

September 20

Our adventure begins! After months of waiting and preparing, the day finally arrives. Our group is at the airport ready to board the plane to Los Angeles and then finally arrive in Auckland on Saturday, September 22. We will lose a day going to New Zealand but will get a day back on the return trip.

Joanne Johnson

Before the bedroom was washed with sunlight it was filled with anticipation of our trip down under. Unable to sleep, we directed our efforts to brewing coffee and organizing thoughts.

Several hours and senior moments later our bags were packed, and Karen Karl arrived to whisk us off to DIA. After a slightly confusing check-in, we were directed to Gate B44, only to be redirected to Gate B33. Most of our group was ready to go at 3:30 p.m. for a 5:15 flight.

It was an uneventful flight to LA, and we arrived 10 minutes early only to wait on the tarmac until a gate was available. Our group, peppered with savvy world travelers, found the International Terminal Shuttle under the blue sign without delay or detour. Since there was a 3-hour interval between arrival and departure, the group broke for dinner of choice. Bill and Joanne Harvey are credited with discovering that we needed to exchange boarding passes; however, it was Donna Robinson who informed us. So we marched to the service center to avoid being rejected at

the gate. A slight delay in departure due to a late arrival from London (the same plane taking us to New Zealand) allowed Rod an opportunity to demonstrate his market predictor to a wide-eyed 3-year old.

In preparation for the trip it was the 12-hour flight I most dreaded. There was no need as it turns out. What a delightful way to spend 12 hours – a spacious seat, state of the art entertainment system, watched a rugby match between the All Blacks (41) and the Wallabies (37).

Somewhere across the Pacific Ocean my journal responsibilities were relieved, but we arrived safely in New Zealand on time to be picked up by our hosts, and the fun began.

Chalmers Turner

September 21

Yes, we did have a Friday.

Four or five hours after leaving Los Angeles Thursday evening, the clock struck midnight, giving us Friday. Several hours later the seatback map showed us crossing the International Date Line at 3:00 a.m. New Zealand time, changing Friday to Saturday.

Friday was a very short day; no meals, no activities, but hopefully some sleep for most of us.

Jim Robinson

September 22

There really was no beginning to Saturday, September 22nd, as the 21st did not exist. Our flight lost that day in crossing the International Date Line. We left Los Angeles September 20th at 10:15 p.m. and arrived in Auckland at 5:30 a.m. on September 22nd. We got our bags and went through immigration with no problem. The Auckland ED, Des Fox, then met us. I really felt sorry for them as I realized for the first time that in order for them to greet us they had to get up very early. Des put us on a bus and we drove for about a half hour to their pickup point at a McDonald's restaurant. We all met our hosts and then departed with them. The rest of the day was spent with our hosts.

Craig Fagerness

After picking up our suitcases, we were met by the Auckland North Shore Friendship Force members who will be hosting us during the week ahead. It was a beautiful day, and we all benefited from the fresh air once outside the Terminal Milford. Olga Blackmore was our host even though she had lost her husband a few months earlier on a FF exchange. She was determined to be involved with the exchange. Her home is in Mairangi Bay, North City, a suburb in North Shore City across Waitemata Harbor from Auckland. Mairangi Bay is a retirement village in a beautiful area. It has 156 single dwellings and 90 apartments with an enormous clubhouse.

With some sightseeing suggestions from Olga, we decided to visit the seaport town of Devonport first. This city has a historical maritime village. We had some lunch before taking in a few of the shops. The New Zealand food is so beautifully presented, making full use of their herbs and flowers. Devonport, known as "The Heart of Auckland," is a charming seaside suburb of about 10,000 people. It is one of the earliest areas of European settlement, with homes from the turn of the century, and villas and other dwellings of Colonial timber architecture.

The Takapuna Beach area boasts of some of the most expensive real estate in New Zealand. Near the pricey homes, Olga showed us a house where she used to live. Because her husband was a former builder, the family lived in a number of homes.

Next we visited Mt. Victoria. It is 700 feet high, and the view from there is phenomenal. It's the best-known view point overlooking the city harbor, Cook Strait and the Hutt Valley. The Byrd Monument, built in 1962 to honor Antarctic explorer Rear Admiral Richard Byrd, has been redesigned and now consists of over 2,000 ceramic tiles depicting the Northern Lights.

Since Olga has had foot surgery, and we could use a little rest, we headed for home. But wait, there is one more stop. Olga needs to make sure everything is in order for Sunday services at her church, the Anglican Church of the Holy Trinity. The church is a historic native Kauri timber Gothic building with

intricate carvings and magnificent stained glass windows. The parish was established in 1856.

Olga has invited guests for supper. Her friends Dorothy and Edger Preest and sister-in-law of Olga's late husband are the dinner guests. Some of our FF members met them later on in the week.

Donna M. Robinson

September 23

After a good night's sleep, up at 7:00 for the traditional breakfast of Mueslix, yogurt, fruit, tea and toast. We got to know our wonderful hosts, Doug and Elizabeth. They showed us their garden, and we watched Doug make his famous wine cork hot plates in his workroom under the house. They are avid rugby fans, and two TVs are always on with one rugby game or another. Doug is a golfer, and Elizabeth belongs to a badminton league. Their two sons live in Christchurch, and their daughter, who is a pharmacist, lives in London. Doug has a very close-knit family, with four sisters and one brother all in their seventies and eighties and in excellent health.

We went to the welcoming picnic at the Wenderholm Regional Park just north of Waiwera. It was a beautiful park on an estuary and had lots of birds. The host group brought the makings for delicious sub sandwiches, wonderful desserts, and tea, of course. After a walk on the beach, the rain came so we headed back to the car. It was great to meet all the

other Auckland North Shore Friendship Force members. We then went to Puhoi, the country's oldest Catholic Bohemian settlement. About 200 people settled there in the 1860's and were given 40 acres of bush. We visited the Catholic Church and had a beer at the original Puhoi Pub amidst a bunch of friendly bikers. The tavern walls were covered in bills from all over the world.

Then we took a drive to the tip of the Whangaparaoa Peninsula through the Shakespeare Regional Park. It's a great place for windsurfing, boating, and mountain biking. We saw lots of sheep, pokekos and peacocks. We then drove by an area called Gulf Harbor with modern condos right on the water and huge boats docked at their back door.

After a corned beef dinner we settled into watching rugby and "Coronation Street" (Penny really got into that!) on TV. Doug always makes tea and serves it with biscuits and chocolate in the lounge after dinner. A great day!

Ray Willett

Welcome picnic lunch at Wenderholm Park which is on an inlet where there is boating. It was good to see Friendship Force members and to meet their hosts. All hosts contributed to sandwich fixings. Unusual foods to me were fruit chutney and a relish of cauliflower and mustard. There were many desserts including scones and brownies. A group picture was taken just as it started to rain, so everyone left to spend the rest of the day with their hosts.

Our hostess Beverly took us for a drive and we ended up at Snow Planet, an indoor skiing and snowboarding facility where we watched for quite awhile before heading home. We stopped briefly at a shopping mall to buy stamps.

Beverly is a fantastic cook. For dinner she fixed chicken breast, cauliflower, broccoli, and cheese escalloped potatoes. For dessert we had brownies and ice cream and, of course, a glass of wine.

Later we stopped at daughter Debbie's home. We had met her husband Franklin and their daughter Alana on Saturday when we were invited to Alana's birthday party. They live very close to Beverly in the same development called The Landing. Beverly's son Steven and his wife Colleen stopped by to meet us. They are all very cordial and welcoming.

Janet Adams

September 24

We took a comfortable 3 ½-hour bus ride to Rotorua. I am constantly amazed by the spectacular lush countryside. Along the way Dennis, our excellent bus driver and guide, gave us tons of information. Here are just a few of the facts that he pointed out:

New Zealand has constructed bus lanes, but most people still prefer their cars. Since Harbor Bridge (constructed in Japan and shipped over as the Nippon Clipon) was built, North Shore population exploded and traffic is

heavy. There are more boats per capita than anywhere else; sailing is taught in the schools. Waitemata Harbor is so deep that any size ship can dock there; it's on the same fault line as California. The Waikato area is one of the richest because of dairy farming, but big companies are moving in and shutting the little farmers out. Small towns are going by the wayside. ("You know you are in trouble when the pub closes.") NZ has no oil but is starting to use geothermal power.

We stopped briefly at Matamata where part of "Lord of the Rings" was filmed; a sign says "Welcome to Hobbitown." It's a wealthy community known for horse breeding.

We arrived in Rotorua, by Lake Rotorua, center of Maori culture, and could immediately smell the sulphur in the air from the thermal geysers, Waiotapu, sacred waters to the Maoris. We went to Te Whakarewarewa and Te Puia, the major Maori culture center. We were welcomed into the Marae (tribal home) with a ritual called the Te Powhiri. There are welcoming calls, ceremonial chants, and once the proper ancestors have been praised and lineages established, you remove your shoes and are

welcomed in. Once inside we got to see the traditional Haka, a dance and chant that can precede a battle or challenge a suspicious visitor. We also enjoyed the graceful poi dance where the dancers swing poi (balls tied on the end of a cord) to the rhythm of the music.

We marveled at the geysers and bubbling mud pools in the rain. The

Pohutu (Big Splash) can spurt up to 100 feet 20 times a day. Our guide told us that there is so much thermal activity that a geyser will sometimes spurt up right in someone's garden. We were a little short on time, so we quickly went through the Maori Arts and Craft Institute where we saw wood carvers and flax weavers.

On to the AgroDome Sheep Show where we saw 19 different kinds of trained sheep go through their paces. A top shearer gave a demonstration of shearing, and we participated in a mock auction. The kids big and small loved feeding the baby lambs with bottles. My favorites were the herding dogs.

The sky cleared and we enjoyed a lovely walk through Paradise Valley Springs. There were natural pools full of brown, brook, and rainbow trout, native trees and ferns, "Captain Cooker" wild pigs, New Zealand deer and native birds. It was peaceful and quiet.

We had a yummy dinner and headed home. A great day!

