

MY JOURNEY TO 41 CLUB NEW ZEALAND

On Monday, 05 January 2009 Rosie and I drove to Wiesbaden near Frankfurt to visit the German National I.R.O. Hans-Dieter Gesch and his wife Elke. After a superb dinner, cooked by Elke in their beautiful apartment the next day Hans-Dieter has shown us his very beautiful town which can show an immense quantity of old houses and buildings, tastefully restored with much love, patience and certainly a lot of money. As Wiesbaden is a Spa, we could visit the old Kurhaus and before leaving also the Orthodox Church, built on a hill, where we could appreciate a magic view of the town.

In the late afternoon, we drove south to Karlsruhe to visit the Int'l Secretary Bob Parton and his wife Gisela. During all the drive to the north and back we were challenged from very low temperatures and also heavy snowfalls. With Bob I had to do a lot of work, but we were honoured afterwards with a very tasty dinner, prepared by Gisela.

The next morning, after a good and rich German breakfast, Rosie and I drove to Munich where we had our flight to Hong Kong and from there to Auckland. In all, we travelled for 24 hours and arrived at destination on Friday, 09 January 2009, at 11.00 o'clock local time which is 12 hours ahead of the continental time.

We were picked up from the airport by BOB STEWART and this was fantastic



because both of us were rather tired. First Bob took us to a bank to change some money and then we had lunch. After this we drove to his very lovely home. There Rosie and I fell asleep for some hours. That evening we met Pam, Bob's wife when she arrived home from work. The next morning Bob drove us around Auckland in order that we could see what this big and beautiful town is about. That evening Bob invited some Ex Tablers for dinner - unfortunately Auckland hasn't any Club 41 yet. The BBQ feast was very nice and some wonderful fellowship followed which provided an opportunity to consider ideas which may conclude in the Charter of a new Club 41. It would really be wonderful if as a result of my visit, a new Club 41 Auckland could ultimately

be chartered. So let us be confident and wish that the collective talents in Auckland can reach this important goal.

The next morning Bob took us to the car rental so we could uplift our car. After this Bob pointed us in the right direction for Rotorua where we visited and admired the geysers and hot springs and could inhale the sulphur smelling air. Then we continued to Taupo, where we were welcomed into the beautiful house of the Ex Tabler GRAHAM DEWES and his wife Paula , situated in a most beautiful landscape. We spent the evening with a tasty dinner on a base of grilled salmon. The next day we visited the nearby waterfall (Huka Falls?) and than the town of Taupo, situated on the shores of the biggest lake in New Zealand with the same name as the town. Beautiful warm weather made this visit most agreeable. Than it was time to drive to Napier, a town situated on the coast of the Northern Island. There we could admire the great Pacific waves. Napier was destroyed in 1931 by an earthquake and was rebuilt with a lot of Art Deco houses which make this town so unique. Nearby Napier we were welcomed by LES MOCKFORD and his wife Lynne who immediately drove us



to Napier to show us their beautiful town. The next morning Les offered us some of his precious working time and drove us to Hastings, a town situated next to Napier and then to a higher hill where we had a most fantastic view to the

surrounding areas with its agriculture, wine and forest areas. Off to the east in the distance was the Pacific Ocean. To our great surprise Les had booked us on a fun ride where we travelled on a tractor drawn trailer along the coast. We drove very near to the sea and sometimes we were washed by the out coming waves which caused a lot of laughter amongst the group - great fun. We travelled along the cliffs, which look somewhat like those of Dover or Cornwall until we reached Cape Kidnappers, which was named by Captain James Cook, as Maori had kidnapped one of his seamen, after they have landed in this place. This area is also named Gannet Beach. There we visited a big gannet colony after a half hour walk to the cliffs of the Cape. While there we had to inhale the “unique smell” of those magic gliders of the air. When we returned, we met John Jordan, the National President of 41 Club New Zealand 2001/2002. It was his wife Monica who had seen and recognised me and what a joy to meet a good friend after such a long time - because we first met during the Int’l H.Y.M. in Bangalore in 2002. Sadly, we were unable to meet our friends again the

following evening, as they had other guests to care for. Some time later we were picked up by Les who drove us to a beach where I could swim in the Pacific Ocean - a wish I have had for a long time. That evening, Les and Lynne organised a nice feast - a fantastic BBQ, with many members from 41 Club Napier – Hawkes Bay. A lovely evening ensued with wonderful friendship, where I provided a report on what is going on in 41 Int'l.

