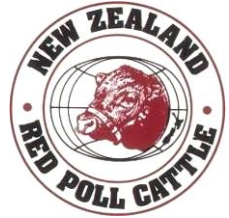


RED POLL NEWS



Winter Edition

August 2026



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Front Cover Photo:

Cows, Heifers and heifer calves at Strathwell Stud on Herd Tour.

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Closing date for next newsletter is November 10th, 2026

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Fellow members,

Sadly, I begin this first report as President by acknowledging the passing of Ann Blackler, partner of longtime member Robin Thomson of Tamihana Stud, now dispersed, and also, the passing of internationally known breeder, Albert Hancock, of Kookabookra Stud in New South Wales. Albert had only recently been awarded Life Membership of the Australian Red Poll Cattle Breeders' Association.



As a first time President I am grateful for the trust you've placed in me. Stepping into this role has been both humbling and energising. I've already had the privilege of speaking with many of you, and those conversations have reinforced what I've always believed: our Association is built on good people, good cattle, and a genuine commitment to the breed.

Reflections from My First Quarter

Coming into the presidency, I expected plenty of learning — and I've certainly had that — but what has stood out most is the sense of community among Red Poll breeders. Whether it's sharing advice, swapping stock, or simply catching up at events, there's a real willingness to support one another. That's something I value deeply and hope to strengthen further in the years ahead.

I've also been reminded how passionate our members are about the breed. Red Polls may not be the largest breed in the country, but they have a loyal following for good reason: fertility, temperament, hybrid vigour, and the ability to perform in both beef and dairy systems.

A Remarkable Season for Red Meat

It's been an extraordinary year for the wider sector. The 2025/26 season has delivered some of the strongest returns farmers have seen in decades. Beef prices are tracking toward a record season average, with economists noting they're likely to be the highest — even after adjusting for inflation — since the early 1990s. Lamb prices have also held firm, contributing to what many are calling one of the most positive seasons in recent memory.

For us as Red Poll breeders, this environment creates real opportunity. Strong store cattle prices highlight the value of well-grown, well-bred stock. It's

encouraging to see buyers willing to pay for quality, and it reinforces the importance of maintaining the traits that set our breed apart.

Looking Ahead

While the outlook is bright, I'm mindful that not every farm has had an easy run in recent years. Some are still recovering from tough seasons, and rising input costs continue to bite. As an Association, we should keep supporting one another — sharing knowledge, promoting the breed, and helping new breeders get established.

If you have surplus stock available, please let us know. With strong demand and good prices, this is an ideal time to help expand the breed's footprint.

Closing Thoughts

I'm proud to serve as your President. This first quarter has already shown me how strong our Association is, and how much potential Red Poll cattle have in New Zealand's evolving farming landscape. Thank you for your support, your advice and your commitment to the breed.

Thank you to all that attended the AGM in April and to those that put effort into organising tour accommodation, visits and hosting.

I look forward to working alongside you all in the year ahead.

*Kind regards,
Neil Wilton
President*



Dorothy & Albert Hancock, Red Poll Congress in NZ, 2024



Robin Thomson & Ann Blackler, Best of Beef, Fielding, 2003



SECRETARY'S SAY

The annual Herd Book (No 71) is being sent out with this newsletter to the full members. This year's book includes the registration of 15 bulls and 39 heifers. Last year we registered 15 and 47 cattle, so we have had a decrease this year.

This goes along with the need to increase our membership, particularly breeding members, and we're struggling for ideas to achieve this.

The recent Farmers Weekly magazine has included an advert for our cattle, along with a follow up advert which was good to see – thanks to Athol Sowry. It will be interesting to hear if anyone gets enquiries from these.

It was saddening to hear of the passing of Albert Hancock from Australia. Albert took part in the World Tour through NZ recently and has participated in other Tours. He was passionate about the breed and passing that on to the younger generation of breeders. Although not everyone agreed with all his theories about breeding, he was well thought of worldwide. Our thoughts also go out to Robin Thomson and his family after the loss of his partner, Ann Blackler.

Winter so far has been relatively kind for us here in the Wairarapa, and with calving approaching I hope this continues, and that it's been similar around the country. Commentators have been suggesting that the current good prices are set to continue for the next two years, and a good calving will be essential to maximising this.

I wish you well going into spring and look forward to hearing of the results of your calving.

Warwick Potts
Registrar/Secretary/Treasurer
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Below is an email from Robin 'AGR' Thomson with regards to his Life Membership following the AGM.

Thank-you for this A.G.M report. An excellent summary. A special thankyou to those who nominated and approved my honorary Life Membership. If my memory serves me, I was involved with the Assn from 1983 to 2023. In that time, I have met many wonderful people, both in NZ & overseas.



Robin and his four-legged mate with some of his Red Polls

Being a minor breed, I know how hard it is to gain traction, as the major breeds - Angus, Hereford etc have the numbers & finances to continually keep their breeds in the farming public's eye. There are butcher shops in the UK & the USA who specialise in Red Poll meat. That has helped the breed enormously in those countries. Unfortunately, we do not have the numbers to regularly supply a retail outlet and receive a premium for our superior product.

