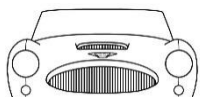




## ***50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Grand Tour of New Zealand, March 2023***



### ***“30 Days on The Road”***



In this booklet we have attempted to provide a summary of the Grand Tour as a record of the great time had by all attendees in the late summer of 2023 to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Austin-Healey Car Club of New Zealand Inc.

For the Club's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, instead of the customary biennial three-day rally, the Auckland group, whose task it was to organise a rally in 2023, decided to run an event with a difference - a Grand Tour of NZ with a 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Dinner in Auckland and a second Celebratory Dinner in Invercargill. Club Executive permission was given and an effort was made to involve as many Club members as possible. A group was formed in late 2020, and the Grand Tour Organising Committee (GTOC) immediately got down to the business of organising this month-long event.

Being the 50th Anniversary Tour, it was decided not to include any competitive events or AGM. For this reason, there was no official Club prizegiving except for the area Clubman and Clubwoman awards. However, a few other special trophies and fun prizes were presented along the way, to mark the relevant occasions and hard luck stories.

Included are details of the route and attendees, personal stories and highlights, and some of the many photographs taken along the way.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank those who have contributed their stories and photos for use in this booklet, and also apologies given for any credits we may have missed.

#### **➤ What's Inside:**

- *Tour Route Overview*
- *Organising Committee*
- *Attendees and their Vehicles*
- *North Island Anniversary Dinner*
- *Personal Stories & Fun Facts*
- *Canterbury Celebration*
- *South Island Anniversary Dinner*
- *Trophies and Awards*
- *Sponsors Thanks*
- *Easter Wheels at Wanaka*



## ***Tour Route Overview***

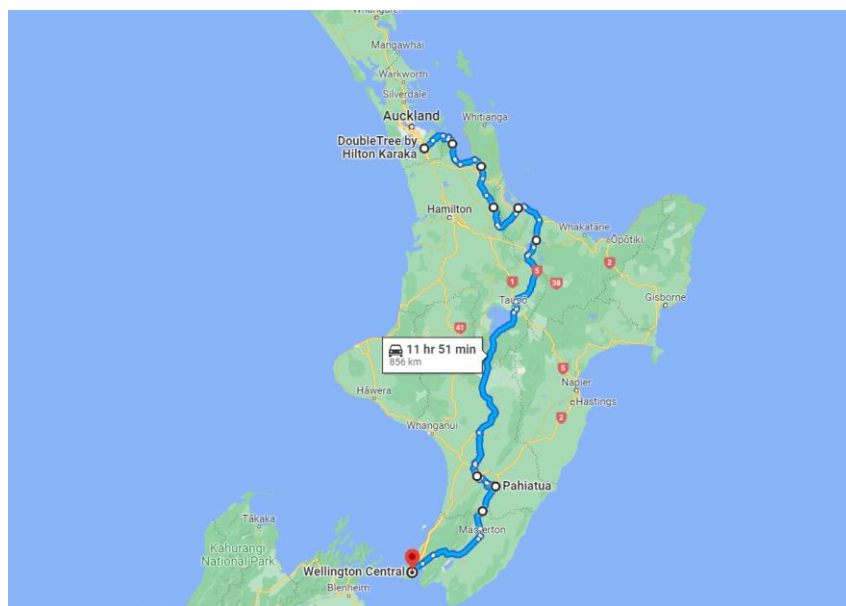
---

With all planning completed, and only 10 days to the start, our original route to Napier/Hastings via the famous 'Gentle Annie' road was devastated by flooding and then Cyclone Gabrielle hit, which unfortunately ruled out the Hawke's Bay section due to unprecedented flood damage in the region.

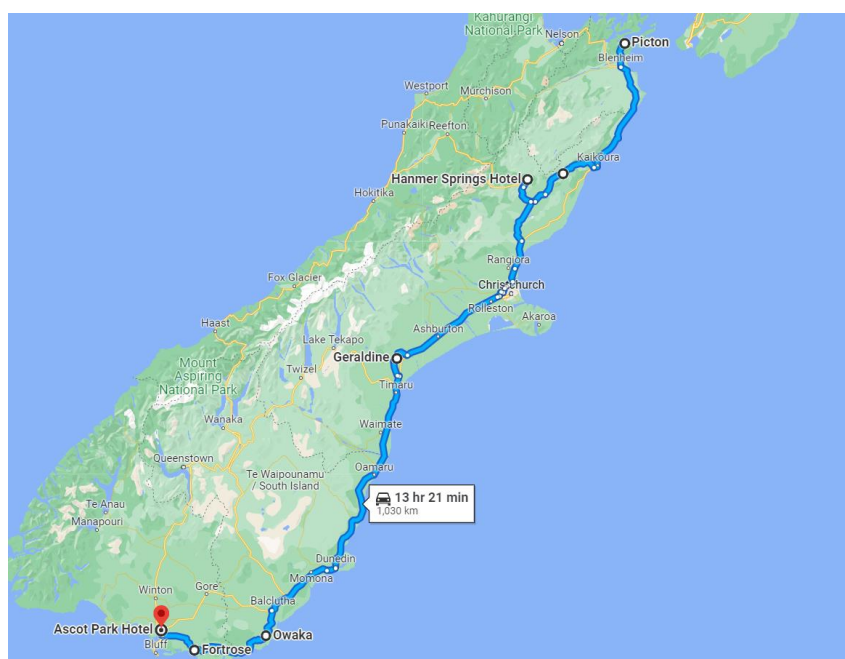
The maps show the resultant general tour route followed for each Island (excluding the short "Post Tour"). Detailed printed route instructions, complete with points of interest, and guidance to the planned and pre-booked accommodation at each overnight stop, were provided to all entrants.

The first Anniversary Dinner was held at the Doubletree Hilton in Karaka, South Auckland and the final Dinner at Transport World in Invercargill to mark the finish of the Grand Tour. Many stayed on to join us for the Post Tour to Queenstown and then 'Wheels at Wanaka' for Easter, the weekend after the Grand Tour ended.

### ***North Island (Te Ika A Maui)***



### ***South Island (Te Wai Pounamu)***



## ***Grand Tour Organising Committee***

---

The following bunch of mugs volunteered and put in a couple of years work to make the event happen.

### **Chairperson**

*Tour co-ordinator, Including 50th Dinners  
The Buck stops here person.  
(Mother Hen to committee)*

**Jan McLaren**



### **Secretary**

*Tour Registrar  
Support Vehicle, with Alan Johnston*

**Allan Horner**



### **Treasurer**

*(The Buck)  
General Factotum  
Holder of the purse*

**Mark Donaldson**



### **Tour & Route organiser**

*"Chef de Mission"  
Route Plan and  
accommodation  
Assistant Treasurer*

**David Knightley**



### **Sponsorships and Marketing**

*Promotions, sponsorships,  
communications*

**Brenton Lee**



### **Assistant Tour Organiser**

*Displays organisation*

**Paul Raymen**



### **Committee**

*Displays organisation*

**Frank Karl**



### **Committee**

*Support vehicle, with Allan Horner*

**Alan Johnston**



### **Committee -**

*Social &*

*Events*

*registrations*

**Maggie Karl**



**Carole  
Raymen**



### **Fabulous Regional Assistance**

The following members were of great help organising events in their local areas:

- **Roger McAlley** – Bay of Plenty
- **Alastair Chalmers** – Hawke's Bay (unfortunately not visited on-event due to cyclone damage),
- **Joan Mechen** – Canterbury
- **Ross Osborne** – Otago & Southland



## List of Attendees and their Vehicles

Some did the entire trip (up to 40 days including return), others joined for a day or more as the tour traversed the country. For vehicles, a good variety of the Austin-Healey marque, plus a spattering of other classics and “young timers”. Alphabetical list follows, (NI) = North Island only, (SI) = South Island only.

Note: International visitors shown in *italics* (with Country/State code). Apologies for any errors or omissions.