The next morning Lynne went with us to Napier where we had a walk through this unique town and took many pictures of the nice Art Deco homes and business buildings. As is always the case, it was so sad that we had to say goodbye to our friends in Napier. We then drove to Palmerston North, where we were welcomed by KEITH and MONICA BATTERSBY, who were members of the Kiwi Group, who visited Meran-Merano last September 2008. After this we went to our hosts BRUCE and SUE McCONNOR, where we were welcomed and met with other members from 41 Club Palmerston North. Then we were driven to a restaurant where we spent a lovely evening in the company of good friends. The next day our friends drove us through the wonderful Massey College with its most magic parks, then through Aokautere to the end of the gorge and had a nice hike along and up the Manawatu Gorge where we could admire the flora and fauna of the rain forest (which looks like a jungle). After this we drove up to the hills of Te Apiti wind farms where we had a most wonderful view to the nearby wonderful landscapes. In a Herb Farm we took our little lunch and then drove back to our home, loaded our suitcases in our car and greeted our friends.



We then drove to Wanganui, where we were welcomed by BRUCE TUNBRIDGE and his wife FRANCIE in their most beautiful house,



situated on a hill with a magic view over the city. As we arrived too late to participate on a boat trip along the Whanganui River (the river is different spelling to the city name), our hosts drove us to a high situated tower, which top we reached via an elevator, which provided a wonderful view over Wanganui and the river. After this we visited the town and could also see the black volcanic sand of the nearby beach of the Tasman Sea. That evening, we had a big party, organised by our hosts and we met a lot of members from 41 Club Wanganui with their charming ladies. Again I had the opportunity to report on 41 Int'l and exchanged banners and presents.

The next morning we were picked up by CHRIS WHITE, a very active 41er from New Zealand, who was also a member of the travelling group who was in my town last September. Who was also a member of the travelling group who was in my town last September. With Chris we spent a most wonderful weekend, where we visited the Ohakea Air Force Base, where we could admire the "Iroquois and Sioux" helicopters of the 3 Squadron shown to us by Wing Commander PETER NEILSON, a 41er from 41 Club Kaukau, (the same 41 Club as Chris). Our next stop was Foxton Beach where we were welcomed by PHIL and DALE BROWN and KEVIN and LIL GILES. Both Phil and Kevin are fantastic "Dune Buggy Car Riders" and with them we experienced a speedy and sand hill jumping drive through and over the dunes of the above mentioned beach. When we returned to their weekend house for lunch, we had to clear ourselves of fine sand, which was in all our pockets and quite everywhere on our body. But cape and ski glasses did save us from sand in our eyes, ears and hair. This adventure would certainly be enjoyed by any future YAP visitors, which 41 Club New Zealand will welcome in their most beautiful country. After Foxton Beach, we drove to Lindale where we sampled a very good Kapiti Ice Cream, and this compliment comes from an Italian, who is spoilt by good ice cream. We drove to Paekakariki camp, where we met other members from 41 Club

Kaukau, who were camping over the long weekend. The last km of our day trip brought us to a high point from which we had a magic view over Lower Hutt and the nearby capital of Wellington. We reached our hosts LEN and JANICE KANE, who were hosted in our humble home in Meran-Merano in September of last year. Chris' wife RONNIE met us at Len and Janice's home and together we appreciated a good dinner kindly cooked by Janice. The next day we drove to Wellington and had a walk through Thorndon, visited the old wooden church of St. Pauls, admired the oldest pub in New Zealand "The Thistle" and the nearby "Backbencher", took pictures of the old and new Government Buildings, went on the red cable car to a hill where we had a magic view over the capital, we later saw the city view from Mount Victoria which provided another perspective. After a little rest in our hosts house we drove to Upper Hutt, where we were welcomed by the National Vice-President BARRY O'CALLAGHAN from 41 Club Upper Hutt and members from Club 41 Hutt Valley. Together we took a nice and interesting bush walk of Kaitoke and after this we made a visit to the Club house of Round Table and 41 Club Upper Hutt, a former "Blockhouse", which was built two centuries ago to protect the settlers from any potential attack by Maori warriors. Fortunately no war was fought in this area, but the old building was restored by the local Round Tablers. There took place the official part of the evening with Barry's and my speech, exchange of banners and presents. The evening ended with a nice dinner in a nearby club in a nice atmosphere of int'l friendship. It was so good to meet so many members of the Wellington area with 41 Club Kaukau, Hutt Valley and Upper Hutt.

