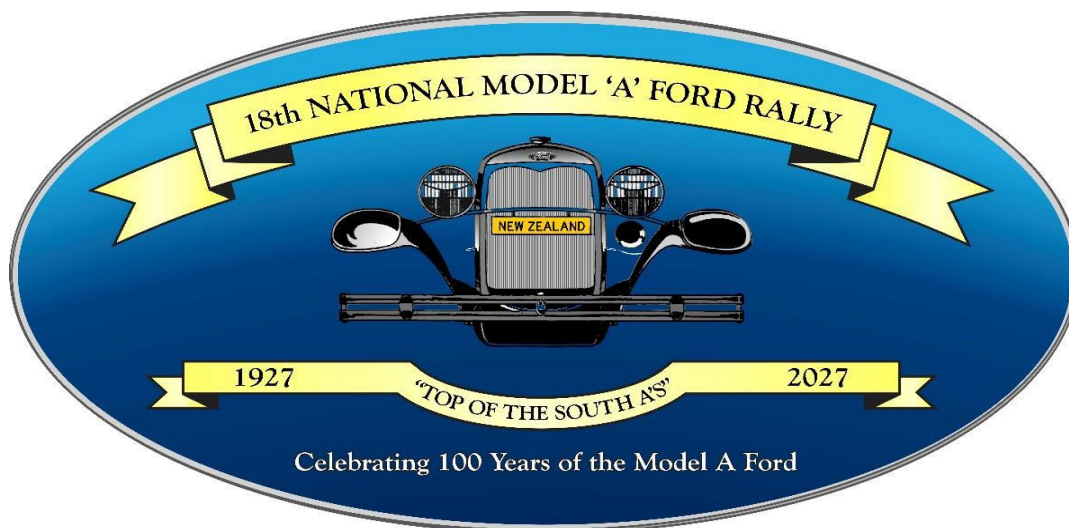




EARLY BIRD NEWSLETTER #3, AUGUST '26

Welcome to our 3rd newsletter as we continue our build-up to the 2027 Rally. Reminder this is a Top of The South event; the rally will be held in two locations: Blenheim (13th – 16th March) and Nelson (17th – 20th March). We are pleased to say we have 91 Model As preregistered, getting close to 100.

NOTICES AND REQUESTS

OVERSEAS VISITORS: We are Looking forward to welcoming two American couples who are shipping their cars out to NZ in time for the rally. They will also be touring the country. We also welcome another American woman who is coming without her car, and about ten of our neighbours from Australia – with no cars. Maybe we need to get a tour party together for the next Australian Rally?

- **Loan of a car.** We have had an enquiry from one of the Australians asking to borrow a Model A if possible (same people who borrowed an Auckland car for the Masterton rally).
- **Empty seats.** Will anyone have empty seats to fill? If so, please get in touch with us.

JUDGING: Due to the poor response to our request for tentative entries for the Car Judging, we may consider not holding this event. There is a lot of work involved to run the judging which can't be justified with only a few entries.
Please contact our team ASAP if you intend to enter your car for judging.

To run the judging we will also need more volunteers to help with this. Thanks to those who have already put their hands up, but we will need more of you to help if we go ahead.

Judges do not need special qualifications as there is a very established process to follow! Each judge is given specific things to look for from all the cars so there is a narrow area of responsibility for each. Being a judge offers you a unique opportunity to look closely at other cars and how each owner has maintained or restored their own car.

TRAVEL: Don't forget to get your Ferry Tickets booked.

Remember to use your VCC or any other discount code you have for booking ferries.

RALLY OUTLINE – FURTHER DETAILS:

To keep costs down for both organisers and everyone attending, we are taking a 'back to basics' approach for this rally. We recommend that you bring a light picnic chair with your Thermos and morning/afternoon tea items. Some days will be self-catering but please see below for further details.