Penny Brinker

This was a long but very interesting day for the Friendship Force group from Denver. We traveled by bus from Auckland to Rotorua, entry to a New Zealand National Park featuring thermal much like, but smaller than, our own Yellowstone National Park. None of our hosts accompanied us on this trip. Our bus driver Dennis shared some very interesting NZ information during the trip, including:

- About one third of New Zealand's 4.1 million people live in Auckland, a very cosmopolitan city.

- There are 44 extinct volcanoes in the Auckland area.

- Wellington was selected for the country's capital and Parliament because of its central location.

- New Zealand is on the same fault line as California. The last big earthquake there was in 1934.

- Graffiti is as prevalent in NZ as in the US, even on rural barns and sheds, as well as city buildings and railroad cars.

We traveled through some beautiful dairy farming land. Soil is volcanic, which accounts for its fertility.

We passed several beautiful open public parks and also saw a couple of golf courses. Dennis said nearly every town has its own golf course.

En route we stopped in the small town of Matamata. This town has a statue of a Hobbit in the main street median in the middle of town. In addition to the statue there are still some of the movie sets from "Lord of the Rings" in the area that can be toured. We didn't see these sets. The bus heater stuck on high as we approached Rotorua, making the bus very warm. (We could have used some of the excess heat later in the day as we left Paradise Valley Wildlife Park to return to Auckland.)

We arrived in Rotorua just in time to get tickets and go to the Te Puia Maori Center where we were treated to a

traditional Maori performance. Both Maori men and women participated. We were told by one of the performers that there are few, if any, 100% Maoris in NZ, While most of the performers have some Maori blood, none here were full blooded. It was an educational, interesting and enjoyable performance.

Afterwards we had a tour through Te Puia. Our guide, a young woman, had just begun work that day; in fact we were only her second tour group, but she did an excellent job. We saw a live Kiwi bird which was housed in a special exhibit and habitat area. That was the only Kiwi bird most of us saw on the whole trip. We toured some of the thermal features adjacent to the Maori center. Hot pools, mud pots and geysers were all accompanied by the distinctive sulfur smell of such features. Thunder and rain and wind joined us as we toured the area. Finally we looked in on wood carving and weaving classes at the Maori Center before boarding our bus to go to the AgriDome to learn about NZ sheep, watch a demonstration of sheep shearing, see trained sheep dogs work, and shop for wool products if so inclined. New Zealand has many different breeds of sheep; some of the cross breeds were developed there.

Leaving the AgriDome we traveled to Paradise Valley Wildlife Park We saw wild sheep, fallow deer, wild pigs, waterfowl, birds, etc., etc., but by far the most impressive were the BIG fish – both brown and rainbow trout – that inhabited the streams and trout ponds. These fish species aren't native to New Zealand, but were imported from the

United States. There was some controversy among the group as to where in the US the ancestors of these fish came from, but in the end we all agreed that they *must* have come from Colorado!

At 4:30 p.m. we left Paradise Valley and traveled back toward Auckland, stopping en route at the Red Fox Tavern for an excellent and varied smorgasbord supper. The small coal stove burning brightly in the middle of the room provided comfortable warmth for some of the chilled Ambassadors. We arrived back at Windsor Park shortly after 8:30 p.m. To top it all off, the evening was clear and the Southern Cross constellation could be seen clearly.

John Morrison

September 25

We are the very fortunate guests of Des and Elwyn Fox, a most interesting couple. They are extremely hospitable and made us feel comfortable and at ease from the get-go. Des, with Elwyn's capable assistance, is the Exchange Director for the week, and they are both working very hard.

Elwyn is a superb gardener and quilter. Their home, which Des helped to build, is lovely. It is one block from Arkles Bay, and we have taken many walks along the beach. Heaven.

Our hosts have turned over an entire wing of their home to us. The kitchen, dining and balcony area overlook their beautiful garden with grapefruit and lemon trees! I sampled the grapefruit and it's delicious.

Des and Elwyn are definitely family people, and we've been delighted to meet their lovely daughter and very friendly grandchildren Lucia, 4, and grandson, 11 who jumped on the trampoline to show us some very difficult maneuvers that he's learned in classes. We also met their daughter-in-law Angelina. Our joy was meeting their beautiful granddaughters who came to Grandpa immediately. The grandparents do a fair share of "child sitting" with the young ones.

Tuesday was a free day, and our hosts took us into downtown Auckland. We boarded the harbor ferry, had a fantastic view of the city from the harbor, and were able to see how huge containers are loaded on the transport ships. After the ferry ride we walked through the train station which looks like an underground subway system. Then we shopped a bit for postcards and saw some beautiful but very pricey jade jewelry. We lunched at a restaurant called McDonalds where we shared a turkey sandwich, muffin, coffee, tea and some good conversation. Walking along Queen Street back to the carpark, it was interesting to watch the many business people walking very fast on their lunch break.

Before returning home we drove up to Mt. Eden, a lush green mountain

overlooking Auckland, which offers a spectacular view of the city. Quite a view! Coming down from Mt. Eden we stopped at Eden Gardens which has breathtakingly beautiful flowers and trees.

Everything is lush and green here – quite a contrast to our semi-arid Denver.

Carol Brown

September 26

We all met at the McDonald's parking lot at 9:00 to board a tour bus for a day trip to the Kauri Museum. On our third day in New Zealand we traveled through beautiful mountain towns with names like Puhoi, Te Nana, Maungaturoto and Paparoa in an area which today is mostly settled by farmers. Early settlers came to this area in the 1860's to work the timber industry. We passed along an area where twin tunnels are being carved through the mountain to shorten travel across the North Island.

The two-hour bus ride took us from the East to the West side of the North Island where a narrow harbour entrance opens to the Tasman Sea. Approaching Matakohē, we traveled around a winding road overlooking the beautiful Kaipara Harbour where ships came in to carry the kauri timber worldwide. The first European traders came to cut kauri trees for masts and spars. Subsequently kauri became the basis of a vast timber industry for shipbuilding and fine furniture. One of the largest tree types in the world, its timber volume is

exceeded only by the redwoods of North America. A mature tree can contain enough timber to build three or four houses.

We had plenty of time to visit the Kauri Museum which tells a fascinating story of the pioneering days through the use of kauri timber and kauri gum – extracted from the trees and used by artists and craftsmen to produce decorative pieces, some of which were on display in the museum. Settlers first came to Matakoho and nearby Paparoa and Maungaturoto in 1862.

In the museum are exceptional displays and galleries, including a magnificent collection of antique kauri furniture. A guide told us the history of the area and the methods of harvesting the timber and kauri gum. We saw restored machinery, including NZ's earliest tractor, a 1929 Cat 60 and a turning Steam Sawmill. In this small town we wandered about, shopped, and enjoyed lunch in a quaint restaurant followed by a quick visit to the school and historic post office with an interesting collection of telephones.

On the way back to Auckland we stopped for photos and a brief walk through a kauri tree forest. One huge tree was named the McKinney Tree, and a plaque proclaimed that it is estimated to be 800 years old with a girth of 7.62 meters and height to the first limb of 11.86 meters. Most of us had our photos taken in front of that tree.

All day long I was impressed by the winding country roads and beautiful little farm villages. Flowers were everywhere, and it was strange seeing such beauty coming alive in late September. The hills were dotted with sheep and lambs and a variety of cattle. The dairy industry is one of New Zealand's most successful. We passed many dairy farms and shining milk trucks along the way, carrying milk to markets. Across the North Island I have photographed the unusually evenly shaped Norfolk Island pine trees, and there were plenty to see today.

It was a beautiful day in New Zealand, with blue skies and billowing clouds.

Larry Brown

Met the bus for a 9:00 departure to the Matakoho Museum – will pick up more ambassadors at the art gallery Orewa.

It's a nice day, the sun is out, but there are some gray-looking clouds. The countryside is so lush, a rich green everywhere with lots of trees, scrub, plants, and very hilly.

At the Kauri museum we have a guide who explains how old and big these trees are and how slowly they grow. The wood is used for building furniture, paneling, and bowls.

The gum that clings to the tree has many uses, among them high quality varnish and linoleum. The Maori used it mixed with plant juice for chewing gum, and for tattooing pigment. It was exported all over the world.

There was a volcanic eruption, and these trees were buried for thousands of years. When discovered, they were in perfect condition to salvage the wood, and gum diggers would save the gum. Some gum was highly polished and resembles amber.

After using the \$10 given to us by the North Shore Club for lunch, we were back on the bus at 2:00 heading for Kauri Park in Warkworth to walk in the bush and see some of these great trees. It was a delightful walk of about 20 minutes on a boardwalk going up and then back down.

Home by 5:00 after a truly good day, both weatherwise and sightseeing.

Arlene Casabona

September 27

I awoke at 7 a.m. to a beautiful day with sunshine streaming in the east window. Pam Paul and I had our breakfast and did our washing, hanging it on the line to dry in the sun.

We caught the 9:12 bus to downtown Auckland for a walking/bus tour of the city. Reached Queen Street and began walking. Entered a bank to change some money, and the friendly, young teller visited with me regarding my visit to NZ.

Heading down the street, we heard bagpipes playing and saw a parade led by a police car. The parade consisted totally of graduating university students and faculty, all wearing their robes and

the colors of their various degrees. Many of the graduates were carrying bouquets of flowers. The parade was headed to City Hall where the graduates would receive their diplomas. Their graduation ceremony is quite different than in the U.S.

Catching the Link bus we circled the city. Auckland looks similar to the way Denver looked 30 to 40 years ago: one-story individual shops, no chain stores. Some of the names of shops were intriguing: "Flesh and Fruity" for a fruit and vegetable market and "Burger Fuel" for a hamburger restaurant. A group of children got on the bus with bikes, scooters, skateboards, and backpacks. School was out for a two-week vacation, and these children were participating in a day camp while their parents were at work.

Got off the bus at the Winter Gardens. Saw many beautiful flowers, such as Monk's Hand, varieties of orchids, snapdragons over 5 feet tall.

Walked up the hill to the Auckland Museum and saw a small monument to Camp Hale where barracks had been housing American soldiers trained at Camp Hale outside Aspen. Visited the Museum gift shop then reboarded the Link bus to the ferry. Waiting for the ferry we had lunch of a sausage sandwich and a chocolate caramel slice.

The ferry ride was pleasant sitting in the sunshine and enjoying the sights along the bay.