The next morning Rosie and I had to get up early, because we had to take our ferry to the South Island and we cruised the Cook Strait under a rainy sky. Thankfully, when we arrived to Picton on the Southern Island the clouds disappeared and we appreciated the wonderful sunshine. On the pier was waiting the National President of 41 Club New Zealand GRAEME HAYMES and his charming First Lady CHRIS. After a hearty greeting, our hosts drove us through the local wonderful Marlborough Sounds until we reached the weekend house of his sister and brother in law in Ngakuta Bay, where we took our lunch in a most wonderful scenery between the sea, sounds and hills. The sun was warm and the water of the sounds was inviting for a swim, which I would have done, if my swim suit hadn't been in the deepest part of my suitcase which was in the deepest part of the car boot. After a couple of hours we greeted our hosts and drove to Blenheim, where together with Graeme and Chris we visited a nice winery in the well known Marlborough wine yards. For the evening our hosts organised a very nice meeting with the members of 41 Club Blenheim, where we could appreciate a unique friendship with a wonderful dinner. Where we could appreciate a unique friendship with a wonderful dinner. It was nice to meet LES ROGERS, one of the first National Presidents of 41 Club New Zealand. The next morning, ALAN and CAROLYN IRVIN took us for a walk

to the nearby Wither Hills from where we had a wonderful view to the sea, the wine yards, the town and the surrounding hills. After that ALAN and GRAHAM IRVIN and I visited the very interesting Aviation Heritage Museum at Omaka where a great number of air fight planes of First World War and a lot of uniforms and medals are on display. After a nice lunch in St. Clair Wines we had to leave our new and good friends and drive towards Nelson, where we were welcomed by the old, but young looking 41er from 41 Club New Zealand and well known to all the 41ers of the world PETER BUTCHART and his wife MARGARET

in their nice house situated on a hill with a magic view to Ruby Bay and the Tasman Sea. After having “checked in” at Peters and Margaret’s house, we welcomed the President of 41 Club Nelson BILL McDONALD and his wife SALLY



and the Club Treasurer ALAN NIMMO and his wife AVERILL. Together we spent another evening in friendship with good dinner and as everywhere the official part. The next morning I got up earlier to take a nice swim in the Tasman Sea and after a good breakfast, Peter drove us to Mapua to show us this paradise on this part of the world. Before we visited one of Peters neighbours who is helping him to make the very good national web-page and his wife Stefania, who is an Italian who lived only about 70 km south of my home town Meran-Merano. Yes, the world can be very small.



After lunch, again we had to say goodbye to our hosts to drive to Motueka where we were welcomed by OWEN and SHIRLEY DRUMMOND in their lovely house situated on a little hill with a wonderful view to the surrounding kiwifruit? apple and hops fields which are farmed by the son? of our hosts. After a short talk with our friend

and a short rest we drove to the brother of Owen where a big party and BBQ had been arranged, where we met many members of 41 Club Motueka and their wives. There we could also talk in Italian with a member who came to New Zealand from Italy in 1951, at the age of 17. After a fantastic dinner, where I was asked to report about 41 Int'l, we went home tired but with the memory of a wonderful experience of international friendship. The next morning Owen and Shirley drove us around their area with magic beaches, many wonderful weekend homes and plenty of natural beauty.

Once again came the moment where we had to say goodbye and continue our journey to the area of Tapawera, where we were welcomed by PETER and DINKIE PHILLIPS with the Italian flag flying magically in front of their nice and quite new farmer house in the middle of a wonderful setting surrounded by many sheep and cattle. That evening we passed together with 41ers of 41 Club Tapawera and for the first time we met with little sand flies - we later met much bigger ones in the days that followed during our drive along the West Coast. Nevertheless we appreciated the evening together with very nice 41ers. The next morning we bid farewell to our friends and hosts and drove towards Greymouth, situated on the north-west coast of the South Island. On the way we visited a seal colony near Westport and the famous Pancake Rocks on the coast. The Tasman Sea showed himself in a magic and impressive way, helped by a sunny and warm day. We spent the evening in Greymouth in a hotel - as this town has no Club 41.

The next morning we got up early and made the long journey to Franz Josef Glacier. During our way, along the coast we saw fantastic spots and the Tasman Sea with its giant waves. The weather was good and warm, but the many sand flies along the coast made a swim, sunbathing or a walk along the magic coast impossible. In the first afternoon we arrived at our goal and permitted ourselves a helicopter flight to the Franz Josef and Fox Glaciers. The experience was magic and we landed on the Fox Glacier and took a short walk on the snow - during New Zealand's summer. The view was superb and many too many pictures were taken. The weather closed the sky with heavy clouds after our return - so we were happy also in these circumstances.

