we had a reasonable lie in!!!

A brunch at Carterton itself (and a few photos) then on to start of our stage.

We left the start crew, (Dinny, Kevin, Poko, Leiton) in position and also George for whom we had arranged a ride through the stage in a Promotional Car.

The Rest of us (Warwick, Phil, Connor - and George once he arrived) together with Dale and Alexander at FF - proceeded to our FINAL Finish Control of the event.

We did not lose any cars, and as I have said before, by now the team was working like a 'well oiled machine'.

George, once more doing both Road Cards and Board.

Having given all the RallySafe gear to the Sweeper for transportation back to Buck in Wellington, we had our next Timing Team Regroup back at Carterton, then over Saddle Hill Rd, Feilding and on to Taihape.

Taihape has a Wild Bean Cafe so we refuelled all vehicles (again) had the usual 'pie and coffee' then (eventually) drove the Desert Rd to our 'final' regroup at Turangi.

Here is where we dropped the 'Turangi contingent' and put all the Targa 'hardware' into Chalkie for eventual return to Targa sometime next week.

We then headed off with Warwick driving Townie with George and Connor (all the way back to Duck Creek),

**Phil with Poko and Alexander, to Auckland,
Helensville and then on to home,**

We arrived a bit after 12.30 a.m. a couple of Ngas then off to bed!!

Kevin with Glennie, stayed overnight with his brother Dale at Tirau and dropped Glennie at Duck Creek Sunday morning.

Alexander should get back to Whangarei Sunday night and George flies to Wellington on Tues then over on the ferry back to Blenheim.

The epilogue in a couple of days, and perhaps some photos that Phil has taken of us during the event!

Epilogue - Mon, 30 Oct 2017

A wrap up - Just to summarise

We left here (Pauanui) Monday afternoon. after fighting our way over SH25A (Kopu - Hikuai) arrived in Hamilton late, collected Phil and Alexander off their respective buses, then we all stayed in Hamilton that night. We had also collected the RallySafe gear from Buck.

Met the Turangi contingent and the Tirau contingent at the Transport Centre, Tues morning then collected Poko off the Auckland bus.

After a final documentation at Hampton Downs did our first stage (SS1). Then headed to Matamata(Backpackers) for the night.

Did our next stage SS5 that morning then SS9 that afternoon.

Then stayed at Otorohanga that night.

Another stage SS11 next morning, and SS15 that afternoon, after which Dale scarpered (as arranged) with Dinny taking over as Start Post Chief.

We stayed that night at Stratford. (Mind you getting a puncture in Glennie was not ideal. This contributed to our late arrival.)

An early stage next morning (radio problems fixed by Connor by changing the aerial back to the original)

Excellent service from the local garage at Stratford then on to Carterton.

Two vehicles used the Pahiatua track but Townie over Saddle Hill Rd.

A good night's sleep after a 'few beers' etc as a thank you for the team then brunch before heading off to our final stage of the rally out the back of Featherston On Saturday morning.

Once cleared we did another regroup back at Carterton, then another at Taihape and a final at Turangi, where we dropped the Turangi contingent, moved remaining team members into other vehicles.

Glennie to Tirau, Chalkie via Auckland, Helensville to Stanmore Bay.

(arrived about 1.30am)

Townie with George, Connor and me back to Duck Creek (arrived about 12.30am)

Gear goes back to Targa base tomorrow.

The team this time.	
Start Crew	Finish Crew
Dale C POST CHIEF	Warwick POST CHIEF
Dinny Subst/Post Chief	Phil
Kevin	Alexander
Leiton	Dale
Poko	George
Marama - till Thurs	Connor

Probably one of our better efforts particularly with the number of newbies, or almost newbies.



FINISH CONTROL SETUP



FINAL REGROUP

Targa Rally Hawkes Bay May 2018

Hi Everyone !

Prologue

A bit late and somewhat short !

We are still a bit short on people but we will make it work!

At present we are all congregating at Dinny's place in Turangi.

Tomorrow morning (Fri) we head out of the gate at 6.45 all meet again at the Start of SS1, (just south of Waiouru) then proceed post haste to the two stages of Gentle Annie (Napier-Taihapa road.)

We stay in Napier tomorrow night (Fri) do one more stage on Sat, then after another night at Napier have two stages on Sunday after which we head back home. More details tomorrow night !!

Day 1

Hi all, Well Day 1 did not start off all that well. After the number of our keen young lads dropped from 12 to 7 we were always going to struggle a bit.

Coupled with some people not being prepared to go with their allocated teams this meant that we missed our 'out the gate time' by some 15 mins.

Then after a toilet and fuel stop at Waiouru we were always running late.

At this stage we had Dinny's team in Glennie, Warwick's in Chalkie, Dale's in Crusier, Leigh's in Townie..

We did not get a chance to do very much retraining but that's life.

Dales major problem was one of his cars taking a wrong turn (right instead of left).

Warwick's team had a couple of worse disasters though.

When setting up flying finish a couple of vital 'signs' at Flying Finish were found to be missing- this problem is in the process of being fixed.

For 'Our' second stage of the day (some 40 km long) we had to do the taping of gates etc.

Even with 2 cars and 7 people we did end up getting more and more behind time.

So much so that we were caught by Safety 1, Safety 2, and even Safety 3 - all of whom were pressganged into helping!

The good news is that although we arrived at our control well over an hour and a half late our FF crew set up in about 2 mins and the FC crew less than 5.

Strange as it may seem as far as I can ascertain we delayed the stage overall by something like only 5 mins – whew!!

We are safely esconsed at Kennedy Park in Napier, the 'boys' had 'fish and chips' for tea, Dale, Viv and I had an adults meal at Restaurant Indonesia.

Tomorrow we have only one stage each and don't have to be 'out the gate' till late morning.

Tomorrow night we are planning on having BBQ style sausages and bread and no doubt a couple of beers ! More news tomorrow night

Day 2

Overall a better day.

Out of the gate late morning (all 6 vehicles) refuel and on site well and truly early.

Makes life a lot easier. Dinny's team at the start of SS10 worked really well and we (Warwick's team) did the Finish after collecting the 'missing' signs so basically everything worked really well.

EVEN Rallysafe did not miss a beat!

The fleetlink radios were fine too.

Dale's team did the start on SS11, Leigh's team did that finish.

We all met back at Kennedy Park just after 5 p.m., Viv organised a BBQ cooking the sausages, several people buttered the bread, and Dale and I got the beer.

Quite a good night in fact - even if lots of the boys scarpered once the beer was almost gone and left the adults to cope with the mess!!

But never mind -the crew really did deserve a 'thank you' for their efforts to date.

Tomorrow Dale and Leigh's crew are out the gate at 6 A.M. and work through until 3 p.m (with two stages)

Warwick and Dinny's are out of the gate at 7.15 A.M. (Again with 2 stages)

We work right through till 5 p.m. that night ! After that we have to return some if not all the gear at Havelock North, then head home.

The logistics for this massive task - remember we have 6 vehicles to worry about about, and 20 people (from Turangi through to Auckland to be got home in order to be back at work or school 1st thing on Monday morning!) have been done so details when we finally get home tomorrow night (late).

Day 3

Last day of the event!

Our out the gate times made just a little bit harder for those that sat up to watch (and even join in) the Royal Wedding.

Timing team #2 (Dale/Leigh) had an out the gate time of 6 AM (yes 6 AM which in reality meant being out of bed closer to 5 - oh joy!

Timing team #1 (Warwick/Dinny) had a more respectable out the gate time of 7.15 AM, but (I have no idea why) several started watching rubbish on TV at 5.30 (instead of making use of the time to sleep in!!!).

Also because this was to be our last night at Kennedy Park complex we obviously had to 'clear our rooms' first - not an easy job I can assure you.

However I am pleased to report that 'our' team were 'out on the street' by the 7.15 deadline. Well done team.

We each had just over an hour to drive to our respective stages, without incident as as I have said before by then all 4 teams were pretty much working like well oiled (mineral oil not alcohol) machines.

After our stage we had pies at the nearest BP - what a pity there were no more vouchers to pay for them - and on to the afternoon stages. We all had what planned to be our final regroup at the finish of the last stage of the event SS19.

But fuel (and other issues) meant that we ended up with another one in Taupo on our way home.

Homeward bound logistics.

**Poko took Sunny straight to Rotorua and then to Dale's place at Tirau Monday morning.
Dale (T) headed home Dinny took the Turangi contingent to Turangi - Dale brought Glennie back to Taupo.**

Viv dropped Leigh off at Putaruru then took Chalkie to Hamilton - I brought it back home Monday morning.

**Dale took his Cruiser from Taupo to Tirau I took Glennie from Taupo to Tirau.
Meanwhile Jessy and Alexander took the Aucklanders right home in Townie - I bus up Tuesday morning to retrieve Townie.**

Epilogue in a few days once I (and the rest of the team(s)) have recovered somewhat.

Epilogue

A saga in itself !!

Despite what can only be described as trials and tribulations, not the least of which being lack of numbers there were quite a few POSITIVES

- . 1. We fulfilled ALL our commitments - that is at total of 5 stages for #1 Start team (under Dinny) and 5 Stages for #1 Finish team (under Warwick)**
- 2. Also 5 stages for #2 Start team(Under Dale) and another 5 stages (under Leigh) for #2finish team 3.**
- 3. It seems that virtually all who came have agreed to 'do it again'.**
- 4. 4. With only minor discrepancies we pretty much met all our 'out the gate' times.**
- 5 Some of the MIT boys proved to be 'a real find'**

However it has to be said there were a few negatives too.

Starting with a 'team of 12' becoming a 'team of 7.'But as has happened before everyone remaining does step up to the mark.

This meant that far from our 6 person (minimum) team we would normally require some teams had only 4 (and a preponderance of newbies too).