Armstrong, Ian (SI)	AH Mk1V Sprite
Chalmers, Alistair & Jean	AH 3000 BJ8
<i>Cowen, Peter &amp; Jan (QLD)</i>	Mini Cabrio
Craig, John & Karen (SI)	Reliant Scimitar
Currie, Malcolm & Lorraine (SI)	AH Mk1 Sprite
Davis, Bryan & Sylvia (NI)	AH 100 BN1
de Vere, John & Angelika	BMW Z3
Donaldson, Mark & Jan McLaren	AH 3000 BT7
Duff, Graeme & Marion (NI)	AH 3000 BJ7
Ewings, David (with R Nicholl, NI)	
Fowler, Fred & Janet Mansfield	AH 3000 BT7
Frost, Murray & Lucinda Rickman (SI)	AH 3000 BJ7
Gill, Ron (NI)	AH 3000 BT7
Hart, Laurie & Suzanne (SI)	AH 3000 BJ8
<i>Hick, Raymond, with Neil Tregea (QLD)</i>	Rental SUV
Horner, Allan & Alan Johnston	VW SUV (support)
<i>Irving, Ian &amp; Susan (ESP)</i>	SAAB 900S
Karl, Frank & Maggie (NI)	AH 100 BN1
Knightley, David & Hazel	Jensen Healey S2
Lane, Russell & Jeni (SI)	AH 100 BN1
Lee, Brenton & Vivienne Arkesteijn	AH 100/6 BN4
Lloyd, Cliff & Gaylene (SI)	Daimler SP250
MacDonald, Trevor (SI)	AH 3000 BJ7
McAlley, Roger & Heather	AH 3000 BJ8
McKenzie, Grant & Pat Edge	AH 100/6 BN4
McLeay, Michael & Carol (NI)	AH 3000 BJ8
Mechen, Martin & Joan (Chch)	AH 100 BN1
Millman, David & Alison	AH 3000 BJ8
Nelligan, Peter & Diane (Chch)	AH 3000 BJ8
Newcombe, Jamie & Evita (NI)	AH 100/6 BN4
Nicholl, Rob & Sue (SI)	AH 3000 BJ7
Osborne, Ross & Shona (SI)	AH 100/6 BN4
Otway, Earle & Helen	AH 3000 BJ8
Raymen, Paul & Carole	AH 3000 BJ8
<i>Rayner, Alister &amp; Wendy (QLD)</i>	AH 100 BN1
Read, Simon & Karon (SI)	AH 100 BN1
Robinson, David & Christine (SI)	AH Mk1 Sprite
<i>Salter, Michael &amp; Judy (CDN)</i>	AH 100/6 BN4
Smith, Kelvin & Joy	AH 3000 BJ8
Snelling, John & Erin Oakley (NI)	AH 3000 BT7
<i>Stanley, Peter &amp; Anne (VIC)</i>	MG RV8
Steffensen, Rod & Jo (SI)	AH 100 BN1
<i>Thomas, Rick &amp; Pauline (CDN)</i>	AH Sprite / AH BJ8
<i>Tregea, Neil, with Raymond Hick (QLD)</i>	Rental SUV
Waldegrave, Brian & Heather	AH 3000 BJ8



## ***North Island Anniversary Dinner – Double Tree by Hilton, Karaka, South Auckland***

The festivities started with a Grand welcome dinner at the Hilton Double-Tree Hotel in Karaka South Auckland on the evening of Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023. For those arriving early there was a 'Meet and Greet' event held on the Thursday evening, a couple of hours after the registration desk opened.

Most visiting attendees also stayed in the hotel, as did the organising committee, and found it very comfortable.

Jan and team did a great job of dressing the banquet room and a great meal was enjoyed in a very convivial atmosphere by around 80 guests. A large screen ran continually, with photos and videos of past events.

A general dress theme of "50 Years" was adopted, and most turned up suitably attired for the occasion in either 50s, 60s, or 70s gear.

Jan started proceedings with a little bit of history, recounting the forming of the Club in 1972 and the early years. This was followed by a humorous discussion about 'Eeleys' by "Pete & Dud" recollecting some of the old club events and parties.

A highlight was the **Celebration of Founding and Inaugural members**. With a select few being present and still current, they each received a commemorative plaque and resounding applause for their membership longevity! Congratulations to:

- **Mark Donaldson**
- **Ross Cammick**
- **Bryan Davis**

The representative of the current National Body Executive, John Snelling then presented the 22/23 Auckland Clubman and Clubwoman trophies to the deserving recipients:

- **Clubmen (3)** - Mark Donaldson, David Knightley, Allan Horner
- **Clubwoman** - Jan McLaren

Another highlight was the transfer of the exquisite Past Presidents Trophy from Roger McAlley to Mark Donaldson. Present at the occasion was Kelvin Smith (provider of the swamp Kauri) while Grant McKenzie (the craftsman, and not present) was also acknowledged. The trophy incorporates shields naming past presidents since inception.

Paul and Carole Raymen were awarded the best dressed on the evening with their matching 1960's hippy costumes. Judge Brenton Lee presented the prize – a towing eye!



## Personal Stories and Fun Facts

Our visitors from Victoria Australia, Peter and Anne Stanley, contributed the following wonderfully comprehensive (slightly abridged & with added photos) report, originally written for the Austin-Healey Owners Club Victoria in their magazine, Hundreds and Thousands.

Once upon a time, some months ago, four Australians, one Anglo Australian and three Kiwis left these shores to cross the ditch, where they joined one Canadian Kiwi, and three other Canadians at the Karaka Hilton, not far from Auckland airport. The objective was participation in the AHCCNZ 50th anniversary rally.

Anne and I began our adventure in Grey Lynn, an inner suburb of Auckland, and close to a much-favoured shopping strip, Ponsonby Road. This was the place to find those clothing items required to complete the ensemble necessary to comply with the instructions of “a Golden anniversary”, and to celebrate 1950s and 60s, plus a small copy of the “Goodwood revival event”.

This was no ordinary 4 or 5 night ‘stay in-one-place’ rally, with a couple of drives, a show & shine, and several parties. The organisers had planned an extensive tour, as we had 25 nights, across 12 locations, with 7 nights in the North Island, with the balance in the South, covering a minimum of 2300km. The cyclones that impacted the North Island early in 2023 forced late changes to the proposed schedule; the visit to the Hawke’s Bay region had to be cancelled as the road and tourism infrastructure had not recovered from the cyclone.

The tour had been organised in stages, members joined and left as necessary, depending on available time and home location. Unsurprisingly, the overseas tourists were in for the long haul, as were the organising committee. The attendee list had 85 names, with 16 staying the distance.

Sadly, no cars were to travel from here to Auckland via Singapore, given the \$’s involved, and the lack of reliable arrival timing. However, a BN1 was liberated from the Highlands Motorsport Museum, a BMW Cooper S soft-top was rented, and a couple of boring rentals were sourced. The Canadian travellers were generously lent a Sprite and a 3000 for the journey.

We have family connections in Aotearoa, which became obvious at the registration desk. The lady manning the first stage of the process had nursed alongside Anne’s sister-in-law. Then on hearing we had borrowed a young classic two-seater, the tour organiser asked us the name of the owner. OMG, I know Pat, she responded. We felt at home.

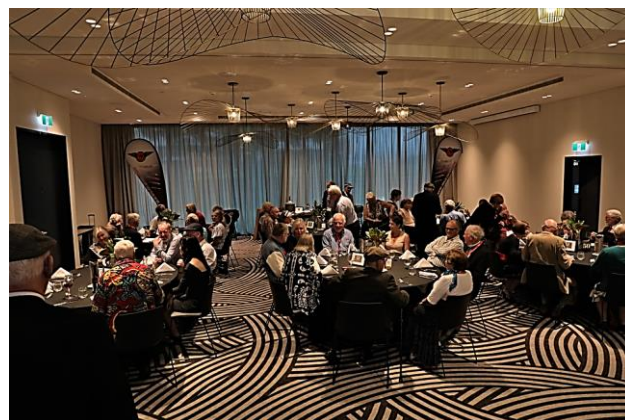


The formal part of the event started, unsurprisingly, with a welcome party on the hotel’s balcony. All the Kiwis present appeared to know each other, with the imports moving around the space to meet and greet the locals.

