

The Deep South Group is at it again!

Here's a report about a fantastic weekend of TR motoring & fellowship in the south.....

TR DSG Winter Escape, August 9 & 10, 2008.

Yes, we go looking for winter down here – into the beautiful Maniototo, Central Otago!

A weekend of Motoring, Socialising and Curling.

The idea for the trip was born from the “we are sick of the b..... rain!” and it was about time we did some sort of a trip, so Brian & Susan Hope had a quick ring around the DSG members till the number of rooms available were full up. All eight rooms we learnt later were high up in the Central Otago Hills!

Our instructions were to front up at Hope & Sons Car Park in Dunedin ready to go in “Winter Mode” which down here means have your tyre chains with you and bring warm clothing ready to head to destinations unknown. First thing on Saturday the 9th of August we all lined up at Hope & Sons car park as requested and yes, with our chains on board. The six car group were ready to go. The weather over Friday night had brought snow down low around the hills of Dunedin and we all were wondering where Brian & Susan were taking us!!!?

After the gathered all discussed the weather etc Brian handed out our instructions to get to our final destination, then saying “don't use these” as the Middlemarch road is closed – great!

Also a call in from Trevor & Jane Payton (TR4) to say they had a little clutch problem and would catch up. Off we went and instead of going over the Middlemarch road (now closed) we drove north over Dunedin's northern motorway. This part of the trip was the snowiest! The motorway was covered with at least 1-2 inches of snow laced with grit (delivered by the Works trucks) – this is something that makes your car look, in no time at all, like you have been up a muddy ski field road! We all made it to Palmerston for a cup of coffee before heading on up the Pig Route Road (HW85) to Ranfurly (normally affected by ice & Snow). A couple in at the Palmerston Cafe who had just come down from the Maniototo area said the road ahead for us was clear – this pleased us all, but there was still snow on the road side and we had to



Dunedin's Northern motorway with snow.



A stop on the Pig Route.

be careful! We stopped for a picture on route and there the Penno's, in their TR6, joined us to make us eight cars in total.

The Drive to Ranfurly for lunch was lovely with white, snow topped hills around us. On arrival in Ranfurly we all parked in the main street and made our way to the Lion Hotel for the lunch. The Olympics opening was on the big screen TV – good to watch while you have a beer and toasted sandwich! On the road again to Wedderburn where we were to stay for the night. At Wedderburn there is not much – only an historic stone clad Hotel and a few local's houses. But just across the road from the hotel is a group of cottages on the side of the fantastic Central Otago Rail Trail. These neat little individual cottages were almost new, warm and cosy. Among these cottages was this neat Red Barn where we later had a drink and partied.



At the 45th parallel marker.

Once we all were settled in many wrapped up in jackets, hats and put our walking shoes on to walk up the Rail Trail to the highest point of the trail (618 metres), many did make it there – about 4 kms each way and a few went on to the 45 parallel and then returned to the cottages, this was good exercise after sitting in cars and eating that good food for lunch! The Red Barn, now with the gas heater going full throttle, was the place we all gathered for a drink before heading off down the driveway and over the road to the Wedderburn Hotel for a very enjoyable night's



Inside the Red Barn.

entertainment and meal. The locals and our group (the 16 of us) stayed warm inside as it was heading for a really good frost outside. The walk back to our cottages in the dark and cold was done at speed as everything but our



The cottages & cars Sunday morning. After a good frost.

cottages and the Hotel was pitch black and the lights of the cottages and barn were like an oasis to get too! We made our way to the Barn and got the party going again. The Bee Gees on the big screen was enjoyed by all in the now cosy, warm barn. The next morning we awoke to a ripper frost (-10 degrees), all the cars were covered with a frosty white coating. At about 10am we all started our cars (for some it was a bit of a mission) and drove past the Hotel and up to Naseby Township. The trip was beautiful with the freshly snow covered hills surrounding us with and a very blue cloud free sky above. Driving into Naseby there is a sign – “Welcome to Naseby 2000ft above worry level”, this historic town has had a boom with tourism (from the Curling & Rail trail in the area) and also many new holiday houses being built. The Indoor Curling rink is world class and we were there to give it a go - Brian & Susan Hope had arranged a time slot for us all the play a round on the Sunday morning. We put together four teams of four to play. What fun the curling was and yes, it was a bit cool in the covered venue but with the right clothing on all was made comfortable (being sports car owners we had the right clothing to wear too).



Curling in Naseby.

Just after 12noon we all made our way to the Royal Hotel in Naseby, just along the road, for a welcome lunch and sat in the sun outside the Hotel where it seemed a whole lot warmer after being in the cool Curling building! Well, all good things had to come to an end and we all made our different ways home. Farewells all around. For those who were going back to Dunedin, a number went down the Middlemarch Valley and passed through the picturesque snow lined road (SH87) over to Outram. What a weekend and it may happen again either next year or the one following.

Overall, what great fun and a neat group of people to do it with.

Those in attendance were Peter & Susan Beal from Invercargill (TR6), from Tapanui, Alan & Norma Parks (TR5) and from Dunedin Brian & Susan Hope (TR6), Trevor & Jane Payton (TR4), Keith & Beverley Allott (TR6), Doug & Viv Osborne (Spitfire), Owen & Robyn Penno (TR6), David & Christine Mehrtens (TR250).

For those coming to join us for next year’s TR Nationals 2009 in Cromwell, we will be going into similar beautiful Central Otago country areas that we were in, but at a much warmer time of the year of course!

David & Christine Mehrtens reporting.



Christine & the TR250 in the snow on HW87 between Middlemarch & Outram. Look at that blue sky will you!