



Established 1993

Triumph Times

The national newsletter of the Triumph Owners' Motor Cycle Club of New Zealand Inc.
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TOMCC is a member club of WATOC



ANZAC DAY RIDE 2014

What a great day for a ride. Gassed up the Guzzi and Barb and Worz headed for Burger King for the annual Ulysses Club St Johns run.

9.45am and already lots of bikes gleaming in the sun and leather clad riders standing around in groups chatting. Parked up with the TOMCC guys and gals then off to see any faces in the crowd I knew seeing we haven't done a Ulysses ride for a while.

This ride sure gets the old fellas out and it was great to catch up with Mike A, Fossie, Mike P, Des T, Mike C and others from the good old days. TOMCC also had a good turnout with Jeff & Liz, Jack, Dennis, Clint, Jock,

Ross & partner, Brent, Billy and another guy on an old Bonnie whose name escapes me. After standing around for a while we were given the ride briefing by Mike C who was going to be RIC. Billy was chosen as TEC and we all headed off to Lookout Hill to regroup after the lights so we could ride to the Ruakaka shopping centre as a group to meet up with Auckland Ulysses.

They arrived in about 15 minutes, 25 or so bikes boosting the number to 80 plus includ-

ing three purple trikes and two dogs wearing sunglasses. We then rode a short distance to the St John Station. We were all directed onto a field behind the station and were greeted by the smell of BBQs and a lovely Lady Ambo officer who welcomed us all. We were then



invited to buy tickets for a yummy lunch for \$10.00 consisting of steak, sausages, eggs salads and a bun followed by dessert. There was also a tight-arse lunch of sausages and bread. Then it was time to mingle and catch up with more riders, Tim, Gary, Nigel and Karen, Bev & Trev from Kaitaia to name a few. After baking in the sun for an hour or so and not having any raffle tickets to wait on I thought the pub will be open at 1pm so by the time we get back into town we're in. So leaving the others all huddled under one of two trees on the property for shade the Guzzi headed for Fringes. Much cooler there and the Old Ale was even cooler. Good to see Rea back behind the bar. The peace was shattered 30 mins later with the TOMCC roaring up the road. Joking of raffle fixing etc. After another couple of beers we left them to it and headed home. Not staying for the presentation, I missed Mike handing over the cheque to St Johns, but I'm guessing it was the usual \$1000. Another great day with great company.

*Worz
Northland, TOMCC NZ*

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

Hi All, I would like to give you the option of having your membership renewal notice sent by email. It will still show all the bank and your member details. If you would like to take advantage of this please email me at:

tomccnatsec@gmail.com You will still receive your receipt and new membership card by post. Please email me your member name and number so I can update my database.

*Thanks and Regards
Melissa Todd, Membership Secretary*

Rennie's 57th Birthday and meeting, 24 May



Well, things didn't go to plan once again up here – not all had read the emails sent out as to where the meeting place and catch up places were to be. Poor Worzel found no one turned up at the first place so he went home and mowed his lawns.

On the other hand, the ones who rode straight up to Waipapa for the meeting that was being held at Rennie and Carol's place in KeriKeri ended up having a great time. Even though they got wet to the bones and had to dry off at the Pioneer Restaurant & Bar in Waipapa before heading out to the meeting house.

A great meeting and Rennie's birthday celebration was had, and the rain didn't stop us all having a good time. We even got to see Clinton with hair, along with John as Bruce Springsteen (I think that's how it spelt). It was a great do with hot steaks and heaps to wash it down with.

*Bill Spice
Northland TOMCC NZ*



The Bikes



The Bar



Clinton & John Anderson



Rennie & Carol



Liz, Carol
& Debbie



Some of the Canterbury Chapter members admiring Pete's new Sprint at the March Hare Rally at Waimate.

President's Piece

Hi all, winter blues have certainly set in. Hope you're all still getting out there supporting different winter activities put on by the club. I see Otago/Southland had their Haast Eagle Search on Queens Birthday weekend. Looked bloody cold and that certainly looked like a novel way to warm up a battery Ken. Nothing a kick starter could have fixed? Also the Mad farmers was on the same weekend. I only know this because I was getting txt from the farmer telling me my sexual preferences (I think my wife disagrees with you Keith, keep to those sheep, aye).

I do try and get to any club events but sometimes time, financial and family restrictions don't make it possible to attend.

I never had a chance in the last newsletter to thank the Waikato guys for putting on an awesome national rally, despite the antics of a couple of Auckland members the weekend seem to go off without a hitch. I guess I'll be finding the ins and outs of it all at next years rally – look for the entry in this newsletter.