On to another bus for our ride home. My seatmate was a charming 12th grade girl

who told me of her world travels and her father, an airline pilot. He had studied with an airline in Denver for six months. Graduating this year, she plans to spend 6 months in Germany studying German, then 2 months in Spain studying Spanish before returning to NZ to study pharmacy.

Arrived home with about one hour to relax and off to the Malaysian Satay restaurant for dinner with our hosts as our guests for the evening. Took our own bottle of wine to the restaurant, which totally amazed me.

A lovely, busy, fun-filled day was over – home to a cup of tea and bed.

Sue Dunn

A glorious day on the North Shore, a brisk walk (or as brisk as the old bones permit) before a delightful breakfast, and then we and our wonderful hosts, Mary and Reg Saunders, were off for a free day exploring some more of the delights of Auckland and environs.

We started by driving to the western shores and the black sand beaches of Muriwai. A short walk brought us to the top of the cliffs above the beaches and a fabulous view of the surfers (in wet suits, of course) enjoying the rollers coming in from the Tasman Sea.

The treat, however, was that we were able to look down on nesting colonies of gannets. These not-too-raucous shore birds have taken over some level and some not-very-level areas immediately below but on well isolated cliff tops beneath the viewing platforms. With the

cool offshore breezes under their 30-inch wingspans, the birds were able to glide gracefully to their chosen landing spots. Unfortunately, the crowded conditions in the nesting areas did not provide for graceful landings. It appeared that a bird would get about 2 feet above its mate, fold its wings and drop. "Hello honey, I'm home."

Despite the abrupt arrival, the mates would then engage in a delightful pre-mating ritual involving extending their necks upward to their full height and caressing each other with their beaks, much like teenagers necking. Now how the birds identified their mates is a mystery because both sexes look alike with their white bodies, black wing tips and peach-colored heads, but evidently they do and are credited with being monogamous.



We returned home for lunch and to warm up as the west wind was a bit chilly on the cliff top, at least to me in my shorts. After lunch it was across the Harbor Bridge to Auckland and on to One Tree Hill in Cornwall Park. The views from the top of this extinct volcanic cone are fantastic. We could see both the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean from this point. All of the hills in both the near and far distance are similar volcanic cones. In fact, from the top of One Tree Hill, one can look down into the beautiful green crater of the extinct volcano.

When we marveled at the terraces surrounding these hills, we were told

that they are the remains of the fortifications of Maori *pas*, or fortified villages. The Maoris recognized the benefits of being on hilltops. Before the arrival of the whites, a favorite Maori sport was fighting with their neighbors. Now we are told that they like to engage in long debates whenever appropriate.

From One Tree Hill we went to the beautiful enclosed gardens and fernery at the War Memorial in the Auckland Domain. The flowers are spectacular and a riot of color. The water garden featured water lilies and incredible floating pads nearly 3 feet across. These start out as softball-size spiny pods and rapidly expand. In their natural environment they have a symbiotic relationship with a beetle that is attracted to their white flower in the pod. After providing pollen, the flower turns pink which is not attractive to the beetle, so the beetle leaves to find another white flower. Thus the plant is pollinated. Unfortunately, New Zealand is not home to the beetle, so man must hand pollinate, which involves wading past the spiny pods or whatever.

The highlight of the evening was the Malaysian dinner with our hosts and other ambassadors. Our two groups of 14 or 16 hosts and ambassadors were seated around giant "lazy Susans" which were very handy when we wished to sample each other's dinner choices. The round table format also provided an excellent opportunity of telling after-dinner jokes. A great time was had by all.

Bill Harvey

September 28

A morning at home with our hostess, Pat Baker, while my roomie Dee Fifer and I did some chores preparatory to the end of our homestay. Then a drive of 30km to Knightsbridge Lifestyle Village (a retirement community) for our Farewell meeting. The facilities were very nice and probably quite pricey. Lunch was buffet style with choices of ham, fish, wontons, chicken salad, lamb, salads, veggies and a number of desserts – ice cream, pavlova, cookies, tea and coffee. We ate at tables in the common dining room, then adjourned to a private room for our meeting. President Don Wrigglesworth of FF North Shore NZ led the meeting, and our ED Larry Brown led our presentation with help from the exchange ambassadors. We showed pictures of Colorado along with commentary, had a sing-along and entertainment by NZ. A raffle raised money for the NZ club.

After returning home with our hostess, we took a long walk on the beach of Arkles Bay. Packed and ready to go tomorrow, we spent a lovely evening visiting with Pat. This has been a great homestay, and we have enjoyed meeting and getting to know the club members here.

Welca Farr

We had a leisurely breakfast with our dear hosts, Mary and Reg. There was always wonderful porridge – half oats, half oat bran – other cereals, excellent

yogurt, fruits, rhubarb sauce, toast, jams and homemade grapefruit marmalade, and tea.

Later we had morning tea in their warm sunroom with delicious homemade goodies. Bill took his morning walk.

The farewell luncheon was at the clubhouse of Knightsbridge Lifestyle Village. On this warm, sunny day we walked over. The luncheon was delightful. All sorts of good food. The finale was the national dessert, pavlova served with hokey pokey ice cream. Absolutely delicious!!

Then we moved to a nice meeting room with space for our programs starting with presentations by Des Fox, ED, and Don Wrigglesworth, President. Shirley Herring sang some lovely songs accompanied by guitar. She was reminiscent of Joan Baez and recent folk and country songs. Dorita Chatfield and

Dorothy Preest gave a hilarious skit on computers—I could really identify with that. Raeleyne Rushton read some fabulous “granny poems”. There was lots of laughter and lots of fun.

Our presentation about Colorado was well received. We ended with a Friendship Force song that most of us didn’t know. Then we all sang “Auld Lang Syne” and “Till We Meet Again”. It was a very touching farewell with these lovely hosts.

We walked home savoring the sunshine.

Mary and Reg then took us over the bridge into Auckland. There was lots of traffic. As they drove us around downtown, I was struck by the very

good way that they have restored many of the old buildings and yet infilled with new modern buildings. They have managed to create a very delightful mix of architectures and styles. We drove down Queen Street. In an older part of town we saw a beautiful block of old stores with living space above. It was very similar to where my great grandmother lived on Upper Larimer in Denver.

Further downtown was an interesting hodgepodge of lovely old buildings above and McDonald's or other new shops at street level. It was a very busy area. There was a fascinating old, old building that had been turned into a market near the end of the bridge.

When we got home I did last-minute laundry and hung it out to dry. What a nice experience – fresh, clean laundry, sunshine, and a soft breeze. I had forgotten what a refreshing experience hanging laundry out is.

We reluctantly packed up this evening. A little later we had a lovely dinner and tea. We plugged in our electric sheets for a cozy sleep. It was a lovely ending for a delightful experience in Auckland.

Joanne Harvey

September 29

Auckland – 8:00 departure after forming a big circle hand to hand and singing Auld Lang Syne. Many smiling goodbyes

with promises to keep in touch. Our bus driver chose a residential drive to Auckland Airport, giving us our last chance to view these well-kept homes and well-swept neighborhoods.

I had a sensation of being escorted through a continuation of our Colorado spring. After leaving home at the end of summer, here we were viewing beautiful green valleys and hills as well as flowering trees lining the streets. Flowers in profusion filled the parks and homes that I had visited.

We arrived in Christchurch about noon and were whisked off to a barbecue picnic at Halswell Quarry Park. The quarry is being reclaimed, and we were honored to have a tree planting for the Denver Friendship Force visit.

Brian Evans being my genial host began a tour of foothills nearby, and we had a great overlook of the city at Queen Victoria Park. Very young children were playing on a very long and quite high stainless steel slide, having a great time and paying no attention to the fantastic view of Christchurch and the Canterbury Plain.

Our next stop was at the "Sign of the Kiwi," another fantastic view overlooking Governors Bay and out toward the Pacific Ocean. Directly beneath our high perch the town of Lyttelton came into view. Brian and I decided on a tea stop which turned into an ice cream stop.

Back down to the valley floor, through to the old town area of Christchurch to the heart of the past where there were several classic European buildings and a

view of the new Art Museum, a very modern structure with simulated sails along the front of the building. Lots of people were enjoying the sun and a cup of tea or coffee while watching passersby.

On our way home we stopped at a nearby shopping center to purchase fresh tomatoes and onions for my Anasazi Bean Soup. Home about 5:00 p.m. for unpacking and my first night in Christchurch.

Rod Greiner

Today we arose with a heavy heart. As much as I was looking forward to going to Christchurch, it meant saying goodbye to Beverly, my wonderful hostess here in Auckland North Shore and all I had enjoyed in Auckland. As usual, Beverly had a wonderful breakfast waiting for us; then we rushed off to meet the bus. We said our goodbyes and climbed aboard the bus. We checked in for our flight at the airport, and before we knew it we were in the air. My home hostess in Christchurch, Hilary Dewe, met Arlene and me at the airport. She whisked us off to the Quarry where we had a great barbie. After the meal we planted a tree and had our pictures taken with our hosts. Then we were off to Hilary's for a short time. Soon we were off again – this time to Dorothy Haywood's for an evening tea which consisted of corn beef, asparagus, carrots and broccoli followed by pineapple pie for dessert. By then I was fighting sleep so we headed to Hilary's for a good night's sleep.

Elaine Schnebly

September 30

Off at 6:30 doing a brisk walk up Barrington Street for milk for scones.

Diane's busy making soup and scones. Her home is filled with wonderful smells – today's lunch will be delicious.

9:00 – off to the Meadery at Rangiora. Owner Leon Havill entertained us about mead making and their properties. They started producing mead in 1964. Mead is made from about 4 pounds of honey, 4.5 liters of water, and their own developed yeast. The honey they use is clover, Manuka tree and Rakia tree. Then it takes from 18 months to 7

years. Mead can be drunk warm, at room temperature, or cold. Each way has a distinctive flavor.

At 12:00 – off to an Alpaca farm. Diane served a special lunch of 4 kinds of soup, rolls, scones and drinks. We all ate lots and enjoyed every bite.

