COLIN'S RUN AT RUAPEKAPEKA – 25th to 26th April 2008

Colin, Natalie, Syd and Brett met at the Kauri Saleyards then met Carol and Brooke at the weigh station at Hikurangi at 9am, stopped to have a little chat then we're off, Colin leading the way. We pulled off at Ruapekapeka turnoff and waited for Syd and Brett for about half an hour, then decided they must have gone back home to change Syd's tow wagon as it was playing up, so we decide to carry on to set up camp. We got to the camp site and pitched tents etc. By then Syd and Brett had arrived. They set up their camp site, had a cuppa, then we set off for some fun. Colin and Nat in front, Carol in the driver's seat and the kids strapped in; Syd and Brett behind. Followed Colin down and around the tracks, some gorse-bashing needed a lot of the time – Colin's Landy getting bashed up a bit. We went back for lunch at about 1pm as were getting hungry. After lunch we took off down a different track and had to do some more gorse bashing with Colin in the lead – blind faith in my brother. I was enjoying myself driving, following where Colin led. After a while we came across another track and went down it but ended up having to cut trees out of the way with Syd's trusty chainsaw and some axe swinging. We decided to call it quits for the night as Colin didn't have lights. We headed back up for tea and a few drinks with a few wild yarns and stories being told. Off to bed we went, with Colin saying early rise in the morning. Brooke had said his wagon had power steering but half way through the day it got hard - found out why when we got back – the hose had come off the power steering pipe. I told him it was bloody hard steering!

Next morning Colin's up at the crack of dawn making a cup of tea. We got up, had a cuppa and some brekkie, and made some lunch for the day. It was raining so the tracks would be wet and slippery. We donned our wet weather gear and left, Syd and Brett still getting diesel out of one of the tow wagons for Syd's wagon, the Pup. Colin's in the lead again with me following, his Landy looking the worst for wear with the front right-hand guard just hanging on with a bit of tape holding it in place. After about an hour of getting totally drenched, we headed back to see where Syd and Brett had got to, as well as Nathan saying he was freezing. Driving along the road we met up with Syd and Brett. We went back to camp, Colin, Syd and Brett went and played some more in a mud hole. We decided to do a bit of tiki-touring once we got dry clothes on. We did the loop through Kawakawa and back to Towai. Got a call from Colin saying they were packing up and going home as they had all broken something. So got back to camp and packed up and came home.

I had a great time even though I got slapped in the face with gorse, and drenched to the bone – looking forward to doing it again. Thanks to Mike for letting us use his property for the run. Fun was had by all.

- *Carol*