There was a certain symmetry about the daily format, starting with a team meeting at 08:45, after breakfast, to run through the suggested route, with potential sights to see and where to eat. Vehicles left the hotel when ready, in small groups or not, at their own pace, and stopping as we felt the urge.

One Auckland day was spent by many admiring the Steve Keys Collection. As New Zealand Autocar puts it “There are plenty of quirky B&B establishments dotted around the world but none that we know have a gallery chocked full of automobile memorabilia like the luxury apartments hosted by Steve and Sue Keys.” Sadly, we spent the day collecting and exploring our little Hyundai SUV which was to carry us to Wellington.

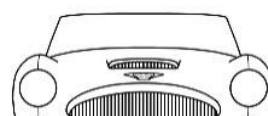
The first formal function celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Healey Club’s formation, with slide shows from present and former members, along with much reminiscing, and old clothes displayed on bodies. A great evening to enjoy and introduce ourselves to more participants.



Our first port of call was Tauranga, on the east coast south of the Coromandel Peninsular. The route selection indicated that minor roads would be dominating the days ahead. Tauranga is the country’s major seaport, is suffering from growing pains, and has Mt Maunganui that asked to be ascended in the morning. Many of us did just that, each at their own pace, some of us missing breakfast. Many locals walk or run the multiple tracks around the volcano, a wonderful way to get and stay fit.

Day two took us inland, through Rotorua and Taupo to a favourite car club motel, Creel Lodge at Turangi. The motel is set on an incline down to the river with a wonderful area for a BBQ, which we filled with food, wine and beer for the evening. The morning’s walk was naturally along the river, far more relaxing than the previous morning’s 230m climb.

By this stage, the Healey drivers had become expert at loading cubes of baggage into small boots, around bodies and seats, with either the hood over your head, or stowed in the appropriate location behind you. Life was far simpler for us, along with the other 4/5 doored vehicles. One couple in a Chrysler engined BN4 had the sense to bring, or actually tow, a spare rear seat and boot single axle combination, so they didn’t have a space issue, see pic next page!







Day 3 took us to Palmerston North, via the National Army Museum at Waiouru, then following Highway #1 South towards Wellington. We enjoyed the Army Museum, picked up some research tips on British army service history, then headed west along back roads, past the worst rail accident site in the country's history. This occurred outside Tangiwai on 24 December 1953 when the northbound express fell off the track into the flooded river below. 151 passengers and crew perished that night. We enjoyed some brilliant scenery of rolling hills, greenery, interesting and fun roads, (pity about the type of transport), with loads of traffic cones.

While we were later than most to view the Terry Rush Collection, outside Palmerston North, mainly due to the L3 into R4, 100, crest & L2 opens; type of roads. The best driving roads we had seen to date, following the Mangawhero and then the Whanganui rivers (I love how the names just roll off the tongue) to the west coast. Terry's collection, amongst other things, catalogues the history of NZ single seater racing, with the '62 Brabham BT4 that won the '63 Australian GP under the control of Sir Jack from the back of the grid, while powered by a borrowed engine courtesy of Bruce McLaren, because the original one had haemorrhaged. A mixture of race cars, and production vehicles that originated from Australia and England occupy most of the floor, while accessories are contained in glass cabinets containing model cars and trains, brass burners, taps, cameras, and fishing rods. There are apparently few places with such an array of cars with such historical significance under one roof!



We ate with others that night at Rosie O'Grady's, a local Irish pub, as they all are, just across the road from the hotel, but we didn't have a Parma in Palmie!

The next day we headed 120km to a small settlement, Greytown, one of four towns within a short distance on the slow road (Highway #2) from Auckland to Wellington.

Greytown is similar to Sorrento, but with only one main street, where all the shops congregate, some of much interest. Thankfully we knew that souvenirs would have to be carried, so works of iron or stone were admired but ignored. The White Swan Country hotel also occupies Main Street frontage where one eats, drinks and stays: rather than eating roots, shoots and leaves! Greytown's Soldiers Memorial Park hosted the first formal conclave of 17 Healey's on a grey day, the sky offset by 5 red cars.



The abandonment of the leg to Hawkes Bay gave us the opportunity to explore the rugged Southeast coast with a school friend of Anne's, plus husband Russell. They came across from Northwest of Wellington, drove us 25km to have dinner in Masterton, then, next morning, after an AHCCNZ provided breakfast, they returned to take us to Onoke Spit at the entry to Palliser Bay, on a bleak windy day, after a huge storm had thrown timber onto the beach. Palliser Bay is east of the headland that contains Wellington and its harbour. At the bay's head is small Lake Ferry township off some 20 dwellings, plus a pub, where a fish & chip lunch was the order of the day.

The Cook strait separates the two islands and is a logistical nightmare. Particularly when the fleet is elderly, and as we are too well aware, can be prone to mechanical failure. One ferry was moored off Picton harbour with a broken gearbox, which is taking months to repair/replace.

We were all due on the 08:45 ferry, and as initially our rental company decided that we had to deliver the car to the Wellington CBD, we thought we should leave Greytown early. Early meant in darkness, and over the winding Pākuratahi pass road. We had to reverse up the hill on one occasion as a semi-trailer cut a tight right-hand corner. On arriving at the terminal, we gleaned two important pieces of information. Firstly, that the car could be left at the ferry terminal, secondly, the ferry was still in Picton, following a chemical spill at that harbour.

All Healeyites received the same message, some went back to bed, others took a leisurely breakfast, we raided the snack bar in the waiting room, and settled in to wait. Cars arrived in dribs and drabs with the boarding time set for 11:45. The time came and went, without a vessel arriving from the south; until finally at about 15:30 our ferry berthed and slowly disgorged its load of assorted vehicles. Eventually cars and trucks commenced queuing, then loading, while us foot passengers carried all our worldly possessions on board, to fight for two adjacent seats.

Dinner for all had been pre-booked and ordered in Blenheim, a half hour's drive south of Picton. It was looking like a late evening as Wellington was left in our wake at 17:30, with a 3 hour sail ahead.



Life was more complex for us; we were collected at Picton wharf by a Healey owning friend of Anne's, loading some of our luggage into the boot of an MGR V8, with the residue staying at the house, to be collected in 3 weeks time. We hadn't seen Patrick and Susan for some years, so deciding what to take and what to leave was interspersed with catching up, drinking tea, and learning the idiosyncrasies of the 1996 MG.

We set off at night, in the rain, with the hood stowed, being chased and overtaken by HGV's off the ferry, on their way to Christchurch. Something of a harrowing experience for the initial drive in a borrowed V8. Of course we were last to arrive at dinner, to eat, relax have a beer, then find the motel and unpack. Thankfully we had a day and a second night in Blenheim!



Once we had seen the car in daylight, worked the hood out, run a trial pack with hood up and down; found goodies for breakfast, and completed domestic things like laundry, it was time to explore. The MGR was designed primarily for the Japanese market, so was usually delivered with air-conditioning mounted in the passenger footwell. A fine location, as used by Porsche in the 1980's, but challenging for taller passengers, with one's knees forced to be at right angles. We both quickly discovered that 90 minutes in one seat was sufficient before we had to switch. This did ensure that driving was equitably shared, without one of us hogging the right seat.

Before visiting the Omapa Aviation Heritage Centre (OAHC), we stopped at Tony van der Water's Basis Classic Spares, where those hard-to-find rubber components are stocked and sold. He also has an early BN7 that requires a considerable amount of time to return to working order, along with a very quick Mk1 Sprite. [www.basisnz.co.nz](http://www.basisnz.co.nz).

