

THE DSG's TRIP TO & FROM THE NZ TR REGISTER NATIONALS IN ART DECO NAPIER MARCH 2008.



4TH TO THE 12TH MARCH 2008.

UP & BACK!

The Deep South Group members are an active bunch, so going to the 2008 Nationals in Napier was a matter of planning to get it underway and Going.

For many of us, the distance and time to get to Napier and return would require adding a few days on either side of the event. Members from down here left home from Cromwell, Tapanui, Mosgiel, Waikouaiti and Dunedin to go to the Nationals. The trip was planned along the lines of the fantastic trip we had last year to Nelson and return.

4th & 5th March, Tuesday/Wednesday: Those who made their way to Christchurch on Tuesday evening planned to meet up in Amberley, North Canterbury the next day, the 5th of March, at the Nor-Wester Cafe for a cuppa. We had already travelled at least 4-5 hours at this stage, but the trip was on our special uncluttered South Island roads, at good speeds. From Amberley it was up to the Kaikoura Coast in near perfect weather conditions – this made this part of the trip a highlight. For those who know this coast line it can cut up really badly, but very beautiful on a nice day. The Boys with air horns made their presence known to the world as we passed through the tunnels! Once into Blenheim we refuelled with wonderful BP 98 petrol and, in our case, then, continued on to Picton. Our stay was at the Top Ten Holiday Park. It was here a couple from the UK were also staying in their camper van. Rob & Chris Mortimer (UK TR6 owners) had been touring the South Island and planned to join in on the Nationals. The camp was an interesting place to stay with a TR. The number of tourists who had one or similar “at home” was outstanding. While washing our car I had an audience “talking sports cars”!

6th March, Thursday: Up and going to get to the ferry by 8.50am report time. Here we were joined by a number of other TR members from Nelson and Christchurch. Once again the interest from the people around us was amazing! The Ferry arrived (30 minutes late) and on we went. The crossing was pretty good with not too many rough patches. Once into Wellington (1.30pm-ish) most of the group drove straight out to Palmerston North but a few of us braved our way into the city. Christine & I managed to drive up a bus lane the wrong way and around a block or two till we made it to a park. The TRs (TR250 & TR5) parked in central Wellington looked very different to those modern Jap things around us! We did our business in Wellington and headed out of the city about 4pm. The traffic was not too bad and we made it to the Camelot Motor Lodge in Palmerston North at about 6pm. The gathered group had a social drink outside the Higg's motel unit till the sun went down. We walked into the town's square for a meal.

7th March, Friday: Over-night a light shower had passed and blue skies had returned. This washed the dust away! After refuelling the car and after a briefing, we all headed through town to the Tapp's home. The Tapp's invitation to morning tea, then a guided trip to Napier was well received with a large number of TRs and two Swallow Doretis arriving. The Tapp's made us all very welcome. After a cuppa and armed with route instructions to get to Napier, away we went. This trip took us past the wind farm up on the hills behind Palmerston North. The size of these things is impressive and the cars looked like toys under the wind mills we parked by. The towns we passed through included Ashhurst, Dannevirke, Waipukurau, Waipawa and Havelock North. All the way we motored on interesting, sealed back roads, in places new to many of us. Lunch was at a busy Waipukurau cafe (was very nice too). The day at this stage was getting hot – around 28 degrees. The groups size here was swelled to 22 cars with the arrival of two more South Island cars. After lunch, on the road again heading through the hills behind Havelock North and we all headed up to the lookout above the town (Te Mata Peak). The temperature up at the lookout was about 31 degrees C with the climb up the road making many of the cars a little hot! Many of the early TRs had hot water shooting out of them as if they were ready for a cuppa – that's what it looked like! The views from the lookout were impressive, with 360 degree panoramas. From here we travelled down the hill and across to our Napier accommodation venue, the Shoreline Motels, right on the sea front. Driving into the motel – TRs everywhere! It seemed we had arrived in TR heaven! The sign-in was just along the road at the National Aquarium of New Zealand. Very impressive! We were given a very warm welcome by the organising team and directed to have a look around the Aquarium and join in for a drink with the other TR members – all very enjoyable.