BLenheim 13TH – 16TH MARCH

- **Saturday 13th Meet and Greet in Blenheim.** *Own arrangements for dinner.*
- **Sunday 14th Judging/Gymkhana/Display Day/Hubley Derby, Blenheim.** *Light lunch options available at the park. Own arrangements for dinner.*
- **Monday 15th and Tuesday 16th Local Marlborough Tours.** *For the Marlborough runs one day there will be the option of having your lunch catered by a local school and the other day we encourage you to sample the local produce at one of the many Wineries and Cafes surrounding Blenheim. There will be time on this afternoon to explore some of the Marlborough attractions at your own pace.
Monday night will be a Food Truck night at "The Vines Village"
Own arrangements for dinner Tuesday night*

NELSON 17TH – 20TH MARCH

- **Wednesday 17th** to Nelson. Pack your bags to change your accommodation and for Rally Run to Nelson. *We have a sheltered spot arranged for lunch but there are not many options for buying your lunch in the vicinity, we recommend you be prepared and buy your lunch **before you leave Blenheim**. When we reach Nelson, we will regroup with an early BBQ snack before you head off to your accommodation. Own arrangements for dinner.*
- **Thursday 18th local Nelson Tours.** *Sheltered lunch stops organized but self-catering for lunch and snacks. At the end of Thursday's tour, we have organized for all the cars to meet up in Māpua for an afternoon tea (provided in Māpua Hall). After this you will be free to further explore Mapua and maybe spend some time enjoying the local hospitality. There are lots of options for dinner in the area including a great Fish and Chip shop, but we do recommend that you **book ahead** for the restaurants. See later in this newsletter for details about Māpua eateries.*
- **Friday 19th Local Nelson Tours.** *Self-catering for your lunch and snacks. Rally dinner in evening.*
- **Saturday 20th** *Breakfast (optional) and Farewells*

To help with traffic control on the Rally runs we will have rolling starts and we will split the local Marlborough and Nelson Rally runs into two groups, which will mean about 50 cars going in each direction each day and swapping over the next day. You will have the chance to nominate your group at Registration.

MĀPUA (location of an afternoon tea following a Nelson run on Thursday 18th March)

Māpua is a vibrant seaside village, famous for [Mapua Wharf](#), artisan eateries, and coastal cycling trails. The sheltered inlet is popular for water sports. There are many craft and gift shops at the wharf. Māpua is about 33 km west of Nelson (Google says a 20-minute drive but we would suggest 40 minutes). Roughly 30 km from Abel Tasman National Park. Population: Around 3,000 residents. If you want to stay in the area for dinner following the afternoon tea on Thursday 18th, there are a several options:

The Smokehouse. Sitting out at the wharf and eating fish 'n chips from the Smokehouse is a very iconic local activity. <https://www.smokehouse.co.nz/>. The Smokehouse also sells takeaway smoked fish and seafood. If you prefer not to stay in Māpua for dinner, taking some smoked fish back to your accommodation to have on a platter would be an excellent option.

Rimu Wine Bar. As well as a great selection of wines, the Rimu Wine Bar serves great pizzas.

<https://www.rimugrove.co.nz/the-wine-bar/>

Jellyfish Restaurant. Fabulous views over the Māpua Wharf and channel. Nice menu. Bookings essential. <https://www.thejellyfish.nz/>

The Appleshed Kitchen and Bar. Another restaurant right on the Māpua wharf. Upmarket cuisine. <https://www.theappleshed.nz/> Bookings will also be essential in March.

Sprig & Fern Māpua. An old, converted school house right in Māpua Village. Relaxed and casual. Tavern food.

<https://sprigandfern.co.nz/mapua/> Bookings recommended due to the time of year.

Māpua Indian Eatery. Situated at the turnoff into Māpua. Bookings recommended.

<https://mapuaindianeatery.co.nz/>

SPRING GROVE HALL. This is the start point for the long Nelson run and the hall has an interesting history. The Spring Grove Hall (originally known as Spring Grove Drill Hall) at 244 Lord Rutherford Road South, served as a military drill hall during both World Wars and is famously the birthplace of the World of Wearable Art (WOW). It is deeply tied to the history of Brightwater—a town originally named Spring Grove until its renaming in the late 19th century.

