



## Vindicatrix 8th Downunder Reunion Christchurch, South Island, NZ

This was another very good reunion gig, and our thanks must go to the organisers for such a valiant effort. They were, (drum roll please mystro) introducing them to the party participants, (from a slightly impaired memory bank) Terry Knight, Vic Gray, John McLister, Dave Spice, Don Sangster, Ian Donald, Dick Hodge, Colin Titcombe. Also Harry Pemberton, who, for personal reasons, was unable to attend the reunion, At this point I once again send our combined thanks to all these men, for a well done job, done well.

I have little doubt too that there were a number of ladies involved here. I do know that Dick Hodges wife Carol was kind enough to make and supply that sumptuous Vindi cake. I send



multiple thanks for that delightful addition to the consumables. When I first arrived at the Woolston Bowling Clubs premises there were four or five able lads there that were arranging some flag decorations, and trying to improvise a message of welcome. They had Terry climbing the wobbly ladder, with Alan Creasey keeping it steady? Rod Orrah was opening and passing the flags upwards, and Vic was trying to keep things going in an orderly manner. There were also a couple of 'our' young ladies there bustling around very busily doing things. Thank you Kim and Laurice. I managed to time it really well and arrived as the last banner was being put in place. This was of course was commented upon, with feeling, by the workers.

If you weren't one of the almost 100 Vindi attendees that attended this reunion, tough, you missed out on really good time. The Meet & Greet on Friday 31st October, was no real indication of what was to come. True, the hall was extra large, but the lads and lasses seemed to fill it anyway. The beginning was a seemingly sedate affair. There was of course the usual joyous greetings of long time no see, friends. The less enthusiastic, but none the less sincere, welcome of members being greeted at their first reunion gathering. Thanks must of course go to the airport greeters.

There were members from many places, such as Australia, most regions. Both Islands of New Zealand and the UK had a representative couple as well, Mike and Barbara Sergeant they were most welcome.

The bar of course was open at 5pm, and we were soon slurping delicious drinks and swinging the lamp with

vigour, figuratively speaking of course. Around 7pm the finger foods started to arrive, the verbal volume didn't noticeably decrease, but the foods did, rapidly. Thereupon, a most welcome interlude ensued, that included music and singing by two of the lovely young ladies, who are members of the Woolston Bowls Club. Many thanks ladies for some really good entertainment with many toe-tapping oldies song and sing alongs included in your repertoire.

### Next Morning, Saturday.

Parade time was around 10am, and what a surprise! We were booked on to an "elderly" ex-London, double deck omnibus. Almost the same sort of London bus I used to drive before I became a 'lorry driver'. I feel positive it still had the original seats as well. Not exactly built for comfort. This ancient vehicle transported us from Woolston to Lyttleton, via a tight fitting tunnel. It certainly looked like all those on the upper deck would have to duck smartly as we entered the tunnel. Obviously the driver had done this trip before. He missed the tunnel roof, by a not great margin it looked like. Then "pop" we were out of the tunnel and heading for one of the long time ago watering holes. The British Hotel.



Well the outside did look rather familiar, but I am told the inside has changed significantly. We, of course were not heading there. Even though the bus parked right outside the door. Our destination was the Maritime Museum, which has been established within the confines of the old Seaman's Mission. Three decks it has, and it's packed with heaps of maritime history and artifacts.

After a short while looking at the exhibits, it was time to take a walk over the bridge to the docks where our second transport of the day lay at rest alongside the wharf. This



was the 100 plus year old steam tug "Lyttleton", that was to be our cruiser round the harbour of Lyttleton. This was a very interesting part of the day, and we were lucky enough to see some of the endangered dolphins known as "Hector's Dolphins" playing in the bow wave of the "Lyttleton" These famous dolphins are an endangered species. Dave

Smith of England, bottled ship maker extraordinaire, donated a prize to be raffled at the reunion with all proceeds to be donated to the Save the Hector Dolphins Fund. I believe that about \$380 was raised in this way. Thanks Dave, that was a very kind gesture. My only complaint, "I didn't win it".

From there it was back to the bus, back to the Bowling club and a few hours to rest and recuperate to get ready for the Official Grand Dinner and some excellent entertainment during the evening. And what entertainment it was. To start with we had a versatile duo, Ian and Tony that sang and



played us through the 60's to the 90's music. Great playing guys. Then progressing along, we were suddenly whisked away to the East and in amongst the bazaar bars and their 'Belly Dancers' What a difference that made to the congregation. With all of those bellies being sensually moved in some Arabian dancing, apart from the dancers music there was silence in the house. There were of course some other sounds, such as "Wow" and get outta the way ya mug, yer spoilin' the pictures. Hey, I can't see through ya mate. You know what I mean. It was a real surprise and a well kept secret. As for the girls, the dancing, oh, and yes, and the attire. Just one word. Superb.

The group is known, throughout New Zealand, as "Clessidra" Tribal Style Dancers These beautiful young ladies kept us enthralled for about 30 minutes. If you would like to see more of and about them just log on to [www.clessidra-dance.com](http://www.clessidra-dance.com) By the way folks, I am still trying to get a disk made of the big day and will do so ASAP.



There was of course the raffles to be drawn, and also the cake to be cut. What a cake it was too. The patience and ingenuity that went in to the production of the Vindi Logo alone deserves a special mention. Someone performed some magic of their own to concoct that master piece. The day finally slowed down enough to let the Guys and Gals start feeling tired, and start thinking that it may just be time for some shuteye before the Church Parade in the morning.

**Sunday.**

St John St church hosted the Sunday Service, and it was good to see that there were a good few of the Vindi lads

still mobile enough to get to the church on time. The vicar at the church welcomed the appearance of so many of our members and invited all and sundry to stay after the service and partake of some tea and a few tab-nabs. It was a very welcome repast and I think we all had some sustenance and indulged in a certain amount of chat with the locals and the church officials as well. The highlight of the service was the reading of the poem Heroes by David Partridge – the reading spoken by an English lass recorded by the BBC and leaving many moist eyes.

From there, we adjourned round the corner once more to the bowling clubs premises. This time to partake of a very well prepared BBQ with Mick Kingcott wearing the apron and tossing the snags, plenty of salads and pre-cooked chicken legs masterly arranged by Helen Mclister. Once again the bar was open and was hosted by "El Presidente" of the bowls club. I feel that I should ask all the ladies and gentlemen of the gathered sea hounds to raise a glass or three and toast that gentleman for his kindness and generosity whilst labouring mightily behind the bar to keep up with the rampant thirst of the customers. WELL DONE SIR.

As the BBQ ended, in the late afternoon it was announced that the meeting was now closed, but it would be re-opened again in Nov 2009 at Caloundra in Queensland. So, to all those that journeyed to Christchurch, Bon Voyage and soft sailing. See you again Next Year. AULD LANG SYNE.

I do have one last thank you to the catering team in the Woolston Club kitchen. A few times, with little or most times no warning, they suddenly had around forty hungry bodies descend on them clamouring for food and some where to sit. Again and again there was suddenly tables reserved and the food that was required appeared from literally nowhere. They did a great job. Thank You All.

Jack Secker