There have been a couple of changes on the committee, Darrel Payne has taken over the role of Regalia Officer from John Milligan. Thanks John for your help doing the regalia. And Melissa is taking over the role as membership secretary from Sharon Rowan. Thanks Shaz for your work over the past 8 years. We have had issues with post, so if anyone thinks they have missed any reminders or membership cards please don't hesitate to contact one of us, if we don't know there isn't much we can do!

Well that's it from me, hope you and your families are all well, and please get out there and support any events we have organised and spread the word on NZs premier Triumph club.

*Cheers, Glenn Mills
President TOMCC NZ*

The Members and Committee of TOMCC NZ would like to welcome the following new members to our club

Warwick Dalbeth	<i>Christchurch</i>
John Bartle	<i>Rangiora</i>
Steve Allen	<i>Taupo</i>
Eddie Reisch	<i>Wellington</i>
Bill Rollerson	<i>Owhango</i>
Stuart Ward	<i>Christchurch</i>
Allen Costello	<i>Christchurch</i>
Michael Bugbee	<i>Auckland</i>
Shane Guy	<i>Christchurch</i>
Dave Taylor	<i>Christchurch</i>
Lara Aspinall	<i>Christchurch</i>
Shane Canning	<i>Ashburton</i>
Lloyd Carpenter	<i>Christchurch</i>
Ritchie Smith	<i>Christchurch</i>
Brad Pike	<i>Auckland</i>
Robert Bicker	<i>Auckland</i>
Darren Williams	<i>Rotorua</i>
Sonya McIntyre	<i>Christchurch</i>
Steve Wichman	<i>Westport</i>

Photo Credits

Photos in this issue of *Triumph Times* were kindly supplied by:
Bill Spice, Judi Nightingale, John Witherington,
Ray Hayward and Ken Spall.

Otago and Southland's Bonneville Brigade winter operation or "where is Harry the hard-arsed Haast Eagle?"

On a cold, bright winter's day the elite mounted troops (all two of them) of the Bonneville Brigade rode out from their respective garrisons – Troop Leader John Witherington from Area HQ in Invercargill and Ken Spall from the Mosgiel outpost. A signal had been dispatched to various TOMCC NZ garrisons around the country calling for volunteers to support in this important mission.

Unfortunately recent desertions from our ranks meant that cunning rather than overwhelming force would have to be exercised in the execution of this mission.

Before proceeding with this report, a brief explanation re the Bonneville Brigade is in order. The Bonneville Brigade is the intelligence, research and exploration unit of TOMCC NZ Inc. It's purpose is to establish the truth behind local phenomena, myths and legends. Its most recent success has been the pursuit and sighting of Margaret the Milford Moose. For further information please refer to the December 2013 issue of *Triumph Times*.

For this Queen's Birthday weekend the two eager members of the unit were tasked with establishing the existence of the "thought-to-be-extinct" Haast Eagle.

Our two intrepid explorers headed off towards the Central Otago wilderness over frost and grit strewn roads and in John's case, roads that had been liberally doused with effluent from stock trucks, adding a certain spice to the journey.

Meeting at 13:30 hrs the two joined forces in Cromwell and in tight formation John and Ken forged west towards Makarora where the base camp would be established for operation Harry the hard-arsed Haast Eagle.

As a few of TOMCC's mounted troops already know the ride from Lake Hawea, over the Neck and then along the shore of Lake Wanaka is indeed spectacular, and particularly so on a sunny winter's day when there is no traffic. There is hardly a straight stretch of road until just before Makarora. A fantastic ride.

Base camp at Makarora was one of the A-frame chalets at the Makarora Tourist Centre. They have excellent accommodation, cosy, warm and very reasonably priced. Also the restaurant serves well cooked meals of generous proportions and there is a well stocked bar for a little tittle in the evening.

Sunday morning our pair of explorers woke early, eager to get underway in their quest for Harry the hard-arsed Haast Eagle. It is winter and they're in an Alpine location so it was no surprise to find that they'd also woken to a ferocious frost.

After scrubbing the frost off the bikes, and following a few sluggish revolutions, John's Bonnie finally kicked into life but Ken's Bonnie just refused to fire up. Jumper leads were connected between the two bikes and with John's bike revving freely and waking up the rest of the camp Ken's bike was eventually persuaded to wake up, with



Is it a bird? Is it a plane? is it a Triumph?
No, it's Harry, the hard-arsed Haast Eagle!