Although I endeavoured STRONGLY to get everyone to 'latch on' to their respective POST CHIEF this really didn't happen and with an overall crew of 20 the phrase 'trying to herd cats' was most appropriate

I had also tried to get the 5 vehicles all loaded with what was appropriate for each and every one mid afternoon on Thurs but was unable to really secure the co-co-operation necessary for such a massive undertaking.

To avoid taking an extra 2 vehicles (which would have made a total of eight), We took a couple of spring tops, for FF and SL use.

Unfortunately without hold down pegs, sand bags etc the wind simply took them over!There must also have been some mix up with the signs- #1 finish crew having only a start crew set.

Timeline

10 May 2018 Dale and I had a meeting with Targa during which we agreed to 'put together' a total of 4 teams, under Dinny, Myself, Dale and Leigh.

We also collected all the gear for the whole 4 teams including the 25w Radios, the 5w handhelds, 16 road traffic cones and the spring tops.

11 May 2018 I collected Viv and Dale and brought them to Duck Creek so they could take vehicles back home with them

12 May 2018

We fitted 25w radios, charged up all the handhelds and spread some of the gear around.

Thurs 17th May

I took Glennie (11 seater Hiace) to Pukekohe collected 4 MIT people and headed for our first regroup at Tirau.

Dale had already collected Leigh from Putaruru, Poko arrived on the bus from Gisborne, Viv brought Chalkie (8 seater Estima) from Hamilton, Alexander arrived on the bus from Auckland at 4.

We then all headed to Taupo to collect the 4 sets of Rallysafe gear then on to Dinny's in Turangi,

We endeavoured to make up some numbers with only limited success.

We slept the night in a variety of poses - Thanks Dinny.

Fri 18th May We aimed for an 'out the gate' time of 6.45 a.m. not quite achieved because of another 2 pulling out and another wanting to select his own team.

A fuel and toilet stop at Waionaru caused us to be later than we would like at the 1st 2stages.

But we made it .

We then headed to our Gentle Annie (West) stage, where we(#1 Finish team) had agreed to do the taping.

It was felt that with 'only' 64 gates to tape and 27 driveways we should be 'all right' YEAH RIGHT.

We had 2 vehicles, and 7 people but we also need the help of Safety 1 2 and 3. BUT even though were very late to our position, we fully set up in less than 5 mins and the stage started pretty much on time.

We then all headed to Kennedy Park Holiday complex in Napier with the 6 vehicles where we had three chocka cabins.

The team had fish and chips for tea, Dale, Viv and myself went out to Restaurant Indonesia.

Sat 19th May A somewhat easier day with only one stage for each team to do - by now it system is starting to gel nicely.

A BBQ and a few beers that night and of course the Royal Wedding to watch on TV too.

Sunday 20th May.

#2 team had an 'out the gate' time of 6 a.m., #1 a slightly more respectable 7.15 a.m.

Two stages today, then what was intended to be a 'final' regroup at the end of SS19 the last stage of the rally. (Can I say another shambles?)

Euen took the Rallysafe gear (2 starts, and 2 finishes) back to Buck

Poko took the Sunny home to Rotorua . Viv took Chalkie home to Hamilton (dropping Leigh on the way)

Jessy and Alexander took the 'Auckland contingent' home in Townie.

Dinny took Glennie back to Turangi, Dale went with him to bring Glennie back to Taupo for me.

Dale /Marama headed home in their own ute.

Dale and I stayed at his place late Sunday night,

Monday 21st May Dale took me to collect Chalkie from Hamilton Monday morning I brought it back home. Poko brought Sunny back to Tirau

Tuesday 22nd May I bussed to Auckland to retrieve Townie from Alexander in Auckland and brought it back home.

Fri 25th May Dale brought Glennie to Duck Creek and I took him back to Tirau So all our vehicles are 'back home where they belong'

MANY THANKS to all the crews

#1 Start

DINNY Poko Leiton Thomas

#1 Finish WARWICK Viv Dominic Jamie Xavier Dale (T) Nikora

#2 Start DALE Marama Werner Josh

#2 Finish LEIGH Jesy AnurauAlexander

And no I haven't sorted out nicknames (or even nametags) that may well be a treat in store!!!

I still think I may well have missed someone. If so I apologise - the numbers from all the Post Chiefs ads up to 19, but I am sure we actually had 20 !

Rally of the North 2018

This year for Far North Rally, we had agreed to provide 1 team, (i.e. two crews) start crew under Dale, and finish crew under Warwick.

Brian flew up from Christchurch to help, Dinny came up from Turangi, we also had Poko from Rotorua, Leigh from Putaruru, and Jesy and Jamie from Auckland itself. Warwick and Connor from Hikuai completed the team.

Once more we had a 'last minute 'pull out' which fortunately we did manage to cope with.

The 2 crews did a 'timing crew regroup' at Burger King at Whangarei and proceeded apace to Paihia, in Trannie (the 15 seat Transit), to be used at the Finish Control, Sunny (the Little Nissan) and Tele (the Telstar), to be used at the Start, Alexander brought his own car up from Auckland too to become the Flying finish vehicle.

So, yes that's right 4 vehicles, 2 for start and 2 for finish.

After settling in to our supplied motel accommodation we uplifted signs, other gear, instructions for the day ahead etc.

The first 'problem' was that whereas we had originally been given stage 4 (the last of the morning) and then stage 8 (the last of the day) this had been changed to stage 4 and 7!

This meant that instead of being able to drive straight to our various timing positions via main roads we were now going to have to drive pretty much the whole of at least 2 stages - a baptism of fire for Trannie!!! It also meant we would no longer have time for lunch in Kaitia, (Or anywhere else for that matter!)

However the advantage of the arrangement was that our Start crew had to move only a minimal distance but did indeed have a long wait.

I was also thrilled to be given a rallysafe tablet for Finish Control (rather than the silly little three line display we have been saddled with for the last couple of years) so although its battery life is still not sufficient to last two stages, our on board 230v inverter did its job admirably.

The same cannot be said of the satellite phone supplied for communications, It simply did not work, even when appearing to connect it simply said 'you do not have enough credit to make this call'.

What rubbish. This meant that for stage 4 we had no communication in any direction, but at least at stage 7 the Spark cellphones did work.

In the event what transpired is that stage 4 was o.k., everyone shook down quite well, once we had found our spots, but getting to stage 7 was what can only be described as a 'mission in itself'.

Instead of being in position some 30 mins before road closure, we

were some 30 mins AFTER, but did not drive on the stage during the closed time!

Alexander and Connor set up Flying Finish 'in record time', and despite the mud Jesy, Leigh and Warwick did similarly at Finish Control.

But here again, once the stage had started running we were ONCE MORE (just like last year) confronted by a group of BLOODY MINDED MAORIS, who threatened us (with language and actions that even those of us of more mature years have probably never heard before). Their gripe seemed to be along the lines of 'we own all the land around here and we don't want you here;

Sound familiar?

Same as last year!!

But wait there is more!

As finish Post Chief I explained that there were cars heading towards us at what could well be approaching 200 kmh at which stage they forced me out of the way with their vehicle and said we'll sort them cunts out, and charged into the stage IN THE WRONG DIRECTION basically attempting to create as much carnage as possible, I managed to get a message to the Clerk of the Course and the stage was subsequently cancelled for that and other reasons,

I do not believe

we have heard the last of this incident.

Their threats of impending violence certainly scared hell out of the young spectators there who promptly scarpered (thankfully).

Not a good advertisement for either the region or the perpetrators.

After the cars had toured past us, and we had been cleared by the sweeper we proceeded back to Paihia 'tired and hungry', no pies to be had on the way either.

Returned the gear then had our own (Targa) officials meeting.

Fish and Chips for tea and a few beers to wash it down.

Out of the gate 9 a.m. Sunday morning, Warwick Connor and Brian back to Duck Creek, the others back to Tirau via Auckland.

Our Personell this time was	
START CREW	FINISH CREW
Dale	Warwick
Dinny	Alexander
Poko	Connor
Brian	Jesy
Jamie	Leigh

The next event is 'Targa Main' in the South Island this year less than a month away - we are still short on numbers.

Targa S.I. Rally 2018

Hi Everyone !!

•

Prologue - Mon, 19 Oct 2018

So here goes! These are our current plans - no more changes I hope!!

This year we are providing 3 full teams (i.e. 3 start crews and 3 finish crews - i.e. 36 people) for the event which starts in Invercargill on Tues 23rd October and finishes in Queenstown on Sat 27th Oct 2018.

We have helpers from Hikuai, Thames, Helensville, Auckland, Hamilton, Tirau, Putaruru, Turangi and Hawkes Bay. (In the north Island) West Coast of the South Island and Christchurch.

As you can imagine the logistics have been somewhat mind boggling!

So tomorrow I collect a vanful of people around the place and head for a major regroup at Turangi, where Dale will be in another van and the Turangi contingent will join us.

We then drive through the night, with hourly driver changes going over on the ferry first sailing on Sunday morning

Another major regroup at our Christchurch base that afternoon, with Christchurch and West Coast contingents, also collecting another 5 rental cars.

After a night in Christchurch, on Monday 22nd (Labour Day) we ALL head south to Lake Waihola which will be our base for the next 4 days.

Tuesday 23rd will be an early start for some crews, everybody has 2 stages this day. That night we should (once more) get to Bluff and Invercargill We also have to do some blockmarshaling . And POSSIBLY taping and more likely detaping.

More stages to time on Wednesday, then back to Waihola

Thursday is 'same as above'

Friday stages around Dunedin then we head over to Central Otago.

We will be staying at Cromwell Fri/Sat nights

More stages In Queenstown (including Crown Range) on Sat

Homeward bound Sun, over on the ferry in the early hours of Mon morning then everyone back home during that day - Tired but happy I HOPE.

So there you have it our plans for the next week!