Linda Searell explained that alpacas originally came from Peru. Their wool is highly prized and comes in approximately 20 colors. Her alpacas were 8 – 9 years old, and two were about 6 months old. Babies are called Cria, males Macho, and females Tui. Gestation is 11 months. She also had Dexter cattle and Gottland sheep. It was such a pleasure to visit her working animal farm.

From the farm Dorothy took us on a beautiful ocean road tour starting through Red Cliffs. At Brighton we stopped and walked to the end of the

pier overlooking the huge waves. People were doing sand art, sand yachts, and wind surfing.

Next we went through the town of Summer to the beautiful volcano crater lake. Near Governor's Bay at the Lyttelton Port was where early settlers came ashore, and now it's where they bring in used Japanese cars. When we were there, they were loading an Indian ship with coal to go out.

Next up on our drive along the volcanic rim was a Time Ball used by ships to synchronize their time about 100 years ago. We continued on with a beautiful view of Christchurch and then home.

Diane sure had already cooked enough, so we treated our hosts, Dorothy, Diane and Grace at Filadelfio's. We had delicious pizzas, each with halves of these toppings:

Lewinsky – salami, spinach, mushroom, garlic, BBQ sauce, oregano, swiss cheese
Curious George – smoked chicken, Brie cheese, American bacon, banana
Indonesian – king prawns, shrimp, peanuts on a satay sauce
Dine In – smoked chicken, tomatoes, capisciums, guacamole, beef.

Such a wonderful, fun day.

Dee Fifer

The group met in Rangiora and went in caravan to Havill's Meadery, run by Mr. Leon Havill and his wife. Mead is an alcoholic drink made from honey, water, and yeast, fermented to the desired stage. Mr. Havill entertained us telling

all about mead, with lots of jokes thrown in, and then let us sample 4 different varieties made with 4 different types of honey. I'd had mead a few years ago in Novgorod and didn't care much for it, but this was quite tasty, even at 11 a.m. I had several samples just to make sure...

From the meadery we went to an alpaca farm owned by a friend of one of the Christchurch FF members. A committee had prepared a tasty lunch for us – 4 kinds of soup, sandwiches, meat tarts, little quiches, and scones with all the trimmings. As we sat on the patio to eat we could watch the alpacas grazing in the paddock just beyond the fence.

After lunch our hostess told us all about raising alpacas and then answered our questions. Alpacas are really cute but can be temperamental, and they spit like all members of the camel family.

Norma, Colin and I took a detour on the way home and stopped first at a nearby holiday park for a walk on the beach. Then we stopped at a friend's house to leave a blouse that belonged to her. Before we left she took us out back to see the miniature horses her daughter raises.

Colin's sister Lorna came by about 6:00 and went with us to Heather and John's home (Jim & Donna's host) for a most enjoyable dinner. Carol and Larry and their hosts were there too. John and Heather's house is down a long steep driveway, modern style, with a wonderful view of Christchurch and the mountains from the deck. We enjoyed

the view while sipping a glass of wine and chatting with one another.

After dinner John showed some videos from the Christchurch club's exchange to Hamburg in June. It was fun to see the roadhouse where we'd had our welcome dinner as well as the three alphon players who serenaded us when I was there last year with the Oklahoma FF group. The evening ended with some of the videos from Christchurch's exchange to Denver in 2004.

It was a delightful day from beginning to end.

Marge Johnson

October 1

Our group descended on City Hall in Christchurch – men in coats and ties, and ladies turned out well as usual, all ready to meet Deputy Mayor Carol Evans. At the appropriate time we were ushered to the large upstairs room adjoining the mayor's office. Formal introductions were in order, and Mrs. Evans made several kind and cordial comments about the importance of Friendship Force and world peace. She is a retiring member of City Council of 21 years, 25 years total in city work. Her record is impeccable, but the papers had targeted some negative information about the cost of her retirement party. She said she hoped the press would take a slow boat to China. Our Proclamation from the office of the Mayor of Lakewood was read, and Evans said she accepted it as an offer to foster peace and that it would be framed and

hung in the office. Other friendly comments were made and she referred to the city name, saying it was named after Christchurch in England. She said they are proud of the All Blacks Rugby team that resides in the city. Christchurch has developed differently than most cities in that residents started building their homes in the hills above the city instead of along the coast as is traditionally done. Tea and cookies were served before we moved into a larger room in front of the fireplace where pictures were taken. This part of the day ended with ambassadors and their hosts going their way, some to the casino for lunch and the Firestation and 9/11 Memorial, others to different destinations.

Dorothy Haywood, our host, planned a full afternoon beginning with lunch at Le Café at the Art Center. While there we enjoyed being in Rutherford's Den where physicist Ernest Rutherford (1871-1937) conducted experiments in what was then a new field – radioactivity. He was first to succeed in splitting the atom, a crucial step in the harnessing of atomic power. His lecture room was dark and austere, and student desks were fascinatingly carved up; the seats and back rests showed how uncomfortable students must have been in the 1890's at Old Canterbury University, which it was at that time. Rutherford earned the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1908. From the classroom, a visit to the Botanic Gardens was welcome, as the beauty was awesome. We enjoyed the unique way the flower beds were planted and viewed the

masses of gorgeous trees as well as seeing the Peace Bell.

From there we entered the Canterbury Museum, founded in 1867, and housing the Hall of Antarctic Discovery which has charts from the days when Captain Cook sailed around in wooden boats. We rubbed the nose of Captain Scott for good luck, a local tradition. Scott unfortunately lost his life on his way back from a visit to the South Pole. The exhibits and the shopping entered into the magic of that memorable place. We hurried on to the Art Gallery that was opened in 2003 and found further feast for our eyes. The five of us left the gallery, fully cultured by then and pleased to return home with our new friends for a dinner together.

Jackie Goreham

The day started with a brisk walk to the top of a ridge behind our hosts' house. The ridge overlooks Lyttelton Bay. The morning was windy with intermittent sunshine. Our hosts, the Cannings, had breakfast ready and were excited about the day.

We headed to downtown Christchurch to meet the Deputy Mayor Carol Evans at 10:00 a.m. She has a warm personality and was quite informative about Christchurch and curious about Colorado. After many photo opportunities we headed over to the Casino for lunch with our hosts.

After lunch we caught a free shuttle bus that shortened our walk around

downtown Christchurch. A stranger on the bus struck up a conversation with the four of us, curious about the Friendship Force. We kept our eye on the clock to be at the 9/11 memorial in time to hear Mr. Murray Jamison, a firefighter who was personally involved in securing the iron beams used in the sculpture, speak about his difficulties in transporting the beams over to New Zealand.

The weather turned cold, and our hosts had scheduled a BBQ at their house, so about 3:00 we headed back to prepare. Guests included John & Heather Ponder, Jim & Donna Robinson, Barry & Cicely Turner, and Peggy & John Morrison. On the menu were bangers, lamb chops, salad, chips and potatoes. After dinner we played "Who Am I" where one person was selected to sit in a chair and the rest of the group knew what personality that person was to assume, but the person chosen had to ask "yes or no" questions to determine who the personality was. Among the mystery personalities were Tiger Woods, Paris Hilton, Brad Pitt, Saturn, Dolly Parton, Mick Jagger, George W. Bush, Bill Canning, Lady Godiva, Michael Jackson, Doris Day and Queen Elizabeth.

Everyone had great fun. We straightened up a bit after the guests left and then off to bed.

Chalmers Turner

October 2

Several of the hosts accompanied us in the chartered bus for our visit to the

picturesque Banks Peninsula village of Akaroa. Like much of New Zealand, Banks Peninsula was formed by volcanic eruptions. Remnants of two craters remain, forming Lyttelton Harbor, Christchurch's deep-water seaport, and Akaroa Harbor.

Captain Cook sighted the peninsula in 1770, naming it for Sir Joseph Banks. In 1838 Jean Langlois, a French whaling ship captain, negotiated the purchase of Banks Peninsula from a Maori chief. Upon returning from France some time later with a group of French immigrants, he was told of the Treaty of Waitangi that claimed British sovereignty over all of New Zealand. The French elected to remain in Akaroa and were later joined by a larger group of British settlers. Today the town's tourist advertising touts its French ambience, but all that remain are some French names on the street signs and some of the trinket shops.

Our morning tea stop was at Little River, a typical New Zealand wide spot on the road, with a coffee shop, a market, public toilets, and a post office. After the tea stop we reached the top of the hill formed by the edge of the old crater and looked down on the harbor with Akaroa and several smaller villages.

Arriving in Akaroa, we had a short bus tour of the town and a brief shopping time before boarding a small cruise ship, the Akaroa Dolphin, for a cruise of Akaroa Harbor. The two-hour cruise took us through the length of the harbor and briefly into the Pacific Ocean.

We first cruised past a Maori marae, or meetinghouse, not far from Akaroa. Donna and I had driven through the village 14 years ago, but I had forgotten it until seeing it again. Our guide, a young part-Maori lady, told us a little about Maori culture and spoke a few words of the language. Then it was on to the mouth of the harbor to see birds and seals. Being protected from predators, ledges on the cliffs make excellent nesting sites for birds. Horizontal bands of white droppings on the cliffs make the nesting sites easy to spot from the ship. We also saw seals lounging near the water on rocks. A small dolphin was sighted on the way back into the harbor. This species of dolphin is very small and difficult to spot. We also saw a salmon farm, much smaller than those in Norway and Chile, on the way back to Akaroa. Several days later I ate Akaroa salmon in a Christchurch restaurant. It was delicious.

On the way back we made brief stops at a pottery shop and Barry's Bay Cheese Company. Our hosts were waiting at the meeting point in Christchurch to take us home for the evening.

Jim Robinson

At 9 a.m. a bus picked us up to go to Akaroa, a city located on a peninsula with a very beautiful bay known for its scenery and animals. Our first stop was at Poranui Beach where it is often

possible to see penguins. We were not fortunate, and continued on to Little River. Just about everyone bought an ice cream cone, as New Zealand ice cream was becoming known as very good. There were many local artisan creations for sale. There was also a museum. We continued through very hilly scenic country to the city of Akaroa. We had about an hour before our reservations for the boat, so everyone went shopping at the craft shops.

Soon it was time for our boat ride. Since regulations allowed only 22, someone had to volunteer not to go. Bill Harvey was the gracious one, and he was rewarded with \$40.