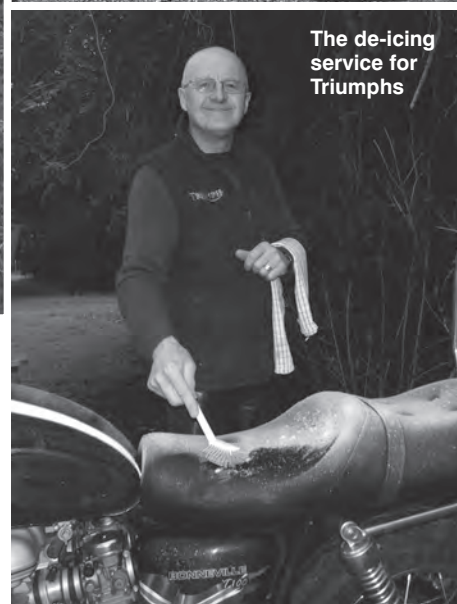
The eagle snare
found at
Jackson Bay

its short megaphone muffler crackle adding to the early morning mechanical racket. Thankfully there were no complaints as most visitors to Makarora come to hear the early morning birdsong not the bellow of a couple of noisy Bonnies.

Finally John and Ken were underway for some serious Haast Eagle hunting. Their trip took them through the exquisitely winding road of the Haast Pass, ducking in and out of stands of ancient forest. On reaching Haast they ventured south to Jacksons Bay and at the bridge over the Arawhata river John spotted an enormous shadow against the blue west coast sky. Just a quick glimpse of an enormous bird, and then it was gone – could it be Harry?

It was whilst foraging along the shoreline at Jacksons Bay that Ken stumbled on what could only have been an eagle snare. It was far too big for snaring sparrows so surely it had to be for a much larger bird like the Haast Eagle. All they had to do now was locate his nest and use the snare to hold Harry the hard-arsed Haase Eagle between the two Bonnies and return "triumphantly" to civilisation.

Whilst also looking out for signs of Harry or his nest, the ride back to Makarora was quick and cold. Quick because the pair needed to make it past the Diana Falls slip before the road was closed for the the night, and cold



The de-icing
service for
Triumphs



The warming service
for Triumph riders

because the sun was well down and that frost was on its way back again.

On arrival back at Makarora the first thing Ken did was to take the battery out of the bike. John had suggested that a warm battery may help with getting the bike started the next morning. During the evening various ways were explored (some of dubious value!) for warming the battery if necessary, see the photos for more details.

Sure enough the next morning the pair were once more greeted by another heavy frost also accompanied by dense fog. Ken set to and defrosted the bikes with pot brush and tea towel before re-installing the battery. One press of the button and the Bonnie roared into life. Conclusion – dodgy battery to be replaced on returning to home.

The ride out was slow through freezing fog which cleared about halfway along the lake road which was just a well as Ken spotted where Harry was perched way up on his eyrie but too far to be able to use the eagle snare we had found at Jacksons Bay. At least we know he's there if you look hard enough!

The weather also cleared nicely as far as Lake Hawea and then it was back into fog again as far as Clyde with sunshine all the way back home. There was a little detour over the Roxburgh Dam with also a quick look at the impressive little generating station at the back of Roxburgh.

From Millers Flat the pair rode the delightful Millenium Track alongside the Clutha river through to the Beaumont pub where, over a toasted sandwich and a cup of tea, a toast was proposed to the Queen and to all those who were unable to join them on this adventure, but hopefully who may be able to come next time the Bonnie Brigade embarks on a mission.

*Ken Spall
Otago & Southland
TOMCC NZ*



Harry, the hard-arsed Haast Eagle hovers high over the half-arsed attempt to get to his hard-to-get-at eagle's hideaway.



Lake Wanaka, gateway to Haast Eagle territory and damn good riding country

Battery warming in a cool climate

Some of these methods are of dubious value and we do not recommend them.



Was that Kawhia or Kaiaua, who knows!

2014 Mad Farmer's Tour report

There was a lot of planning and to-ing and fro-ing before this year's Farmer's run as there were a ton of corners and back roads to negotiate. Bryan and Sue were this year's organisers and I must say they did an awesome job.

The meeting point was the Rototuna BP petrol station, the groups leaving at 9:30am so were off a little earlier this year. On my arrival there were a number of people gathered around and the stragglers rolled in over the next 15 minutes.

The group comprised of Bryan & Sue (Hinckley Thunderbird), newcomer Neville (Hinckley Thunderbird), Jocelyn (Hinckley Thunderbird), Judi (Hinckley Bonnie), Mike (650 Bonnie), Peter & Sue (51 Thunderbird), Robin (65 BSA), Ray & Maxine (79 T140D), Geoff & Jo (Hinckley Sprint), Paul & Cheryl (Hinckley Legend), Kerry & Brenda (Hinckley Bonnie), Rob & Selina (Rocket) and of course the Mad Farmer (T150V) Trev also turned up on Mr Ted to see us off but this year he was not joining the tour.

