



came along and introduced Bob to the wider world. Bob became quite the party animal - he limbo danced, got dressed up for the Sign and Display Awards, went to the pool tournament, he's even had a break in Napier in some less salubrious company before heading down to Ashburton. He even went to Warbirds over Wanaka! I think it's a safe bet that we'll be seeing Bob again in Invercargill next year!

If Thursday was a long day, Friday was shaping up to be even more so with a 9.00am start for a full morning of business sessions with John Hadfield, our guest from Australia, who spoke to a full house audience and enthralled those present with some canny advice and some practical guidelines for future business improvement. Then, after lunch it was a choice of pool, golf or the craft tour before heading off to the Bowl of Brooklands for the 10th annual NZ Sign & Display Awards.

If ever there was a need to pray to the weather gods Friday night was it. The logistics of moving close to 200 people from the hotel to the Taranaki Home Show where the entries for this year's NZ Sign and Display Awards were on public display at the TSB Stadium and then by coach again down into Pukekura Park and the Bowl of Brooklands where a reasonable amount of outdoor walking on grass or loose seal paving was required, the weather was to play an important role. Thankfully what little rain fell that night was after the last of the awards was presented and then on light - certainly not enough to dampen any spirits.

With it being the tenth anniversary the people at Flying Pictures went to considerable efforts to ensure it was an event we would remember. With the MC for the evening being Bob Parker, who before becoming the Mayor of Akaroa was the presenter of the 'This Is Your Like' television series, a look back over the ten years of awards formed the theme for the evening. Given the natural amphitheatre that is the Bowl of Brooklands, outdoor feature lighting, lasers and fireworks coupled with some AC-DC and Scottish pipers ensured the event was a memorable one for those present. It was also a time to recognise the support of those sponsors who had supported the event since its inception



ten years earlier so special awards were made to the seven sponsors present on the night and our thanks for this solid support is recorded here again.

Some unsolicited entertainment happened close to midnight as one of the award winners went up to the back of the park to get an impression of the stage and lake from the spectator's perspective only to find themselves dancing on the hillside as the lasers played all around. We won't say who, but those present will long remember the antics of that night, all in very good taste and from that distance it was fairly hard to tell who you were watching anyway which was possibly just as well!

There was a slow start to Saturday as the effects of the night before took somewhat of a toll on those present and after breakfast around 10am Martin Churchman and Jo-Ann Pugh from OSH made presentations regarding work site safety and outlining a few of the experiences that they had come across and the outcomes of those occurrences.

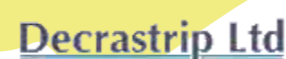
Before lunch was taken it was traditional conference group although there were some still could wait for no man as there was keep to for the afternoon.

A number of buses took delegates out to Okurakura winery where wine tasting was the order of the day while a handful of

special people headed for the airport as during the President's breakfast a draw was made from amongst the early bird registrations that saw Robert Singleton's name pulled from the hat to become the lucky winner of a flight in a Vampire jet but things got even better when we found out that other Vampire jet that is based in NZ was also at the airport and intended to fly alongside. So sponsor Dave Hullah joined the flight also.

Others took to the sky in the YAK formation flying planes and were treated to some unique flying experiences over the coast above the Okurakura winery for the benefit of all to see. The whole afternoon was well worth the blustery conditions (even Bob enjoyed himself).

From here it was back to the hotel to prepare for the Pauly T evening of Stars in Ya Eyes - lip synching for the masses! Pauly T, who was a feature of the last Taranaki conference in 1996 did a more than passable impression of Billy T





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James that garnered a fair few belly laughs before a buffet dinner was served and the fun began.

Notable performances were presented by most of those present with local radio djs doing the overall judging to ensure a level of non-partisan appreciation.

Sunday saw the closing breakfast underway at 9am when the winners for golf and pool were announced. This is the time for the Farr Cap also and the distinction this year went to Warren Burrows for his Queenstown banners.

Obviously the Taranaki people put in a huge effort and were thanked by delegates. Also to be thanked are the people from Taranki Signs, The Sign Shop and Aspect Signs for their help in setting up the Sign and Display awards entries - no mean feat this year! Thanks are also due to those who took the time to cross the Tasman and meet some new friends.

We call upon you now to reconvene in Invercargill in the deep South in April next year, to learn, share, enjoy and participate.



Where do you start? Taradise is a big place and we covered a good portion of it during the conference period. Some even covered it from the air!

Basically the event started with a mix and mingle in the house bar at the Plymouth Hotel on the Wednesday night when a large proportion of the delegates had already arrived in anticipation of the President's breakfast at 8.15 the following morning. But hang on - someone's missing! Yes we were Max-less. Max had taken a bit of a tumble some weeks earlier and was still recovering from recurring back problems meaning that Jeff Harvey had to be deputised to run the pool tournament and Max had to be paid a 'special' visit to receive his Life Member badge.



The Life Member badge and a badge for Past Presidents is an initiative of our new President Warren Haakma and it is hoped that we can catch up with all such members in the near future to present them with the mark of recognition that is due. Those Past Presidents and Life Members attending conference were presented with their badges by Jeff Harvey during the President's breakfast.

With breakfast over it was time to shape the Association for the future with the staging of the Annual General Meeting. Many important decisions were reached at the AGM and the minutes enclosed with this newsletter should be read and absorbed by all.

After lunch it was out to Onaero and a demonstration of native wood turning where we were entertained and enlightened for a good hour or so. From there it was off to Mike's Mild Ales in Urenui for lunch, ale tasting, brewery tours, teepee building and in some instances teepee sleeping! The girls beat the boys in building an authentic teepee. (Guys don't need to read instructions - it's a bit like a video recorder really - you just use your intuition!)

From here there was a spot of sightseeing off the beaten track ending up on the coast at Onaero for drinks and nibbles on the cliff top before a bush walk through to Waiau Estate where, courtesy of Jeff Harvey, we met 'Bob' the Gecko. Bob had apparently led a fairly quiet life sitting in the rafters of Waiau Estate until those nice sign people

