

Foxton Meeting – May 2022

Date 6th 7th 8th May.

The meeting was held at Cowern's 'Blast From the Past' venue on their property at Oroua Downs.

With the uncertainty of Covid hanging over our heads, those who decided to attend the Foxton Meeting were more than a little excited as we assembled at Blast From the Past in Oroua Downs on Friday night for the start of what turned out to be a great weekend. Twenty two had registered although one had to cancel and three were not able to attend the whole weekend. There was plenty of interest around the many items available for the Saturday auction and some sales of DVDs and other bits and pieces took place amongst the chatter.

Around 7.30 pm a lovely supper was served. This was followed by a selection of NFU Pictorial Parades; *Excuse me Can You Tell me Why You are on This Trip*, *Sheer Legs* (the making of nylon stockings), and *Ruapehu Chair Lift*. A 1935 colour cartoon *Mr & Mrs is the Name* brought the evening to a close.

Saturday morning we arrived just after 8.30am and at 8.45am morning tea was served. The meeting then took place and business was completed by 9.30. We had plenty of time for a chat before the auction got under way. Bidding was brisk even with the small number in attendance. All items were quickly sold and we had time to relax before lunch. As is usual, it was served outside and the lovely selection of food on offer was most welcome.

At 12.00pm, we departed in a couple of people movers and headed to Luttrells White Pine Gardens and Working Pioneer Museum and Wetlands at Pohangina – a distance of 60km from Oroua. Here you can step back in time and view the many articles used by early New Zealanders in their everyday lives, from farm machinery to household items, many of which most of us could relate to. There was even a tiny cinema showing continuous film. The area covers 5.2468 hectares and contains one of the Manawatu's largest remaining single stands of Kahikatea forest, regenerating native bush and wetlands nestled beside a manmade lake. From here, we drove to Palmerston North to make a return visit to the Regent on Broadway theatre. We had a conducted tour through this beautiful theatre which included the projection box and the stage. We then returned to Oroua Downs.

At 6.30pm, we gathered in the Cowern lounge for pre dinner drinks before heading into the hall for dinner. What a feast it was too – we were all suitably impressed and well satisfied. The entertainment was provided by a young chap called Brynn Olsson, who conducted a quiz. He was assisted by Alistair (Monique's son) who did a great impression of a mime artist. It was a fun night and some of our members' did very well in the quizz. The place mat was auctioned and the lucky winner was Glynn Babington who very graciously gave it to Alistair, who had hoped his ticket would have been the winning one. The night then drew to a close.

Sunday saw us gather at Blast from the Past for a quick cuppa before we headed into Foxton to visit Jim and Sarah Harper's restored print shop. Their large collection of mechanical musical instruments and pianos, player organs and other self-playing devices, along with wind up music boxes, organs and all sorts of unusual musical devices dating from the 18th and 19th centuries are housed here. Jim demonstrated a number of these to us. In Jim's garage (next door), is his beautifully restored Dutch street organ which puts out a mighty sound when in operation.

We walked the short distance from here to view Sunnyside Cottage, another of Jim and Sarah's projects. The 1869 cottage, reputedly made from one Totara log, retrieved from the Manawatu River, was originally located on a local farm. We had seen it on a previous visit to Foxton when it had just been shifted to its current site on the same block as the town's replica Dutch windmill. Although the building was quite sound, a lot of hard work was required to bring it back to life and the transformation is wonderful. Soon it was time to return to the venue for lunch and farewells. All too soon, a very successful meeting had come to an end.

The stayers BBQ was held later in the evening at Blast From the Past. Gavin had cut a section out in a 44 gallon drum and used it for a fire and this certainly kept us warm as we chatted while the food was being cooked. It was decided to eat the meal indoors which was a good move. Following the delicious meal, we went outside again, sat around the fire and watched a couple of movies under the stars which Gavin projected onto the side of a container. It was a great way to finish the evening.