It was a beautiful day and the sun made the water so blue. During our two-hour boat ride we ate a lunch that our hosts had packed for us. Then we sat back to enjoy scenery and many animals. We saw New Zealand Fur Seals, a White Flipped Little Blue Penguin and many birds. There were many nests of Black Shags. We passed a salmon farm where Coho Salmon were being raised. Many photos were taken of the beautiful shoreline which was filled with caves and cliffs.

After we got to shore we boarded the bus and went to a pottery shop where the artist showed his very high quality ware. We then drove on to a cheese factory; nearly everyone bought cheese or wine.

At 5 p.m. we arrived for pickup by our hosts. It made for a very big day that everyone really enjoyed.

Joanne Johnson



October 3

Awoke to a gusty rain that began during the night, and it included some light hail. Janice Canning gave me a bag of Paua shells at breakfast which got us talking about how pretty they are. This is a day with our hosts and we have decided to go to the Art Gallery and the Canterbury Museum with extensive Antarctic exhibits.

The weather gave us four seasons today: sun, rain, sleet, hail, and snow in the high country. Our hosts were gracious in preparing breakfast every day; Bill would grind the coffee beans each morning and make lattes for all of us. Over breakfast Bill and Janice told of their travels to China, Japan, Chicago, South America, and Madison, Wisconsin.

After the Canterbury Museum we walked through Hagley Park, a large urban park with greenhouses sporting a variety of plants. The park is full of a variety of trees with an old fountain. A second fountain called the Peacock Fountain is outside the Canterbury Museum. Originally erected in 1911, lost in 1932, it was discovered in storage and erected again in 1997. Our hosts indicated it

used to be a dull color but the new paint job brightened it up considerably.

At the Art Museum we found paintings by John McIntosh, Charles Frederick Goldie, John Gibb and John Gottlieb Lindauer. We were fond of them all. While walking through Hagley Park back to the car we made sure to take a photo opportunity by the Peace Bell, donated by the Japanese as a symbol of peace with a cutting from a tree that survived the A-bomb in Hiroshima.

We were invited to have dinner at Kevin and Eilene's and were joined by Diane Ward and Dee Fifer. Kevin served wine and beer to go along with the Hogget, potato salad and carrots, with apple strudel and Hokie Pokie ice cream for dessert.

It was home to bed after dinner.

Frieda Pfahl

This morning we were amazed to see large hail on our hosts' balcony. As we had breakfast we discussed what we wanted to do for the day. Our first item of business was to return books to the South Christchurch Library, a place that our hosts are extremely proud of. This South City Learning Center has mostly children during the day, but it comes alive in the evening with adult classes. One million dollars were allocated for the library because of the closing of one school.

After leaving the library we headed for the Canterbury Museum in the heart of Christchurch City. Digital daffodils

blossomed underfoot in the foyer as we walked across the floor. This museum is

a "must to see." During the month of October it goes pink for Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Pink filters were placed in the lights that illuminate the Museum's Rollerston Avenue façade. In conjunction with the museum there are 40 specialty and craft shops. Just outside the back entrance is a beautiful fountain, and within strolling distance are the Botanic Gardens and Curator's House restaurant/café.

For lunch Jim and I treated our hosts to Canterbury cuisine at the Curator's House, situated on the banks of the Avon and surrounded by the Botanic Gardens. Once inside this charming place with a homey atmosphere, it was nice to get next to the fireplace. (The day was cool with intermittent rain.) Local produce is combined with their own fruits, vegetables and herbs grown in nearby gardens. Our plates came garnished with flowers and herbs – such beautiful presentation. Oh yes, the food was delicious as well. While waiting for our food, we tried to guess where our waitresses were from. We all had a close guess, but none of us guessed Argentina. They were quite delightful and shared in conversation when we showed interest.

After lunch we toured the gardens and were awed by all the beautiful flowers. Oh those Pohutukawa flowers (the New Zealand Christmas tree) that were everywhere were just gorgeous in color, and some of them were quite large. There was also an occasional fowl.

Another interesting area was the indoor gardens. We saw the first tree planted in the Botanic Gardens.

Our next stop was the Christchurch Town Hall. The building is truly beautiful. Some people know I love to quilt and sew, but I wasn't quite ready for what I was about to see. – There hung the Women's Suffrage Commemorative Wall Hanging. This finished work not only represents and depicts aspects of women's lives over the last hundred years, it also signifies obtaining the vote. It represents women from all walks of life. I managed to get a brochure by asking for one, so I'll share a few facts about this hanging:

The work was started and completed in 8 months in 1993. It took approximately 4,000 hours excluding preparation and organization time. One hundred members of the Canterbury Embroiderer's Guild worked in 3-hour shifts with four on duty per shift. There is a documentary film about the making of the wall hanging; the video can be rented from the Canterbury Public Library. Oh, would I love to see that!!

On the drive home we rode through the suburb of Sunburst. For supper we decided to have the traditional fish and chips, as we hadn't had any since we set foot in New Zealand. However, we decided to go home and then walk to get our supper at a take away. It was so tasty and a nice finish to a lovely day.

Donna M. Robinson

October 4

Friendship Force members took a bus tour, passing through rural Canterbury. Driving through wine country with vineyards, we were able to see the snow on the mountains. There were lots of sheep and horses; many of the sheep were sheared. Double rows of pine trees divide properties and line the road.

We stopped at Darfield, 1300 people. Mt. Hutt, a large ski field, was visible from there. We then drove into hill country and through Arthur's Pass to Springfield. The cartoon characters "the Simpsons" are well known there. It's also a place where their donuts are famous.

Porters Pass is 3,000 feet above sea level. Lake Lyndon freezes over in the winter and is used for ice skating and ice fishing. It was a beautiful ride to the blue Lake Coleridge. The lake had whitecaps, indicating high winds of maybe 60 mph. We stopped to eat the picnic lunch prepared by our hosts. It was so windy and cold that it was a very quickly eaten lunch! Jackie, Dee and I had a delicious bacon and egg pie, salad, freshly baked chocolate chip cookies, and a Muesli Bar. I want to try making the bacon and egg pie when I get back to Colorado. We were very glad that our hostesses had sent hot tea. Cold winds and rain made it seem like Antarctica.

We stopped at Terrace Downs High Country Resort for afternoon tea. We had very hearty scones, juice and tea. The fire in the fireplace really felt good! Terrace Downs is a very expensive

resort; as an example, postcards cost \$5. The weather while we were there looked like it could be a hurricane.

When we reached Rakaia Gorge it was too windy and rainy to get off the bus, but within 10 kilometers there was no wind. The main industry is dairy farming and also raising deer for venison.

We returned to Christchurch around 5 p.m.

Janet Adams

This was our day in the mountains. We left the Canterbury plains and went west. Our first stop was a restroom break at the town of Springfield. The city of 400 was in a movie released in July titled "The Simpsons The Movie".

We continued on to our next stop at Porters Pass, altitude 3000 feet. The snow-covered mountains of the Craigieburn Range were very scenic. The most prominent mountain is Mt. Hutt. On the descent down the other side of the pass we picked up the Kowhai River and followed it to Coleridge Lake. Not everyone wanted to get out of the bus there as the wind was blowing at a sustained 60 mph. Taking a photo in that wind was really a blast! One of the Christchurch members said that it must be windy out because he saw a chicken lay the same egg three times!!

We continued on to the Coleridge Hydroelectric Power Station where water discharged from Coleridge Lake generates power. The plant produces 40,000 kilowatts per year. There was a

park there with very large trees. Our hosts had sent along a packed lunch, and the park was a great spot for a picnic. Some saw one of the famous New Zealand possums up in a tree.

After lunch we started our trip back to Christchurch via a different route. We followed a deep valley called Rakaia Gorge. We stopped at a very nice place called Terrace Downs High Country Resort, near the city of Windwhistle. It was still very windy, so you could say we blew in. At the resort we had afternoon tea with pastries. There were two huge fireplaces with log fires, and it made for a great afternoon tea.

We started back, and it was not very long before we were back on the green Canterbury Plains and the weather there was beautiful. It was a great outing in the mountains of New Zealand.

Craig Fagerness

October 5

International Antarctic Center is part of a huge complex built for the administration of the NZ, US, and Italian Antarctic programs. According to Gilly, our guide, it's 2,200 miles to Ross Island and there are 1,200 personnel on the base. The coldest it can get is -128 degrees Fahrenheit in which you could die in one minute if not properly clothed. The winds blow at 200 miles an hour and it is as dry as the Sahara. If all of Antarctica melted, all the oceans would rise by 200 feet; 90% of the ice in the world is in Antarctica.

The most popular attraction was the blue penguins which had all been rescued. There had been a leak in their pool the night before, so they weren't really swimming around, but they were still full of personality. All of them had names; some were couples, one had a fiberglass beak, one had eaten 40 fish in one day. They wore little rubber shoes to protect their feet because they were out of the water more than usual that day.

We saw videos on the importance of the research done at the NZ and US bases McMurdo and Scott – research that can't be done anywhere else on earth. Global warming is the big topic, but the world's sea level is another area of interest. Medical, marine, weather, and greenhouse effect are among other areas of research.

We had fun watching the people experience the Snow Room with blowing snow and wind, simulating an Antarctic storm.

We went home to have lunch on the deck and then helped (really watched) Rosemary prepare a chicken curry dish for dinner. Then we went for a walk and this time tackled the very steep hill up to their house.

Farewell party overlooking the ocean – magnificent! A few surfboard/hang gliders on the beach. After a delicious assortment of dinner items brought by our hosts we gave our thanks and appreciation, and Larry entertained on the guitar.

Ray Willett

Spent today with my hostess Lee Biddington and her daughter Catherine. Catherine, a wine distributor, invited Lee and me to accompany her on her sales route from Christchurch to Kaikoura to Hanmer Springs and back to Christchurch.

Left Christchurch at 7:45 a.m. and drove northeast to Kaikoura through beautiful green rolling countryside, an area becoming a major wine-growing area filled with new vineyards.

In Kaikoura, a pretty little peninsula town surrounded by snowcapped mountains, we shopped while waiting for Catherine to conduct her business. A large art festival would be in town that weekend and preparations were evident.