Today, the hall is managed by the local community and functions as a popular rural event and wedding venue. Historically, the broader Spring Grove and Brightwater areas are renowned as the birthplace of Nobel Prize-winning scientist Lord Ernest Rutherford. The original property and schoolhouse where Rutherford was born lay just south of the main village.



The Spring Grove Drill Hall is located approx 10 minutes from Richmond and 15 minutes from Nelson Airport in between the suburbs of Brightwater and Wakefield. The venue has a large, grassed area at the front of the hall as well as ample parking space at the back of the hall.

NELSON For those choosing to stay on in Nelson, there are a lot of attractions.

Walk to the Centre of NZ. The Centre of New Zealand, on Botanical Hill at the start of the Maitai Valley, is an iconic walk in Nelson Tasman. This steep but short family-friendly walk starts at the Botanical Reserve, where the first ever rugby game was played in New Zealand. From here, there are a couple of options to take you to the top where you will enjoy spectacular views over Nelson Tasman.

Suter Art Gallery

The Suter Art Gallery Te Aratoi o Whakatū is the public art gallery for the Nelson Tasman region.

Located beside the Queens Gardens on the edge of downtown Nelson, The Suter Art Gallery is one of the oldest galleries in New Zealand, with a rich history dating back to the late 19th century, when it was founded in memory of the second bishop of Nelson. It now serves as a contemporary gallery, [150-seat theatre](#), inspiring [education space](#), as well as a popular [café](#) and a gallery [store](#) filled with beautiful objects crafted by local artists.

Founders Heritage Park. Founders Heritage Park is a replica historic village of Nelson's early days (circa 1880-1930) featuring heritage displays, railway, cafe and working artisans.

Located on the outskirts of Nelson city, the park is filled with character streets and attractive gardens across 5ha of land. It hosts weekly farmers markets, regular craft and beer festivals, antique and retro shows and many annual community events. There is ample off-road parking. Open seven days, 10am – 4.30pm.

Includes Nelson's newest second-hand bookstore. The Book Vault Opening Times: Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday 11am until 3pm. The Book Vault is packed with quality pre-loved books across all genres, from children's favourites to classic literature and hidden gems. All sales support the park, making it the perfect place to find your next read while giving back to the community.

Lake Rotoiti. Fringed by manuka and kanuka, Lake Rotoiti is one 16 lakes in the Nelson Lakes National Park and is easily accessible from the alpine village of St Arnaud. Whether you have a couple of hours to spare or an entire day to explore, there is a network of walking tracks around the lake that can be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities. Lake Rotoiti is just over an hour's drive from Nelson.

Classic Car Museum

Nelson Classic Car Museum (NCCM) is the best place to see more than 150 cars in excellent condition – from more than 120 years of motoring. Open 10am – 4pm daily. Entry fee \$20 adult or \$15 Senior.

Museum Store For those not into the classic cars, there is a quirky little well-stocked museum gift store which could easily take up 30 minutes. Also the excellent Little Engine Eatery, the onsite café.

Abel Tasman National Park Abel Tasman National Park is renowned for its golden beaches, sculptured granite cliffs, and its world-famous coast track.



Boat and/or walk. <https://www.abeltasman.co.nz/> half or full day trips with Wilsons – the original boat operators for the Park. Options include full sea trip or part track walk. A nice option is to elect to walk a small section of the track, and the boat will collect you from whichever bay you choose. Most of the track is very easy walking although there are some uphill sections from selected beaches up to the track.

<https://www.abeltasmanseashuttles.co.nz/> For quicker

trips although you'd be best to allow at least a half day.

<https://www.abeltasmanecotours.co.nz/> Or Eco tours for another option.

Kaiteriteri. Loved for its turquoise water and golden sand beach, the sunny town of Kaiteriteri is a launching place for trips into the Abel Tasman National Park. The rally will include a run to Kaiteriteri.