OAHC has combined an amazing collection of WW1 & WW2 aircraft with a brilliant display designed by film maker Peter Jackson, and restoration facilities for both aircraft and vehicles. Really worth a visit when in the South Island. Because we arrived late, we watched the staff closing up, which involved using tugs to push/pull fighter planes back inside for the night while learning about the operation from a volunteer. A great experience.



After Blenheim, we had a 260km trip down the Kaikoura coast, then inland to Hanmer Springs, a mountain resort and base for outdoor activities. The Kaikoura coast is typical of New Zealand's coastal scenery, the town has beaches facing everywhere apart from west, and the main road through is lined with cafes, restaurants and tourist accommodation, plus the associated service industries. A classic holiday resort!

We only sampled the outdoor spa waters, and the view from the summit of the closest hill at Hanmer, that night's accommodation was at a wonderful old fashioned hotel that once catered for Christchurch's aristocracy, and could have been graced with a semi-circle of Healey's parked in the forecourt. Sadly that was not to be. Part of Saturday morning was spent walking through the town, deciding that neither mountaineering or tramping equipment nor more new clothes were necessary. It was a leisurely 130km into Christchurch, with the hood down.

By this time, we had become accustomed to the MGR, making use of the available power to pass HGV's and other law-abiding citizens on those occasions that we had 2 lanes on our side of the double white line. There appear to be few dual carriageways in the country apart from on the outskirts of major cities, and we only spent NZ\$1.81 in toll fees for the entire trip.

Welcome to the wonderful city of Christchurch, a place of churches, the other Avon River, beautiful university buildings, and Hagley Park almost in the CBD. Oh, and continuing to recover from the effects of the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. The container-based shops have largely disappeared, the scaffolding has finally been removed from the facade of the cathedral, and the spire-less building looks rather naked. The morning of the river walk excursion we strolled to the meeting cafe, via the street where Anne had lived. It could not be recognised, and virtually every building had been removed after 2011. The city has changed, and it has a once in a lifetime opportunity to enhance its liveability.

The walking tour from Pomeroy's brewery followed the Avon into the city, passing "Red Zone" land that has been transformed into parks, and a memorial to firefighters constructed from the steel from New York's World Trade Center site.



The City Hall was on our right across the river, the wall in memory of those who died in the earthquakes on our left, and the cathedral was just visible in the distance. I learnt that a Japanese language school occupied floors in the CTV building that collapsed in the February 2011 quake, killing 115 of the 185 lives lost across the two earthquakes. Little wonder that Japanese names are common on the wall.



A second touching memorial was carved into the slabs we walked on "Outside I touched earth, called upon it as witness. I too am learning to heal myself." by Frankie McMillan 1950 - 2012.

Our walking that day continued from the CBD, following the river to lunch in the Arts Centre, a glorious 19th century stone edifice built around a central courtyard, reminiscent of Oxford or Cambridge. Then drinks with friends at dusk, again overlooking the river, followed by dinner in another traditional Irish pub.

Dunedin was the next port of call, after 380km with the roof on, and the rain pouring down, but not inside the car. Remarkably watertight for an MG after we had learned the trick of a small towel inserted behind the window to soak up the water as if flowed along the window and in the gap between it and the hood!!!! There is only one sensible road between the two cities, that mostly follows the coast, and as we stopped early to catch up with a relative in Ashburton, we had a solitary uneventful run.

While Christchurch is relatively pancake flat (apart from the Port hills), the opposite is true of Dunedin. Built on hills, surrounded by hills, and with the steepest housing street in the world, it is quite literally 'something else'. It's a city that recognises its history and architecture, the name is an abbreviation of the Gaelic for Edinburgh (Dun Eideann). With both a Scottish and Māori heritage, and wonderful Victorian and Edwardian buildings, it is a feast for cyclists, walkers and adventurers.



We ventured to the Speights brewery and ale house, for a guided tour and a meal; to a "garden of national significance" for morning tea and a meander around some magnificent old trees; and to the albatross breeding centre where we saw mature birds arriving, and fledglings close to nests on the cliffs. I, of course, had to walk up Baldwin Street, as mentioned above. The street is 161m long, and climbs 47m, with an average gradient of 1:3.41, and the crux at 1:2.86. It is certainly good for the calf muscles on the way up, and the quads on the way down. We took drives out of Dunedin, on both sides of the upper reaches of Otago harbour, firstly to Port Chalmers, where Dunedin's harbour lies; and on the south side through the hills to the resort village of Portobello. Some interesting roads, and fun buildings.

The tour's weekend in Dunedin happened to coincide with the start of The Otago Rally, the first round of the NZ Rally championship. So, we all headed to the Octagon in the centre of town to wander through modern rally cars. Jan McLaren, sister of Bruce, as Grand Tour organiser in chief was asked to wave off the first cars. We were quite chuffed, as I'm sure she was.



Between Dunedin and Invercargill lies the southern tip of mainland New Zealand. Donald Healey must have visited this part of the world as he designed cars that are totally suited to the roads down there. The main road travels inland, but the fun route follows much of the coastline, through an area known as the Catlins. This was the road we took. Small towns like Owaka, where we stopped at the local museum, manned by a single volunteer, who took time to educate us on the history of the area.

Naturally across the road was a shop that sold great coffee, amongst many other things. We headed towards the coast, with its long deserted beaches, rock formations, fossilised timber, stunted trees, and Slope Point, at the very bottom of the country.



Rolling hills, sweeping corners, some radiused more tightly than others, minimal traffic, and thankfully without the red & white cones of the North Island.

Do go and enjoy this particular part of the country.



Invercargill is similar to Christchurch in that it is pancake flat, but for a population of about 50,000, it has 3, yes 3, motor museums. One does double as a hardware store, (and this is where you will see Burt Munro's "World's Fastest Indian" motorcycle and associated memorabilia) and if that assists both store and museum staying in business, then so be it. There's Richardson's Transport World, Classic Motorcycle Mecca and E Hayes Hammer Hardware; there is a full day wandering through the three.

Our first full day in Invercargill was spent at the Teretonga race track, as guests of honour at the George Begg Festival. George was a notable Kiwi single seater engineer and car designer, who worked with Bruce McLaren in England designing the McLaren sports cars. After Bruce's death in 1970, George returned to New Zealand to create a series of F5000 cars from a small workshop in Drummond, 30 minutes NW of Invercargill.



The Festival event recreates a compact version of the Goodwood Revival, complete with attire of the period, for me an olive green 1970s corduroy suit; and in the lunchtime break from racing, the Healey's, and other assorted marques, were given track time for a few parade laps. It was a cold and blustery day, so it was mainly the drivers who attended, partners might have been found at alternative warmer places.

Anne has spent time as a pit marshal at several South Island tracks, so had the opportunity to re-acquaint herself with several cars, and drivers, who raced back in those days.



The 50th anniversary gold themed dinner was held at Richardson's Transport World, a short distance from our motel, where our Ponsonby purchases adorned our bodies. Tables of black and gold were surrounded by a Texaco fuel truck and very early Fords.

Invercargill was the end of the formal part of the tour, but there was an option of continuing up to Wanaka for the Easter "Wheels at Wanaka" event the following weekend.

There was really no point in calling it quits at Invercargill, as Queenstown and Wanaka are both kinda en route to Picton where the MG lives. So off we went, along with most of the party, after farewelling some who had alternative arrangements for Easter. The latter included the Thomas's from Ontario, who were now in a loaner BJ8, in which they experienced the best of NZ hospitality and mechanical prowess. More of that later. We took a long driving option, extending the 193 km journey to Queenstown out to 295km by avoiding both the main highways, and the drive along the edge of Lake Wakatipu. We lunched at a gorgeous little town, Alexandra. It was a case of eating dessert first, the best ever pavlova, doused in a creamy raspberry coulee, followed by a close examination of Lake Dunstan, where we met a young Dutch couple who had modified an elderly van into a camper unit, and were spending 6 months touring the country. Oh, the joys of today's young people who have the gumption to get out of their comfort zones.

We crossed the Clutha River into Cromwell, home of Highlands Motorsport Park. One could wonder why construct one of the world's great tracks in the depths of a sparsely populated small island at the bottom of the world. Just ask those who have driven there, and those who watch.

