

The Inaugural Trans Tasman Packard Rally—Tasmania May 2011

By Lynette Duncan

Recently seven NZ South Pacific Packard members headed to Tasmania for the inaugural Trans Tasman Packard rally which involved a 13 day rally around the island. They were Judy and Peter Talley from Motueka, George and Jo Wallis from Wanaka, Nelson Taylor from Muriwai Beach, Auckland and ourselves Robert and Lynette Duncan, Wanaka.

Anthony Spinks from AusTrips, Devonport organised the rally including all accommodation, activities and most meals. He travelled in front in his utility (for excess luggage) and trailer (for breakdowns). Although Anthony supplied a full itinerary with accompanying maps, it was a case of “follow the leader” around Tasmania, enabling us to enjoy the scenery and not have to worry about navigating. Our co-ordinators Rob & Margaret Trembath from Adelaide, travelled in their Audi due to Rob’s recent hip surgery. They were our tail-end Charlie to ensure no-one was left behind or got lost. Great way to have a rally.

We arrived in Devonport on Thursday 28th April, our starting point, a couple of days before the Australian contingent. We had anticipated it would take two days to clear our cars from customs and get them registered for the road but as Anthony had pre-organised everything, this only took half an hour!

So having the next day, Friday free, enabled us to head off on a day trip to Stanley in our Packards. We headed north up the coast, taking in all the small towns on its way, culminating with our lunch stop at Stanley for a feed of seafood, for which the town is famous for. Stanley is a small historic town at the base of a large hill called “The Nut”. (see photo right)



We also visited a local timber shop where you could purchase slabs of Tasmania native timbers and crafts. At Wynyard, we stopped off for a look around a veteran car museum called the “Wonders of Wynyard”.

Saturday 30th April ~ Day 1 – Devonport sightseeing trip



The following day, Anthony arranged for his father John to take us for a sightseeing trip around the Devonport area in a bus, allowing us to sit back, relax and enjoy the sights. John has been a bus tour guide for some 45 years in Tasmania and his tour took in the House of Anvers chocolate factory, the Ashgrove cheese factory to try their selection of cheeses including wasabi. They hold an annual cow painting competition and the entries can be found on the grounds (see photo left). Lunch was at the Christmas Hills Raspberry Farm. On the way home, we visited a few of the local wineries.

Back in Melbourne, the Aussies were getting ready to board with their cars, the overnight ferry to Devonport.

Sunday 1 May ~ Day 2 – Devonport to Launceston

The Australian contingent arrive about 6.30am off the Spirit of Tasmania, meeting at the local McDonalds (close to port and has a large car park). We met up with old friends from the Wild West Rally from last year and new friends, who we will eventually get to know very well. The rally totalled nine vintage cars, 22 rally participants, plus Anthony and John, a really good size group.

Our morning visits included visits to Sheffield (town of murals), and Chudleigh Honey Farm (yummy honey, but sorry Kiwis no taking any honey back to NZ). After lunch at Deloraine, we visited “Entally House” at Hadspen (see photo at right), built in 1819 by Thomas Reibey, the eldest son of Mary Reibey. She was a former convict who became one of Australia’s wealthiest women, her face is on the \$AUD20 note and was founder of the first bank of Australia, now Westpac. She obtained a grant of 300 acres which her son was to settle and build this homestead.



Our final destination was Launceston where we stayed at the Country Club Villas. At dinner we were informed by John Spinks that he had recently been appointed by Julia as the Country Member for Tasmania. He gave us his inaugural speech, to which our member of Davis (Western Division Member of Australia) responded. This was the first of many entertaining nights.



*Photo left: John Spinks
Devonport Tour Guide &
"Country Member" for Tasmania*

*Photo right: Kiwi Contingent: L to R:
Nelson Taylor
George & Jo Wallis,
Judy & Peter Talley,
Lynette & Robert Duncan,*



Monday 2nd May ~ Day 3 – Day trip from Launceston

Our day trip from Launceston involved heading north up to the Beaconsfield to visit the Mine Museum. This was where in April 2006 two miners, Todd Russell and Brant Webb were trapped for 14 days before being successfully rescued. The museum has displays acknowledging the contribution of the community during that rescue. We had lunch in George Town, where we discovered scallop pies, which Tasmania is famous for. Afternoon visits to the Goaty Hill winery and the Batman bridge. On arriving back in Launceston, we had enough time to call in at the National Automobile Museum of Tasmania, where they had a Peter Brock exhibition of cars and memorabilia, large collection of vintage cars and motorbikes. That night we were free to choose a restaurant of our choice, but we ended up eating together at our motel restaurant which seemed to be pattern for the whole trip.

