

# McLaren Falls Picnic

*By Geoff Muir*

To introduce myself, I am Geoff Muir and we (+ Glennys my wife) joined the club about 6 months ago after purchasing our 2006 XK convertible. We live at Fairview Estate were there several other club members.

We drove from home thru the Athenree and Karangahape Gorges to the “The Old Forge Kitchen Café” at Te Aroha West in fine weather. We had not been to Te Aroha West for at least 25 years and were surprised at the changes to this village. We used to pass thru on our way to the Coromandel and would stop to buy some of the wonderful Swiss Sausage & Salami that were produced on the site of the new café by a Swiss Family who farmed there. The pairs of ‘Landjäger’ were our favourite, but the owner passed away in the early 90’s and they were no more.

Arriving at the Café soon after 10, there were 20+ cars from 1960’s Mark IIs to late model ‘F’s, and there familiar faces as well as many new ones all seated in the well-appointed premises enjoying everything from just coffee to full English breakfasts with the Jaguar based chatter.

About a 50/50 participation from both clubs.



We were all marshalled to leave the café about 11:30 and headed north in convoy along Mace Road to turn right onto Te Aroha Gordon Road. In my many years of traversing the eastern Waikato this was a road not previously travelled. It runs south along the foothills of the Kaimais and is well maintained with good tar seal even though it is off the beaten track. The terrain is undulating following the land form and the road does not appear to have been “improved” by flattening out the humps and hollows and there are many single lane bridges to beware of if your are not used to giving way!

A few kms along this road we saw a road sign for “Thompsons Track” off to the east. Very interesting as we have a similar sign near us which is the other end, though I think it is not a short cut home for a Jaguar. A left turn took us onto the Old Te Aroha Road, and another onto SH 24, then another onto the main Hamilton to Tauranga highway, SH 29, to start our ascent over the Kaimai Range.

On this steep climb one of our Waikato cars, a 1970's Daimler blew a transmission hose and had to pull into the shoulder where the occupants were picked up by a following car to continue their journey. After cresting the summit and down the BOP side we had to patiently wait in a queue to turn right off the main road to proceed to McLaren Falls. Amazing amount of traffic coming up the hill!

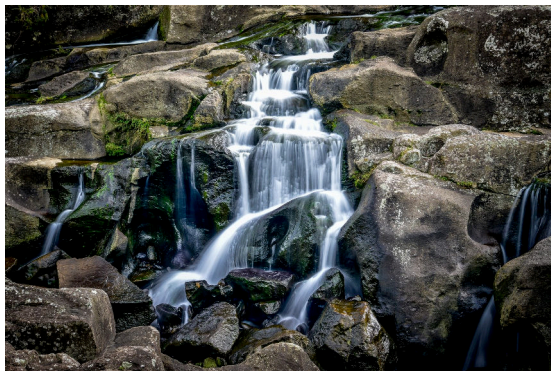
We had never been to McLaren Falls before, it was one of those destinations that we had said we must do one day, and it was worth it.

The reserve has a myriad of grassy flats separated by native bush and connected by well-sealed narrow tracks around the lake that is the reservoir for the small BOP Hydro scheme.



Being a rally we all followed the convoy and eventually arrived at what I think was "Pin Oak Flat" and after we had all parked, we were informed that we were in the wrong place! So back into the car, down the hill to where the others were at "Top Flat Camp".

Everyone unpacked their picnic chairs, hampers and joined the group on the grassy flat under the mature shady trees and lunch was had along with much conversation between the groups. After looking at the various cars and talking "Jag" we gradually all packed up and headed home just in time for the 4:15 Start of the days Americas Cup racing.



*Geoff*