Queenstown is one of the adventure centres of New Zealand, a mecca of outdoor activities, both summer and winter, the country's third airport, along with a compact city, and its associated traffic congestion. Most residents have to suffer the endless traffic to commute to work, as the residential area is beyond the airport. Our activities there were limited by a rain cell, that hovered over us for the full day we were there. Some took a cruise on the lake, but visibility was obviously limited, others, like ourselves engaged in domestic activities, window shopped, and bought gifts for the sole member of the family still in nappies.

While one can avoid Arrowtown by taking the direct road, it is worth the small deviation to spend time in this historic and restored gold mining town, with a significant Chinese influence; plus, a main street dedicated to increasing tourists' credit card debt. We ignored supposedly Zimbabwean artifacts, but found one more long handled timber shoe horn to add to the collection. There are also remnants of the gold mining era that are worthy of investigation.

The Crown Range road heads left off the highway into 6 uphill hairpin bends, then winds through the 30km to Cardrona and on to Wanaka over the highest main road in the country. One more great driving road! The Wanaka Edgewater Hotel lives up to its moniker. Out of your room, across the grass to the narrow beach, and if you so desire, into the crystal clear water.





Four nights there allowed us to totally empty the car, and thoroughly wash the accumulated dirt and grime off the steed. The township of Wanaka is significantly smaller, more relaxed, and easier to traverse than Queenstown, and also holds a major event every Easter long weekend that alternates between “Wheels at Wanaka” and “Warbirds over Wanaka”. Given the location, these events are only over two days, allowing travel to and from over the weekend.

Thursday evening was a social event where I found a new favourite Pinot Noir from a winery literally around the corner (behind Wanaka town). As Friday was a free day, we attempted to buy additional supplies, but every self-respecting small winery, including Maude was closed. Instead, we turned right out of the Edgewater and headed north up the side of the lake as far as the tarmac allowed, having a quiet day prior to the evening’s entertainment; at a local member’s house overlooking the town, the water and the mountains beyond. An excellent place to live.

Wheels on Wanaka caters for the full gamut of powered vehicles, it also caters for the interesting NZ sports of tractor pulling, and dirt moving. Tractor pulling involves, in this instance, moving a large JCB that is attached to a large heavy plate along a course of 100 metres within a defined time period. Or so it would appear. Anything from steam traction engines to Nissan Patrols took part while we watched. Traction engine torque allowed them to slowly move the load down the track, while the Nissans bounce from front to rear axle as they struggled to evenly apply enough power to move the beast. It finally bogged down part way along the course.

The other sport(?) that fascinated us was dumping dirt into the back of a tipper truck, moving it a few hundred metres, emptying the load into a hole; only for a second machine to load the same dirt into another truck to move it elsewhere. We watched for a few minutes, understood the process, and moved on. It appeared that others spent hours entranced by the activities in front of them.

The Healey group of cars were positioned close to the main arena, while the other featured marque, Land Rover were consigned to the paddock. Mind you, there were considerably more Landies than Healeys, the others celebrating their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in NZ. There was a very early Series1 SWB that had been re-built to its original specification, along with a variety of other models from every era.

At about this time the Ontario Thomas’s in someone else’s BJ8, were in the township of Haast, some 150k north of Wanaka on the isolated West Coast. Rick and a couple of brand new friends were trying to Macgyver a replacement dynamo pulley. Finally, several lengths of rope were used in succession to drive the water pump, and they arrived at Franz Josef for the night, before the battery was flattened.

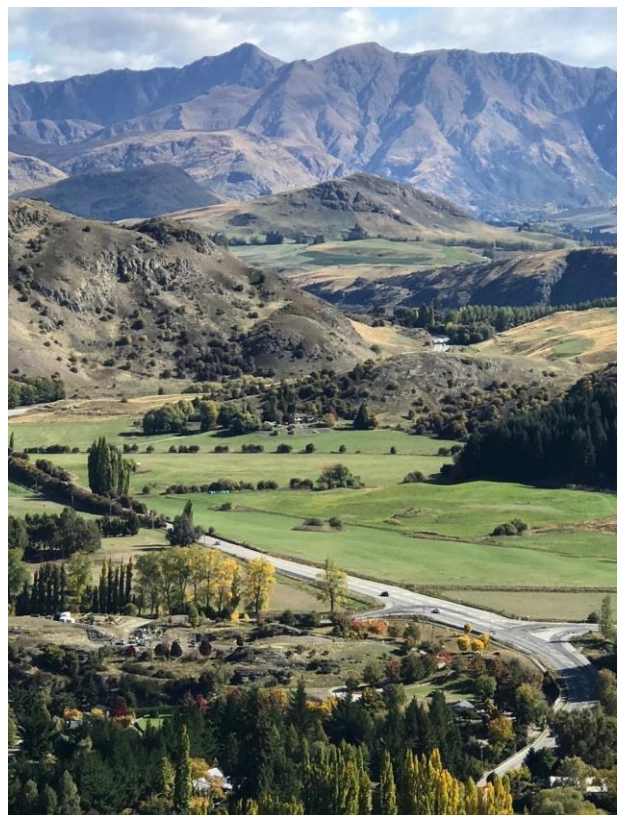
Meanwhile the Wanaka support crew had organised for an auto electrician in Greymouth, 180km up the road from FJ, to open on Easter Monday. Green bungy cord followed by zip-ties provided sufficient traction to reach Greymouth, where repairs were completed within 90 minutes. “The trip from Greymouth was mostly rain, and then some more rain. Then torrential rain overnight. Then halfway to Picton was more rain.” Ontario Thomas’ via WhatsApp.

Meanwhile we had a quiet, slow Easter Monday 420km to Christchurch over a series of glorious roads winding through the foothills of the southern Alps, in recovery mode for a couple of days with long standing friends. Then onto Nelson, to stay with members of Anne’s family. We managed to be taken to the same restaurant by two couples on consecutive days. Sadly, we were sprung on the second visit as the first occasion had been with Royce, a potter friend of the owners, and I had admired pieces of his work. On the second visit, the connection was mentioned, with the reaction of “ah Royce was in here yesterday with a couple of friends”. That will drop you in it.

Five nights in Nelson was sufficient, the MGRV8 was cleaned within an inch of its life, and we headed back towards Picton to drop the car, repack those clothes left with Pat, and be taken to Blenheim airport for a flight to Auckland. With one small exception all that went off well; the long-handled shoehorn bought in Arrowtown was left stretched out under the tonneau cover. It will remain in Pat’s care until the families meet again.

The Interislander ferry must have friends in Auckland, as the ferry services between Waiheke Island in the Hauraki Gulf and Auckland are similarly random as the Cook Strait crossings. We arrived on the island late, and were forced to depart earlier than planned. The small world syndrome is never far away, as when I mentioned the brilliance of the Maude Winery Pinot I had enjoyed in Wanaka, my cousin remarked that the owner was a former colleague in a sporting organisation.

Nevertheless, it was a relaxing way to end the holiday, sitting on the deck, with the sea under one’s toes, looking out over the Gulf, wine glass in hand, and having wonderful food prepared for us. Many new friends have been made, old friendships renewed, and family contacts reinforced. We must have had a great time in a beautiful country.



**Peter and Anne Stanley**

## Musings from GTOC Leader Jan...

**Worst Day:** Leaving Greytown at 5am and then sitting in the Ferry Terminal at Wellington ALL day and then the boat not leaving until 5pm! Add to this, having to leave Greytown in the dark and having to cross the Remutaka Hills in the dark and then, due to the lateness of arrival, we had to go over the hills from Picton to Blenheim in the dark also. Joseph Lucas, the Prince of Darkness, was not welcomed by any of us, let alone being monstered by huge trucks in both instances on either side of Cook Straight!