8th March, Saturday: Another beautiful day. Many got up early to clean their cars to be ready for the 8.30am briefing and day's drive around the Hawke's Bay area. We were all set off by the local identity "Bertie", Napier's Art Deco Ambassador, who arrived in a 1930s Austin Seven sports car – we were very impressed. The array of TR's was impressive, about 50 cars in total all ready to set out for the days drive. What a lovely drive it was passing through many lovely spots, new to many of us. The organisers provided us with a packed morning tea to take and the spot to stop was on the coastal settlement of Kairakau Beach, a beautiful place with real beach sand. A few of the members took the opportunity to have a swim in the surf. On the road again and heading inland through Waipawa and across to the historic town of Ongaonga, into the school grounds. This place was so dry that the grass was all but gone. All the TRs parked in model groups and ready for the concours judging. The school put on a fabulous first class lunch for us with many of us staying out of the heat, in the shade, and enjoying the homemade lemonade that was made available. The afternoon drive back to Napier had great views of the bay and passed a number of wineries. This day's motoring was about 140 miles in total. In the early evening many of us had a drink and socialised with others in the motel complex. Then it was time to spruce up for the evening at the Napier Cosmopolitan Club, just along the road from our accommodation. The theme was "Art Deco" and many looked just fab in their 1920s & 30s clothing. The evening's food and entertainment was fabulous too, with a live band playing music from all eras. As the evening progressed all enjoyed the dancing and fellowship. Christine and I really enjoyed the evening and it was possibly the best Nationals Saturday night to date. All was over by midnight – as all the fresh air of the day had got the better of us all!

9th March, Sunday: Yet another lovely day. At 8.30am many attended the Forum held in the morning sun just beside the sea front. A group of about 40 people discussed subjects from insurance to club funds. In all the forum was very worth while and good to see a club functioning like that. At 10am a large coach arrived to pick up many of us to take us into town for the organised "Art Deco walk". We got to see a few of the city's interesting highlights including buildings and historic items. This walk was something every visitor to Napier should do – highly recommended! At noon, we all left from the Shoreline Motel forecourt in convoy and went through the city to the Brookfields Winery for lunch. Once there, we all parked under the trees, for the shade, and then made our way to the venue for lunch, but first a group picture was taken. The rest of the afternoon was taken with lunch, prize giving and speeches. Hey, what a neat venue and able to handle that sized group too! Many happy winners of prizes had to find more room in their cars to take their prizes home! In our group's case the Allotts (TR7 DHC) won first place and the Parks (TR5) and Higgs (TR4) were place second equal in their classes. Well done to everyone who made an effort with the concours this year. Farewells all round, as many started to head off home. Our group had another night in Napier and relaxed a little longer.

10th March, Monday: Off we went south down HW50 to Pahiatua to visit friends (Morgan owners) for a very welcomed morning tea. Ron & Di Gray had kindly organised a trip through the back roads down to Martinborough for lunch. This was a lovely trip, similar country to that the Tapps had shown us through a few days earlier. After lunch we all headed into the Hutt Valley or Wellington. A small group stayed in Wellington, in a Newtown motel with covered parking, which also made it easy to get onto the ferry the next morning.

11th March, Tuesday: All assembled at the ferry parking spot to board for the 10.35am crossing. Yes, this crossing was smoothish and once off the ferry in Picton we were on the road south. The Kaikoura Coast was lovely again, as it was on the way up. After driving several hours we all stopped at Greta Valley for a coffee and some food and then back on to the road to Christchurch.

12th March, Wednesday: A few of us went first thing into Christchurch city to have a look around – and of course had to visit the motoring shop in Central City. The girls whizzed around the shops before heading out for home. The rest of the day was taken with a lovely lunch in Geraldine and motoring home.

The trip (2600kms round trip for us) was accomplished home to home "hood down" all the way! We really enjoyed the camaraderie, fellowship, adventures and motoring that a holiday in our own country can give. We would do it all again if we could.

We must pass on our special and sincere thanks to Peter & Gill Tapp for the wonderful care of us in Palmerston North, and to the 2008 Napier Art Deco TR Nationals Organisers – Trish & Bruce Hislop, Joy & Graeme Thomas, Pamela & Ron Robbie - thank you all for a very well run event and we all enjoyed every moment we had with you all. Well done.

Well, with such a good National event now over the next one is now in everyone's sights and our guys down here are already underway to interest and invite as many TRs and their owners into sunny Central Otago in late February 2009 to the next big TR National gathering. Keep an eye on the register's website to see what is developing as the year progresses.

David & Christine Mehrtens 1968 TR250. Dunedin, March 08.