Thanks to both Ken and Mike who are keeping the home fires burning, looking after my customers here at home while we are away.

And also a heartfelt thanks to those people who have stepped up at the last minute to cover those who have 'pulled out just before they are due to come'.

It has been pointed out that some of my 'jargon' is not well understood by quite a few people. If that applies to you do let me know and if I possibly can I can explain in more detail

The will be trackers in our two vans, if you do wish to track us do let me know and I'll give you the website access, id and passwords etc.

I shall, of course, continue my practice of doing a daily write up telling a 'warts and all' story of each day, then a final Epilogue once the event is over.

Have you heard that I am SUPPOSED to be retired !!!!!

Day 0 - Preparations

Reasonably brief for the first one - others may, or may not be somewhat more fullsome

Connor, Ethan and Warwick left Hikuai about 10 a.m. (in Trannie) and collected

Bruce from Thames.

We then proceeded to Auckland, collected Alexander, Pri (who replaced Darrien), then Jamie (1 start Post chief)

then out to Papakura for Poihipi, then Pukekohe for Josh.

Next stop was Hamilton for Viv and Steve then headed (over the back roads - thanks to our Navman Gps) to our Major regroup at Turangi!

Dale had already arrived with Leigh and Poko (in Glennie) so we then took on board the Substantial 'Turangi Contingent'

As planned. we then drove both vans ' through the night' (with hourly driver changes), arriving in Wgtn about 2 A.M being joined about 5 a.m. by Karl and Sansin...

We boarded the Interislander for its 6.30 a.m. sailing (nice smooth crossing), caught up with Jesy in Picton,

transferred a couple of people and proceeded to Christchurch, arriving quite a bit later than we were supposed to!!! (Sound familiar?)

Collected more rental cars, and more Christchurch helpers,

fitted 5, 25w Fleetlink radios to

various vehicles then decamped to our overnight accommodation at Spencer Park Holiday Park for the night.

'Well not quite,

as it was Dale's 65th birthday we headed back to Bob's for a mini celebration.

**More news as to what happened, next day Monday and onwards wait for later installments!
It will be worth reading I can assure you !!**

Monday (Labour Day)

The day did not start off well and then rapidly deteriorated!!

First problem was the Rallysafe gear which is vital to run the rally.

It was supposed to be left

at Christchurch Base (as so much other stuff had been), or for us to get one of our Christchurch people to collect it if that wasn't readily possible - and at a pinch it might have to be delivered straight to Lake Waiholo camping ground -where we are staying for the next week.

But instead it had been taken straight all the way to Invercargill (where the Rally is starting)!

**The plan had (apparently) been to deliver it to each stage in the morning
by the 'first official car'**

**This would mean no possibility of training, checking the gear etc at Waihola and remember
most of the crew had never used it before.**

**We also have to be heading out to our first stage
at 4 AM (yes 4AM) on Tuesday morning.**

**This resulted, as you can imagine, in a hastily convened Post Chief meeting,
at which it was
agreed that this was quite simply**

NOT ON. Jesy offered to drive to Invercargill

**(a six or more hour drive) then bring it all back to Waihola almost another three hours after
which we
would need to train people as well as we could!
This too was simply NOT ON.**

**Eventually commonsense prevailed and the organisers agreed to send someone up from
Invercargill to Waihola with it and that it would be there before we arrived - which it was, if
incomplete !!!**

**Although we did get away from Christchurch on time
the time wasting in Timaru sorting out
lunch was a harbinger to things to come!**

**About 4 .30 p.m. one of our drivers managed to slip on a pile of gravel and roll a car, which
we had borrowed.**

**Although a very slow speed. single vehicle, non injury crash, it still was
'very disruptive' as you might say.**

**We all feel bad, particularly for its owner- We are all
really sorry.**

**This meant that instead of arriving between 4.30 p.m and 5 p.m.(well before dark - time for
training, room allocations etc) it was about 9 p.m before the last of our people actually
arrived.**

**Remember the first crew (which included the two that crashed) had to leave at 4 a.m. next
morning to time the first stage of the rally.**

**We did manage to swap with another crew to
avoid that situation.**

As I said, the day started badly and got worse and worse.

More news tomorrow

Targa 2018 Tuesday

**With the sheer numbers involved this year (3 teams, each of 2 six man
crews) It is simply not possible to relate to ALL the adventures and
misadventures, so some will, of necessity be either hearsay or simply
not reported!!!**

Anyway Dinny agreed to do the early shift start and my crew the finish. Our out the gate time was 4 A.M. (After all yesterday's dramas) but, after having to relinquish people for block marshalling duties we were down to a crew of 4!

But wait there's more!

One of our crew had become sick during the night, so we were down to a crew of 3 - two of whom had never even done it before

Anyway, with not a little difficulty we timed the finish of SS1 - despite having unsuccessfully tried to stop a couple of school buses driving **WRONG WAY** in to the stage some hour after it was closed, without any consideration for their precious cargo.

More of this
later perhaps.

After the stage finished my crew had burgers in Invercargill, then a trip to Bluff and on to SS6 the last stage of the day.

Here we had
only minimal comms which created something of a problem.
Meanwhile the Block Marshaling team under Brian were securing SS3, the other teams doing almost what we had done but with 5 A.M. out the gate times.

Back to Lake Waiholā that night to find that several of our troops were already starting to misbehave - oh bugger.

In my case after a 4
A.M. start I got back just after 8.30 p.m.

More about tomorrow soon !

Targa 2018 Wednesday

Started out a better day(for us anyway) we only had a short
stage 'over the road' at Waiholā.

Oh joy what rapture. We didn't have to be onsite until 1.30. pm !!

Mind you the block marshals had to be out the gate about 9 a.m.
for their stage up at Lawrence, and Dale and Dinny also had 10 or 11 a.m. starts.

Once again I really can't speak for the other post chiefs, but our only problem was an irate
resident

(not a Maori this time) , although his language was just as bad who maintained that
there was no 'ROAD CLOSED' sign at his gate and that even if there was he

wasn't going to take any notice of it.

That night the various (basically younger members of the team), really played up - drinking
smoking and yelling almost all night.

Despite the fact that I had made it crystal clear that
alcohol and motorsport simply do not mix.

Not a good look for us, Targa or Motorsport in general.

I intend to have a real sort out tomorrow (Thursday) night.

Saturday 27 Oct 2018

Hi all.

With all the (bad) things that have happened this week I was simply not able to keep up with the daily reports, so it will have to wait for my Epilogue next week.

Just a couple of thoughts right now though.

- 1. Postitive! Despite the trials and tribulations we did manage to fulfil ALL our obligations, 21 stages timed and another 4 blockmarshalled.**
- 2. Negative A goodly percentage of the group (mainly the younger ones - but not all of them) seem to have regarded this as a free week long party - to be interrupted by 'work' only when absolutely necessary. Not pleasant!**

More later!

Targa 2018 - Epilogue

Hi All, FINALLY the epilogue!

As indicated during the week with six crews 'in the mix' it has not really been possible to give full coverage to everyone - but be assured it was, indeed, a massive undertaking.

We did manage to fulfil all our commitments - timed 44 Starts/Finishes and supplied a vanful of 8 block marshals who also taped and detaped nearly 10 stages.

In summary then:

With the four of us leaving the lovely Coromandel on St 20th we then went and collected another 3 from Auckland itself, another from Papakura and another 2 from Hamilton.

Meeting up for our major regroup in Turangi. Drove through the night (with hourly driver changes) and over on the ferry at 'first light', after picking up our next 2 from Wgtn and 1 from Palmerston North.

Then down the recently repaired highway 1 to Christchurch, arriving somewhat late.

There we met up with our West Coast contingent and the good folk from Christchurch itself

At Bob's place (which we were using as our Chch Base) we all met, collected the other five rental cars and fitted big radios etc.

Most of us stayed at Spencer Park holiday camp. With it being Dale's actual 65th birthday we had a 'mini celebration' Sunday night.

Monday (Labour Day) headed (but not in convoy) towards our base for the week - Lake Waihola,

unfortunately though the rallysafe timing gear had found its way right past Chch and Waihola to Invercargill where the event was due to start next morning.

It was returned to Waihola that afternoon, but later than we would have liked.

Unfortunately one of our crews had a non injury, single vehicle accident on the way down which caused utter consternation, and also contributed to our collective late arrival.

Tuesday our crew had an 'out the gate' time of 4 a.m. (after late arrival the night before) to do SS1, the first stage of the event.

Our major calamity on this was the local school bus that refused to wait for an escort (or even for cars to be stopped and the stage cleared for them) but instead, some whole hour after the road had been closed and cars were hurtling through at speed, insisted on driving into the stage going in the wrong direction.

One driver's comment that ' It was pretty scary meeting a school bus in there!., was pretty much an understatement'

communication problems and an arrival back at 'camp' after 'Burgers for us in Invercargill then via Bluff to our last stage of the day where we had arrived after 8 .30 p.m.

Wednesday just one stage (oh joy), but here again we had an irate resident who took issue with our even being there and waited till stage had been 'secured' and the the certificate issued. then when cars were arriving (again at speed) he then drove into the middle of them but at least in the correct direction.

Thursday we seemed to end up with almost all the crews at Palmerston at lunchtime.

But that night one of the team hurt his hand badly (blood everywhere, and excruciating pain). The ambulance dispatcher said it would take an hour and a half to get an ambulance the 20 k from Dunedin (which I personally found appalling) so his post chief rushed him to Dunedin Hospital. Back on deck next day surprisingly enough.

Friday morning we packed up from Waihola and after doing our various stages headed for Cromwell Holiday park for the next two nights.

At this stage some people (who were no longer actually needed) took the opportunity to head home, some flying direct from Queenstown.

The rest of us did our stages on Saturday (as did our marvellous block marshalling team) . Our stage was the Crown Range, starting from the Queenstown end and ending at Cardrona Pub.