On the next morning we drove to Matheson Lake which we walked around in a 1.5 hour walk and during this walk we could see Mount Cook reflecting in the lake which gave us also many nice pictures. Then it was time to reach Haast and from there we crossed the Haast Pass where we were impressed by the wonderful vista which Lake Wanaka and Hawea offered us on the other east side of the pass. Our drive brought us to Wanaka, the lovely town situated on the south end of the lake with the same name. Here we also stayed in a nice hotel, as no club 41 exists in Wanaka.

The next day we took things easy and appreciated a longer sleep and a easy drive to Clyde nearby Alexandra, where we were welcomed by BILL and ANNE WADE. Our hosts, also experienced travellers, granted us an easy afternoon, where we could wash our dirty laundry, answer our incoming e-mails

and rest for the remaining day. The next morning our hosts offered us their precious time to show us around Clyde, Alexandra and Cromwell with their wonderful surroundings as wine yards, magic rivers with unique blue colour and also the very impressive Clutha? Dam. For the evening where invited the members of 41 Club Central Otago. The meeting was very nice and a lot of members joined us.

The next morning we drove to Queenstown, where we were welcomed by KEITH and MERLE O'DONNELL,



who are members of 41 Club Invercargill. They have a wonderful house overlooking Lake Wakatipu, the most wonderful big lake on which shores is situated Queenstown. Our host offered us a most wonderful day, full as the young people would say of “action”. We made a speed or jet boat ride along the active Shotover River, we went with the gondola up the mountain, which provided a most spectacular view overlooking the town, the lake and the surrounding mountains. The evening we spent in our hosts house together with ALLAN FYFE and his wife SHARON, who are also members of 41 Club Invercargill, but who live nearby Queenstown. A lovely evening followed with nice food cooked by? Merle.



The next day we had to get up very early to be in Te Anau at 10.00 a.m. to catch the bus to Milford Sound that would provide us with the time to take the ferry boat to visit and experience the most fantastic area of the Milford Sound. With the tourist vessel we went along the Fjord until the open Tasman Sea. During the journey we saw fantastic mountains, waterfalls, seals and a unique sea. The evening was spent in a hotel in Te Anau, which we were brought back to by our tourist bus.

The next day we drove to Invercargill, the largest city situated in the most southern part of the South Island, located only 1000 km from the South Pole. There we met TREVOR OLIVER in the town of Tuatapere. Trevor showed us



Cosy Nook, than Colac Bay until we reached Riverton, the Riviera of the South, where we had lunch. After that Rosie spent some time shopping, after which we reached Trevor's home, where we met his wife NOELINE.

Then we drove to Bluff, the harbour of Invercargill which is situated 20 km south and which is the most southern point of the South Island of New Zealand. What a feeling being there, some 17.000 km away from home. From this point on we stopped our travel south and altered our journey in a northerly direction. Back in Invercargill we walked through the city, meeting also with Peter, a local 41er who owns a shop along the main street of the city, where we also did some shopping. Trevor and Noeline had arranged a meeting with the local 41 Club in their home and again we appreciated a most wonderful evening in full friendship and understanding.

The next morning we travelled to Gore, where we were received by ALAN and our hosts JIM and ROSALIE COPLAND; who own a most wonderful house,



situated on a nice hill with a fantastic view to the surrounding area. Alan, a member of Club 41 Gore and ex pilot, drove us to a nearby little airport, where a company is specialized in remaking, assembling and making wooden spare parts for very old smaller aircraft. It was very interesting to view this activity and to then visit some of the restored old aircraft. After that we drove back to Gore and visited an interesting art collection in an Art Museum sponsored by an American. Then we drove to Jim and Rosalie's home where they welcomed the members of 41 Club Gore and again we experienced a most wonderful evening.

The next morning we drove to Dunedin and visited this nice town with its old stone buildings and the Scottish flair. In fact the town was founded from Scottish settlers.

It was time then to continue our way to Oamaru where MURRAY ISBISTER

waited for us on a junction to guide us to his most wonderful farming house - thankfully as it would have been a big test for our GPS to find it. The house was built in 1921, but kept by Murray's wife LYNNE



in a most wonderful state between modern and old taste - we liked it very much. That evening, the members of 41 Club Oamaru met together with the National Past President ALAN PARKHILL and his wife COLLEEN. Also this evening ended with a great BBQ and wonderful friendship.



The next morning we could take it easy because our next destination, Timaru was only 84 km away. Murray drove us through his big property, but also through the most wonderful landscape surrounding Oamaru and his back land. After this our host guided us through the city of Oamaru with its wonderful old and restored buildings. With this we had to leave also our hosts and friends in Oamaru and drive to Timaru, where we found our hosts ALAN and DAWN SHUKER with our GPS. After the "check in" we drove to STEVEN NEWMAN and BETTY'S nice and tastefully furnished home. Also this evening like the others was in full friendship, but something that was special was that Steve honoured us with his magic baritone voice. Further he enriched the evening with a never

ending, but nice poem which impressed all members of 41 Club Timaru and

their ladies. We were also entertained by a piano and quartet performance which was delightful. What a nice evening, but also this came to an end.