Catherine picked us up, stopping at a bakery where we bought a meat pie and a sweet. We took our lunch to a little park on the bay and ate in a sunny, sheltered spot (windy day) enjoying the sound of the water hitting the beach and the view to the ocean.

Finishing lunch we drove a couple miles to a seal colony where many adult and baby seals were sunning on the rocks, on shore and resting in the flax plants by the road.

Returning to Kaikoura we saw a fish stand where different fish were cooked and sold. Here we had a White Bait patty sandwich, made with tiny white fish (only available in NZ and only at this time of year) in a batter with the fish and eggs fried like a pancake, served on a slice of bread with a piece of lettuce

and a slice of lemon. A unique and tasty sandwich.

Drove on to Hanmer Springs, famous for its hot springs. It is a popular tourist town with the hot springs housed and used similar to our Glenwood Springs hot springs (swimming and relaxation). Lee and I walked around town and had a cup of tea while Catherine talked with her wine customers. Left Hanmer Springs, arriving home about 5 p.m.

Quickly changed our clothes and went to the FF farewell dinner. A great meal full of fun and fellowship with goodbye ceremonies.

Returned home, where Lee's son Tony had stopped by to bid me farewell. We had tea and visited for an hour. After Tony left, Lee gave me a copy of Janet Frame's autobiography. I had been made aware of and become interested in this NZ author while I was in Auckland. I was thrilled to be able to read about her life. Finished packing and to bed by 12:30 a.m.

On the plane home from Auckland to LA I watched the movie based on this book.

Sue Dunn

October 6

Time to leave, and we are sad; enjoyed Rosemary and Les so much. Off to the train station to board the TranzAlpine train across the Canterbury Plains, through the Southern Alps to Greymouth, from the Pacific to the Tasman Sea. The trip is 4 ½ hours and

231 km. Once again the lush and varied scenery is breathtaking. It's hard to know where to look, it's all so beautiful. The train enters a labyrinth of gorges and hills called Staircase, a climb made possible by three large viaducts (made in the UK and put up in 2 weeks) and tunnels. At Arthur's Pass the train enters the longest tunnel, the 8.5 km Otira. (Ask Larry and Carol about tunnel activity.) This tunnel was started in 1908 and finished in 1923; it descends 280 meters. The town of Otira is trying to attract visitors by renting cabins for \$65 a week. There is terrific hiking and it sure would be peaceful. The rivers were full with spring runoff. Jackson – a short stop; the Jackson brothers from Scotland built a hotel and served possum pie. Moana – great sailing, trout fishing, hiking.

Arrived in Greymouth, known for its gold mining history. It started as a port but the rough waters of the Tasman put a quick end to that enterprise. On to the bus with our wonderful guide Doug, headed for Franz Josef Glacier. Stopped at jade center, saw Monteith's Brewery and gold mine-era hotels. Stores close at noon in this area. Doug let us know that the people of these towns are independent in spirit because of their isolation. Good fishing – 600# tuna, white bait (a delicacy) \$50 US a pound. Jade comes from the west coast. The Maori used it for weapons, transforming their culture from Stone Age to Steel Age. There are earth tremors every 3 minutes, but they can only be measured on a seismograph.

Hokitika – lots of jade, arts and crafts, glass blowing, ruby rock which is second in hardness to diamonds. There is a Carnegie Foundation Library there. Tiwahi Punamu, Land of the Green Stone, in Maori. In the early 1500's Raurika, daughter of a Maori chief, walked to the east coast to sell jade. She was the first NZ businesswoman. Dense forest, mostly NZ pine. The settlers named them for their colors – red, white. A hakitia tree can host up to 28 other plants. Native timber here can't be used for anything. If a bridge is being demolished local craftsmen come to buy up the lumber. The west coast gets 120 inches of rainfall a year.

Doug made a good call, and we went straight to the Franz Josef Glacier while the weather was clear. The glacier was first explored by Europeans in 1865; Austrian Julius Haast named it after the Austrian Emperor. After a long period of retreat, the glacier started advancing in 1985, progressing nearly 2 km a year until it started to backpedal again in 1996. (Lonely Planet) At one time it reached the sea.

The town itself was peaceful with swirling clouds and mist. We had dinner at the Blue Ice Café. A great day!

Penny Brinker

Today we said goodbye and thank you to our Christchurch hosts as they dropped seventeen of us at the train station to catch the TranzAlpine run to Greymouth on the "wet" (or west) coast of the South Island.

Our baggage was loaded into the Baggage Van, the last car on the train. As is sometimes the case, the train left late for the 231-km, 4 ½-hour trip to Greymouth. As we were leaving Christchurch the train passed a cricket field with all of the players dressed in white. The trip took across the Canterbury Plains where green foliage stretched for miles, covered with white sheep, red deer, and a variety of cattle. The train had an observation car, open to the elements and windy. It was an adventure to go between cars on the moving train to reach it. Our route traveled up the Waimakariri River. The river ran cloudy, perhaps from the limestone that it ran through. The grade was steep for a railroad – one meter vertical for each 60 horizontal meters.

Our route went through 19 tunnels, the longest being the Otira tunnel, 8 ½ km long. We passed through several towns that had flourished when the railroad was being built and later when it was the primary means of transportation through that part of the country. Their names included Cass, Arthur's Pass, Otira, and Moano. Most are now little more than ghost towns. We also crossed an area called Inchbonnie, the place where the Australian and Pacific tectonic plates collide. This fault line can be seen from space. It's estimated that major earthquakes occur on this fault every 300 years or so. As we passed over the fault, the "big one" was 70 years overdue.

We arrived in Greymouth and were met by our bus and its driver, Doug Kirk, who turned out to be a gem of a driver

and tour guide. Greymouth is a town of approximately 10,000, the largest community on the west coast of the South Island. Initial settlement in 1864 was fueled by mining gold, jade and later, coal. There we had lunch and visited the Jade Boulder Factory.

Then we traveled south along the coast of the Tasman Sea. Much rougher than the Pacific, the Tasman over the years caused many ships approaching the west coast to sink. The roughness of this sea was a prime reason for the extraordinary effort to build the railroad across the mountains to the east side of the island in the 19th century.

Roads on this side of the island are two-lane and narrow. Single-lane bridges, some shared with a railroad track, were the rule rather than the exception. Who had the right of way on the bridges was clearly marked, although there is no question of who has the right of way when a train is crossing. The foliage is rain forest – very thick with large trees. The trees support up to 28 smaller parasitic plants and vines. Most of this forest is natural, native forest, hundreds of years old. Current New Zealand law is very protective of these native trees.

The hillsides are very steep for the most part, and rocky. Waterfalls abound, and are visible when the clouds don't obscure the mountains. Much of the area adjacent to the coast receives up to 120 inches of rain a year. It's just a beautiful, but wet, area! The trip down the coast was wonderfully scenic.

Lodging tonight was at the Scenic Circle Franz Josef Glacier Hotel. Some of us

took advantage of the coin-operated washers and dryers that were available. Supper was on our own, and we could choose from several small restaurants within easy walking distance of the hotel.

Prior to checking into the hotel we went directly to the Franz Josef Glacier. The weather was dry (not raining) and the clouds were only part way down the mountainsides. The glacier, from a scenic overlook point, was spectacular in the evening light! Unlike most of the world's glaciers, New Zealand's glaciers are currently growing slowly; however, they too have greatly receded during the years since they were first discovered by Europeans.

John Morrison

Note:

Just after we arrived in Greymouth we were boarding our bus when Welca slipped and fell down the back stairway of the bus, injuring her head. An ambulance took her to the hospital where she spent 48 hours under observation. She was released on Monday, flew to Christchurch for the night, then returned to Denver on Tuesday. We all missed her for the rest of the trip, but were thankful that a full recovery was expected.

October 7

It was a foggy day with light rain as we headed out past the Franz Josef Glacier, named for an Austrian who was the first

European to discover the magnificent glacier and named it after the Austrian Emperor. We crossed a bridge spanning a waterway which our driver explained "was drowning in rocks!" The bridge over the glacier-fed river had to be raised to accommodate the influx of large rocks. In New Zealand roads are often repositioned around the rivers.

In response to the question "How do you know how fast the glacier moves?" Doug told a story. A WWII aircraft crashed on top of the glacier. Six years later crushed bits of the plane were discovered at the foot of the glacier, revealing the significant movement of the ice.

During a windy ride on our way to the Fox Glacier we passed camellia bushes in full bloom and heavy ferns along the road. People who live on the west coast of the island are referred to as "coasters." Doug described the orange-colored rocks as the first form of life which is later overcome by greenish algae in the ancient forests. We learned that New Zealand is deficient in selenium and other trace elements, unlike Australia which is rich in minerals.

Both the Fox and Franz Josef Glaciers cut through glacial valleys to flow into the temperate rainforest. While many glaciers world-wide have been retreating, these glaciers still flow almost to the sea, making them unique relics of the last Ice Age. Located at a latitude of only 44 degrees south and in a relatively mild climate, Fox and Franz

Josef are more easily accessible than any other glaciers in the world.

Fox Glacier, named after an early New Zealand Prime Minister William Fox, is reached by a road that crosses ancient moraine from earlier advances and retreats. Doug told us many things about this glacier which comes down from 11,000-foot Mt. Tasman. It is 8 ½ miles long, about ½ mile wide and 1,000 feet deep. It moves in a jerky fashion as the walls move more slowly than the center, moving like a wedge and filling all the crevasses. He described it as sounding like a living, breathing beast as it moans and groans over the rocks and moves among the ancient forests. We were able to walk close to the glacier for a look and some photos.

At Gillespies Beach we gathered small rocks created by the glaciers. We were impressed with the spectacular surf of the Tasman Sea. It can be very rough. We were told that the Strait of Magellan and the Foveaux Strait near New Zealand's Stewart Island are the roughest in the world.



With many fault lines in New Zealand, waterfalls are common as streams flow through the mountain cracks and rocks. Tourism is the number one industry in this part of New Zealand, with artists and sports enthusiasts coming to experience summer activities here.

This was a remarkable day seeing spectacular glaciers and lush, beautiful scenery, and collecting rocks by the shimmering and pounding surf of the Tasman Sea.