It was here that one driver was heard to remark that ' I never thought I would be able to drive over the Crown range at 180 kmph'

Afterwards we have another regroup and handed back the Rallysafe equipment.

Sunday morning we 'upped stakes', headed for Christchurch (via Forest Range station for some of us)

gathered at James and Sophia's place at Burnham, deinstalled the radios, repacked the trailer etc,etc then returned the rental cars and headed for Picton.

This time we were on a freight only sailing so once we arrived the ship was under way, squabs in the bar(closed) became our beds!!

We were, indeed, off in time to beat the Wellington morning peak traffic and after dropping Ben at Palmerston North and Leigh at Bulls we had our final regroup again at Turangi,

Dropping people at Hamilton, Paeroa (so Jamie could take Chalkie to Auckland), then Thames and back home - as I keep saying TIRED BUT HAPPY.

I repeat despite all our trials and tribulations we fulfilled all our obligations.

Now just a few final words...

I do want to thank those people who were released from their 'normal' crew to become block marshals, and a taping and detaping team.

This , whilst a very late change, is an absolutely vital part of any event.

THANKS AGAIN!

**I also want to thank Connor and Ethan for their help in preparatory work before the event
not to mention during it.**

**And, of course those who stepped up at the last minute when about four confirmed people
pulled out leaving is somewhat 'in the lurch'**

The people involved this time - in alphabetical order were:

Alexander (Andy),	Karl,
Anaru,	Kevin,
Aydan,	Leigh,
Ben,	Leiton,
Brian,	Leonie,
Bruce,	Lochlan
Chris,	Nikora,
Cody,	Poihipi
Connor,	Poko,
Dale,	Pri,
David,	Ruben,
Dinny,	Sansin,
Ethan,	Steve,
Fiona,	Thomas,
Jamie,	Vivien,
Jenny,	Wairehu,
Jesy,	Warwick.
Josh,	

Silverfern Rally 2018

Hi Everyone !!

•

Silverfern 2018 - Day 0

Pretty good so far.

Out the gate at home at the proper time, documentation, balance of gear pickup at Hamilton.

Rallysafe have given us a tablet this time and, oh joy it is fully charged.

We shall, of course charge it again between our stages tomorrow.

We are safely esconsed at Raglan Holiday Park and have been down to find the actual spot we have to be at 7 a.m. tomorrow.

All in all not too bad a start. Tomorrow we time SS1 ,(the first stage of the rally, obviously), then over to Taumarunui for SS6. We stay there tomorrow night.

The weather gods continue to be kind to us so far!!

Day 1 - Saturday 24th November 2018

There is, as they say good news and bad news.

The good news is that having found just where we had to be this morning at 7.15am, (which necessitated an 'out the gate' time of 6.30 and getting up at 6 a.m.), we didn't have to do that stage after all, so a much more sensible 'out the gate' time of 9 a.m. was achieved.

The bad news is that through no fault of the organisers, or the competitors SS1 had, had to be cancelled !!!

After sleeping in Chalkie and Townie, we had showers at the Holiday Park, 'up and go' for breakfast - then refuel and pies for lunch - arriving at our next stage SS6 with time to spare. Just as well as finding our spots on a reduced length stage took just a little while - especially as our FF (Flying finish) spot had nowhere to put a vehicle with any safety in mind.

We tried a tent (which even when well pegged) would not stay upright so David did manage to get Townie in to a paddock behind the fence - we thought we may need to tow him out with the 4WD van but he extricated his van without difficulty.

It was once we were set up that our Fleetlink radio kept dropping out of service.

We could sometimes communicate (badly) other times not at all.

Repositioning the aerial, and even repositioning the van (Chalkie)

itself was to no avail

With several of the best brains being exercised on site - I finally disconnected the radio entirely, re plugged everything and repositioned the aerial onto the bonnet instead of the roof, and lo and behold it has been fine ever since!

It was, however, a very long day - not only were we late starting (no doubt largely because of us), but there were several very long gaps between things happening so we were on site for almost 6 hours.

We are now at Taumarunui, had Chinese for dinner and are at the Holiday park where plugged into the power point in our cabin we have:

- 1. The Rallysafe Tablet on charge**
- 2 .My laptop on charge**
- 3. The Rallysafe beam battery on charge**
- 4. The hand held radios on charge**
- 5. My cellph on charge**
- 6. Connor's cellphone on Charge**
- 7. Ethan's cell ph on charge**

I think David's is awaiting a spare plug.

Out the gate tomorrow about 10 a.m., but a very quick trip will be necessary between our two stages, SS11 nd SS13

A couple of what I have called 'titbits', for you to have a giggle over...

Being somewhat pedantic, and always concious of the legal situation, Connor (a learner driver), had his 'L' plates displayed for his whole trip (with me beside him of course), a local wit said 'I hope there are not too many competitors that need 'L' plates !!

Another one:

I was grateful to have a Rally Safe tablet at Finish control, rather than the 3 line display we usually get.

HOWEVER, the 3 line display needs NO setting up, it truly as a 'plug and go'. We tapped 'FINISH' on the tablet but it didn't seem to work (no times for the first few cars), so back to reading instructions and finding that with the Tablet we also need to select the stage!!!

Bingo and it works.

Reporting success was met with an incredulous ' You mean Warwick has actually made a mistake': - Bugger, what a reputation to have.

Till tomorrow then !!

Day 2 - Sunday 25th November 2018

Hi All,

Well, after a good nights sleep, and fully charging pretty much all the batteries in all our devices we were out the gate by 10.a.m. to time our first stage of the day, refuelling both vehicles and bodies on the way.

All went swimmingly except that the stage did run a tad late- which would normally be no real problem, except that we had a VERY tight time frame to get to our next stage well over an hour away a bit after Ohura - wow.

We were , of course, late!

But wait there is more, our Fleetlink radio decided to misbehave again

and although other

officials seemed to be able to communicate we really could not.

We have checked the aerial thoroughly, repositioned it, repositioned the vehicle etc,etc,etc.

Because our spot tomorrow is virtually the same as today, we are camping out.

David has organised the troops,

Ethan has cooked the sausages, and after looking still harder at the radio problems we shall (again) sleep in the two vans and face the new day tomorrow.

If all goes well we shall get to Raetihi tomorrow night, in cabins again.

Day 3 - Monday 26th November 2018

Hi again,

Well roadside camping actually worked quite well.

Although it rained, we were all quite comfortable sleeping in the two vans (Chalkie and Townie). Spagetti for breakfast was o.k. too.

This morning we still could not get our Fleetlink radio to work, even though our start crew who came to see us had no difficulty!

It is now unrepairable after David was a bit TOO rough and yanked the aerial cable out of its socket. We were provided with a satellite phone so I did have communication back to base.

Another day of two stages, with a really tight time between them.

Particularly in that we had to drive a stsge (the same one we did yesterday) and with an allowance of 2.5 hrs, it should have been o.k. !! Yeah right - both our Navman and TomTom both said 3hrs 10 mins !!!

Here we go again.

Yep, we were late, for our second stage!!

We are, however now happily esconsced at Raetihi Holiday Park and once again, have 7 things all being charged.

**We will probably end up with Fish and Chips tonight, possibly chicken.
Only one stage tomorrow (where we should expect a replacement radio and aerial - which,
could then have us smiling) , then on to Feilding holiday Park.**

Day 4 - Tuesday 27th November 2018

Hi All.

**Well here we are at Feilding. And just to get the priorities right, with not TOO much
difficulty I have managed to track down some lovely Ngahere Gold.**

Don't worry Lisa I have only had two (so far anyway!)

**Only one stage today, out of the gate at a reasonable 10 a.m.. Connor drove to the stage,
where once more we had no comms, but a satellite phone almost sufficed.**

**A bad crash, just before flying finish showed how important 'start orders' are - and they do
HAVE TO BE CORRECT, so we can tell if anyone is missing.**

**I understand we did, actually, have problem with at least one official car, but both Chalkie
and Townie continue to perform adequately.**

**We have another 'easy' day tomorrow, so after burgers for tea tonight we don't have to be
'out the gate' much before noon tomorrow, hence my Nga tonight !!**

**I am quite impressed with Connor's driving, and Ethan's overall ability, Dave and I have
known each others quirks for well over 30 years !!**

Day 5 - Wednesday 28th November 2018

Hi All,

**Well here we are, camping out again, this time somewhere out the back of Masterton on
Route 52 (not Route 66 as you may well imagine).**

I really must put on record just how good the two teenagers (Connor and Ethan) have been.

**I was sitting down to write this report and a knock on the door had a sausage and bread
handed to me, then a few minutes a mixture of spaghetti and baked beans likewise.**

**I have just been told that both vans have now been converted to comfortable sleepers, all
without my having to even ask - let alone speak forcefully.**

Well done boys.

**We were out the gate this morning by 10.a.m. but had only one stage to time, so it really
was 'a piece of cake'**

**.Connor at Flying Finish, Ethan doing Road, Dave log writing, criss
cross sheet and drivers cards, and no I wasn't poncing around like Captain Peacock, I made
myself useful by doing a 'mini stage time board'.**

**Connor has been doing most of the driving (with his 'L' plates up of course,) drove out to the
stage this morning then all the way here (including over Saddle Hill Rd) to Woodville.**

**As I say, we are in position for our first stage tomorrow morning, where we have to be 'on
site' no later than 7.25 a.m.. WE ARE ALREADY HERE !!**

We then do a second stage later in the day, and then on to Napier.

**Staying once more at
Kennedy Park, and I'll shout the troops dinner at Restaurant Indonesia, in return for all the
work they have done and continue to do.**

More tomorrow night!

Day 6 - Thursday 29th November 2018

Hi all (again),

Here we are at Napier!