The next day, as Alan had to work, Dawn gave us a leisurely tour of the town so we had a good appreciation of Timaru. Around 17.00 o'clock Alan came back home and we drove more than one hour to Lake Tekapo, where my digital camera went on strike, but fortunately Alan's camera worked and so we could make nice pictures of the Church of the Good Shepherd and also the monument erected in the honour of the dogs, who greatly contributed to the settlements of the country. Later, we visited the weekend house of our hosts situated along the nearby Lake Alexandrina. Both lakes are situated in a most picturesque landscape and both lakes are a different blue colour. After a small dinner we drove back to Timaru, where we arrived late in the evening.

The next morning we thanked our wonderful hosts and drove to Ashburton, where we were welcomed by KEN and LINDA BAKER for something special and this was a lunch with the members of 41 Club Ashburton. Sadly our visit was shorter than we would have liked, because at 15.00 o'clock we had to drive to our final destination Christchurch - but we spent a special hour with our friends from Ashburton.



On arrival in Christchurch we drove to the airport, where we left our good car with the car rental company and we were picked up by ALAN IRONSIDE. We packed our luggage in his car and were driven through the city of Christchurch until we reached his new and most wonderful house on a hill from where we had a unique view to Christchurch and the Pacific. SUE, Alan's wife has prepared for us a most wonderful evening and some hours later some guests arrived like CHRIS and COLLEEN GLASSON and the well known national I.R.O. DEREK JOHNS and his wife TINA. What a joy it was to personally meet Derek with



whom I stood often in phone and e-mail contact and who had organised our most wonderful and unique New Zealand 41 journey.

The next morning Alan and Sue drove us into the surroundings of Christchurch, like its harbour Lyttelton, the Gebbies Pass before Akaroa, the French town, which once was a French settlement. That afternoon we walked through the city of Christchurch with its wonderful old stone erected buildings like the Christchurch Cathedral, the Arts Centre, the Canterbury Museum and Christ's College with its wonderful botanical park. Back at Alan's and Sue's home we packed our suitcases and were taken to a nearby brewery, where we met the members of 41 Club Christchurch for the last official meeting with a Club 41 in

New Zealand - which ended in great friendship. What a joy to meet GRAEME BICKLEY, the National President of 41 Club New Zealand 2005/2006. I suppose, he was the last National Delegate, who appeared during the Int'l AGM of Dortmund in



Germany held in 2006. After three years we met again and this is also the magic of 41 Int'l remaining friends with the time to come. After the official part the meeting came to an end and it is always sad to leave such good friends you hadn't met until a few hours before. We transferred our suitcases from Alan's to Derek's car and drove with Derek and Tina to their most wonderful house in Amberley, where we arrived after a 40 minute drive.

The next morning, after a good breakfast, Derek and Tina drove us to the very nearby Pacific, which showed himself with great and very impressive waves. The weather was cool and didn't invite for a swim. So we visited the nearer areas with the Waipara vineyards and Pegasus Bay. We had lunch at Tina's and Derek's home and in the afternoon we had a wonderful drive through the Waipara Gorge, also passing where Tina was born in Haydon Downs and went over the Weka Pass with its wonderful landscape, flora and fauna and the giant farms, some of them around 3.500 hectare which is "35.000.000 square meters", giving us a wonderful impression how magic is the country and nature in this part of New Zealand.

On 06 February 2009 it was time to pack our suitcases for the last time in New Zealand and to drive to the airport of Christchurch, bidding a final farewell to our most wonderful hosts.

From Christchurch we flew to Auckland and from there to Los Angeles, Frankfurt and back to Munich, where we drove our car home after a long and most interesting journey to New Zealand,



where we

Drove 3.200 km through the North and South Island,

visited 17 Clubs 41 with meeting and official part,

had meetings with Ex Tablers in Auckland and Taupo,

Returned home with a great knowledge of what is 41 Club New Zealand,

having understood the needs, joys and critics of this wonderful Association of whom we are located so far.

But in our thoughts we are daily very near to you and our friendship is connected with “The Hinge who will never rust”

Thank you 41 Club New Zealand for this unique experience of travelling and this most wonderful friendship you gave to Rosie, the Int’l First Lady, who was a brilliant wife, and travel companion for me and last not least myself

Your International President 2008/2009
Randolph Riedlinger