Carol Brown

October 8

"On the road again," to quote Jackie Goreham – not very creative, but very factual. So we started our trip from Franz Josef to Queenstown. As usual, Doug filled the day with interesting commentary between pit stops, view stops and lunch. We saw and heard so much that it is impossible to list it all, so here is a brief capsule of the day:

We retraced our previous day's route to the Fox Glacier and briefly down the road towards Lake Matheson in hopes of a cloud-free view of Mt. Cook. (I can spell glacier, but not pronounce it as the Kiwis do – GLA-see-er.)

Inland and then out to view the Tasman Sea at windblown Knights Point – spectacular view.

Then on to Haast where we dropped off six intrepid ambassadors for a jet boat ride up the Haast River. The rest of us killed a little time at the Haast

Department of Conservation Center and enjoyed the excellent presentations of history and ecology there.

On the drive to the pickup point for the boaters we could look across the river and see such waterfalls as "Boiling Billy," named for a cook on the road-building crew. Once through Haast Pass we were starting to leave the rainforest of the West Coast behind, although we enjoyed a stop at Thunder Falls before we were in drier country.

By the time we arrived at Makarora Station it was time for lunch. (To digress briefly, it should be noted that Joanne and I were constantly seeking good Kiwi meat pies. Joanne got the last lamb pie while I enjoyed the last venison pie – singular achievements considering the volume of customers alighting from multiple tour buses.)

The drive beside Lake Wanaka gave us a beautiful view of the lake before we had to shift (Kiwi term) to travel beside equally beautiful Lake Heweia. Back at the end of Lake Wanaka, the town of the same name started to give us an idea of the population growth in this part of the South Island. This feeling was intensified as we traveled beneath the peaks and ski areas of Cadrona and Coronet Peak and on to Arrowtown.

Arrowtown is no longer the sleepy near-ghost town that I remember from my visit to Queenstown 13 years ago. It is a tourist town filled with expensive shops among the restored miners cabins. Clearly, growth and prosperity have come to the Queenstown/Arrowtown

area, so much so that the working and service classes can't afford to live there.

Queenstown is almost unrecognizable with new hotels, apartments, shops and malls. Ten years or so ago it was a fairly quiet tourist center. Now it is packed with Japanese, Indian, English and American tourists. We noted that Christchurch has changed; now we'll see if Te Anau, Milford and Dunedin have enjoyed similar prosperity.

Bill Harvey

October 9

We awoke to a fine day. During breakfast we watched the sun begin to light the tops of the mountains behind us, then gradually move the light down the hills. Eventually the sun came over the top of the hill and lit the whole valley.

We had arranged to sail on the Queenstown America's Cup Yacht...but it appeared that there was no wind. As we walked down the hill the only wind we felt was the breeze we made as we walked. As we approached the pier we were relieved to see that the flags on the sailboat were moving. So we bundled up and went aboard the NZL14. She was 22 meters long with a keel of 16 tons and a hull of 6 tons. Bill was disappointed that we motored out of the bay. The skipper explained that there was a reef so there was only a narrow space for us to get through to the lake. He has much more control of the boat motoring than sailing, so we motored until we were past the reef. The yacht

was required to install a motor when they started taking passengers.

Once out of the harbor they began putting up the sail – a huge 2000-square-foot mainsail. It was so tall that it was hard to look up to the top. There were three rows of tell tales, each at

different levels to check the wind direction. A crew of four taught some of the passengers how to use the winches to put the sail up. Almost everyone took turns at the winches at various times.

The weather was perfect, the sky blue, the water clear. As soon as the sail and the jib were up we were sailing along. The ride was swift and smooth – a truly delightful experience. We saw the steamship Earnslaw going up as we came back in. We waved to all aboard. It was a glorious experience on a marvelous vessel on a beautiful day!

We had quite an appetite when we returned. We walked over to Fergburgers and shared a "little lambie" – lambburger, tomato, mint jelly, aolie, tomato relish, and ginger beer. Delicious!!! On this lovely day we ate outdoors.

We walked back up to the hotel, ready for a short nap before we met to go up to the gondola. The early mornings must have caught up with us.

Refreshed, we enjoyed the goldola ride up to the Kiwi Haka. Beautiful ride up. Gorgeous views in every direction; from the viewing points we finally could pick out Coronet Peak, a great ski area. And the Remarkables – the only range of mountains in the world besides the

Rockies that runs north and south. Rod and John thrilled us by riding the luge. It looked scary but fun. Arlene rode the chairlift up.

Then we saw the Kiwi Haka. Our fearless leader Larry took the challenge. The voices of the Maori are beautiful. The men were impressively fierce and strong. The women were very skilled with the poi. Poi are used by the men to strengthen their wrists for combat, and the women use them to retell history. Arlene was chosen as a volunteer to go up and dance with them. She was darling – energetic and bubbly. It was lots of fun.

After the show we walked downhill to Queenstown, had a light supper and then took the steep walk back up to the hotel.

It was a delightful New Zealand day in this charming town.

Joanne Harvey

After a full, filling breakfast at the Copthorne Hotel: What are you going to do on this "You're on your own" day? Walk through Queenstown Gardens, go sailing, take pictures, head for a sheep station, amble around town, stop for morning tea, play a round of golf, do a bungy jump, lose some \$ at the wharf casino, do a luge ride at the top of the gondola? So many choices!!

So what was this day like for me? After that very satisfying breakfast it was out in the fresh sunlit morning air for a leisurely walk through some of

Queenstown Gardens, continuing around the lake into town through the Rotary Memorial Gate honoring military personnel from the Great World War #1 and World War II.

Strolling through several pedestrian-only blocks, stopping for morning tea and a scone. Sitting in the bright sunshine watching shoppers ambling by.

Upon arriving at the Boat Dock for a midday sail on the Sail New Zealand, America's Cup contender: This craft had been skippered by Russell Coult and the New Zealand Challenge team. What an experience we were in for!!!

Joanne and Bill Harvey joined me along with 5 other passengers and 4 crew members. Larry and Carol were taking pictures as we sailed away. Everyone had a turn at the wheel as skipper and on the coffee grinders tending the main and jib sails as we tacked to windward. We made quite a crew jibbing and setting the genoa for the downwind run and back to the harbor, tying up at the assigned slip. We were on the lake well over 2 hours.



I stopped for afternoon tea on the way back to the hotel for our taxi ride to the gondola up to the observation deck far above the city.

John Morrison and I chose to take the luge ride before the live Maori cultural singing and dance performance. Larry Brown was our chief and was able to control our warlike ambitions. The Maori chief decided to let our Friendship Force tribe stay and asked us to participate in the festivities. We were nearly ejected when Arlene Casabona became so entranced and "into it" that the Maori chief, using his war club and fierce facial expression (tongue extended, eyes wildly open) suggested that the ladies should "cool it." No more wiggles!! Things got back to normal and the show finished without further disruption.

The lights were coming on as we descended into the city. What a beautiful sight! From the gondola it was a series of walkways and steps to the center of town. We were looking for a recommended Irish Pub, PO'G Mahoney's, for our last dinner in Queenstown.

After stopping along the way home for some New Zealand ice cream we declared it had been a "Halcyon day and we had been on a starboard tack"!!!

Rod Greiner

October 10

We left Queenstown this morning at 6:00 a.m. The views were breathtaking with the sun rising on the rugged snow-covered peaks. There is a mountain range in the area called the Remarkables because of the way the mountains are constantly changing color.

Shortly after 9:00 we pulled into Te Anau. It was cool and foggy. During our half-hour stop I walked up the main road to a bakery where I bought something for lunch on the boat.

The area around Te Anau is geographically the oldest part of New Zealand. It uplifted out of the ocean some 50 million years ago. Twelve million years ago another section rose from this ocean in the same general area – it's the newest part of New Zealand. The largest lake on the South Island is Lake Te Anau. It has over 200 miles of shoreline and it 1000 feet deep. This is the wettest part of New Zealand, receiving from 27 to 28 feet of rain a year.

It was a rather cloudy day in Fjordland, and I was concerned that we would not be able to see Milford Sound. As we drove toward Milford the clouds lifted and we saw many beautiful rugged snow-capped mountains with the sun shining on them. It was spectacular!

The road through Fjordland to Milford Sound was originally planned to be built in 18 months, but it took 20 years to complete. The road builders made their life's work out of it. They built homes, schools, movie houses plus many other

things. The closest doctor was 100 miles away. We took a delightful 15-minute walk through the bush to view a beautiful chasm.

When we arrived at Milford Sound there wasn't a cloud in the sky (nor a sand fly to be found). The water was as still as glass. On the boat we had a reserved seat with a table where we ate the lunch that we had purchased that morning in Te Anau. As we sailed along we found a seat on the second deck at the very back facing backwards. I think this gave us a fabulous view. We could also see through the glass panels on the ceiling. The first time I was here 12 years ago it was so socked in we could hardly see anything. Today on this gloriously perfectly clear day we didn't miss a thing. Even the Tasman Sea was smooth as glass. Eventually we went up on top to get a better view of the waterfalls.

When the cruise was finished we drove back to Te Anau and checked into the Luxmore Hotel. Janet and I decided to eat dinner at the hotel in a restaurant called Bailey's. We had a wonderful cod dinner with roasted veggies.

At 8 p.m. we watched a movie called "The Fastest Indian" starring Anthony Hopkins. It was quite good - a true story about Burt Munro from Invercargill who broke the motorcycle land speed record at Bonneville Flats in the 1960's.

Elaine Schnebly

October 11

We left Te Anau at 8 a.m. and are now on our way to Dunedin. It's a bit chilly, but the sky is blue. It will take about 4 hours to Dunedin. We'll be going through a lot of country towns and seeing lots of sheep, cattle, and deer farms. Flat plains and rolling hills - great farming country. In Manderville they restore planes from all over the world. In the Hokonui Hills the MacRae family made moonshine whiskey for 80 years and ran from the law.

Gore is the country music capital of New Zealand. In the middle of town is a statue of a brown trout. The next town (much smaller than Gore) is Clinton, and the highway between the two towns is nicknamed "The Presidential Highway." It's said that then-President Clinton gave his permission for the name when he visited NZ, but wasn't thrilled that Gore was bigger.