Tuesday 3rd May ~ Day 4 – Launceston to Freycinet

Leaving Launceston, we travelled south to the Freycinet (Fray-cin-nay) National Park. On the way, we stopped at Campbell Town for lunch for more scallop pies (a favourite with George, Peter & Robert). We then detoured off to Ross to view the National Wool Centre and their historic bridge which was built in 1836 with convict labour. We arrived at our final destination of Freycinet Lodge late that afternoon (*see photo left*). Some of the more energetic rally participants chose to walk to Wineglass Bay lookout with Anthony (*see photo right*). At the summit, there was a great view of the bay, so named because of early whaling in the area (water turning red like wine, not for the shape of the bay).

Others took a more sedate walk along Richardson Beach to Coles Bay where they had a coffee. During our evening meal, Rob Trembath offered a wine from his selection of South Australian wine for tasting which he had brought from his home area of Adelaide.



Wednesday 4 May ~ Day 5 – Freycinet to Port Arthur

Up until then, the weather had been exceptionally warm in Tasmania and having packed many warm clothes, I was soon running out of "summery" clothes. But on waking this morning, the weather has started to deteriorate. Some braver Aussies, like the Davis' and McCreadie's had their hoods down on leaving Freycinet, but by the mid-day, the rain had set in and they had to admit defeat and put them up again.

Our first stop in the morning was a short walk up to the Cape Tourville Lighthouse for spectacular views over the southern ocean where we all gathered for a group photo. (*see group photo on final page*). Then it was off to Port Arthur, going through quite a few small towns such as Swansea (directly adjacent Freycinet Lodge across Great Oyster Bay), Spiky Bridge and Sorell (one of Tasmania's oldest towns) to Stewart Bay Lodge at Port Arthur. We were meant to go on a Port Arthur Ghost Tour that night, but was cancelled due to the inclement weather, so we stayed put in the bar.

Thursday 5th May ~ Day 6 – Port Arthur to Hobart

It was still raining, but was not as heavy as the previous day. After breakfast, we headed down to the Port Arthur Penal Colony settlement for our guided tour. This was one of Australian harshest penal colonies operating from 1833 to 1877. *(Picture right)*

First port of call was a short cruise around the Isle of Dead, the destination for all who died inside the prison camps. Of the 1646 graves recorded, only 180, those of prison and military staff are marked.

Back on shore, we met up with our guide for a short commentary on the history of the colony and its buildings. We were then free to wander at our leisure around the buildings and grounds.



Port Arthur is also well known for the killing spree in 1996 by Martin Bryant who murdered 35 people and wounded 21 before being captured.



On leaving Port Arthur, we headed to Eagle Hawk Neck, which is the narrowest part of the Tasman Peninsula, called an isthmus. It was 30m wide, and the only connection to the mainland, it was fenced and guarded by soldiers, mantraps and half-starved dogs. It is today marked by a bronze sculpture of a ferocious dog.

We then headed to Hobart via Richmond, which is famous for having Australia's oldest bridge still in use, again built using convict labour in 1823. *(Picture left)*

Leaving Richmond, we drove through to Hobart, where we had our first experience in driving in the "big city". But we dutifully followed Anthony and found our destination of Wrest Point Casino.

Friday 6th May ~ Day 7 – Day Trip from Hobart

Our day trip involved travelling south of Hobart towards Huonville. Our first stop was at Franklin to visit the Wooden Boat Centre, an accredited boat building school who offer courses and diplomas. They make boats in the traditional craft using native timbers, including Tasmania's famous Huon pine. This beautiful handcrafted boat *(pictured below)* was built for a famous Sydney chef and nearing completion after two years.



Picture left—Jo Wallis on the Tahune Airwalk



After morning tea at Franklin, Anthony then offered the option of returning to Hobart via Channel Highway, or to travelling on to the Tahune Airwalk, which we chose to do. This involved quite a long drive into the Tahune Forest Reserve, but it was definitely worth the drive. The Airwalk is nearly 1km long, set 20 metres above the ground, giving a birds-eye view of the eucalypts, celery top and King Billy pines, blackwoods etc. It is amazing how large, tall and straight these trees are.

This great story to be continued in next issue.....