Great to see Jocelyn joining us (we all wish Shadz could make it as well) and new club member Neville, great to have you along.

Ray had received a call from the Farmer indicating he had staff problems on the farm and still had a few things to sort before leaving and he commented that he wouldn't get away until closer to midday. Some would say he was leaving so late because he had to



The group at the Kaiaua Hotel for lunch

kiss each cow farewell before leaving but I wouldn't record that as fact.

After the riders brief the group loaded their bikes and formed up behind Bryan in the driveway. Most will know that the location for the night is not disclosed so you need to keep up and make sure the bike behind you gets around any intersections correctly. As long as everyone follows that instruction nobody should get lost. Geoff being the most obvious bike from a distance (big red Sprint) he was

delegated the tail end Charlie role. Bryan and Sue (been so organised) had given everyone a sealed envelope before we departed on the first day with instructions not to open unless lost! Mate who could get lost!

We head off in an easterly direction toward Morrinsville. We twisted and turned our way around out the back of Ta Huna. At times we seemed to be heading in the wrong direction but another turn off saw us back on track. We got pretty close to some small towns like



TOMCC 2015 National rally



20-22 February 2015 Waitawheta camp, Coromandel Forest Park

Here is the outline for the 2015 TOMCC National rally, I believe we have got a fantastic deal for our club members. Prepaid entry includes cloth badge, bands on both nights and **entry to the Paeroa Street Races**.

Friday night's band will be "Piston broke" and Saturday we will have playing "Fat max with Harley and the rocket 3s", Paeroa Street Races is on the Saturday (street parade, swap meet, hot rod show) and Sunday (main race day) those from out of town might want to book accommodation for the Sunday night as the races don't finish until about 5pm.

So for \$45 being a member does pay. Where else can you get a weekend full of entertainment at this price. There will be onsite caterers over the weekend but the Waihi memorial RSA has done us a good deal on catering:

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Friday | BBQ Steak, sausages, marinated chicken nibbles, onions, bread rolls, coleslaw, bean salad, pasta salad, roast veg salad and mushroom sauc. |
| Saturday | Breakfast. Scrambled eggs, sausages, tomatoes, toast, bacon, fried mushrooms, hash browns. |
| Saturday | Roast roast beef, roast chicken, roast potatoes, roast kumara, roast pumpkin, bread rolls, coleslaw, pasta salad, roast veg salad, bean salad. |
| Sunday | Breakfast. scrambled eggs, sausages, tomatoes, toast, bacon, fried mushrooms, hash browns and baked beans. |

You can check the rally site out at www.waitawhetacamp.co.nz Accommodation is bunk style, if you require private accommodation we can organise caravans (this will be payable on top of entry fee) otherwise tenting is best. If you wish to forward any gear ahead of time send it to System Control Engineering NZ Ltd, c/o Rik Reid, 182 Station Road,

Penrose, Auckland 1061. And we will get it to the rally site for you, please make sure your gear is clearly marked and has return packaging with it.

Those of you travelling up from the South Island we will be doing a draw, the first pre-paid entry before January 31st 2015 will get free travel on the blue bridge ferry.

This rally we opted to do singlets as well as t-shirts. Here is what the white t-shirts look like, and the black t-shirts will be a white print.



So there you have it, get your entries in, and we will see you next year.

Te Kauwhata which caused a few to wonder where we were. We rode through valley after valley of scenic farmland and bush. The morning air was pretty fresh and I would say in places the area was close to a big frost.

Soon enough we popped out on SH 2 at Maramarua. We fuelled up at the Waitomo service station, but no we are not at Waitomo at all.

The morning tea stop was another kilometre down the road at the Pukeko's nest. We warned our own Mike Gray of the stop knowing his Pukeko phobia from recent years. Whilst at the café we heard from the Farmer and arranged for him to meet us at the final destination for the night (yet to be revealed). His delayed start certainly frustrated him. An hour later the 5 minute call is made and we were off again this time heading further north, then turning right to head up into the Hunua Ranges.

The ride was generally uneventful apart from Ray getting stung by a bee and having to stop at Clevedon to buy a bottle of water to swallow his medication. Soon after the restart from Clevedon, Bryan whilst out in front, was looking in his mirror to ensure everyone was in tow, ooops, watch out for those 35km left handers mate, they pop up pretty quickly when you're looking backwards.

What great views as we crossed over the hills toward the Firth of Thames, blue sky, no wind, great sea views. Just outstanding! Must be the finest weather for a Mad Farmers Tour in history!

We cruised down the coast to Kaiaua and stopped at the local pub for lunch. When in Rome do what the Romans do, so its fish & chips for lunch washed down with ya favourite pint. The group evidential photo was taken, lunch eaten, beer consumed and off again towards our final stop for the night.

