

Visit to Club 41 New Zealand

Derek and Tina Johns picked us up at the airport. After a quick stop at their house to get rid of part of our luggage we headed for Picton, where we stayed overnight. Early next morning we picked the ferry and went to Napier. Les and Lynne Mockford were our splendid hosts during the convention. After slowly getting rid of jet lag we started to enjoy the friends we met and the program which gave us a good insight into the city, which is famous for its Art Deco style, but first of all into the club life and the Kiwi fellowship.

The meeting itself was really well managed and the program around provided for lots of fun. I had not enjoyed sheriffs at work for many years and of course had to accept some fines as well. The 41ers are very close together. The only problem seems to be how to keep close contact to Round Table and through that keep their membership growing. In some of the clubs no new members are entering any more. Founding new 41 clubs with recent Extablers seems to be the only and therefore best way to tackle that problem.

After the conference weekend Les and Lynne took us on an exciting tour through Taupo and Rotarua to Tauranga where Derek and Tina Johns were waiting for us. Along the way we had the opportunity to see many impressive places like the Huka falls, a Maori village with a Hangi dinner and the different volcanic phenomena along the way.

Derek and Tina took us further north to the Coromandel Peninsula along the coast and many places were stunning and beautiful. We especially liked the Dennis Creek Pottery Railway in Coromandel with a magnificent display of native plants and the fun ride on the train itself. Lydia also liked feeding seagulls and they seemed to like it too even feeding from her hand. The most impressive visit was to the giant Kauri trees in a hidden valley. We visited the Waitomo caves with both magnificent display and stunning glow worms. There was also the Army Museum along the way to Palmerston North. Keith and Monica Butterfield hosted us there and we had an interesting stay with some information about his hobby. Next day saw us back in Picton where we had to let Derek and Tina go back home and to pick up a car for our trip to Nelson.

Ray and Gay Northcott were our lovely hosts and we would have wanted to stay longer. Alan had organized a pot luck dinner with 41ers and we had a great time. We enjoyed the town, the surroundings and the climate – it is one of the most inviting places in the country. Alan and Ray showed me more of the countryside and made me even more hungry to stay, but....

...but we had to go further south along the west coast discovering nature in unbelievable abundance and beauty. What a difference of climate and nature when turning east to get to Clyde, where Bill and Anne Wade were waiting for us already. After a nice and relaxed evening they took us to Queenstown. We visited the birthplace of bungee jumping, went up the mountain with a gondola, looked at speeding jetboats in a canyon and liked the old Arrowtown. The evening was spent with some friends of the local club and their wives. Another opportunity to enjoy another pot luck dinner with lots of fun.

The next day saw us going down to the east coast, visiting Dunedin with its beautiful railway station and the steepest road in a living area – what a drive up and down! After wondering about the Moeraki boulders we enjoyed the penguins coming back home from the sea in a sanctuary in Oamaru, where Alan and Colleen Parkhill hosted us.

We went on a loop into the mountains next morning – again with beautiful weather, as all days of our stay – and coming down to Timaru joined Keith and Jan Gray and almost all

members of the club at a most exquisite evening meeting in their home. After a sightseeing tour through Timaru with Keith we went back to Christchurch in the morning. Derek and Tina, our “foster parents”, were waiting for us at the car rental station and together we toured the surrounding hills and beaches with lots of beautiful sights down from the hill tops. We enjoyed a lovely evening together and set up plans for the last two days. Next day we went sightseeing in Christchurch and had a meeting with the local club at an Italian restaurant. We were in a rather sad mood when we had to pack on our last evening in New Zealand. After sending back home two of our suitcases with the “warm stuff” using a very helpful and cheap postal service it was time to say good bye, not only to our lovely and caring hosts Derek and Tina but also to the members of 41 New Zealand who had invited and hosted us. We will try to come back one day to meet old and new friends and see more of New Zealand’s wonderful natural treasures. We had to save something for the next time. Many many thanks to all of you for this unique and unforgettable experience, for your warm hospitality and your most precious friendship!

Yours in 41

Dieter and Lydia