When I had the privilege of serving as Association President, I used the then popular Steak of Origin competition to promote our breed. A prominent Angus Breeder from Northland asked me how I managed to get into the semifinals every year with just one entry, when he was getting a similar result with one animal, after entering TEN in each class. He never continued the conversation when my reply was, "Red Poll are a superior breed". I truly believe that.

So, thank you to existing Members who continue to promote the breed of cattle that gave me so much pleasure, for so many years.

*Regards
Robin Thomson*



PATRON'S PAGE

Greetings,

To those of you who have suffered from some cruel weather recently I send my sympathy and hope that there is something better to come.

There is no doubt that we are held in the grip of climate change and unusual weather patterns. Those will so easily upset the best laid plans of mice and men. Major challenges are facing us as we deal with the past and the damage caused while keeping day to day operations on target. All of that before we start planning for a future which may be totally unpredictable.

With that nagging at me I was diverted and happily relieved to see a family favourite heifer deliver her first calf today. I was equally pleased to see that this novice mum actually knew what to do and the calf likewise did not have to be taught where to find a full teat.

While we all have to make sure that we are managing our farming ventures across a spectrum of needs and requirements it is often those simple behaviours of our animals which steadies the mind and gives simple pleasure and purpose our farming lives. I know that leaning over a yard rail looking at a mob of heifers may not be considered to be a profitable occupation of time, but it may well be that straw chewing moment which we will remember best. That picture which gets stuck in the mind, of sleek, happy animals which seems to help make sense of why we farm.

After this ramble, good luck with calving and may the weather gods bless us all.

Robin Shepherd
Patron

FOUR DIAMOND STUD REPORT

Hello everyone from Waikari, North Canterbury.

As most of you would be seeing as well, it's been a very odd 12 months weather wise. No moisture last winter/spring and several downpours during the summer. Then dry again in autumn and now over 100 mil in 24 hours. Not easy to manage with no irrigation. Luckily, we were able to put away a good amount of feed late last summer and I'm busy feeding that out now.

We have eight cows due to calf in September, some of which should be bred to the AI bull, Willowlea Super Sire. I have one cow that didn't get bred for whatever reason and two R2 heifers that are being bred now (AI) for autumn calves. I have never tried this before so hopefully it works out. We are keen to try milking so this will hopefully keep it flowing year-round.

We also have 41 Wiltshire ewes due to lamb in September. The older ewes scanned at 235% and the hoggets at 95%. With me working full time and the cabin very busy it will be a crazy month, but we love it! We are saving for the trip to England next year. Hope to see several of you there.

Doug & Sharon



Willow Lea Super Sire

STRATHWELL REPORT

In June we travelled to the UK and Portugal, it was great to catch up with our daughter Brionne and partner Reece and my sister Rachel, John and family.

The weather, apart from a few days at the beginning which were wet, improved considerably and we enjoyed some very warm days throughout the later part of our trip.

We stayed with Kate & Paul Fardon and were shown fabulous hospitality, not only from our accommodation but a tour of different locations including "Bourton on the Water", "Stratford – upon – Avon" and Worcester. Also, went to the Royal Three Counties Show where we caught up with Terry Mancey of the Moreton Red Poll Stud. Here we saw a great display of Red Polls from six different breeders. Mr Thomas Stinton, Terry & Helen Mancey, John Williams, Robert Jones, David Blunt and Ms Helen Arthan.

L-R John Williams, Chairman of the UK Red Poll Society; Anita, Ian & Terry Mancey. ➤



The Champion Red Poll was Pinguis Michael, a four-year-old bull owned by Mr J. R. Williams and Reserve Champion Pinguis Emily 25, a lovely cow born 06/02/2021.

The Red Poll Judge was Mr Alan Timbrell from Gloucestershire. He did a fantastic job and described his placings with great depth. All cattle stewards were wearing bowler hats which was great to see, a real touch of class and tradition. Overall, we thought the show was well run with great supporting infrastructure. There was lots to see, with over thirty sheep breeds and twenty breeds of beef cattle.



Another highlight of our trip was visiting "Clarkson's Farm" known as Diddly Squat, and 'The Farmers Dog' Pub. Here we had a wonderful lunch which we had booked two months prior in NZ. Of course, we were the typical tourists buying up large of the named products, from hats, T Shirts, aprons etc.

The Champion Red Poll was Pinguis Michael, a four-year-old bull owned by Mr J. R. Williams, Chairman of the Red Poll Cattle Society

*Reserve Champion
Red Poll Pinguis
Emily 25 ➤*

After a relaxing week in Portugal in a town called Salema, it was back to NZ. Soon after we arrived home, we had to endure 80mm of rain which was a real shock to the system.



Overall, a great trip and looking forward to our next one.

Ian & Anita Fleming.