**Working backwards, we have all been out to Restaurant Indonesia in Napier for our
'Special – night'.**

**For those who think it is not so good I am happy to report that all of MY
team think it was well worth while!!!**

**Unfortunately (for those in the know) we were so late that the boys didn't have to 'climb the
steps up to my place; - bugger!**

David was our 'sober driver', so you can just imaging the rest of us !!!

**Anyway, as indicated last night,we slept 'on site' in the vans so we were 'ready willing and
able' in plenty of time this morning and comms were not a problem!**

**Getting to our next stage was also 'not a problem', with our arriving in 'plenty of time'.
However during the afternoon we did, however. have a rallysafe problem which seems to
eventually have been sorted .**

**A word about a board- WRC require it, and SBT always endeavour to provide similar
service.**

**What this is that each competitor is shown (by means of a board - whatever) the stage
times of everyone in front of them.**

**It is not required for NZ rallies, but is really appreciated by pretty much all competitors,
and is something that SBT pride themselves on being able to deliver.**

**Earlier in the event we just did a 'mini board', i.e, the 'previous' times written on an
A4 sheet of paper and shown to competitors.**

**More recent stages, a proper 'WRC style" much larger board to be more readily read.
Anyway we have an 'out the gate' time of 0830 in the morning - up to Tuai Power station
then heading for Gisborne afterwards.**

Then two more stages on Saturday before heading home !!

**It looks like some 1500 Km since leaving home - Connor driving well over half of that in
Chalkie, and David most of that in Townie.**

**Ethan is still not keen on relaying his experiences to his school assembly peers, despite my
clear instructions of how necessary this will be.**

More tomorrow, probably sleeping in the vans again!!

Day 7 - Friday 30th November 2018

Hi All,

Well here we are at the Doneraile Camping ground, at Ruahaka - between Wairoa and Gisborne which is where our first stage (SS44) ends tomorrow morning.

A marathon indeed.

After a good night 'dinnerwise' last night and even better night 'sleepwise' last night, we were out of the gate at 8.30 a.m. to head for Tuai, well over 2 hrs away.

Yes, indeed, we were well and truly on time, comms were fine, but no Spark cellphone coverage, but strangely Vodafail did actually work (and I actually was able to make a call!!)

Our problem here was that our beam unit at Flying Finish was 'iffy' to say the least, the spare unit which was delivered, was able to be kept in reserve, because all times came though correctly. Bingo.

We did a full sized board, which seemed to be much appreciated by competitors.

Having bypassed Wairoa on our way to site (David??) it was then necessary for us to have 'late lunch' there and buy more sausages, bread etc for tea tonight and to eat cold for lunch tomorrow (the last day - oh joy).

As mentioned above we do two stages tomorrow SS44, here (for which we, once again have no cell ph coverage, and no real comms either!!! We then go up to the mighty Motu for SS 47, then once cleared head for home, possibly via Rotorua.

We have been working on nicknames, none of which are really repeatable.

However it looks like

Warwick will remain Wazza or Boss- not so keen on wrinkly

David will be Chief (from his navy days as CPO)

Connor is simply Helpful

Ethan is Smart eh? (or Smart A..if you prefer!!)

Day 8 - Saturday 1st December 2018

Hi all,

Well we did it

Fulfilled all our obligations

A marathon indeed.

Home a bit before nine tonight. Tired but happy.

Two VERY tired teenagers, two almost as tired 70 something men

Two quite tired vans!!

Connor (Helpful Henry) has driven almost 1000 km, and David (Chief) pretty much the entire 1800 km.

Anyway – on site at 7 a.m. this morning, just as well we slept there overnight!

Connor set up the (replacement) beam with little problem (after all we had tested it last night anyway), but once more no Fleetlink Comms, no cellph coverage - so satellite phone to the rescue (once more)

We had been given 2 hrs to drive to our next stage to which my comment had been , yeah right.

However, we actually did it in 1 hr 45 - miraculous!. Left over sausages for lunch!

But joy, oh joy, not only did we find our marshals awaiting us but we had full Fleetlink coverage, to both Targa Base and our own 'Stage Manager'!

Once finished we were not game to 'drive the mighty Motu' but opted instead to come back through the gorge.

Connor drove from Matawai virtually all the way home - well done boy.
Chinese for tea at Opotiki, handed our Rallysafe equipment to another Post Chief to return to Buck and we headed home, as I said above tired but happy.

Was disappointed to see when we got home that Slingshot had let us down and not fulfilled their promises (a fairly rare occurrence I must admit)
and also that Spark continue to let us
down - a much more regular occurrence, of course.

We plan to return all our gear to Targa on Wed 5th, have a 'birthday lunch' at Happy Days and put Dave (Chief) on a plane back to Christchurch that afternoon.

An epilogue in a couple of days when we have all recovered.

Silverfern 2018 - Epilogue

As I said when we got home - we did it.

Fulfilled all our obligations

Dave, Connor, Ethan and myself really did make a pretty good team

Out the gate at Duck Creek on time Fri 23rd, final gear pickup and briefing at Hamilton then on to Raglan for the night - slept in Townie and Chalkie at the camping ground.

SS1 cancelled unfortunately so only one stage on Sat, stayed at Taumarunui in cabins.
Sunday we had two stages, the time between them not really sufficient to cover the distance (and no Toby, I didn't get the tracker into the red zone).

Stayed the night on the roadside at Kotare (where we also had to be 1st stage next morning).

Monday another two stages, staying the night Raetihi (in cabins again)

Tuesday, at Feilding - a very nice unit, we all had individual bunks and with only one stage next day quite a civilized out the gate time !!!

After our 1 stage on Wednesday we looked at staying at Ekatahuna but instead opted to stay roadside again so we were already 'onsite' for our 1st stage of the day on Thursday morning.

Did our two stages on Thursday then back to Kennedy Park Complex in Napier and our 'special night' for the team.

Friday just one stage nearly at Tuai, and after a late lunch at Wairoa stayed at Doneraile Camping ground which again was to be our 1st stage of the next day.

After doing our 1st stage of the day on Sat we then headed past Gisborne up to Matawai when we did our last stage of the rally, Chinese at Opotiki then home - Tired but happy - a bit after dark.

Returned our Targa gear on Wed 5th, and took Dave to the airport after a birthday lunch at Happy Days.

A real Marathon - makes me feel tired just re-reading what we did.

8 days. (Actually 9 if you count the Friday)

A different place every night just under 2000km in each of the two vehicles.

A really good crew, but now I suspect we are all into recovery mode.

Warwick.

Targa Rotorua/Hawkes Bay 2019

Dates 18th May to 20th May 2019

Prologue

- A very quick, and short preview of what we are doing this week.

With Connor and Ethan not being available for this one, we had organised some of the crew to come up from Turangi.

All was well until Leigh's team let him down and (as usual) all hell broke loose!

Dale and I tried 'several' without success but it looked like we were all sorted with Laura and Connor apparently keen as newbies. Guess what they too, pulled out a couple of days before.

So we now welcome Ezra to our crew (Finish 2), which is now completed with Anaru and Thomas from Turangi.

Fortunately Dale had managed to get Colin to help Leigh out, and his crew (Finish 1) is completed with Leiton and Cody.

As an aside - Dale has Bruce, Dinny and Darryl completing his crew.

So, midday Thurs 16th David, Ezra, and myself headed away picking up Anaru and Thomas from Tirau when their bus arrived.

While awaiting the boys' collect we spent a couple of hours soaking in the hot pools here at Opal Springs where we are staying tonight!

Dale collected our Rallysafe gear, and final documentation for us too.

We time SS2 tomorrow morning, then SS6 tomorrow afternoon (Fri) and stay at Golden Springs Reporoa tomorrow night.

Just one stage SS 11 on Sat and then on to Napier for the night.

Sunday SS16 then SS20 for the final day Sunday.

After delivering the Turangi contingent home on Sunday night, David will plan to head back towards Christchurch, and Ezra and I will head towards our place.

More tomorrow night (Fri) I hope !!

Day 1 - Friday - 18th May 2019

Here we are at Golden Springs on SH5 between Taupo and Rotorua for the Fri night.

We easily made our first 'out the gate time' of 0800, but someone must have turned right instead of turning left and as a result instead of being on stage 30 mins before we had to, it was only 15 mins so you could say we were well and truly early!

For SS2 we timed the cars, Dave and Ezra on Flying Finish, Thomas on Cards (copying data from the Tablet in front of him), Anaru writing up the logs and Wazza doing Road.

A bit of a pity that our Start Crew did not bother to put the Start Order on the appropriate cards so we could not complete the criss-cross sheet.

Once cleared we headed through Putaruru to Arapuni then on to our second stage of the day SS6.

This time we had Ezra on his own at Flying Finish, Dave on Cards, Thomas on writing logs,

and Anaru doing Road. Wazza and Anaru shared the duties of writing up the 'board', something competitors really do appreciate.

We did have a 'little' problem with a rogue van who broke onto the stage and created minor havoc. But together we all coped - sort of.

We then drove the 90 mins here, sausages and bread for tea - a better meal and a mini celebration tomorrow (Sat) night.

Only one stage tomorrow, with an out the gate time of 0830, then over the Napier Taupo Rd to Napier.

Day 2 - Saturday - 19th May 2019

Here we are at Napier Beach Kiwi Holiday Park, after a 'mini celebration' at Hot Chick in Napier in recognition of Cody's birthday - Jesy's crew, Dale's crew, Leigh's crew and my crew.

We spent last night (Fri) at Golden Springs just out of Taupo - and boy was it cold!

Mind you the three 'adults' all had double beds each to themselves and the 'younger members' had single couches in the lounge.

An out the gate time of 8.30 was achieved, at it was, indeed, nice to be woken (well sort of) by chief with a plate full of nice warm porridge and chocolate milk to put on it!!