We cruised down the coast heading towards, and then onto highway 25 to Thames, then down the main street to our accommodation for the night at the Imperial hotel. This is where the Farmer caught up with us and he was still cursing his farm hand for his late departure (we can't actually write what he said).

With the accommodation sorted and the bikes parked up around the back, a number settled into the bar for the night. Now this

got a bit confusing as a group of us decided to drink outside at one of the tables. Now be careful here as there is an invisible line down the foot path that you cannot step over when drinking. Testing the boundaries, we managed to work out not to cross the footpath to the nice looking bench seat on the other side, as they say the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence where you're not allowed.

The group broke up before dinner and a some of us walked down to the Junction Hotel to visit an old mate of Mike's who drank there. What are the odds I ask you as we walk in the door? Sure enough there he is in his usual seat with pint in hand. Apparently he lives some 400 yards up the road and it only takes him a few moments to drive the distance to the pub and home again – if he doesn't get tangled up with the local law. Yep, okay, makes sense I suppose.

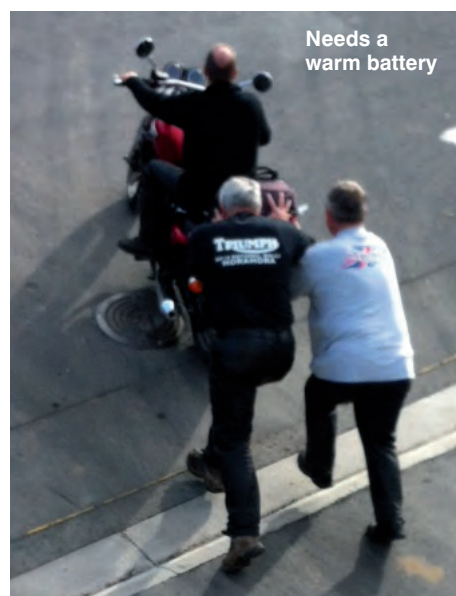
Talking about the local law, on our walk back (yep we walked both ways) we spotted the local law en masse at a shop ahead of us. The odds were on that it was either a 2 for 1 donut sale or free coffee, but nobody was brave enough to ask.

After dinner it was back into the bar. It's getting busier as there is a 21st in the room next door but I would say it was a pretty quiet 21st until we overheard part of one of the speeches which talked about his birth and coming out of his mum's womb, yep that was a crowd pleaser alright (should have saved that story for the wedding).

Up early the next morning with a \$10 cooked breakfast of bacon and eggs, pay the account then set up the bikes for a photo in front of the Hotel. A couple of issues this morning. Paul and Judi's Hinckley's won't start plus Ray's T140 also has decided it is just too cold. Plenty of pushing, kicking and cursing later and all three are up and running and with the group photo taken, we're off for fuel.

Heading westward we cruised up the back way out of Thames on highway 25 then out around the back of Te Kauwhata, around the Lake Waikare and onto the Waiterimu road. Now for those who are lost, we are out the back of Orini. We continued through Taupiri

continued on next page



Needs a warm battery



Oh, that's a nice bike!



Needs help from the Bonnie Brigade



Bikes lined up at the Imperial Hotel

Mad Farmer's Tour – continued

then down to Ngaruawahia for a coffee and fuel.

It was another great day to be a motorcyclist. Blue skies, no wind, no traffic and 14 mates on bikes just enjoying themselves, just awesome.

At this point we were pretty close to the Orton's home and confusion was starting to reign on just where we are headed. Kawhia was a reasonable guess due to some big hints by some mischevous attendee's, but by this time Mrs Orton had thrown her hands in the air and had given up guessing.

Leaving Ngaruawhaia we headed north on the back road to Huntly then up Rotowaro road and along highway 22. This just had to be the best roads of the weekend. The pace hotted up as we twisted our way through to the Waingaro Hotel. In places you could see the remnants of the morning's frost. Everyone stretched out at the Waingaro soaking up the sun, enjoying lunch and the odd pint. Soon enough the 10 minute call echoed out, and we were off again. Back through to Ngaruawahia then on to Whatawhata for gas, we then took a right turn and headed to Raglan.

Robin had an argument with 3 young fella's in a ute when riding up the Deviation. Arms were waiving and the one finger salute was issued. What a great day, a bit of road rage as well as a great ride, does it get any better than this?

Everyone settled into their digs. Bryan and Paul looked into the Legend's starting problem and found the earth to the battery not connected (problem then fixed). A few others mucked around with their bikes. Afterwards a quick committee meeting was held to see what the dinner plan would be.