WHISKEY CREEK REPORT

Hello to all,
Things are going well on Whiskey Creek Farm.

We are having a real good winter, missed all the bad weather. The only time the bad weather affected us was coming back from the Red Poll conference in Christchurch. Jessica and I had to have an extra night in Christchurch after our airplane got turned back after trying to get past the bad weather in Wellington. Air NZ paid for our accommodation as well as the taxi to and from the airport.

My Red Polls are due to calve from mid-August. Looks like three are not in calf, so may only have eight Red Polls to calve this year.



*Kind Regards,
Priscilla*

*Three of my ladies.
Safe to say two of these are
in calf.*

KAIHINAU REPORT July 2026

Whatever we say about Red Polls need not be as confrontational as our water rates being levied through Tiaki Wai when it costs us nothing to have preferential animal status class or breed and enjoy the rights of freedom of farming.

We must say we have had an excellent winter up until now without loss or shortage of either pasture or supplements. Our cows, in calf heifers, and all yearlings are looking well but heifers this year are in calf as 2year olds.

Of interest was our son in law, representing Massey University, taking a trip to Mongolia for an Agricultural conference and taking Red Poll literature with him. The photo shows the literature being received. They themselves commented on first appraisal as being Red Angus but receiving 2 Australian year books and our NZ March 2026 magazine realised otherwise. ▼



Grassland farming is huge in Mongolia having four times the grassland area of NZ, 83 million hectares, but flanked by and encroached on by the Gobi Desert. In fact,

desertification on a global basis is estimated to be the size of Egypt per year. The Gobi Desert is larger by 100,000-150,000square miles larger than the United States. All efforts are to halt desertification but to reverse it is a scientific geographical challenge.

Spring is the time of increase and with it comes the intensity of caring for stock. Our thoughts and wishes would go out to everyone at this time.

PS Don't watch Clarkson's Farm till Spring is past!

Kelvin and Kath

STONEY ACRES HERD REPORT Winter 2026

Hello Fellow Breeders

Following on from the Autumn 2026 report, we have had a very good autumn here at Stoney Acres. It was a good grass growing season and the stock came through it well.

Winter grass has now come to a standstill, so we are feeding out baleage and hay with a ration of grass to keep them ticking along.

Currently we have 33 cows, 10 R1 heifers, 3 Red Poll steers and 3 bulls on hand. We sold 12 weaners at the fair and were very happy with the price, helped along by the market being high at the moment.

Had a great trip down at the Canterbury AGM. As usual had fun tripping around seeing the herds in the south, meeting new breeders and catching up with ones we hadn't seen for a while. Even the delays at Christchurch Airport due to crazy weather was bearable because we had good breeder friends to pass the time with.

Two young heifers I purchased from Ian and Anita with the intention of me leading them in the October show in Clareville, had a huge trip around the lower North Island. Eventually came home eight days after they left their home in the South Island.

My 33 girls are due to start calving any day now, and according to the vet it will happen in two blocks as the bull got a sore back during mating time.

All the best and hope you have a good calving.

All the best,
Neil Wilton



NZ AGM TOUR 2026 – CANTERBURY

Friday 17th April

Warwick & I picked up Neil & Sharon from her house on the Moonshine Road – driving along the latter an adventure in itself! After a look around her native gardens shop and a nice lunch we left for the airport. Arrived there in goodtime to find our booked flight suspended.

We got the last two seats on the next available flight to Christchurch with Sharon & Neil getting on another one about 20 minutes later. On arrival in Christchurch, we picked up our hire car from Ezi Car Rental, a nice Mitsubishi Outlander with a good sat nav system.

After driving to Leeston we found our Motel for the duration of the tour – the 'Crate and Barrel'. Warwick and I were fortunate enough to have the ground floor room right next to the entry to the restaurant and bar. Inside, the décor was utterly unexpected with taxidermied animals, musical instruments, motorbikes and sports equipment hanging from the ceiling and placed on the walls. Above the baronial fireplace was a mounted Red Deer stag in all his glory.



It was great to catch up with those present at dinner which was very good with even a 'small' plate being very substantial. There is always room for crème brûlée however.

Saturday 18th April



Bachop – what a softie!

Before breakfast we went for walk to the main street, stopping to admire the etchings on the motel windows recording historic local clubs in the district.

In the morning when we went in for breakfast, we met Bachop, an enormous young Golden Labrador ensconced on one of the leather couches and yes, that is a cowboy saddle on a stand at the far end. Breakfast was a good country style breakfast with unlimited pieces of toast whether you asked for them or not. Apparently, any surplus goes to pigs somewhere.

At 8am we all left for the drive up to Doug and Sharon Pitsch's **Four Diamond Stud** at Waikari. There we met up with Kelvin and Kath Lane who had stayed the previous night with Ian and Anita.



Part of the group gathered to look over Doug and Sharon's cattle.



Cows and calves at Four Diamond stud.

Sharon had presented us with a scrumptious morning tea; especially the little apple muffins topped with cream cheese.