**Highlight of that Day:** Raupo Restaurant in Blenheim holding our 7pm booking for 50 people over until 8.40pm, and a great meal it was too! Lots of phone calls to them over the ensuing hours and some of the motels to tell them we were still arriving. Not even time for us to check into our motels first – just straight to the restaurant.

**Best Meal:** Well, there were a few!!

- **Raupo** was excellent.
- The **White Swan Bistro** meal was superb and great service.
- **Pavilions Christchurch** was superb the night we returned from the Deep South, excellent steaks, cod and chips, pasta and dessert were scrumptious. The Maître D was in good form, lots of cheek and jokes and it was worth the wait until 7.30pm due to some other large group booking. And really superb desserts.
- **Richardsons** – great meal and such a pleasure to deal them. And especially nice to have 5 of our Healeys on display in the main area, including the Grant Clearwater McLaren 100 on show.

**Best BBQ North:** The Turangi Creel Lodge impromptu BBQ after our main meal booking was cancelled as the restaurant was closed due to a bereavement. Huge thanks to Grant McKenzie and all the rest of the helpers and team that put it together. A fabulous location, 30+ people (some didn't get the What's App message) and registrants rushing off to the liquor store as it became a BYO. And others to the supermarket to buy the supplies ably supported by Erin Oakley to organise the salads. Team-work in the kitchen of the closest motel unit was worth a medal.



**Best BBQ South:** Bev & John Lamont's home at Wanaka and the most amazing and superb BBQ organised by Ross Osborne's daughter and her husband. Absolutely fabulous food, great company, beautiful location overlooking Wanaka, outdoor fire, and enough food to feed us all for lunch the next day at the Wheels at Wanaka Show. A definite 15 out of 10 BBQ and a huge thank you to the cooks and organisers! See also the article later by Ross Osborne. A group photo accompanies this story.

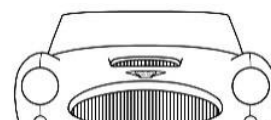
### Best Hotel/Motel/Location:

- **Edgewater Hotel** at Wanaka had to be the best location by far.
- **Creel Lodge** at Turangi was an absolute favourite, the location and grounds were superb, the BBQ area and covered outdoor seating were first class as was the hospitality of the Lodge Managers and the actual owners who joined us for a drink.
- **White Swan Hotel** in Greytown. The upstairs Suites certainly took first prize and it was the only place that we did 'room tours' and took photos. Most glamorous was the George Room and all the other 6 rooms were most glamorous. The staff were most accommodating and helpful, even did the laundry for some couples, meals were great, venue superb, staff very obliging, separate room for our Bistro Meal at no extra charge, etc.

**Worst Weather:** Queenstown in the rain on the only whole day we had there. No Luge and No Gondolas! And shopping in the rain was unpleasant.

### Fun times:

- Pete & Dud, (aka Mark & David) complete with raincoats and flat caps, entertaining us regarding Healeys and a bit of history at the Hilton 50<sup>th</sup> Dinner.
- Hanmer pre dinner drinks on the terrace courtyard, the group just got bigger and bigger. And Brenton did his 'Wherefore art thou Juliet' from his balcony above us.
- Photograph of the day has to go to the picture of Carole and Hazel with the Borat Swim-suited 'gentleman' at Kaikoura and Hazels' comment – "he was all sweaty"!!





### Best experiences:

- Track Drive at Tereonga Race Circuit
- Dinner at Richardsons Transport Museum
- Visit to the Terry Rush Collections at Feilding – Tim most helpful and even did a second session for all the AA Crew and others that had to return to Taihape to help the Rayners get the 100 back on the road.
- Wheels at Wanaka and parade laps in the Austin-Healeys
- Tram ride around Christchurch and all the other tours that the local members organised.
- Visits in Dunedin organised by Ross Osborne - Speights Brewery and the Speights Pub Dinner, Etrusco Italian Dinner, even though we could hardly hear anyone talk.
- Start of the Southland Rally and Jan being spotted in the crowd and then interviewed and then also having the pleasure of flagging away Emma Gilmore – a McLaren flagging away McLaren's only female driver!



**Medical Emergencies:** Fortunately, only one, when we had to farewell Fred Fowler and Janet Mansfield in Blenheim on Day 9 (they only joined us at Tauranga on Day 3). Pleased to report that Fred is okay and everything back under control. He was able to get a return Inter Islander Ferry that same night which was very much appreciated under the then current Ferry situation.

We did also have a few registrants testing positive for Covid in Invercargill, so some disruption for those couples, whilst the rest of us got by with just the odd normal type cold symptoms.

**Allan & Alan A.K.A. the AA Team:** What would we have done without them and the support vehicle and luggage trailer for all the gear, tent, flag poles, merchandise, admin stuff, etc. Ten out of ten to both of them. They were kept busy, but not too many problems. And the first breakdown on the road was Allan Horner's own Sprite on loan to Rick & Pauline Thomas!



### Mix Ups:

The dinner function at the Pavilion Hotel on the first night in Christchurch. 64 people BUT they split us between two separate dining areas.

I've never had to control a function in two locations at the same time – they all had to come into the one dining area for the buffet meal, we had to do separate speeches for each area, and then get them all to come into one area for the Awards and Prizes presentation. Challenging!

And we can't forget the wonderful winners of the 50s night at the Hilton – Paul and Carole Raymen taking our both Male and Female awards as a couple of hippies with great wigs and flared trousers. And the amazing winner of the Gold Theme night at Transport World – Vivian Arkesteijn in her "Woman in Gold" version of the painting by surrealist artist Gustav Klimt. Amazing, and where they stored that in the Healey we have yet to find out! And the male winner was Graeme Cochran in his very regal Pharaoh costume.

### Northern Section Breakdowns:

**First problem** was overheating, – Committee member Brenton Lee (not him, the Healey).

**Second problem**, and we hadn't even left Auckland – Rob Nicholl had starter motor issues and got by with a loan motor from Mark Donaldson's "spares division".

**Third Problem**, after we had only just left Auckland. The first use of the support vehicle and it was at Kawakawa Bay – Rick and Pauline Thomas had Fuel Pump issues, but as it was a Sprite and a loan car, that happened to belong to one of the Support Vehicle drivers, no penalty for Rick!



**Fourth problem**, Alister Rayner's Healey got as far as just leaving Taihape and had throttle linkage failure and then later, as they got to Sanson, the fan belt broke. Allan and Alan to the rescue on both occasions with help from ace mechanic Mike Salter.

**Fifth and last North Island problem**, a battery failure for Michael Salter in his borrowed 100/6.

### Challenges and Fun times:

Because of the route change due to the Napier/Hastings floods, we ended up having two nights in the lovely White Swan Hotel in Greytown. Five lucky couples were accommodated in the themed rooms and after dinner it was decided that room tours were the order of the night. All were beautiful and stunningly set up but ... one of the rooms was Moulin Rouge themed with full wall sized mirrors on either side of the bed. One member who shall remain nameless decided he needed to see how many ladies he could fit on that bed. Much hilarity ensued.





### North-South Ferry Crossing:

In the meantime, we, the organisers, had been busy rearranging farewell breakfasts, coordinating the in-house dinner for 50, checking on ferry departures and then letting everyone know that instead of a leisurely morning departure and a ferry departing at 1pm, they now wanted us to report to the terminal by 7.30am for a 9am departure! That meant a 4.30am departure from Greytown—in the dark, over the Remutaka Hills, with only the Prince of Darkness to guide us! A stressful trip for many on the narrow winding roads but we all made it on time only to find out that Picton Harbour was closed due to a 'supposed chemical spill' and our ferry in Wellington hadn't arrived. It was a very long day and we didn't depart the Wellington Terminal until just before 5pm. In the meantime, Tour Leader Jan, spent the day on the phone rearranging the Picton and Blenheim plans – dinner bookings, accommodation, plus the Picton Presidential South Island Welcome. A very long day for our AHCC President John.