It's raining and we're traveling from the west coast to the east coast. We're away from the sea, but there are some lakes to be seen. When we stopped at the Gore Museum we had a wee taste of the moonshine, so most of us are dozing on the bus.

Dunedin, built on volcanic rock, was established around 1847 by the Scots. It became the richest town in NZ when gold was discovered about 1870. It was the largest city in NZ, with lots of schools and modern facilities, but in the 20th Century the capital was moved to Auckland which is now the largest city. Dunedin remains a student town.

We stopped for lunch at noon, leaving at 1:00 to visit the Albatross Center on a peninsula nearby. It was a lovely drive on a narrow winding road right above the water.

We learned about the Royal Albatross from a video and a talk by the guide. The Royal Albatross weighs from 14–18 pounds and has a wing span of 9 feet 9 inches. About 150 birds belong to this colony, and they breed every two years, arriving in September and building their nests until early November. The egg weighs about 1 pound, and the parents share incubation duty in spells of 2-8 days over a period of 11 weeks. When the chick hatches the parents take turns guarding and feeding it. As the chick gains weight, the parents lose 1/3 of their body weight until the chick weighs almost as much as they do. After 300 days the parents return to the sea. Then the chick ventures out to sea and doesn't return for 5 or 6 years, looking for a mate to start the process again.

In 1885 there was a threat of war with Russia so 100 men were stationed at Fort Taiaroa; however, the threat never materialized and the gun was never fired at the enemy.

On the way back into Dunedin we went to see Larnach Castle, started by a Scotsman in 1870 and finished in 1882.

It was a full day, raining most of the time. We checked into the Scenic Circle Hotel at 6:00 and at 7:00 went for an Italian dinner at a nearby restaurant, The Etruscan.

Arlene Casabona

We were on the bus on our way to Dunedin at 8 a.m. It was a beautiful drive south, seeing many sheep, elk, and deer farms with beautiful fields of green, valleys, and rolling green hills.

We stopped in Gore and were given samples of moonshine whiskey or liqueur. It was good and a fun stop.

We passed through Mandeville which is known nationally for rebuilding old aircraft.

Throughout this trip we passed many huge milk trucks traveling from the dairy farms.

Arriving in Dunedin at noon in rain and fog. Dunedin is the top educational town in NZ. There are 30,000 university students out of 130,000 people.

Lunch downtown and off to see albatross.

Albatross is the largest sea bird, weighing 14-18 pounds with a 9'9" wingspan. There are approximately 150 adult birds to a colony. At sea they feed on squid and fish.

The albatross breed on the Otago Peninsula. They arrive in September and mate in October. In November they lay an egg weighing about one pound. Eggs incubate in 79 days.

After hatching, parents take turns feeding the chick. At first, they feed the chick a lot and parents lose weight. By 4-5 months the chick weighs more than the parents. By six months parents are exhausted and give the chick less food. The chick's weight goes down to about

17 pounds and the parents leave. Chicks are on their own and do not touch land again for 3 to 5 years. Then it takes them 3 summers to find a mate on land. Albatross life span is 30 to 35 years.

Up the hill to the point and tunnel, but could not go to the viewing area because we would disturb birds laying eggs. We saw Fort Tairaroa's Gun.

Next, up through the Peninsula hills to Larnach Castle, a castle built about 1880's by the Larnach family. It was sold and bought in 1967 to restore. Beautiful castle and grounds.

Back to the hotel to check in. A wet, cool day, but beautiful scenery everywhere we ventured. Seafood Italian spaghetti finished off the day.

Dee Fifer

October 12

This is our last full day and night in New Zealand.

Breakfast was scheduled for 8:00. Craving our caffeine, a few of us tried to enter the dining room a few minutes early but were told that they weren't ready for us. At 7:58 they let us in.

Before we left for the drive north, Doug drove us around to see some of Dunedin's sights, including the steepest residential street in the world according to The Guinness Book of Records. We looked longingly at the Cadbury factory, which does give free tours, but alas - all

we had time for was a photo or two as we drove by.

Home to Otago University, Dunedin is the site of many student traditions such as taking their couches to rugby games to sit on, burning their couches at weekend parties, having races down Baldwin Street (the steepest) with various kinds of vehicles. The locals call students "scarfies" because most of them wear neckscarves.

We had time to walk through the Botanic Gardens and enjoy the beautiful flowers before heading north, stopping at Moeraki for lunch and a chance to see the Moeraki Boulders. They looked like giant stone tortoises on the beach.



Our next stop was Oamaru, notable for its limestone buildings built from stone quarried locally. Limestone is soft when first cut, then hardens after it has been exposed to the air for a while, making it an ideal construction material. There were some beautiful flower gardens just across the street from where the bus parked.

After a couple other brief stops, we were back in Canterbury, enjoying the peaceful green fields with sheep, cattle, and deer grazing in their paddocks. At

about 6:00 we arrived at our hotel in Christchurch – near the airport and practically next door to the Antarctic Center.

A few of the group had dinner with their host families, but most of us enjoyed our last New Zealand dinner in the hotel restaurant. Then we went back to our rooms to be sure everything would fit in our suitcases for the trip home.

Marge Johnson

Today is the last traveling day in New Zealand, and after spending the night in Dunedin, the second largest city of the South Island, we will be wending our way back to Christchurch by the end of the day and going home tomorrow.

We had a full delicious breakfast and met Doug, our very special guide and driver, at 9:30 to tour around the city. We drove past the Olveston mansion, built for the wealthy businessman David Thromin; saw Baldwin Street, the world's steepest residential street; took pictures and stopped for a walking tour through the lovely Botanic Gardens. Founded in 1864 it has 6,800 species of plants on 70 acres – a year-round attraction. We saw the University of Otago, the country's first university, founded in 1871. Doug's son is a law student there. The Dunedin Railway Station was our next stop, built in 1906 of massive bluestone in Flemish Renaissance style and lavishly decorated. Its architect George Troup earned a knighthood from the King and the nickname Gingerbread George from the people of the city.

Across the street from the station was the jail, designed and built like Scotland Yard.

We passed the First Presbyterian Church where Robert Burns' nephew was pastor. Doug told us about the tradition of college students here burning their couches while partying on weekends; Dunedin has more fires than any other city in the country. As the free-flowing conversation continued, Doug said the Irish first made whiskey and the Scots perfected it. Scots brought the first gorse plants to the country, and the somewhat beautiful yellow flowering shrub has become difficult to control. The seeds last for 80 years, and it even thrives when burned. Bees love it, however, and it does have 2 seasons.

One of the small towns we passed through was where John Jones had lived and operated from. He was a big supplier for shipping and was the man who first introduced the use of credit letters when gold was used. It proved to be a valid way to pay. He helped a lot of people who needed financing and gave a lot to the community.

In 1893 women in New Zealand gained the right to vote through by the efforts of John Mackenzie, a powerful man who also helped early New Zealanders get land to begin farming. He was hated for it but helped the farmers take over the land that was not occupied by those who claimed it but had gone back to live in England. He was knighted as a result.

We stopped for lunch at the café on the coast where we could see the Moeraki Boulders. They are huge spherical rocks

formed by a gradual buildup of minerals around a central core. Some have sprung open to reveal interesting calcite crystals.

An especially bright and beautiful city was Oamaru, the best example in New Zealand of Victorian architecture still in use. Many of the buildings are stately, ornate and built of white limestone which is quarried in the area. Limestone is easy to quarry and cut, and when it dries it becomes quite hard. These limestone buildings are cool in summer and warm in winter. It's a prosperous town where people like to retire because houses cost \$150,000 to \$200,000 less than in Christchurch. Oamaru is also the place where the little blue penguins emerge from the sea and waddle on the beach each evening. We were too early to see them.

We passed from Otago Province into Canterbury and were gradually aware of flat land and gently rolling plains. Hundreds of sheep graze here, and there are many dairy farms, some quite large.

Timaru, meaning shelter, is a city of 30,000 with a large port and service center. It's two hours from Christchurch – close enough to visit but far enough to have its own identity as a holiday destination. Carolina Beach is lovely, and Timaru is a popular venue for summer concerts and sideshows. The inventor Richard Pearse lived here. On March 31, 1903, some months before the Wright Brothers made their first flight, he launched the first powered flight in New Zealand in a field outside

of town. The Richard Pearse Memorial, with a reproduction of his plane, marks the spot where he crashed into the hedge on that day. Some time later among his things were found plans for what would have been the forerunner of the helicopter. Those plans are in the Christchurch Museum of Technology.

We stopped briefly in Ashburton, a town of 24,000 that had been hammered financially but was coming back, Doug said. They have a new industry of boat building and are the largest manufacturer of spinning wheels in the world.

As we neared our destination, Doug began to explain with a mythological story why New Zealanders are called Kiwis and how proud they are of that designation. It was a long but enchanting story. We arrived in Christchurch at 5:30, in time for some to have dinner with their original hosts, but most of us had a lovely dinner at the hotel and turned in early.

It was the last full day of our TRIP OF A LIFETIME! I'm happy and grateful for new friends from the Denver Friendship Force and for those in New Zealand.

Jackie Goreham

October 13

The silver fern, which is found only in New Zealand, is a brilliant silver on one side and bright green on the other side. It is the country's national plant. During our visit in Auckland, our dinner hostess picked a large silver fern leaf dripping

wet from her garden and placed it on the table. It was beautiful.

Many birds have become extinct in New Zealand. The 12-foot-high Moa birds were hunted to extinction by the Maoris. An eagle with a 12-foot wingspan has also become extinct. The Europeans brought in rabbits and other animals, some of which ate the birds. Rabbits have become a devastating nuisance to the farmers.

We saw *Totora* trees which live for hundreds of years and are often cut for logs to build Maori homes. Other unique trees that appeared along our way were palm trees with a slender base and many fronds on top called *Nikau* palm. Timber doesn't rot in NZ as much as it does elsewhere because it is quite dense and can handle much water. Logs have been dragged from lakes and found to be good usable logs despite being under water for long periods. The flax plant was used by Maoris for clothing.

The Maori language, like English, has 5 vowels and is pronounced phonetically.

Doug's grandfather came from Scotland and bought farms which have been passed down to family. We met many second and third generation New Zealanders whose ancestors came from England, Scotland and Ireland.

Carol Brown