Relaxing in comfort in the Pitsch living room with our morning tea

In their lounge they had an old photo on the wall of a large group of cowboys and a couple of cowgirls in Montana back in the day. One of those who had

roped the large steer lying in the foreground was Doug's grandmother.



Doug & Sharon at Thompson's.

We moved on about 11am to travel to Eugene & Lisa Thompson's at Oxford. Unfortunately, Lisa was unable to be there as she had a prior commitment, but this was made up for by the presence of their daughter Katelyn who runs the

Birchwood Red Poll herd of her grandfather, Gordon Thompson, who older members may recall. He passed away in November 2024.

The property is not an easy one with parts being very hilly, but the family are getting both it, and the herd, back on track and hope to be able to build up a pedigree herd again. The cows are all pure bred, but Gordon had not registered any recently. In his younger years he had been a keen participant at local shows, competing against Garthmyl, Willow Lea and Elmwood studs as well as being an experienced judge.

Gordon & Thelma Thomson, taken as part of a group photo at Liz and Kevin Symonds in 1999. ➤



The cows had been down at the bottom of the hill but after we came back from looking at a couple of young bulls they had come up to some hay. They were looking good. Twenty-one were mated this year.



Katelyn and some of the Birchwood cows

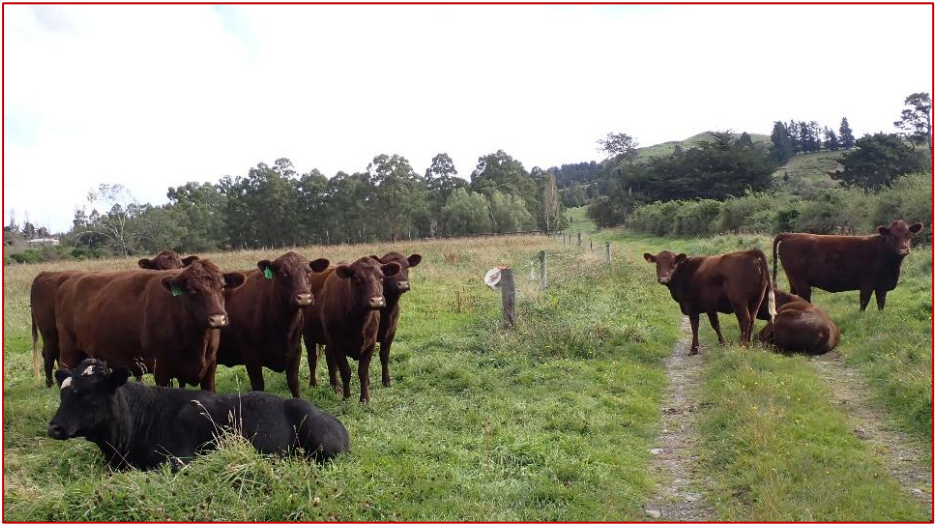
Before we left, we had a look at a couple of Eugene's American light trucks. The men (and some of the women!) were very impressed with the work he is putting into them to get them up to usable/saleable standard.

From their property they have a stunning view looking east.

The Thomson family's beautiful mixed breed dog ➤



The next brief stop was to see **Brent Ward's** small herd. He has 8 cows bought from Mike and Ann McSweeney's Dawn Mist herd when it was dispersed, plus two heifers. He has been using a purebred bull over them. He also has one black animal which of course was front and centre in the photo!



Cattle at Brent Ward's.

Dinner on Saturday night was at Ian and Anita Fleming's. It was at their new house at West Melton. It was a lovely surprise to find Eleanor Fleming there to greet us. For those who do not know her, she is Ian's mother. The first course at dinner was a tasty Red Poll casserole. This was followed a delectable feijoa and apple crumble with ice cream.

After dinner there was time to view the photo albums that Eleanor had put together of her & Peter's trips away to the several International Red Poll Congresses. Also available for viewing were family photos of some of the bulls they had bred and/or used over the years.

As we went into their driveway, we were greeted by a stunning photo of a bull we bred, Rosemarkie Mort's Ash. He has now gone the way of all good bulls but made it to 12 years of age which is not common when bulls are used for breeding and daughters are kept in the herd. We used him ourselves, then Neil Wilton had him for several years and then he went down to Ian and Anita. He was a very calm bull and went to a Hastings Royal Show and also to our local shows.



Rosemarkie Mort's Ash and Strathwell friend

It is a great advertisement, and I'm sure has generated much comment among their townie neighbours!

Next morning we were off to see Ian and Anita's cattle at their lease block. We began with a stop at the shed for morning tea – thank you Anita. We had a quick look at the cows and heifers' mob. Some very nice animals in there. ▼



L-R Betty, Priscilla, Jessica, Athol and Warwick view the females ➤



Ian had his show cows with their calves tied up in the yards for us to see.

Taking them back to their paddock.

◀ L-R Warwick, Neil & Ian

From there we went to see the cows with the male calves, running with an Ash son. The calves were Ian's last crop by Rosemarkie Mort's Ash.