The lovely Raupo Restaurant in Blenheim, that we had fully booked for 50 – 60 people at 7pm, were absolutely wonderful and totally understanding – they said they would stay open until we got there, and they did! Constant phone calls to the restaurant with updates and times throughout the day. Team orders then became: when your drive off the ferry in Picton, drive straight to Blenheim, then straight to the restaurant, DO NOT check into your motel first but let them know you are in town and to leave your key under the door mat! First diners arrived at the Raupo Restaurant at around 8.25pm, and by 8:45 most had arrived. By 9pm we were being served the most delicious meals by the most welcoming and accommodating staff and owner we have ever dealt with. A fifteen out of ten to them all at the Raupo and to everyone's patience throughout a very long day.



### Southern Section:

After our late arrival in Blenheim, the following morning the sun was up and we were ready for taking on the South, and a vineyard or two, and a chocolate factory.

Before departing the area the boys had a great time visiting Basis, the classic car parts business run by club member Anthony and Anne Van de Water at Renwick. And many also enjoyed the Omaka Aviation Heritage centre nearby.

### March Birthdays:

As the end of March fast approached, there was a special birthday to celebrate. Our beloved Healey Club auditor, David Knightley, was due for his OBE (Over Bloody Eighty) and this award was duly presented by Group Organiser Jan McLaren. Also, within a couple of days it was Allan Horner's birthday and then all the rest of the March birthday members joined us as well. Surprising how many had a March birthday. Joan Mechen had organised a fabulous cake and needless to say we ate birthday cake for the next couple of days. Yummmmm.

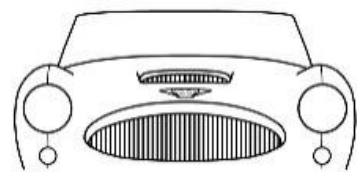
### Challenges:

Christchurch saw us try and run a dinner between two separate rooms at the Pavilion Hotel – a new challenge and some double speeches were required but we all managed with not too much confusion and then all joined up for the final presentations.

As previously mentioned, Invercargill saw some of our members "fall by the wayside" with Covid but all managed to either stay in isolation, thanks to the hotels involved and/or test negative within a few days. Played havoc with some of our numbers for functions and dinners but all rallied around.

### Most Memorable Moments:

- The smile on Allan Horner's face when he drove Martin Dippie's 100S around the track at Wanaka.
- The Healeys that were allowed to display inside at Richardson's Transport Museum for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dinner.
- The surprise invite to do display laps at Teretonga Race Circuit.
- The impromptu BBQ at Turangi for dinner for 30 when we found out our bookings for a meal were cancelled due to 'closed restaurant due to bereavement'. Great teamwork all round.
- Viv Arkesteijn's Gold Outfit for the 50<sup>th</sup> Dinner at Invercargill – a Gustav Klimt painting from his Golden Phase. A winner for sure that night! Absolutely awesome and where she hid it in the Healey 100/6 we have no idea!!
- And the most wonderful BBQ at Bev & John Lamont's home at Wanaka with the amazing spread all catered by Ross and Shona Osborne's daughter and her husband.



## Fun Facts

### Registrations:

There were Forty Eight registrations overall, so we were dealing with around one hundred people

Unfortunately, there were ultimately three cancellations from Australia due to issues with shipping their cars.

And, sadly, one cancellation from the South Island due to a tragic accident.

- We had around a 50/50 ratio of North Island and South Island entrants.
- We had seven couples/vehicles doing the FULL Tour!
- We had four couples/vehicles doing the Full Tour minus 1 day!
- So, twenty two hardy souls did pretty much the FULL TOUR.

### Full entries:

- P & J Cowan
- M & J Donaldson
- A Horner & A Johnson
- D & H Knightley
- A & W Rayner
- P & A Stanley
- R & P Thomas

### The 'minus one-day' entries:

- R & H McAlley
- G McKenzie & P Edge
- E & H Otway
- K & J Smith

### We had seven entries from overseas:

1. Peter and Jan Cowan from Brisbane, Australia
2. Ian and Sue Irving from Girona, Spain
3. Michael and Judy Salter from Dwight, Ontario, Canada
4. Peter and Ann Stanley from Ringwood, Victoria, Australia
5. Rick and Pauline Thomas from Sault St Marie, Ontario, Canada
6. Neil Tregea & Raymond Hick from Queensland and New South Wales, Australia
7. Alister and Wendy Rayner from Burleigh Heads, Queensland, Australia



### Austin-Healey's on the Tour:

BJ8 –	11
BJ7 –	4
BT 7 –	3
BN4 -	3
BN1 & 2 –	7
Sprite Mk 1 & 2 –	4
Jensen Healey -	2

### Other Sports Cars on the Tour:

Daimler SP250 -	1
Reliant Scimitar -	1
Saab 900S -	1
MGRV8 -	1
BMW Z3 –	1
M/Cooper S Cabrio -	1





## ***Canterbury Celebration, moving on Southwards***

Two get togethers were held in Christchurch, both at the Pavilions Hotel where most of the 'Tourists' stayed. By this time many of us had been on the road for two weeks and as this was to be our longest stopover since the event began in Auckland on 16 March, we were ready for a break!

First of all, an informal "meet and greet" function, which also served to register many of the South Island entries who were joining us for the first time.

**Joan Mechen, our area organiser reports:** Following delays in the ferry crossing, the tour participants made their way to Christchurch, and to our base for the duration of their stay at the Pavilions Hotel. Here, on the Sunday evening the 'Meet, Greet and Dinner' were held - both for those joining the tour and for others joining for the evening only. Overseas participants included Australians, Canadians and an English couple currently living in Spain. It was great to see Russell Lane's freshly restored 100 on display, having been specially trailered to the hotel as not yet road registered.

The following 2 days were free, with a number of options organised by our local club members:

Russell and Jeni Lane had organised for Monday morning, a walking tour along the banks of the Avon, starting with coffee at Little Poms, which was previously the site of the first brewery in Christchurch. Post earthquake, this walking tour is known as the City Promenade and is a relaxing way to view the city landscape and learn some historical facts along the way. The weather was perfect, and a large group turned out for a most interesting morning, thanks to Jeni for the informative commentary.

John Craig had organised two car tours, one driving through the red zone, and the other around the harbour and Summit Road. On Tuesday it was time for the ladies to relax and possibly some shopping at Merivale. Two tours had been arranged for the men (and ladies wishing to partake) to visit Auto Restorations, and Auto Haven Museum. Auto Haven also included their restoration shop for viewing. Once again, a great turnout of participants on these tours, both of which were absolutely amazing and reminded us of the very high level of classic car restoration available in our country.



A celebratory dinner was held on the Tuesday evening at the Pavilions hotel before the tour continued on southwards. Unfortunately it had to be split across two rooms but we coped well and the food was good. A number of awards and prizes were presented and recipients congratulated. Most notably:

- **Canterbury Clubman & woman** (joint award) – Len and Valerie Rickard
- **Special long-standing AHCC club members (Southern)** – Peter and Diane Nelligan



## On Southwards

Wednesday morning saw the tour leaving Christchurch heading south to Dunedin via the Inland Scenic Route. A lunch stop at the famous preserves provider, Barkers of Geraldine Cafe, then many also stopped at the world famous Moeraki Boulders for a walk on the beach to view the huge spherical boulders before returning to the on-site café for an afternoon refreshment.



Our Dunedin stopover was at the Kingsgate Hotel in the central city, where another registration evening was held for the southern locals joining us for the final section of the Grand Tour. Once again, our area representative Ross Osborne had organised a variety of options for our stay in the “Edinburgh of the South”:

After morning coffee at Glenfalloch Gardens, a fabulous visit with tour options at The Royal Albatross Centre, Taiaaroa Head was enjoyed by many. In the afternoon a brewery tour, followed by an evening meal at the famous Speights Brewery and Ale House in central Dunedin, also a highlight.

The following day, Friday, was a free day and many challenged themselves by climbing Baldwin Street, the world’s steepest, in North Dunedin, or visiting the iconic Dunedin railway station.