Brenda suggested a barbecue (which sounded appealing) but I think the pub had a calling, and most of the group ended up heading there.

Neville's partner Joanne, joined us for dinner. She had seen part of the group riding toward the Waingaro earlier in the day. It was funny because they were saying, as the crowd flies across Raglan harbour, we were within 2 km's of their place.

Jocelyn spotted something walking out of her meal, so suddenly the pub meal was rightly off, and Jocelyn, Geoff & Jo walked down to a local restaurant.

Judi and Ray entertained some locals with their antics through a closed window. The women watching did not know we knew each other, the finale being Ray climbed out and joined her on the balcony. The night wasn't a big one so the group headed back to the motel and promptly sat in the courtyard drinking whilst others tried to find the source of the loud music in town.

There were about 5 very nice American V8s also at the motel and the owner of a very nice lefthand drive coupe (this car got my

vote) came out to join us and we all talked the usual bull. It just got too cold and with Pete and Ray the last of the bunch still sitting out there (talking shit) they too threw in the towel and headed to bed.

Not long afterwards those from town turned up. The Farmer was bashing on motel room doors trying to find or make a party. I suspect Mike G and Judi were with him as you could hear more than one voice but everyone kept a low profile and wisely nobody turned on a light to see who it was. This form of avoidance from a hangover has been learnt over the past 14 odd years of the Farmer's runs.

Dawn brought an overcast day and everyone gathered in the courtyard waiting for the breakfast area to open. Robin had invited everyone to his place to wander through his shed, so after breakfast, and packing up, the group headed off.

Paul, Cheryl and Mike turned off at Whatawhata as with dark skies looming they wanted to get back to Auckland. Geoff & Jo, Jocelyn & Judi also headed for home and bolted directly toward the dark clouds heading for the BOP. Bryan & Sue, Ray & Maxine, Pete & Sue, the Farmer, Neville and Robin all headed to his place to look in the shed. Here we spent a good hour kicking tyres and talking before the decision was made to head off home.

What a great weekend of motorcycling with like-minded kindred spirits, (as Henry Cole from World's Greatest Motorcycles rides would say). I'd rate this as one of the best Farmer's runs we have done.

Thanks again to Bryan & Sue. Next year Kerry & Brenda and maybe Eric are sorting the Farmers. Planning is already underway.

*Ray & Maxine Hayward
Waikato & BOP, TOMCC NZ*



TOMCC NZ Breakdown Assistance

The purpose of this list is to offer member's assistance in case of a breakdown or an event while travelling out of their own area.

For further information, additions or deletions, or if you wish to be added to this list please contact John.Witherington@xtra.co.nz or your area coordinator.

Christchurch

Phil Garrett	027 441 5954	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
Wayne Woodward	027 285 3083	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
Geoff Walton & Chris Devos	03 324 8385	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
Trevor Saul (Rangiora)	027 296 7066	Breakdown assistance

Murchison

Sue & Chris Donavan	03 523 9016 027 892 1544	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
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Otago

Ken Spall (Dunedin)	03 4891740 021 269 9530	Breakdown assistance
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Southland

John Witherington (Invercargill)	027 247 2853	Breakdown assistance
John Holgate (Lake Hawea)	027 432 2917	Breakdown assistance

Waikato

Ray Haywood (Hamilton)	027 369 0018	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
Keith Randle (Te kuiti)	021 0291 0605	Breakdown assistance & accommodation

Bay of Plenty

Judi Nightingale (Papamoa)	021 324 063	Accommodation
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Taupo

Dig Young	021 244 4090	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
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Gisborne

Arthur Bond	022 140 6252	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
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Wanganui

Alan & Dayle Abbott	06 347 7550 027 245 7771	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
Baz & Mel	021 843 564 027 225 1313	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
Sharon Rowan	027 256 5595	Accommodation
Beano	021 175 2696	Breakdown assistance & accommodation
Bob Anderson	07 345 3333	Breakdown assistance

Levin

Ron Schiphorst	027 442 1345 021 164 6045	Breakdown assistance
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Canterbury TOMCC NZ Twilight Ride, 2nd March

The write-up for this ride appeared in the March issue of Triumph Times



Triumph's Last Days at Meriden

Inside the Triumph Factory: Workers' Co-Op, August 1981. Story by Lee Palser

Race riots were dividing Britain, spilling out of the London suburb of Brixton and touching even staid Royal Leamington Spa. I had planned to visit the Tiny Perfect Redhead working in a bar at the Lord Leycester Hotel in nearby Warwick, but arrived to discover she'd already left, our letters to each other stalled somewhere thanks to a Canada Post strike.

