

## "Southern Muster"

### National Mustang Convention, Invercargill 2011

In all BOP had eight cars travel down to Invercargill for the "Southern Muster". Three travelled individually and five left as a group. The group plan was to get down in three days, spend a day cleaning, participate in the convention then take a bit longer coming home to have a bit of a look around.



The first day was spent travelling from Tauranga to Wellington for an early ferry crossing the next morning. There was a small hiccup passing through Wairaki when Debra & Graham reported "No brakes!". Pull over, rear wheel off, brake drum removed and a whole heap of bits fell out! "I think we found the problem". Quick repairs and we were on the road again.....



Day two; a long day with first the crossing and then travel to Ashburton for the night. Despite concern by a few the crossing was uneventful and smooth in drizzly overcast weather.



However after landing, the weather gradually worsened so that by the time we got to Kaikoura it was blowing a gale with driving rain and flooding in some areas. On arrival at Ashburton Paul was concerned about lifter noise so early on day three he went to look for an open garage to do some "minor" adjustments before we all left. It turned out that at least three push rods were broken so the minor became major. The good news was that the garage he stopped at was one that built race engines and knew what they were doing. They ordered parts and said they would work late if necessary to get him back on the road so in true team spirit we all left him there on his own (Gillian was bundled in with Gus and Wendy) and we pushed on to Invercargill.

The first fuel stop of the day saw us watching a cop car race past with sirens blazing. Someone suggested that it may have had something to do with four mustangs laying rubber at a set of traffic lights 5 minutes earlier – but we all know that wasn't true!



There were a lot of phone calls during the day to see how paul was getting on: the garage worked late, got him on the road and he joined us in Invercargill after an all-night drive – luckily no cops about after dark eh Paul? Rumor has it that Gillian was seen streaking half naked across the hotel grounds at 1am to greet him.

The next day was cleaning day. Debra had made arrangements with the local Ford dealership to use a hoist to clean under the cars. Macauley Motors were great, they provided two hoists, cleaning rags and hot water, coffee, and wash up facilities. It made cleaning easy and enabled a few ongoing repairs to get done. (Cars drive better with the diff and rear axle assembly FIRMY secured eh Bruce?). A few beers and a small presentation in appreciation was richly deserved.



Due to time and space constraints we were one of the clubs that was to set up in the Velodrome that day. Once in and the car photos were taken it was a chance to do a final clean and dust and get the cars ready. It was about this time that Paul discovered a screw imbedded in a tyre: wheel off and off to the tyre shop!



That night was a mix and mingle and the watching of the RWC 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> playoff. (Also a chance to taste a few Bluff Oysters!)



Show day: The Velodrome turned out to be a great venue with most cars fitting in and about 20 (non-judged cars) outside. All BOP cars looked fantastic on the day which was a great effort after all the wet weather travelling down. (We hear that Rusty & Wendy even tried off-roading on their way down.)





During the show, SMOC had arranged a bus for a "Ladies Day Out" for those who wanted to partake. Not a lot has been said about what went on here but I gather Rusty's credit card got a bit of a hammering! Those that went all reported having a great time. For the boys, Bill Richardson's Truck Museum was five minutes walk from the Velodrome and was an eye opener. There were over 200 trucks many of which would have not been out of place in the car show such was the work that had gone into restoring them.



After the show wrapped up some of us took the opportunity to shoot out to bluff for a quick look. Battling cold gale force winds we got a few quick pictures before heading back to join the others for dinner and a few quieties. After a hectic few days it was an early night for everyone.



Cruise Day: A big line up of Mustangs (around 140) assembled for the drive to Tuatapere for lunch and "Push & Grunt" (least said about that the better – no one wanted to bring it home anyway!). This was followed by a couple of laps around Teratonga Raceway on the way home. It was good to have a fine day to enjoy the activities and the scenery along the way.



After the run it was back for a fine session – and there were a few - before getting ready for the prize giving dinner and the RWC final.



BOPMOC all went in our referees uniforms complete with red & yellow cards and whistles. (Unfortunately the whistles got shut down pretty early – something about other guests complaining!).



Dinner and prize giving wasted no time with the last presentations being completed as the teams ran on. BOP did extremely well with 7 awards (4x 1<sup>st</sup>, 1x 2<sup>nd</sup> and 2x 3<sup>rd</sup> placings) and Paul also received a hard luck award for all his troubles. There was then a very patriotic following of the game with a lot of relief at the final whistle. That result really capped off what had been a great trip so far. However, the previous weeks activities finally caught up with everyone and it was a fairly early night for all of us.

The farewell breakfast saw Auckland being presented with the Top Gun trophy which was well deserved. Bruce, Wendy & Rusty, Bev & Gary and Wayne & Ross headed off to meet other commitments and or visit family. Four cars left and after we all said our goodbyes it was time to start up and start the long trip home via Queenstown. However..... Paul's problems hadn't finished. With the hood up it was a matter of trying to figure out what was causing the popping noise?

It looks like a spark plug lead had come off throwing the timing out which caused two push rods to disengage. Easy fix – no; one of the push rods was badly bent and unusable. The convention duty mechanic was called and he just happened to locate some spare push rods that should fit and enable the car to get Paul & Gillian home. The mechanic was called out on Labour Day, spent nearly 3 hours sourcing and fitting parts then wouldn't accept payment for the work – how is that for southern hospitality!



A little late, but we were finally on the road and Queenstown bound. On arrival Graham & Debra were off to Wanaka to visit relatives (quite a story in itself) while the rest of us enjoyed local sights before boarding the Gondola up to the restaurant for dinner. There just happened to be a fairly substantial storm passing through

(130kph+ winds) so it took a bit of persuading to get everyone up there but it was worth it. The views were fantastic and the dinner just as good. (Gillian appeared to enjoy the Buzzy Bee a bit more than the Gondola!)



Next day and it was off to Timaru via Arrowtown and Tekapo. The weather was still pretty average but we managed to get some good views of the alps and the views at Tekapo were stunning. Timaru was a night of takeaways, an interesting take on Poker and one or two drinkies.



Next day it was off to Hanmer springs with a stop in Christchurch to visit the Mustang Centre (where we met up with Bev & Gary) ; Moorehouse Motors and have a cruise past the red zone. It was pretty obvious that it is going to take a long time to patch Christchurch up. Hanmer Springs provided a relaxing soak and a welcome rest.



Next day it was off to Nelson and a stop off at Southern Mustang where we caught up with Wayne & Ross.

Next day was a chance to look at WOW (and the car display!) That was well worth the stop. Everyone split up here with some visiting Blenheim, some visiting relatives and others heading direct to Picton.



We all met up there to find out our Ferry had been delayed – strange the Aratere had just undergone a multi-million dollar refit so there can't be a problem with her!!! After a bit of a wait, and a little dancing on tables, she finally arrived and we had a calm sailing into Wellington. Paul & Gillian certainly breathed a sigh of relief to be back in the North Island. (They did make it home without any more mishaps – they had already had more than their fair share of bad luck.)



After a good sleep it was again on our way north and homeward bound. Most split up here to follow different routes to make family stops along the way. Stops included the Kapiti chocolate factory and the Army museum for lunch – and other things!



All up most did close to 4000km and spent between \$1200-\$1500 on gas and it was worth it. Southland turned on a great convention and we all had the opportunity to catch up with friends and like-minded people from the other clubs. We got a lot done in a fairly short time and had a great time doing it.