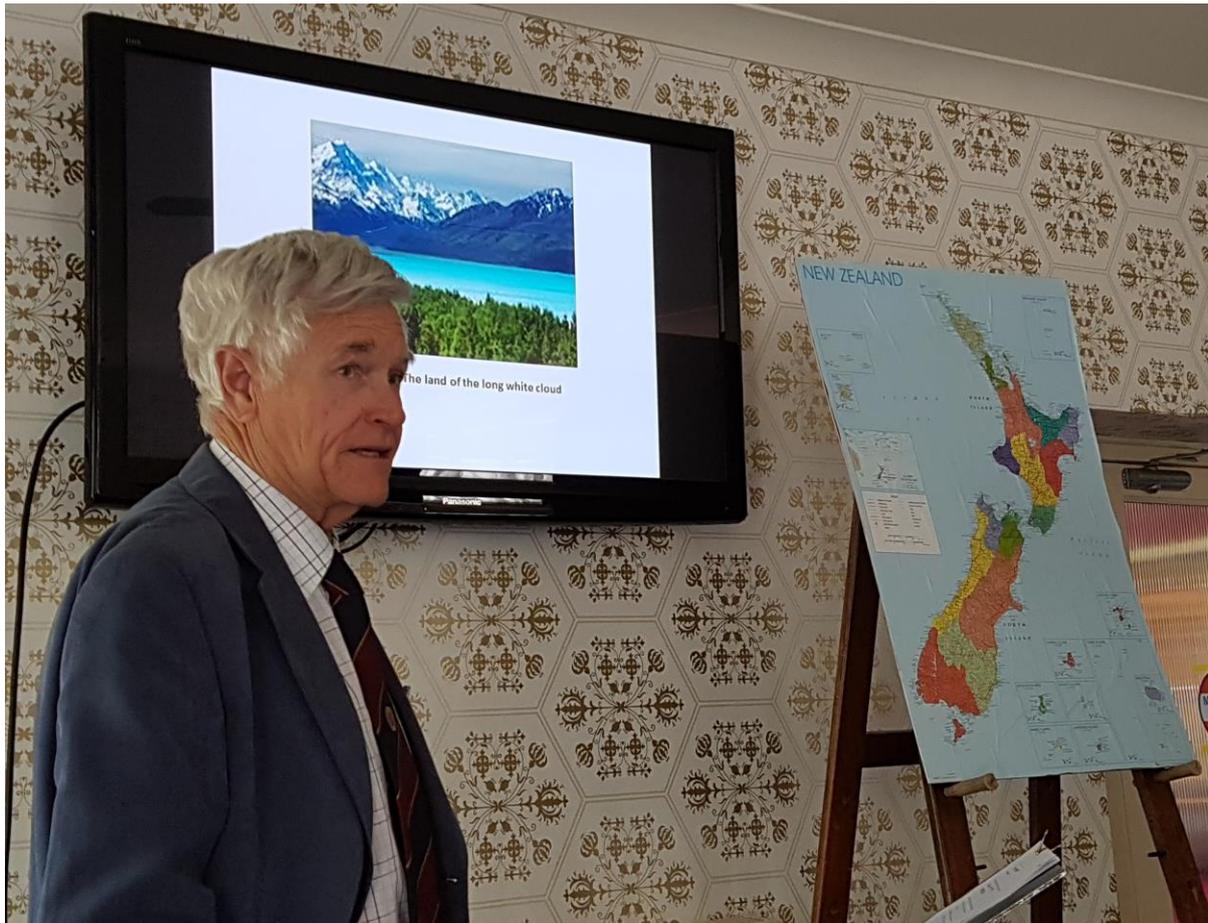


KYRLE PROBUS CLUB 4 MAY 2017

Kyrle Probus Club member Ben Norris presented a colourful and informative slide-tour of New Zealand at a club meeting on Thursday 4 May.

Ben, who describes himself as a 'Kiwi bloke' also added a selection of amusing –and near disastrous – anecdotes about narrow-boat trips with his wife Jane in England.



He talked of growing up in New Zealand on a hill overlooking Ohope Beach and the sea facing White Island, an active volcano 30 miles offshore, and Whale Island, named by explorer Captain Cook on one of his voyages. Both boasting Maori names of Whakaari and Moutuhoka respectively.

Geysers and mud pools (which smell like rotten eggs!) are a unique feature of Rotorua, some 50 miles north.

Jane grew up in the then-Rhodesia before she and her mother emigrated to New Zealand, where she met Ben in 1967, a year prior to their marriage.

When in their thirties they bought a ten-acre plot of bare land just outside Auckland, where they endured a series of house-building episodes. "New Zealand homes are different from the ones here," said Ben. "Mostly they are built of wood – the moral of this story is that if you buy a house in New Zealand, buy a weatherboard one built before 1970!"

After running a coal and firewood yard Ben and Jane launched and sold imported ladies' gardening gloves.

"They sold like hot cakes and we travelled the length and breadth of New Zealand selling all sizes to Garden centres, hardware shops and supermarkets."

Ben's slide-tour of New Zealand (Aotearoa in Maori) – the land of the Long White Cloud – featured a campervan drive to the Bay of Islands; around the remote East Cape; south to Lake Taupo and thence to the desert road – home of the Mountains; From the foothills of the remote Southern Alps to Stewart Island, where the next stop is the Antarctic.

Ben said that after commuting for years between New Zealand and England "We got sick of aeroplanes and found a nice house and garden here in Bridstow".