Alone then, I traveled on to my second stop, a short trip away by BritRail and bus: Meriden and the Triumph workers' Co-op. The once-great company was struggling. A workforce that had numbered nearly 2,000 souls turning out 1,500 motorcycles a week had shrunk to just over 100 producing 125, most of them Bonneville. Fanatically loyal North American dealers, feeling betrayed and unable to get enough new products at anything like reasonable prices, were out of business or selling Japanese motorcycles almost exclusively. A Triumph man ever since I was able to discriminate one bike from another, I wanted to see what was happening.

The bus let me off near the main gate of the plant, a long, reddish-brown, two-story building with a few cars parked in the lot and "Triumph Engineering Company" in blue block lettering across the front. I snapped a couple of frames on my old Nikon F and hesitated, unsure if the letter I'd written to managing director Bob Lindsay had arrived. What kind of reception I'd get would likely depend on my charm, seldom very dependable at the best of times, and not at all helped by jet lag from a flight overseas in steerage and a virulent argument with a BritRail conductor on the way to Coventry.

In the event, I was met by an affable, robust man in a gray suit sporting a handlebar moustache that utterly failed to hide a disarming smile. He was Peter Britton, sales director, and no, my letter, with its accompanying introduction from one of Triumph's earliest Canadian dealers, hadn't arrived. He glanced cursorily at my press credentials, peered a little closer at my travel-battered camera gear and rumpled appearance, did something of a mental shrug, and said he'd be happy to show me around.

Along the way, we discussed the Co-op. I listened to the words and tried to search out the meaning behind them. I heard much hope for the future and an undertone of sorrow for those who had gone. Some 300 of the remaining workers had accepted voluntary layoff not long before, he said. The 100 left, struggling to keep Edward Turner's venerable engine design alive, were those who could do two, three or more jobs.

But they were, he said, producing a limited-edition Bonneville, the Royal, to commemorate the wedding of Lady Diana and Prince Charles, something similar in intention to the Silver Jubilee of 1977 but in far fewer numbers (250 as opposed to 2,500) and with a correspondingly higher degree of exclusivity. Was I interested in seeing them? Oh yes, I was indeed. Soon he was standing amid

distinctive gray frames – destined for the home market – that awaited their seats, side covers and special chrome-and-paint tanks, a justifiably proud look on his face.

Then it was on to other parts of the plant, where Britton made a point of showing me the assembly line that had been recently moved to the main shop floor by workers who came in to do the job on their holidays.

If there weren't hordes of people, there were at least racks of engine casings awaiting marriage with crankshafts and frames ready to be welded up. Men and women, most oblivious to my presence, but some looking up, smiling, at hearing a strange accent, were busy spoking wheels, pinstripping side covers, powder-spraying cylinder barrels and building up engines. They were a mixture of ages, intent on their work and pushing hard to ensure there would be a tomorrow, but still able to muster some humor: "Don't marry for money, it's far cheaper to borrow it," read a hand-lettered thought-for-the-day on a chalkboard near one work station.

Britton made note of improvements that were steadily finding their way into production: The frame was now powder-coated and baked in high-temperature ovens; mating surfaces actually mated and had proper seals to prevent the oil leaks that had long been a standing joke to riders. There were also trials with anti-vibration technology to overcome the inherent characteristics of the vertical twin design, and even the Prince of Darkness – Lucas – seemed to have improved its reliability to the point where basic illumination was not an afterthought and even electric starting (with a made-in-India component) was viable.

Britton was as honest with me as he could be, under the circumstances. He knew the Co-op was in trouble – hardly a state secret – even though it had finally wrested control of its own marketing away from Norton Villiers not long before. He also knew the North American dealers had lost faith and acknowledged there had been mistakes. Many of the problems were being addressed, he said, but it would take awhile for the message to filter out. Triumph was instead concentrating on consolidating in the UK, where it maintained a 30 percent share of the 750cc market, before tackling overseas sales again in any big way.

But the Co-op was still hugely in debt. If they were to stay alive beyond the next couple of years, more would have to be done. The people in the plant, Britton said, had good, sound ideas, including some experimental work that he couldn't talk about. Meanwhile, the 650 Thunderbird, sporting black siamesed pipes, was back and there were entries in the off-road market, the 650 TR6T and 750 TR7T. All that, coupled with high-end niche marketing – the fully faired Executive and the 8-valve TS series, including the new TS8-1 sports tourer – should help turn the corner. Triumph, he believed, would continue, albeit in reduced circumstances. It would be a slow,

difficult climb out of the hole they were in, but they were going to give it everything they had.