Our one and only stage for the day was only about 10 mins away so we had no problems setting up - with our desire to encourage and 'blood' younger people Dave trained Anaru at Flying Finish and Ezra did cards at FC. Thomas did log writing, and I did road and board.

That is until I had post chief duties to fulfil when we had ANOTHER rogue pickup truck attempting to race among the competitors.

A burger for lunch on the Napier Taupo road, and a 3 p.m. arrival in Napier oh - joy !!

Took the crew on a 'tiki tour' of Napier, including where I used to work, then made them 'do the steps' up to where I used to live, a bit of puffing and panting, but not too bad, then up Bluff Hill, down to Marine Parade etc.

As mentioned above we all had BBQ chicken at Hot Chick for dinner!!

We then got back in time to watch the Blues play the Chiefs - not a result anyone was happy with.

Tomorrow we once more have an 'out the gate' time of 8.30 to do our morning stage SS16 then we do SS20 the last stage of the rally before heading in the general direction of home.

The Turangi contingent to their place, Leigh to Putaruru, Dale to Tirau, Bruce to Thames and Ezra and myself back to Duck Creek.

More tomorrow night (hopefully - may be late) then the epilogue a few days later.

Day 3 - Sunday - 20th May 2019

The final day !

Much warmer this morning about 12 deg instead of the 1 or so yesterday morning !!

Once more we met our 'out the gate time' of 8.30 and proceeded post haste to our first stage of the day SS16.

We eventually arrived after some perigrination (oh for a Toby or even an Ethan), actually in plenty of time.

Anaru and Thomas manned the Flying Finish (well done boys) and we had the so called 'adults' at Finish Control. Beautiful sunny day, radios worked etc,etc,

Once cleared we headed for our final stage SS20, the last stage of the event.

We arrived so early that we ACTUALLY had time to go and get petrol (a never ending task) and 'pies for all'. Great!!

Back on the stage finish in plenty of time - we had a small issue with start orders but finally determined that we hadn't actually lost a car after all!!

There was however what we understand something of a disaster turning this stage to 'white', and we were instructed to simply keep doing what we were doing until told otherwise.

This we did. An ACOC (Stage Manager) then released us and took over block duties.

We did however encounter another rogue motorist who insisted that he was going to use the road 'as was his right', regardless of the fact that it was legally closed for another hour or more. We really could do without these people.

We then headed for Havelock North (Porters Hotel), returned gear and redeployed our people.

Ezra took Leigh back to Putaruru then waited for me at Dales, using one of Dale's cars. Meanwhile David took Anaru and I took the rest of the Turangi contingent and we delivered them all safe and sound back home.

I then undertook the long trek from Turangi back to Duck Creek, collecting Ezra at Tirau, we both then shared the driving getting home at 2 a.m. Mon morning.

As has often been said - TIRED but HAPPY.

Epilogue

One of our better performances - once more we fulfilled ALL our commitments

TIMELINE

8th May - Collected majority of gear from Targa HQ.

14th May - David (Chief) arrives from Chch - Personnel issues raised their ugly head!!

15th May - Personnel issue resolved - Thanks Ezra.

16th May - Proceed to Matamata, collected the rest of the crew and the rest of the gear. Stay at Opal Hot Springs that night.

17th May - Time SS2, then over to Arapuni/Waipapa for SS6 - Rogue vehicle problem. Stay at Golden Springs Reporoa.

18th May - Time SS11 at Reporoa - another rogue vehicle problem, Stay at Napier Kiwi Beach Park. Mini celebration at Hot Chick with 15 of us.

19th May - Timed SS16 (after some peregrination), then the final SS20, where once more we had a rogue vehicle. Once cleared, took the Turangi contingent home, then Leigh home, then Ezra and myself back to Duck Creek.

ACCOMMODATION Having to pay for accommodation each night did stretch finances somewhat, but at Opal Springs we had a 5 bunk Cabin, wifi and use of the hot pools. Golden Springs was VERY cold, but they gave us two units, each with shower, toilet and kitchen.

Napier Kiwi was probably the best this trip - another 5 bunk cabin, but this time self contained shower, toilet. fridge etc. 10 GB Wifi.

ROGUE VEHICLES

To me it is extremely disappointing that after organisers of any event having to spend many hours, jump through all the hoops and finally managing to get the roads legally closed to run an event, there are still 'bloody minded' individuals who can simply ignore them, rudely, and apparently without consequences.

I quote from the 'Public Notification' for this event which reads as follows:

"Club Targa Inc has been granted this legally sanctioned road closure as per schedule 10 of the Local Government Act 1974 and the Traffic (Vehicular Traffic Road Closure) regulations 1965 and is protected by the Crimes Act with the following outcome;

Imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years, with the intent to cause danger to persons or property with reckless disregard for the safety of persons or property."

On the first day a Hiace originally drove onto the stage, then parked on the side of the road 'watching' the cars - then decided to 'join in the fun!'.

He refused to stop for our marshals and simply gave us the fingers.

On the second day a pickup truck decided he would race the competitors and again refused to stop at Finish Control.

On the third day a 'local' was adamant that the rules did not apply to him and he would drive 'his' road whenever he wished.

My personal view is that the time has come for action to be taken against the likes of them. - After all there could have been carnage. I believe we have so far simply been grateful that they have not managed to actually kill anyone and have let things slide.

PERSONNEL			
Finish Crew	Dale's Crew	Leigh's Crew	Jesy's Crew
Warwick (Wazza)	Dale	Leigh	Jesy
David (Chief)	Bruce	Colin (to start with)	Jamie
Ezra	Dinny	Leiton	Ben
Thomas	Darryl	Cody (birthday boy)	Woody
Anaru			

Thanks everyone. Warwick (Wazza)

GOLDRUSH 2019

This year we were just required to provide 4 (very important) block marshals.

Eventually (despite a fairly short time frame) were able to have

Warwick at the Coroglen end of Coroglen Tapu Rd

Bruce at the Tapu end of same road

Jesy at Whitianga end of 309 Rd

Dale at Coromandel end of said road.

Jesy came down from Auckland on Friday night and stayed with me here and after doing his 10hr stint (the stage was traversed 3 times) headed back to Auck on the Sat night - a 13 hr day!!

Dale came from Tirau to meet Bruce at Thames, stayed there Sat night and home on Sunday.

I had the best job, out the gate here about 10 am, on

site at Coroglen till about 4 p.m. (stage used twice) then home !

Thanks everyone.

FAR NORTH RALLY 2019

We have been associated with this event (formerly Rally Of the North) for well nigh 10 years.

This year we were to provide ONE finish crew, now that I am 'fully retired' - yeah right - I have had to 'pull my head in' somewhat and stop organising everyone !!.

So we had our crew, Jesy, Jamie, Fabian, Zane and myself, all organised.

Then a month or so beforehand Jesy had to pull out for family commitments (a month before hand is fine - a day beforehand is not).

In chasing the organisers for allocations a few days before the event though I learnt that they could not do them as yet as they were still short of a finish crew.

I have no doubt you can easily guess what comes next!!!

Yep a LOT of people got leaned upon, Facebook friends, emails, phone calls etc,etc,

My thanks to Darryl who came up from Rotorua, Johann, from Tairua, Josh from Tuakau and Andy and Sean from Auckland

This meant we could have one crew with me as Post Chief, and the other with Jamie as post chief.

Darryl, Johann, Josh and myself arrived in Paihia 'before dark', on Friday 20th and then collected all the gear etc.

The others drove up from Auckland after work so at our meeting later that night we reallocated personnel with my crew consisting of Andy, Sean, Johann, Josh and myself (yes 5) and Jamie had Fabian, Zane, Darryl and himself.

Both crews had a morning stage and an afternoon stage but thankfully out the gate times of between 7 and 8 am were much better than 4 a.m. starts which 'have been known'.

However with our morning stages being some 100km away there was still some driving to do.

Jamie's car misbehaved on the way to their first stage and they survived with one car (Darryl's thirsty Ford).

Meanwhile our crew with Josh, Johann and myself in trusty old Chalkie the Estima, with Andy and Sean in his car proceeded to Kaitaia where Andy used his magic FF training skills then joined

us at Finish Control and did Road Cards.

I should mention at this stage that Rallysafe are back to having a Surface Pro Tablet at the FC instead of a silly little 3 line display.

But although we still had our inverter to allow charging between stages it is no longer necessary.

The battery life has improved dramatically. Rallysafe certainly makes life a lot easier.

The rally did run a little late, caused partly by a taping problem on SS2 and Jamie's crew being a bit late because of their vehicle problems.

Lunch break enabled some regrouping. For our part we stopped at Kaitaia and had a few words with an old friend Brendon Morrissey.

A pie etc whilst heading another 100 km for our afternoon stage SS8 (the final stage of the event) then arriving in plenty of time.

There was however a typo in the road closure time (1450 somehow became 1540). Bugger.

Never mind, all went well eventually, that night (after returning all the gear - Rallysafe etc) we had a small gathering in my room for the 9 of us, then Andy and Sean took Jamie, Fabian and Zane back to Auckland so Jamie could arrange to rescue his vehicle,

the rest of us stayed Sat night, headed home Sunday morning. I shouted Josh and Johann lunch at Happy Days, took Josh home then Johann and I back home!!

Tired but happy again.

The Teams
Warwick Post Chief
Andy Cards
Josh Log Writer
Johann Road
Sean Flying Finish

Jamie Post Chief
Darryl
Zane
Fabian

Our next event is Main Targa in about a months time. More then.

Targa Rally 2019

Hi Everyone !!

Targa 2019 Prologue

Later today (Mon 28th Oct2019) we all gather at Taupo to pickup our gear, and attend a Timing Team Briefing.

**This year our team consists of: David (Chief), Wazza (Boss), Johann and Josh
Once cleared from Taupo we head for Otorohanga where we stay the night ready for our stage in the morning.**

When we have done that we head off to Stratford, where we stay for two nights.