Cows out with the bull, Strathwell Tom R12 # NUMBER 4896 (centre), & their male calves at Flemings

On leaving the Flemings we went to see a friend of Ian's he used to play rugby with. John Turner, a dairy farmer who uses bulls from Ian to tail up his mob. He runs about 650 cows. The retained calves in the weaner mob were all varying shades of orange/red, out of Ayrshire cows. The two bulls have been named, Ginge and Red. John is hoping to try milking the crossbreds to see how they go.



Kath & Kelvin check out the weaner heifers at John Turners

After John's there was a short trip along the road to view Ian's radish seed crop. The crop is grown on three hectares of Ian & Anita's lease block. He said it costs \$1,000 a hectare to put in. He is not sure whether it will be a viable source of income. Costs for spraying and management amount to about \$25,000 with a projected income of \$53,000 if all goes well with the weather etc.

It is a tricky crop to grow in that rows of male plants are interspersed among the rows of female plants – sexed seed?

After pollination the male plants are sprayed out and mulched once dry. Once the seeds have matured and are almost ready to harvest the female plants are defoliated and it is then about 3 weeks til they will be dry enough to harvest the seed. As in vineyards; nets and gas cannons (and the local harrier hawks) are used to keep the sparrows etc away from eating the crop.

The Canterbury Regional Council, known as ECan, can dictate whether a particular crop may be grown.



L-R Ian, Neil, Warwick (obsc.) Athol and Kath check the progress of the seeds.

Leaving there we took a quick side trip to see Lake Ellesmere then returned to Ian's to see the heifers as Neil was hoping to secure an Ash daughter or two.



◀ L – R Kelvin, Kath, Warwick, Ian & Anita

That evening we attended the Annual Dinner at the Crate and Barrel where we were staying. We had a dining room to ourselves upstairs. There were many more interesting items attached to the walls.

For dinner there was a choice of chicken breasts, beer battered fish, lamb shanks and roast of the day – pork in this case. Desserts were a choice from Eton Mess –

deconstructed; sticky date pudding, apple strudel – the latter more of an apple turnover really - and cheesecake. All were favourably received.

L-R Ian, Anita, Neil, Sharon, Priscilla, Jessica, Athol & Betty. Helen was taking the photos!



After dinner, in lieu of a speaker we were privileged to be able to watch some historic footage of the 100th Ellesmere Show celebrations in 1970. The parade included vintage machinery, Clydesdale horse teams, light harness horses including a hackney – this breed has now died out in NZ I believe and is very rare throughout the world. There was a bullock team which consisted of horned

Herefords – quite unusual in itself, as most of the original bullock teams in NZ were the dual-purpose Shorthorn type. Also, on view were some very plump Red Polls! Certainly, a lovely trip down memory lane.

After the usual extra hearty breakfast with masses of toast next morning, it was back to the room of the previous night for the Annual General Meeting.

Among the discussions was the need to better promote our breed with more advertising – smaller more frequent ads in the Farmers Weekly were suggested.

The Association website is now accessible, and the newsletter is also back online within in it.

The Royal Agricultural Society medal which the Association awards for the stud doing the most for the advancement of the breed went to Ian & Anita Fleming for their continuous efforts in showing their cattle at their local shows, including the prestigious Canterbury Show, and getting their bulls out into the farming community.

The WD Davie-Martin Award went to Helen McKenzie for her continued production of the NZ Red Poll News which also has a large international following.

The way home later that day was a bit of a mission. The stormy weather saw our plane flight cancelled. We had to retrieve our luggage from the carousel and re check in later. Neil, Sharon and us were not the only ones as later in the day Jessica suddenly appeared. Their flight had got halfway to Palmerston North and then got turned back to Christchurch.

The Wairarapa contingent then got rebooked on a later flight with a bigger plane and arrived back in Wellington about 11pm-ish. A surprisingly smooth flight and landing. We jumped in the car and dropped Neil & Sharon off at the foot of the Moonshine where a family member picked them up. We then drove on home and arrived about 1am.

Another Herd Tour over. At least this time no one got lost. There were some memorable episodes of missing members over the years!

RED POLL INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS & TOUR
9th - 22nd April 2024 Part Seven
17TH INTERNATIONAL RED POLL CONGRESS

Thursday 18th April, Day 10

A quick walk around the block and then in for breakfast at 8am. Down to the dining room a bit early. Had to wait while 3 tourist coaches of Chinese tourist were being fed first. Two large tables were reserved for our group.

By 8.45am we were on the bus to travel to Te Puia, the New Zealand Māori Arts and Crafts Institute and to see the mud pools, geysers etc nearby at the Whakarewarewa thermal area. Te Puia was set up by Act of Parliament about 1963. They do not have government funding, only money from what they earn. They take anyone with 1% Maori blood or more. The group was split up to go round with the guides. Ours was a very enthusiastic young Maori lad with a great 'gift of the gab'.

