

# Waitoa and Beyond

*By Rex Bentham*

After all the terrible wet weather we have been having, Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> February dawned fine and clear for the visit to Jan Shoemarks Glass Art Gallery in Waitoa. Just as well, because it had already been cancelled from the previous Thursday.

Actually, our preparation for the event had started back in December last year when I enquired about the availability of a new fuel sender unit for our XK150 from the Daimler Jaguar Parts Club in Christchurch. One was ordered along with a warning that it may take a while, with Christmas etc. So we were a little reluctant to embark on any longer runs as we could only fill the tank to less than half because of the leak in the old sender. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of February we got an email to say the new part had arrived from Britain and they would courier it to us. By Friday 17<sup>th</sup> it still had not arrived, probably due to cancelled and broken down ferries, so I had resigned to travelling to the Waikato with a can of fuel in the boot. However on Saturday morning it arrived and by the afternoon it was installed and the tank filled in time to check for any leaks.

Next morning, we had a nice drive over the Kaimais', not much traffic and even less trucks! Twenty four cars and their occupants arrived at Gary and Estelle Bexley's home in Matamata at 10am for a lovely morning tea. Gary welcomed us all and explained that they had not planned on moving to Matamata, but this house just happened to be close to family and fit for purpose, it had a **WORKSHOP!** And a place for the camper.

Our convoy left for Waitoa around 11am and apart from roadworks on Highway 27 at Ngarua it was a pleasant drive.

On arrival at Glass Art we had to wait for the group ahead of us to conclude their visit, they were the Hamilton Vintage and Classic Car Club. During our wait we were interviewed by Sheryl Glover from the Morrinsville News - an online and printed local newspaper. So some of us were lucky enough to get a mention and photo in the local 'rag'. Because of the size of our group we were split into two for the tour through the house to view the Gallery, while the second group toured the garden display.

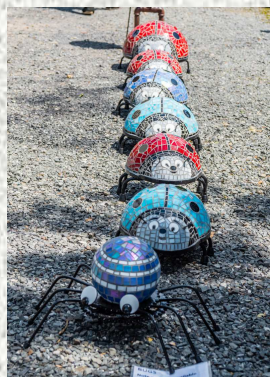




At the conclusion of the tour, we were seated in a large covered area at the rear of the property, where Jan explained how she got started and how she has diversified over the years into more intricate pieces. She is the only person still doing this type of glass art in NZ. She imports the large sheets of glass from USA and Mexico, and like most things imported now days, it has become very expensive.



By this stage we were all getting fairly peckish, so next stop was Café 77 in Manawaru. The venue is the old Dairy Factory ( which my father supplied milk to in early the !950s) It has recently been converted to a community centre



complete with gymnasium and climbing wall. The Café is very popular with locals and visitors alike, situated as it is on the Te Aroha to Matamata Cycle Trail. The staff did a great job catering for such a big group and they had set up tables in the gymnasium for us. I believe everyone enjoyed their lunch and the beautiful sunny day. We all headed back to our various homes in different directions. An interesting and pleasant day out.



*Rex*