POST SCRIPT

Later – months later, as it turned out, given the vagaries of newspaper work – I would write about my impressions of the plant for the business section of the Canadian paper where I worked, and interpret as best I could the hopes of the workers and the will they displayed, despite indicators that they could not long survive, no matter what they did, no matter what their supporters wanted. Undercapitalized, working with outmoded equipment, they were soldiering on, I wrote, striving hard for a turnaround. But it was a turnaround that would never come.

The stories trickled out later about the efforts to find a "White Knight" or additional capital, or even to make a merger. None of it happened, and the bankers and accountants descended. The factory and property were to be sold for housing estates, the money used to pay down the debt. Proposals to move production to a nearby disused auto factory (ironically, Triumph's, which until the mid-1930s was part of the original company) fell through. By late 1983, the Co-op was gone; the stock, the spares, the equipment – even the name – gone, too. Although a handful of Bonneville continued to be built under license for the next few years at Racing Spares in Devon, Triumph at Meriden was no more.

I grew up in the Sixties, in an era when British twins ruled the Canadian roads. I got my motorcycle license and a bike – albeit a lightweight Japanese single – as soon as I was able, and spent time in the Army reserve Signal Corps, where I hung around bothering the dispatch riders on their Triumphs and Nortons when I wasn't out climbing telephone poles.

Along the way, I never lost sight of a very personal objective: to own a Bonneville. By the time I arrived at the main gates in 1981, I had one, a 1973 750 5-speed that went like lightning and sounded like thunder, leaked oil and vibrated – and provided as much fun as I've had in my life in a saddle.

Sometimes I miss that Bonnie, but more often, I miss the idea of those bikes and those dedicated people at Meriden. I am very pleased to know that they are building beautiful, modern Triumphs bearing famous model names just up the road in Hinckley. I am happy to see a new Bonneville that so clearly pays homage to its more illustrious namesake. But I don't think I'll ever make a pilgrimage to John Bloor's Leicestershire plant. They make a world-class motorcycle there, but not "The Best Motorcycle in the World."

Oh, yes, the redhead I was going to see that hot August? She's right here. Passions, like legends, deserve to live on.

Reproduced with thanks to
Richard Backus, Editor, Motorcycle Classics
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The bikes at Lawrence

Otago and Southland Monthly Ride

As all our local members will know we have a regular monthly ride on the first Sunday of each month, meeting 11am at the Z Service Station on Anderson's Bay Road, Dunedin. As with all TOMCC NZ events all members, friends and family are always welcome to attend.

The May monthly ride was well supported by 3 members and 3 guests and in cool but sunny conditions headed for the little historic gold mining town of Lawrence. After a warm-up cuppa it was agreed that 4 of us would continue the ride up the Millenium Track between Beaumont and Millers Flat and then head back via Raes Junction to meet up again at the Beaumont Hotel.

The Millenium track is a gravel road all the way but easy going. You may get your bike a bit grubby but it's well worth the ride through the very picturesque valley and past the hills on both banks of the Clutha River.

My thanks to all who took part, it was an excellent ride in good company.

*Ken Spall
Otago & Southland,
TOMCC NZ*



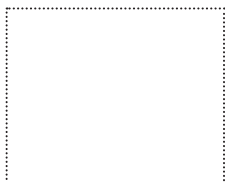
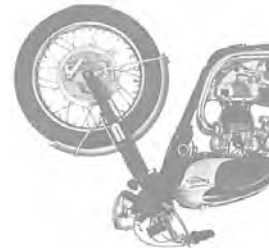
Steve, Ken, David and Phil at the "Lonely Graves" on the Millenium Track



Beaumont Hotel



*The Triumph Owners Motor Cycle Club of New Zealand Inc.
If undelivered, please return to 7 Glasgow St, Mosgiel, Otago, New Zealand*



BITS & PIECES

A small number of WATOC badges are still available at \$10 each plus postage (in NZ). If you want one please get in touch with me.

Also we still have some copies of our club history book, *The First Twenty Years 1993-2013*, at \$20 each plus \$2.50 postage (in NZ).
Contact Ken, details below.



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The deadline for the next issue of *Triumph Times* is 19 September 2014

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All past and present members are invited to the TOMCC NZ 21st Birthday Party

Friday 11 July 2014 6pm – Meet and greet at the Sideline Sports Bar, 331 Stanmore Road, Christchurch.

Saturday 12 July, 7pm to midnight – Social Night at Ouruhia Hall, Guthries Road, Marshlands, Christchurch.

Catch up with your old mates. Partners, friends and associates all welcome.
BYO and a plate for supper please.

If you would like to attend and require accommodation, billeting can be arranged with local TOMCC members, or if you have any questions please contact:

Wayne Woodward 03 388 1873, or 027 285 3083

Sunday 13 July –
Backup day for ride and final farewells.

Twenty one