From Wikipedia: *'Whakarewarewa has some 500 pools, most of which are alkaline chloride hot springs, and at least 65 geyser vents, each with their own name. Seven geysers are currently active. Pōhutu Geyser erupts approximately hourly to heights of up to 30m (98 ft).'*



◀
*View overlooking
the thermal area;
native ferns and
flax in the
foreground.*



To get from the arrival gate and thence to and from the Whakarewarewa thermal area to Te Puia we travelled in little covered trailers with seating for about 15 in each.

Our guide is in the red T shirt on the left of the photo.



◀ *Our colourful guide.*

Intricately carved gateway to the Marae at Te Puia ▼

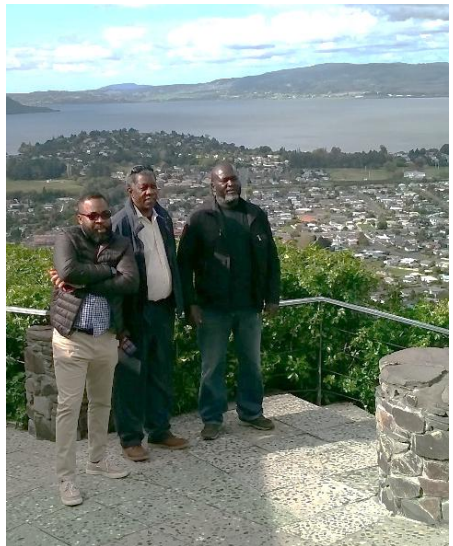


It would have been good to have spent more time watching the artisans at work at Te Puia.

Back in town it was 'own choice' for lunch at local cafés.

The afternoon began with the bus taking us up Mt Ngongotaha to the Gondola, Luge and Sky Swing. There is also a large mountain bike park. Several of the gondola cars are set up to carry mountain bikes and their owners. It is a very popular attraction. Athol, Priscilla and Jessica went for a ride down on the luge and thoroughly enjoyed it.

➤
L-R Devon, Calvert & Erick at the gondola site with part of Rotorua township behind them, population 58,000.



From there we went for a drive to see the Blue Lake and Lake Tarawera. We were able to indulge ourselves with an ice cream at the lakeside shop.

We returned to the Sudima about 4.15pm. We had time for a rest and to get ready for our evening outing – a visit to Te Pa Tu about 15 minutes away. We travelled on their bus, a large coach with very comfortable seats. There were people from another tour group on board as well. The Maori bus driver was a real character and made everyone feel very welcome. He said we had to choose a representative for the traditional welcome when we arrived. We unanimously nominated Calvert. Nothing like throwing him in the deep end! He very graciously accepted the nomination.

From their website: - *Te Pā Tū is owned by Tauhara North No 2 Trust. Te Pā Tū celebrates our history, generates employment, and honours te taiao (natural environment) with generous, genuine, and beautifully curated knowledge-sharing events.*

Te Pā Tū is intended as a tourism operation that gives more than it takes – sustaining land, place, stories and people.

The driver began with teaching some Maori words – Kia ora – hello/thankyou, Ka kite – goodbye. Also, that 'rotorua' means second lake.



It was a very good set up. On arrival we entered through the beautifully carved formal entrance. Once inside basic marae protocol was explained. Calvert did his bit replying to the welcome and telling a bit of his background as required. We then followed our hosts to four different areas where young

people brought us canapés and told us about our surroundings. There were some small traditional buildings and a fire in the centre of each area which contributed to the atmosphere, along with the traditional costume of the hosts. They demonstrated poi dance, stick games and haka with the guests being invited to participate.

Calvert picking up the proffered fern frond. ▼

Photo: Cheryl Couch





^ Practising the haka. Driver Les in the centre looks particularly fierce! Second from right is not from our group.

From there we went to a small hall where we took seats to watch a concert with haka, singing and demonstration of long poi.

In the photo below the white arcs are the poi swinging on the end of their strings. The girls were very adept at this – lots of practice. Note the painting along the rafters. These are called kōwhaiwhai. They represent tribal genealogy (whakapapa), nature, and stories. ▼



The final activity was dinner! The large hall was lit by a variety of older household chandeliers and light fittings. It was provided with several tables. It was very nice as all the tables were second hand - lovely old fashioned dining tables, some with matching chairs but many of the chairs were different too. The tables were nicely set with a side plate, silver cutlery, serviettes in silver rings and the bottles on the table were filled with water, not wine.



The meal was from a hangi; not the traditional underground one though. The entrees were pieces of duck, salads and slices of scotch eggs, accompanied by fresh rolls. This was followed by pork, tandoori chicken, beef cheeks, kumara and stuffing. Dessert was pannacotta. Very nice.

◀ *Devon caught up with calls while we waited for dinner.*



The Aussies are a clannish mob and sat together this night ▲

The bus trip back to the hotel was equally entertaining. The bus driver sang "What a Wonderful World", "You Are My Sunshine" and "Que Sera Sera" with everyone joining in. He then encouraged Calvert to say a bit about himself and his family. Being Jamaican, Calvert sang some of Bob Marley's "One Love". Overall, it was a great evening.

