

“Top up?” Shelley asked as we locked the house and headed for “Peanut” (aka our white 1998 MX-5 NB). “Yes, we’ll go to Waitomo before we meet the others.” I responded. “We are not going to Waitomo, we are going to Glen Murray, and I meant top up or top down, seeing it looks like rain.” She explained. “Yes, on both counts! Top up and top up.” I confirmed.



We met at Rototuna and gathered with other determined club members under the shelter of the bike shop. Ian and Marlene from Tauranga also joined us. It was a top up trip with wipers that morning. Puketaha to Piako road, then left into Matuku road. Matuku translates to ‘be careful’ and given the raindrops that were defying gravity on our windscreens, we were obliged to matuku indeed.

Spotting a sign warning us of cows on the road, we saw green evidence of where the cows had been on the road, but by then they were grazing and chewing their cud in a roadside paddock. Another interesting sign warned us of “Ground Movements” but while the road was somewhat undulating, there were no earthquakes. (Our sympathies to the people in Venezuela, who are suffering as this story is written.) Waitakaruru has a community centre featuring a roof that looks like a skateboard ramp then turning towards Miranda we stopped for a toilet stop by the Country Store. The toilet bowl was made of stainless steel but was certainly not a shining example of its claimed stainless properties. Through Mangatawhiri, Mercer and through to State Highway 22. Then arrived at the impressive Glen Murray Memorial Hall,



where some other MX5s had already arrived to join us for a picnic lunch.

This hall was once the local centre for some illustrious motorsport names of the fifties. Ron Roycroft and the ill-fated Johnny Mansel, as significant single-seater drivers, and David Caldwell who campaigned a D type Jaguar. Ron’s ex-Nuvolari Alfa P3 was known as the “Glen Murray Express”.



His son Terry, inventor of the amphibious “Sealander” that was further developed by Alan Gibbs to be the “Aquada” a version of which featured in James Bond’s “The Spy Who Loved Me.” Until recently Terry was still driving his father’s Bugatti-Jag at historic meetings. The Glen Murray Hall has a room dedicated to historical photographs in which the Roycroft, Mansel, and Caldwell families appear. (And mine too, as it happens).



Shane and Ann had requested that we bring a personal artifact to share with the group, while our lunch settled. They opened proceedings by sharing fascinating stories about a pinecone, and “Cookie Bear” respectively. From the fascinating to the bizarre, as we were treated to Kevin’s collection of authentic glass eyes.

Donee brought two old tools. He hand-drilled, and torqued, then quipped that he had also brought another tool with limited functionality too, but that was not to be displayed.



Shelley shared a story about some Buddhist beads, then we moved into the auditorium. I stood on the same spot that I had occupied in 1955, played the same 1954 model of ukulele, and sang the opening verse of “The Ballad of Davy Crockett”. As a seven year old my performance won a prize. Seventy-one years later it won some applause. Thanks guys and girls. It was a pleasure.



The following Sunday we joined a large contingent of MX-5ers for the AGM at Hamilton’s Workingmens’ Club. The formalities were over inside an hour and then an excellent lunch, partially funded by the club, so at \$15 per head we were superbly fed. Gary Major, (right of picture) used his vastly experienced commanding presence to control traffic in the queue for food. Current President Allan Boot, (left-appropriately ) who has continued to set the leadership bar at a very high standard, handed his office to Charles Thompson of Kapiti (Centre). Charles’ excellence in preparing newsletters suggests the high standard of leadership will continue. It was nice to see the new committee put in place, including at least one member who is in the younger brigade.

Looking forward to another year of MX-5 activity. Amen.