

TOURS OFFICERS REPORT – 2008 -

It is with some sadness that I present what will be my final Report to the A.G.M. as your Tours Officer – a position I have held for some 13 years, and have thoroughly enjoyed.

On the Tours scene, we have been very busy this year finalizing details for our planned trip to China and Eastern Europe which departs from Auckland on Friday, August 29th of this year.

We have a group of 30 travelling, many of whom have travelled with the 41 Club groups in years gone by, and I must say a special “Thank you” to those ‘multiple travellers’ for the support they have given not only me as their leader, but for the way in which they have represented our organization in many corners of the world.

We will be away for about 6 weeks, and after stopping over in China for a week, we will be visiting places in Austria, Romania, Serbia, Bosnia, Croatia, Italy, and Germany, before finishing up in Berlin at the end of September.

Home hosting will be an integral part of this trip (again) and the response I have had when I approached 41 Clubs overseas has been wonderful. They are all very keen to host us, look after us, and show us why their part of this world is so special to them.

Looking back at all the trips I have been fortunate enough to lead overseas, it is always the people that we meet and stay with who create the long term memories, and contacts. Sure, there are some you never hear from again, but we always come home with new friendships that endure time, and really develop into something very special.

To create these friendships takes two way giving, and the members of the New Zealand 41 Club groups that have toured with me have all been great ambassadors of New Zealand, and have always given freely of their best. You have to enjoy people to get the most out of a 41 Club trip, and I believe we all do just that.

On the domestic scene, things have been rather quiet, although I did get involved with the planning for a group from Estonia (some of whom were 41’ers, and had hosted us there 3 years ago), who did a series of walking trips during their time in New Zealand.

I do know Derek Johns as your I.R.O. had other contacts during the year with overseas people.

In closing, I must thank all the National Executives over the years who have supported my efforts, all the 41 Club members who have shared these wonderful experiences around the world with me, and all the 41 Club members who have had enough confidence in me to re-elect me each year.

There is one person without who’s support none of this would have been possible, and I wish to say a very big and heartfelt “Thank you Margaret for everything”. When the ideas have dried up, when a letter needed proof reading, and most of all when the going got tough, I always knew I had your support.

On a lighter note, what does concern Margaret is just how I am going to fill in my time from now on !!!

To my successor, I wish you every ounce of good luck in the future, and you may rest assured, you will have my support and I will always be there to give you ideas, or even more importantly names that you can contact somewhere around the world.

For me, this brings to an end the 26 years of my involvement with the National Executive of 41 Club New Zealand, since my election as your National Vice President in 1982, then National President, I.R.O., and finally your Tours Officer. Rest assured, I have loved every minute of it, and I must thank you all once again for everything I have enjoyed over those 26 years – your friendship, your company, and everything you have done to make 41 Club New Zealand what it is today.

Yours in 41,

Peter Butchart

TOURS OFFICER – June 2008