Sadly, Ayleen and Robin are leaving us at 7.30am to catch a bus for Auckland in the morning as they were late finding out about the NZ tour and had booked to go on a boat cruise. They were catching up with the cruise in Auckland.

To be continued

ROSEMARKIE REPORT

We had a great trip away in June starting with 3 nights in Hawaii, then Alaska to cruise the inside passage looking at glaciers etc, followed by couple of nights with Dean & Marsha Anderson, then a trip on the Rocky Mountaineer train followed by 4 nights with my nephew and his wife near Edmonton.



▲ *A fabulous bronze piece of a hunter's pack train at the Fort St. John Airport. The execution of the animals & people was absolutely true to life.*

It was wonderful to see Dean and Marsha again. The first night there Marsha said "we're going to a concert tonight" – turned out to be A Gordon Lightfoot tribute – we really enjoyed it.

Next day Dean took us on a drive around the Peace River Valley, firstly, to see the small Hudsons Hope Museum. There was a fabulous buffalo skin coat worn by a Royal Canadian Mounted policeman back in the day. I put my hand on it and then saw the sign saying please do not touch!

Buffalo skin coat ➤



One of the other buildings had several taxidermied game animals including tahr and chamois from NZ. Also, an adult muskox. They are very solid. A pronghorn antelope next to it for size comparison.



◀ *Musk ox and pronghorn antelope*

From there we travelled quite a bit further to see a couple of the hydro-electric Power Stations. A highlight for me was seeing a chipmunk. I did not realise how small they are.

The next day Dean took us to see Arthur and Jennifer Weber and their **AJ Farms** cattle.

Spring was very late, but the grass was now growing flat out. The cows were a bit lean but picking up rapidly. Their new young calves looked very good.

Their young herd sire is from Dean & Marsha's **Shadow Creek** herd.

Emma talks to the bull ➤

Dean and Marsha regularly see black bears and moose on their property too.

Marsha manages the bloodlines for the stud. We saw bulls by **Turanga** Why Such a Fuss, **Moreton** Danny Boy, and

Eurimbla Cassanova as well as some by homebred bulls.



◀ *Yearling bull at **Shadow Creek** by **Turanga** Why Such a Fuss.*

We recommend a visit to Dean and Marsha's if you are planning a trip to Canada. They are in British Columbia.

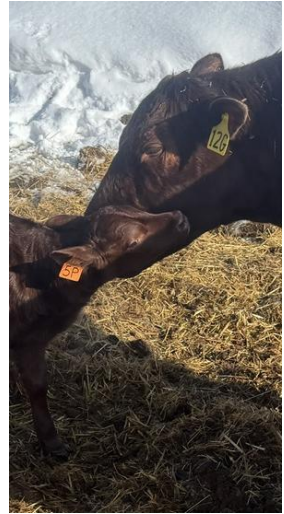
We really appreciated the chance to stay with them and to see their cattle and those of the Weber's.

Warwick & Helen

CANADA NEWS



AJ farms showed their first Red Poll heifer in 4-H and placed 3rd in over all. Daughter Emma is leading.



Motherly love - note the snow in the background



L- R back Arthur, Emma & Jennifer Weber, Helen & Warwick Front, their very cute youngest daughter, Peyton & their son, Ashton.

A beautiful day, as can be seen, when Dean took us to visit their cattle. This was at a lease block.

UK NEWS, Part One

We very pleased to host a visit from Ian and Anita in June. Whilst on their holiday in the UK they stayed with us in Upton upon Severn for a few nights. We had a busy time visiting the sights of Stratford upon Avon, Cotswold villages, Worcester and a local farm.

We spent a whole day at The Royal Three Counties in Malvern starting with the judging of the Red Poll cattle at 8.30am. We chatted to many Red Poll cattle exhibitors and generally enjoyed the atmosphere of this prestigious show. After watching the Grand Parade, we were all invited to join the celebrations and prize giving at the Red Poll Cattle Society stand.

Kate and Paul



Part two, from Billy Laird, Wemyss Red Polls

Hi there - This might interest you,

Since 2018 I started buying Red Poll cows for my suckler herd. I put the British Blue and Blonde bulls over the Red Poll cows. I looked at other breeds, but Red Poll cows was the breed to buy.

I am now selling some 12-month-old show calves.

Just last month I managed to sell a 16-month BBX RP bull. He is going to be used on Highland and Galloway cows.



◀ *Blonde X Red Poll cow with bull calf by a British Blue bull.*

What interested the buyer was my Red Polls have a big pelvis, plus plenty of milk. The British Blue has a shorter gestation period and easy calving.

I have facebook pages - Livestock Scotland where farmers buy and sell livestock and other things. If deals are

made, I ask satisfied customers to donate to the RSABI. They help anyone in the farming community with depression, suicidal problems etc. They helped me in 2019, so payback time. That's how the page started. Now over 28000 members on it! Wemyss Red Poll rare breed is my other page.