One Stage at Inglewood on Wed.

Another 2 stages in the Stratford area on Thursday then heading for Taihape

so we can do our stage on Fri morning just out of Waiouru

then after our afternoon stage near Feilding we head over the hill to stay at Pahiatua for Friday night then our final stage of the event out the back of Masterton.

A long drive home once cleared from there on Sat afternoon, getting home as I have said before TIRED BUT HAPPY - (I hope)

Once more if you have no wish to receive these emails let me know so you can be removed from the list - otherwise I intend once more to do a writeup each night with our 'trials and tribulations' for the day in question.

Dale has his own Start team which consists of: Dale himself, Bruce, Kevin and Darryl.

But although they are doing starts for the stages for which we are doing the finishes we tend not to be staying together very often and our paths probably won't cross all that much.

More tomorrow

Day 1 - Tuesday 29th October 2019

Most important things first! I managed to find a stockist of Ngahere Gold in STRATFORD !!!!!

But back to some sort of chronological order...

After collecting all the gear and attending the Timing Crews Briefing in Taupo yesterday - 4hrs from home -we headed for Otorohanga holiday park where we had a very nice 2 bedroom family motel - Another 2 hrs drive.

We well and truly met our out the gate time of 0900.

So,here were are at Stratford having done one stage (SS3) today - just down the road from where we stayed last night.

Josh set up and operated the Flying Finish, David was our Finish Control logwriter, Johann did the cards and I did road and a 'mini board'.

We were cleared about 1230, Johann and I had a pie etc at Te Kuiti, at which stage it looked

like 'left behind' had struck again (remember James?), but problem solved later!!

We were heading for Stratford, where we were to stay tonight.

But coming into Inglewood (about 20k from the destination) I stopped at an intersection whereupon the water temp on Goldie moved imperceptively upwards so i knew we had to do 'something about the water' Yeah Right.

The engine stalled!! And not only would it not start, it wouldn't even turn over - OH BOTHER (or worse) being in the middle of an intersection did not help but Johann managed to push the car over to the left a bit.

The AA tech was of the opinion that the engine had cooked, but having cooled down for over half an hour and then refilling it with water it SEEMS to be o.k.

Dale is holding his breath - how good is it having a mechanic of his standing as part of the team?

We all had chinese for tea, have determined an out the gate time of 0700 in the morning had a couple of Ngas, and am off to bed shortly.

More tomorrow (when we are back here) I HOPE!!

Day 2 - Wednesday 30th October 2019

Here we are still at Stratford.

Out the gate at 0700 this morning, drove the 36km to our stage - no more vehicle problems as yet anyway.

Johann on Flying Finish, with a handheld radio that although indicating being fully charged was not.

At least with Rallysafe we do not rely on them anywhere near as much.

While waiting at Finish control, Josh (who we always have to look up to) said (among other things) " I guess I had better play with myself", then a short time later "see three noughts in a row" (yes we had been playing noughts and crosses!!! What else?)

David did log writing, said Josh settled into reading the tablet and writing up the competitor's cards and I managed time to do a 'proper' board.

Once more Rallysafe showed its importance as Josh was able to give me the stage time usually before the competitor actually arrived at our control and I was able to already have it displayed before they arrived.

We had only minimal problems with 'start orders', and the one rally car we 'lost' was determined to be pulled over safely and presented no safety concern.

We did however lose one of the tour cars, but believe they too are o.k.

We all have this afternoon and evening off, and have another out the gate time of 0700 tomorrow morning.

Day 3 - Thursday 31st October 2019

Here we are again at Rusty Nail Backpackers in Taihape,

where we last stayed when on Big Targa 2016.

At that stage we had Dale, Kevin, Kriss, Phillip, (there was no room for James and Sophia) and the rest of us - that was when we also met Poko, Leigh, Dinny, Denise, Kia etc - but I reminisce, back to the present.

Today we had the usual suspects 1. Left behind AGAIN 2. Positioning the car in JUST the right place to stop the SVC light on the radio flashing 3. Rogue Cars - see below.

Out the gate from Stratford at 0700 again, on site for SS11 at the appropriate time.

Lovely day again, this time we had Dave on Flying Finish, Johann doing Logs Josh on Cards and I did road and also a proper board (much appreciated by competitors). Once cleared pies for lunch and then to SS15.

It was at SS15 that we thought we had a communication problem but managed to reposition the car, to achieve the necessary comms. The sun was so hot that Josh was in danger of getting his arm sunburnt!!!

ROGUE CARS.

Once again we were plagued by rogue cars - those that have no business being there. Because we are a finish crew, in conjunction with our Block Marshals, are faced with people demanding to drive Wrong Direction straight into oncoming competitors (who could, be driving up to say 180kmh, and expecting a closed road are likely to be using it all) !!

HOW STUPID CAN YOU GET ????

- 1. The 'good' One person claimed that the road closure wasn't supposed to start until 8.30 (instead of 8 a.m.) He agreed to go and have a look at the sign at the end of the road- he did and we didn't see him again.**
- 2. The 'not so good' A local vet claimed to be attending an emergency and didn't mind 'taking his chances'. What rubbish - as if any dog is worth more than a human life.**
- 3. The 'Really Bloody Awful' A woman driving a First Security vehicle Rego KQJ 823 and claiming to work for Corrections, DEMANDED access.**
- 4. The block marshals had attempted to stop her and had rung Targa base (unsuccessfully as it happens) whereupon she charged up to our control zone (which is an offence in itself).**
- 5. As mentioned she claimed she could do whatever she wanted, asked for my credentials which I was happy to provide, but I was not going to allow her in no matter what. Regardless of her assertion that the competitors should simply avoid her.**

In point of fact I was told to try and take her keys, and otherwise actually pull her out of the car and hold her until the police arrived.

We did have a news photographer there too, he said he couldn't get involved directly but could only film the confrontation.

Despite a very tense situation she eventually turned around and roared off.

If indeed she was Corrections Dept employee I would hope her days of employment are numbered!.

Tomorrow we do SS20, the 2nd stage of the day - at Waiouru, then SS24 near Kimbolton then on to Woodville for the night. More then I hope.

Day 4 - Friday 1st November 2019

Tonight we are at Masters Hall In Pahiatua - just down the road from Woodville, as expected it suits us fine - individual beds, in individual rooms, out the gate a 9 a.m. tomorrow.

But back to today; Out of the gate 8.15, and although the water problem seemed to have resolved itself, on the way to SS20, the alternator decided it had done enough work and gave up the ghost -apparently anyway.

However I must have hit a bump or something and it started working again.

Just as well as without any cell coverage we just had to use our big fleetlink radio.

We had no problems with rogue vehicles at all today, but instead Rallysafe went back to its 'original roots' and for SS20 all cars had NRT (No Rallysafe Time) written on their cards!!

Buck 'had a go at it at the Taihape lunch break and changed the aerial etc, and during the afternoon SS24 it worked almost half the time!!

We did have a rather bigger problem however in that the Goldie water problem reared its ugly head again! BUT we did get to our stage more or less on time BUT we once more encountered an angry farmer and despite being positioned in EXACTLY the correct place had to move up quite close to the Flying Finish, leaving the cars minimal distance to stop from say 180 kmph.

The brains trust decided to advise competitors by notice board at the start and putting double cautions in the 300m.

I also commandeered another official to 'do a paddle' i.e. wave cars to a stop. A few scary moments but no real danger!

Once cleared we proceeded over Saddle Hill Road, through Woodville down to Masters Hall.

As is my wont on the last night, I took the team out to a nice meal, Josh and Johann shared a seafood platter - and couldn't actually finish it !!!!. One last day tomorrow, the head for home tired but happy hopefully.

We have settled down with semi permanent positions, David on FF, Josh on cards, Johann logwriting and myself road an board (when Rallysafe works!)

Day 5 - Saturday 2nd November 2019

Hi all,

Well this was our final day.

Thurs night 1st Nov we stayed at Masters Hall in Pahiatua, all in separate rooms each with a queen sized bed. Something Josh was able to make the very best use of!!

Knowing we had to drive right through SS27 to get to the start of our stage SS88, we had given ourselves an Out The Gate time of 0900 which we managed to achieve despite the 'late night' our younger members had had!!

Once we got to the start of our SS28 we had arranged for Josh to get a ride through the stage in a Promotional Vehicle while the 'workers' amongst us drove through the stage itself, where we 'did our stuff'.

I understand that once Josh was buckled in to the Lexus and ready to go he wondered whether he had perhaps overdone it the previous night.

We only had one rogue car (van) this time - but not wrong direction but all the way from the start - almost caught by Saftey One.

Anyway once Josh arrived we (again) had David on FF, Josh on Cards and Johann writing logs.

I again did road and the board. Rallysafe only failed for one car.

Once cleared we handed Rallysafe Equipment to Recovery1 and headed home well over 600 km. We did however have lunch in Dannevirke, then back over Saddle Hill Rd, dropped David in Turangi, Josh to collect his vehicle from Tirau, then Johann drove pretty much to Tairua, whereupon I came home arriving just after 1 a.m.

My face is quite sunburnt from being in the sun all day, Josh had the same problem with his arm (out the window). As I have said many times before TIRED BUT HAPPY.

Epilogue in a few days.

Targa 2019 - Epilogue

Hi All,

Well Main Targa 2019 is now over, and once more we fulfilled all our obligations and returned home tired but happy.

In our case we did 2160 km in the 5/6 days.

SUMMARY:

Mon 28th Oct. Johann and I went to Tirau (some 2 hrs), collected Josh, then on to Taupo (another 2 hrs), there we met up with Dave who had travelled all the way from Christchurch - thanks Chief. After gear collection, another 2 hrs to Otorohanga - Stayed Kiwi Holiday Park.