Our timing was right to see the ceremonial start of the Otago Rally in the Octagon, also on the Friday evening, and once it was known that Jan McLaren was present, she was invited to flag away the leading cars, with famous names such as eventual winner Hayden Paddon, and New Zealand’s most successful woman rally driver, Emma Gilmour, taking part.

Next, we tackled the Catlins scenic coastal road to Invercargill, our Southernmost destination. On the way, most stopped at Slope Point, the South Island’s most southerly and windswept spot. Next landmass south is the Antarctic Continent!

Once in Invercargill, most attended the George Begg Festival of classic and historic motor racing the following day at the most southerly race circuit in the world, Teretonga Raceway. The Club was given pride of place to show off our cars and to provide a lunchtime parade. It is just a pity that the weather was cold and damp, but we didn’t let it dampen our spirits and a great day was had by all.





## ***South Island Anniversary Dinner – Richardson’s Transport World, Invercargill***

The final event of the month-long Grand Tour was a magnificent celebration and dinner at the world famous Richardson’s Transport World. Not only did we have the grand front hall to ourselves for the evening, but also some famous and not so famous Austin-Healey cars on display as well.

The staff at Richardsons did a great job of dressing the banquet room and a great meal was enjoyed in a very convivial atmosphere by around 80 guests, set amongst the various vehicles and memorabilia on display.

There should have been more guests, but unfortunately some were struck down by a Covid outbreak at the Ascot Hotel, where most of the travelling group were staying.

Brenton Lee and Allan Horner acted as MCs for the evening and presented a number of prizes and fun awards for various achievements and misdemeanours from the South Island section of the Tour.

A general dress theme of “Gold” was adopted, and most turned up suitably attired for the occasion. Winners of the “best Dressed” lady and gentleman awards were judged to be Vivienne Arkesteijn from Auckland and Graeme Cochrane from Mosgiel, Vivienne as a Gustav Klimt painting from his ‘gold’ phase, and Graeme as an Egyptian Pharaoh!

Prior to the dinner, most of us took the time in our Southernmost city to visit Transport World and its partner organisation closer to the centre of Invercargill – the stunning Classic Motorcycle Mecca.

Many also took the opportunity to visit E.Hayes & Sons hardware & engineering supplies store, which houses the World’s Fastest Indian exhibition, complete with original bikes artefacts from Burt Munro’s shed where he built his land speed record-breaking Indian-based motorbikes.

After a farewell breakfast at the Ascot hotel on the morning following the dinner, the Grand Tour ended and everyone went their separate ways. Many headed for Queenstown on their way to Wanaka, to attend the Easter weekend “Wheels at Wanaka” show. A special report from Ross Osborne on this “Post Tour” activity follows.





## ***Club Trophies and Awards***

---

During the Grand Tour the following Club trophies and awards were presented at the North and South Island Commemorative Dinners:

- **Past Presidents trophy:** Passed on from Roger McAlley to Mark Donaldson
- **Auckland Clubman trophy:** Shared - David Knightley, Mark Donaldson, Allan Horner
- **Auckland Clubwoman trophy:** Jan McLaren
- **Christchurch Clubman trophy:** Len and Valerie Rickard (jointly)
- **Special Inaugural/Founding members Commemorative Plaques:** Mark Donaldson, Ross Cammick, Bryan Davis, and long-standing members Peter and Diane Nelligan

## ***Prizes***

---

There were many sponsor and supporter provided fun prizes and gifts awarded during the event at the evening functions. These are summarised below.

## ***Sponsors Thanks***

---

We would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank our various sponsors and giftors as listed, in alphabetical order. The primary sponsors are also acknowledged on our website [www.autinhealey.org](http://www.autinhealey.org)

- **AH Spares (UK)** – caps, lanyards, prizes, pens, £25 vouchers, key rings etc
- **Classic Car Magazine** – Classic Cars of New Zealand books
- **Classic Cover Insurance** – Jute ‘goody’ bags, registration label holders
- **Classic Driver Magazine** – feature article, plus current mag copies for goody bags
- **Egmont Seeds** – seeds and catalogues
- **Grant McKenzie** (club member) – Healey towing eyes (gift, one per entrant)
- **Meguiars (NZ)** - car care products
- **Paul Walbran Motors** – product & service vouchers
- **Penrite Oils** – 5 litre oil packs, SU Carb damper oil bottles
- **Petrolhead Magazine** – current mag copies for goody bags
- **Repco** – large car wash, T shirts various
- **The Healey Factory (AUS)** - \$50 vouchers, promo pens

## ***Easter Weekend & Wheels at Wanaka – special report by organiser Ross Osborne***

---

When it became apparent that planning was underway for the 2023 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour and the proposed itinerary was made known, the writer advised the organisers that the biennial Wheels at Wanaka event was to be held at Easter and suggested it would provide a superb addition to the Tour if it could be included. The Tour schedule was manipulated, and Wanaka was ultimately included as part of the After Tour to be enjoyed following the completion of the main Anniversary Tour.

Property developer Allan Dippie along with earth moving contractor, the late Robert Duncan, had a vision of a mega display of everything with wheels to take place in Wanaka, which culminated in the first Wheels at Wanaka taking place over Easter 2019 on a 50 acre site at Allan's Three Parks commercial development. The event was an outstanding success with in-excess of 12,000 patrons enjoying the many displays provided by some 1600 vehicles over 2 days. Included in this number were some 500 to 600 tractors, over half of which were sourced from Allan's continually growing private collection.

The bug had seriously taken hold and the 2021 event, this time extended to three days, attracted 24,000 visitors. The show continued to gain in popularity, and when the Austin Healey Car Club staged their display at the 2023 event, in excess 40,000 people attended the spectacle to enjoy over 3,500 vehicles. Although there was a multitude of activities across the weekend, including classic car displays, tractor displays, earthmoving activities, tractor pulling etc., undoubtedly a major attraction was the GINORMOUS Caterpillar 789 dump truck, recently restored and upgraded for Oceana Gold, to operate at the Macraes Gold Mine. Rated in excess of 300 tonne with a payload of 124 tonne, the monster was accessible to the public to climb aboard and it undertook regular circuits of the display arena across the weekend.



Having the ear of the organisers did no harm at all and the Club was given a prime spot adjacent to the display arena for 26 members to display their gleaming Healeys. Fellow member Martin Dippie, brother of organiser Allan, added the ex-Ross Jensen Austin-Healey 100S to our display much to the delight of Allan Horner who jumped at the opportunity to pilot the 'brute' when it became time for the Healeys to circulate the arena.

A self-drive shuttle van was arranged for the organisers to provide transport between the accommodation, the Show and other points of interest about Wanaka while the Healeys were on display. This also meant our cars could stay at the show site overnight and the owners could enjoy a little longer in bed on the chilly mornings!

Knowing that evening dining facilities would be at a premium on Good Friday, albeit with a surcharge, Shona and I went into coercion mode.







Our thought was a casual BBQ for Club members, and our first move was to convince daughter Stephanie and her husband Lee, along with their friend Matt, to take on the cooking duties, which they duly accepted. Our next move was to ask long time Club members John and Bev Lamont if they would be prepared to host the BBQ at their exquisite home in the gated community of Far Horizon, overlooking Lake Wanaka. When the idea and the proposed format were explained to them, they were excited to play host. In the event the weather played its part and a superb offering was enjoyed by all as darkness fell over the outstanding vista and the evening chilled.

On Saturday evening the W@W organisers put on prize giving and entertainment in one of Allan Dippie's carpeted tractor storage buildings with food trucks parked outside and bars operating within, to thank all the many hundreds of people who were displaying items, all the sponsors and not least the multitude of volunteers. A wonderful event to compliment the weekend.

After another wonderful show day on the Sunday, it was time for the After Tour to get back on the road North and to get this underway the organisers had arranged a farewell breakfast at their accommodation at Edgewater Resort on the Monday morning. Soon enough it was time to share our farewells with those still with distance to cover and wish them all safe travels.

**Ross Osborne**

### ***50 years of the Austin-Healey Car Club in New Zealand***