About me -

We have 130 suckler cows.

Calves: heifer calves sold at 12- to 14-month-old as stores.

Bull calves kept as bulls, some are sold for breeding with the rest finished at about 17 months of age.

I buy in replacement cows as well. I don't have space for breeding heifers.

Just bought cattle from my Livestock Scotland page so farm to farm sale with no auctioneer's fees being a big saving.

I also judge shows. I participated in the Red Poll's overall herd competition.

WOODBURN RED POLLS, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA
Douglas and Catherine Payne

We love to reflect on our beautiful experience in NZ a few years back.

Back home there is always a lot of work to do but the autumn proved to be really good. Right now, winter feeding in wet paddocks is quite a challenge but spring is getting closer.

We hope to escape to Queensland to warm up at the end of it all.



Some of the Woodburn cow herd

FREEMARTINS IN CATTLE

Understanding the Condition and its Impact on Livestock

Reprinted with permission from the Australian Red Poll Annual, 2026

Recent discussions have indicated that the freemartin condition is not well understood by a lot of cattle breeders. Most know of the condition, but with little understanding of just how it is caused. Checking the scientific literature throws up terminology that is unfamiliar and therefore a little confusing. This is an attempt to put the condition in "laymans' terms" by Murray Williams.

What Is a Freemartin?

A freemartin is a female calf born as a twin to a male calf in cattle. (Can also occasionally appear in sheep, buffalo and pigs). This condition results in the female being infertile due to the influence of male hormones during foetal development.

How Does Freemartinism Occur?

Freemartinism occurs when a cow gives birth to twins – one male and one female within the same uterine horn. During pregnancy, the placentas of the two calves will fuse, allowing blood and hormones to mix between the foetuses. The male calf produces testosterone and other hormones, which cross into the female calf's system. This exposure disrupts the normal development of the female's reproductive organs, leading to varying degrees of masculinisation and, most commonly, infertility.

By way of background, a properly functioning fertile cow will shed an egg monthly, alternatively between the left and right ovaries. She can sometimes shed an egg in both and therefore develop a calf in each uterine horn. If this happens and they are a male calf in one horn and a female in the other, there is no joining of placentas and therefore no detrimental effect on the female calf. If she sheds two eggs into the same uterine horn and they are of the same sex, they will develop as normal male or female twins.

If she sheds one egg into the uterine horn and as it starts to develop it splits into two, then perfectly normal identical twins of the same sex will develop. It is only when two eggs of different sex are shed into the same uterine horn that the freemartin condition will develop.

Characteristics of Freemartins

- Usually appear physically female but may have some masculinised traits.
- Reproductive organs are underdeveloped or abnormal, making natural breeding impossible.
- May have a very shortened and sharply pointed vulva often with a tuft of strong hair at the point and an enlarged clitoris.
- Often smaller than normal heifers and may show behavioural differences.

Diagnosis of Freemartinism - Can be diagnosed in several ways -

- Clinical examination: a vet can check the reproductive tract for abnormalities.
- Blood tests: Chromosomal analysis can confirm the presence of male (XY) cells in the female calf.
- Probe test: a simple test using a probe to measure the length of the vagina; freemartins typically have a much shorter vagina than normal heifers.

Implications for farmers

Freemartin heifers are not suitable for breeding and are usually raised for beef production instead.

Farmers should be aware of this condition when managing twin births, as it can affect reproduction rates and the value of individual animals.

The male calf is generally unaffected, is fertile and suitable to breed with. They will sometimes have smaller testicles.

Prevalence

About 90% of female calves born as twins with a male will be freemartins

Conclusion

Freemartinism is a significant consideration in cattle management, especially for breeders. Understanding the condition helps in making informed decisions about herd selection and animal use, ensuring both animal welfare and farm productivity.

(Around 86,000 freemartins are born annually into USA dairy cattle breeds.)

Red Poll Society (UK)

If you would like to join to the Red Poll Cattle Society (UK) contact secretary@redpoll.co.uk

or write to:

The Secretary, 48 Mayfield Road, Writtle, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 3EL, England.



The overseas associate membership subscription is £30 sterling; includes three printed issues a year of the newsletter. The newsletter is also available to view on-line, gratis.



NZ Red Poll Badges Available

These are well made and beautifully finished and each one comes in a lovely presentation packet.

\$15 each + p & p (About \$3.50 for up to 6 badges). Size is approximately 3cm by 2¾cm.

Order from the Secretary, Warwick Potts, who will supply an invoice and the badge/s.



Photos Back Cover:

Top: Cows and calves at Four Diamond Stud.

Bottom: 3 young bulls at Flemings on NZ AGM Tour.

Left: Blue 2, dam #13039 show cow, sire Rosemarkie Mort's Ash.

Middle bull: Inny Vale Bard Percy # 4912,

Right: Athbey tag 354, Athbey Lindon # 4914.