Tues 29th Oct. Met our out the gate time and timed our appointed stage. Poor little Goldie found 'sustained high speed running' did not agree with it, but we made it to Stratford Kiwi Holiday Park happily.

Wed 30th Oct. Met our out the gate time again and fulfilled our obligations back to Stratford that night.

Thu 31st Oct. Out the gate at the correct time, timed both our stages and then headed for Taihape where we stayed at Rusty Nail Backpackers (where we last stayed in 2016)

Fri 1st Nov. Timed our stage just out of Waiouru, then headed for Kimbolton (just out of Feilding), then over Saddle Hill Road to stay at Masters Hall in Pahiatua.

Sat 2 Nov. To get to our position it was necessary to drive through two stages SS27 and SS28 - which we did, but arranged for Josh to get a ride in a promotional car (thanks Peter). Once cleared and lunch in Dannevirke we dropped Dave at Turangi, Josh back at Tirau, Johann at Tairua.

A couple of points

ACCOMMODATION As it happens we did not need sleeping bags after all.

Monday night was in a 2 bed room 'family motel' - shower and toilet etc included Tues/Wed another 'self contained' unit but with bunks (I claimed the double)

Thurs at the quirky Rusty Nail in Taihape - but as there were already 4 men in the 8 bed dorm room we had booked, Dave and I were given a nice big room to ourselves and the boys had the so called 'female dorm' to themselves. Fri at Masters Hall, where we each had a room to ourselves - with a queen bed.

ROGUE VEHICLES

Once again the problem of rogue vehicles raised its ugly head.

Being a finish crew any vehicle that actually gets past us (and our own block marshals) is driving WD (that is wrong direction) head on towards rally cars that could be travelling at up to 200 kmph, and not expecting anything coming the other way!!

I say again HOW STUPID CAN YOU GET.

RALLYSAFE

Usually worked really well, except on the occasions it didn't work at all and we had NRT (no rallysafe time) written on cards and logs - then even once Buck had fixed it it seemed to miss

ONE car (one car doesn't seem much - but is actually one car too many)

A titbit One of the competitors said to me ' Aren't you a trialist from way back?'

Which I was happy to confirm. ' I thought I recognised your face, and then the name rang a loud bell too - we used to do all the Gold Star events!! This just had to be from the 1960s !!!

My crew was: David (Chief) Josh (Mr Popular) Johann (Mr Left Behind) Wazza (Boss)

Dale's start crew (who were doing starts for the same stages) was: Dale Bruce Kevin Darryl

JAMES, RIMU AND ZAC

Once I hit my seventies James and I were at Mt Paku in Tairua, with lots of teenagers coming and going all the time.

One of whom was Rimu who was sharing his time living between his mother in Thames and his father in Onehunga.

This arrangement was proving not to be ideal and his mother 'sidled' up to me one day asking if I could 'take Rimu on'.

I consulted with James who agreed that it would not be TOO difficult, he could re- enrol at Thames High, be taken to school on the bus and in general have a somewhat more stable (and perhaps disciplined) living arrangement.

So then by late 2012 I had two 15 year old boys in my care (but at least an all male household). But wait – again there is more!

Soon afterwards. Zac also approached me and asked how much it would cost for him to 'board' with me.

I explained that there was no way, how even with his part time jobs he would be able to afford it – but let's see what we can do!!! Yeah Right again.

So after discussions with his parent(s) we did make an arrangement so I could include him into my growing family!!

So there you have it at 72 I had three 15 year old boys on my hands!

Despite what you might think this actually worked pretty well – the boys all went to Thames High every day, we continued to do all the the rally work and they all got part time jobs.

Oh yes they all had girlfriends too.

There was, of course, a real bonus in that we now had a 'built in' stage timing team!!

After passing all necessary exams they all attended Wintec Trades Academy at Kopu – as it happens in the Dale's Auto Repairs building.

James managed to get into NZ Army,(now a qualified Automotive Engineer), Zac has completed his apprenticeship in what I call 'Fitting and Turning', but what is now a Mechanical Engineer.

Well done boys! Rimu is still finding his way, but as an Early Childhood Teacher he was loved by all the kids.

I was adamant (they all dispute this though) that once they turned 18 they were then adults and had to piss off and give me my life back!



OUR VIEW FROM 258





ALONE AT LAST

As I said, I was looking forward to being by myself and (we) had moved back to Duck Creek (again).

Whilst at 258 the boys (James, Rimu and Zac) together with their various hangers on, had shared the downstairs flat, with own bedroom, lounge, bathroom, toilet etc and thought they could take over my chalet for their own 'purposes'.

This did not sit well with me and I put my foot down with a firm hand as they say – asking them ALL to leave me alone.

For some time James lived in our caravan at the SBT depot in Tairua until getting his own flat, Rimu went to a backpackers, and Zac had already arranged a flat nearer to his work.

SO FINALLY I WAS (and am) ON MY OWN !!

I spent the next few years in 'semi retirement' continuing with motorsport involvement etc and still driving some 60,000 km per year in various size vehicles.

I have slowed down a lot recently but still drive about 20,000 km each year and am thrilled to now have my 'P' endorsement renewed till 2025.

THE MORBID BIT

My will is with Trustees and Executors whose Head Office used to be in Dunedin. It is pretty standard any assets to be shared between, Kat, Goose and James. Academic really as I have no assets anyway/

I would like to be cremated and my ashes put on the wall at Whangamata Cemetery somewhere near Auntie Bea's

PROUD MOMENTS

Both Kat (Kathryn Louise Lillian Sykes) and Goose (Lucy Elizabeth Mary Sykes) graduated from University of Canterbury with Degrees.

James ((Shy James Sykes) has graduated to become an Automotive Engineer with NZ Army.

Kat (Sykes) married Sean Rush to become Mrs Kathryn Rush.

PHOTOS FOLLOW



KAT
KATHRYN LOUISE LILLIAN



GOOSE
LUCY ELIZABETH MARY



JAMES GRADUATING
FROM BASIC TRAINING



ANOTHER FINE YOUNG MAN
HIS GRANDFATHER WOULD HAVE BEEN SO PROUD



GETTING OLDER EH?



POSSIBLY MY PROUDEST MOMENT

SNIPPETS

(For you to giggle or guffaw over)

We were one of the first firms to embrace cell ph technology. Formerly we all had pagers, which when they went off required finding a ph and calling in.

Our main cars had full 5 watt handsfree phones permanently installed with speakers, microphones and voice activated calling.

Staff all had Motorola flip phones and when we all went out together there could well be 6 or more phones sitting on the table – One smart (?) staff member decided it might be fun to lock the boss's cell phone.

I was NOT amused.

It took him several hours of trying up to 1000 codes to finally unlock it.

oOo

Frances was indeed a wonderful actress and one part in particular she really made her own.

She was Bunny in Agatha Christie's A murder is Announced .

'Oh Silly Me' and 'I can't find it ANYWHERE' became synonymous with her.

When she was living at a retirement village in Brisbane I sent her letters addressed as

“Mrs F SM .. OSM' (for oh silly me) caused significant mirth I understand.

oOo

One night one of the male staff asked if he could 'use the office all night'

as he had his eye on a girl.

It obviously worked out pretty well for him, judging on the state of the couch next morning - I would not have been so keen had I known that the girl in question was supposed to have been with me that night!!

oOo

After Pat had been so badly treated by Chch Women's Hospital we had a holiday together in Fiji. On the Yasawa cruise there happened to be another couple – the man's name was also Warwick. Pat claimed we were as bad as each other!! It had to be in the name. There may well be a photo somewhere still.

oOo

While working at New Plymouth on one occasion my 'boy' was despatched to the local Mill night club to find a couple of girls – but one had to be for me!

What a pity she got cold feet when they were just over the road!!!

oOo

On our honeymoon we were plotting the 1968 Lakeland Rally (really a trial) and staying at O'Connell's Hotel in Queenstown.

Also staying there was another couple also on their honeymoon.

Yep you guessed it!

We had a lot of fun together (after all she was a Miss New Guinea or something) and one night coming back after Arthur's Point Pub each of the two blokes had the wrong bride over our shoulders.

The girls cried off at the very last minute - bugger.

Late one night I was woken by a strident knock at the door to find a Policeman and a girl (in a Police Issued boilersuit), the Policeman asked if I could confirm that 'Warwick will always look after me'.

There was nowhere else so I said sure, James room (he wasn't there that night), or my bed?

'I really could do with a cuddle',

'Nough said!

oOo

We used to have a liquid lunch on Fridays and that was often it for the day.

One male staff member was leaving us for pastures new so we invited his 'new boss' to join us.

We went to a local strip club to celebrate' new beginnings'.

Having pretended that this would be his first time there this illusion was shattered somewhat when the bouncer said good to see you again, have you brought your boss this time?

Once upstairs the girl performing said something along the lines ' Hey hello again – are we going to get together later?'

I don't know – the people I have to mentor.

OOo

For the centennial year at Southwell Jo Backhouse was tasked with writing a book detailing the entire history of the school, with as many photographs as could be located.

She did a marvellous job but after all the proof reading, checking etc on p 178 (check for yourself if you don't believe me) half of one sentence is repeated to make nonsense of the paragraph and this was not discovered until all the copies had been printed.

Discussions ensued and someone said ' never mind perhaps no-one will even notice'
(Yeah Right – again)

Jo said 'I bet Warwick will'.

Bingo, a day or so after the launch I rang and asked if I would get the prize for being the first to notice 'the deliberate mistake'.

Jo said 'I KNEW IT'
- Pedantic that's me.



THE OFFENDING CELL PHONE

AND FINALLY

A FEW MISCELLANEOUS PHOTOS



THE LIZARD GEORGE MADE AT METALWORK CLASS



MACINTYRE – MY PET



FRANCES AT 87



This publication has been self-funded
Any donation towards cost would be much appreciated
SBT
01-0833-0137626-00