

WARKWORTH - 3 DAY EVENT

Day 1 (Photos supplied by Dennis Shepherd)

By Noel Harris

Wendy and I had everything packed (including our dog Lucy) and headed to "Big Paws". Lucy was having a holiday too.

We were met there by 3 other Jag member couples and headed off to Mercer to meet up with others. It took a little longer than expected due to numerous patches of road works. One stopping us for close to 20 minutes. Never the less, we made it and had a coffee and a bite to eat. Some of us sampled and purchased cheese from the Mercer Cheese shop. I highly recommend them. Great cheeses at exceptional prices.

We have about 8 cars now in convoy to Warkworth. The new motorway leaving Auckland is amazing. It is always good to see Auckland (in the rear vision mirror!)

Warkworth was humming. Not enough parking for us all so we shot out to Sandspit for a picnic lunch. An absolutely stunning place.

Some of us checked out the other beaches before returning to Warkworth to check in to our rooms.

This is where there was a bit of a problem. One would assume that since "I" reserved 9 rooms for 2 nights and "I" booked our room 1st that they would book Wendy and I for 2 nights. NO. Just one night and everyone else 2 nights. As it happens there was no other accommodation available in Warkworth.

Major problem was soon resolved by Murray and Corrie's kind offer to put us up at their house for the 2nd night. Cooked breakfast included. Thanks heaps.

Dinner on the 1st night was at the motels restaurant which I knew was going to be a hit with everyone.

We all headed off to bed knowing there was an early start the next day and it was going to be full on.

Noel

Day 2

By Alison Kay

Those in the know said it was important to reach Matakana early on market day, as parking is at a premium. They were right.

A group of us left at precisely 7.45am, Shepherd time. A short drive later the traffic told us we'd reached Matakana. Happily, there was plenty of parking outside Matakana Hall. Soon it was filled with Jaguars. (Only as we were leaving a few hours later, did we notice the sign saying Hall parking was for Hall users only.)

(Thank goodness it wasn't in use that day.)

Markets are wonderful places; you never know what you'll find that you didn't know you needed. Matakana craft and farmers markets have a well-deserved reputation and didn't disappoint. Craft market stalls ranged from vintage crystal and china to beautifully crafted woodware, quilted Kiwiana table runners, merino kids clothing, classic casserole holders and peg aprons. The farmers market offered everything from olive oil to fresh produce, a knife maker and plenty of treats, including decadent chocolate brownies and delicious whitebait fritters.

Matakana on a Saturday positively hummed. Even the shops were a bit different from standard. We found a book shop expensive to leave. Others had similar experiences at a shoe shop.

Just a short drive away, we reached Morris and James pottery, the business founded in 1977 by Ant Morris and his then wife Sue James, using clay harvested on site. The range of pots, home décor and gardenware in vibrant colours and bold patterns was exquisite and some found this an expensive place to leave.

Noel had arranged for a behind-the-scenes tour which was fascinating. We saw the prepared clay sweating away in plastic on pallets and viewed the process from pot forming, to drying (in the "summer room"), firing and decorating. Every piece is handmade, which means every piece is unique. The hard part is picking a favourite.

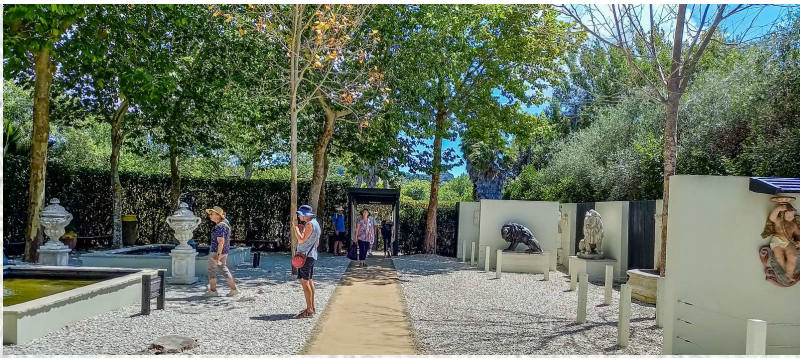


Barely a kilometre away, we called in to view the personal car collection of Aucklander Michael Thornton. In a purpose-built shed we viewed an E-Type, couple of Austin



Healey's, Porsches, Ferrari, Aston Martin and a mini, among others. All are loved and used, though Michael admitted a big expense is batteries as he has yet to find a charger that can be left on seriously long-term without killing them. Many had sympathy for this dilemma and offered various suggestions.

At this point our day's schedule was altered. Sunday's trip to the Sculptureum near Omaha became the Saturday afternoon excursion. What a place!



Opened in 2017 to showcase the art collection of Anthony and Sandra Grant, this was a stunning display of more than 800 works in six galleries and three gardens. If you didn't like cherubs and fountains in the classical gardens, you might have preferred pink snails, a green rabbit, orange and yellow meerkats or a polar bear created from old whiteware in the enclosed gardens – or some of the amazing blown glass in gallery display cabinets. It would be impossible to leave the Sculptureum without feeling intrigued or enchanted or, at the very least, happier than when you entered.

In that mood we returned to Warkworth for some down-time before drinks and another excellent meal at Bridgehouse Lodge.

Big thanks to Dennis and Jenny Shepherd for being our chauffeurs this day. We returned home early on Sunday and within a few hours of arrival had the bonnet off, fan motor fixed (a loose wire) and bonnet replaced. Everything worked perfectly on a subsequent test drive.

Alison

Day 3

By Peter Spurdle

Our 6.32 alarm was the purring of Francis and Alison's E Type heading for home without an operating cooling fan. Francis was counting on the cooler morning temperature to get the car home safely. Everyone had their fingers crossed for them.

Noel suggested we find our own breakfast in Warkworth and so a few of us found ourselves standing outside the 'So French Café' at 8.00. At 9.30 we headed to the Goat Island Marine Reserve at Leigh, along with half of Auckland who had left us very few parking space.

Geoff and Glennys in their XK8 decided a sloping grass verge was the best option, however when moving into place the car lost traction, progressing backwards towards a ditch. It was all hands on the boot and fortunately manpower overcame horsepower. The event may be relived at the forthcoming AGM!

While enjoying the marine environs, Noel failed to see the "Do Not Feed the Fish" sign so the said fish were able to enjoy chicken sandwiches while providing great photos opportunities (and some later embarrassment on realizing our misdemeanor).

It was a beautiful spot and nice to see so many participating in various ocean activities including a swimming race.

Some headed home at that point and the five remaining Jaguars headed to the nearby Reptile Park. Those attending increased their knowledge on skinks and geckos, peered into seemingly empty enclosures for a glimpse of turtles, tuataras and tortoises and marveled at the alligators and water monitors, feeling pleased that there was solid protection between us and them.

The quote of the visit was 'better than I thought it would be'

With the official program at an end, we all headed our various ways after a most enjoyable and well-planned weekend. Well done Noel and Wendy.

Peter

