

Bulletin – May 2018:

Welcome to this edition. Time to look back and reflect on what has happened since the last edition.

We were able to offer two Explorer departures to the Kaikoura area primarily to see what happened with and after the November 2016 Earthquake and the resulting damage caused by that event. This departure included overnight stops in Ashburton, Hanmer Springs, Kaikoura and Blenheim. Both departed from Gore and travelled through Cromwell and the McKenzie Country via Tekapo on the first day. The proposed route from Hanmer Springs was along the inland route to Kaikoura with the opportunity to experience the rail and road rebuilds along the way. Due to road repair work and weather conditions the first trip only saw the section north of Kaikoura undertaken with the return having to be via Murchison and the Lewis Pass and there we experienced a snow blizzard so you can expect all sorts from the weather. On the second we still had to travel the inland route north again due to rock removal south of Kaikoura. This road is an interesting experience indeed. However this second trip saw all of the road and rail repair being undertaken with extensive use of shipping containers to prevent the new construction sites from being damaged and to protect those people working below. The new formations are amazing. Also a side trip to Gore Bay was fascinating on the way back south.

The sea bed has been lifted some 4 to 5 metres in places and it is amazing to see all the new (to the surface) lighter coloured rock formations being exposed there. Seals are still in abundance which is great to see again. There was a great TV3 programme on the area recently which primarily concentrated on the fishery and the effects of the earthquake on what to expect in the future.

While in Blenheim each group undertook the morning cruise from Picton out onto Queen Charlotte Sound almost out to Cook Strait and to visit and walk around Captain Cook's landing place. This is an interesting Cruise with all that it has to offer. Now that we have the detail in place for this another such departure can be offered if enough people show interest in that at a time to yet be decided.

After a busy summer of Cruise Ship visits to Dunedin with trains on over 90+ days it is good to have some time away from that. However there were still Silver Fern Railcar Tours to do as well. These were from Christchurch to Invercargill with guests enjoying the Otago Peninsula with the highlights being Larnach Castle and the Albatross Colony. On to Invercargill and Stewart Island before heading north to Oamaru and next day back to Christchurch. These did attract people from all over New Zealand and Australia. More next summer.

There has been no time for Patricia and me to do any touring on our own. Pat was back at Gore High School during the first term so now is back into a second retirement! I do appreciate her helping out now on the tours that we still operate. On the 8th of June we will head to Auckland to spend some time at Matamata and to take in some of "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" movie sets in the area. A few days later we are off to Vietnam and Cambodia for 3 weeks with a combination of land and river cruise activity. We return home early in July. Believe it when I say we are going with another tour company so we will be able to sit back and let somebody else do the work and appreciate all that!

Future Departures:

Norfolk Island: This will not eventuate this year. I have decided to withdraw from this due to the fact that flights to Norfolk direct from New Zealand are still not being offered currently. However there is a possibility this may happen with a yet to be publicly named airline taking up the service. It is simply a waiting game to see what eventuates so watch this space.

McKenzie Country Stay Put Explorer: This could not operate due to the fact that there was no accommodation available for a 4 night stay in Twizel at the time that was available for us to offer that. The cycle trail people are numerous and taking up that accommodation. It is good for that area but does create difficulties for other groups. It is intended to try again for next year but

perhaps at a later date into the autumn when the cyclists are not so numerous. Names are still held for that so we will be in contact when we know more.

Top of the South: Departing on 23rd August and returning 3rd September. Once again this popular departure is organised and the detail is available for this. Over nights will be Ashburton, Hanmer Springs, Motueka (2), Takaka (4), Havelock (2) and Kaikoura. You will experience a boat cruise along the edge of Abel Tasman National Park and also return to parts by road from Takaka. The highlight is the amazing journey along the road and beach to the Farewell Spit Lighthouse. Out west from Collingwood to pass the beautiful and remote Whanganui Inlet and listen to the tales of a long time farmer out there in this far north west country of the South Island. From Havelock journey out to French Pass along side and above Pelorus Sound and Tasman Bay to view remote Durville Island on the edge of Cook Strait. A half day in Blenheim and time to visit the spectacular Omaka Aircraft displays depicting both world wars of last century. We will also have time in Kaikoura and see the rail and road rebuild as described above in that area. You can register for this now.

Tasmania: This is all set to go with a departure from Christchurch on 11th October, returning on the 26th and is almost full. This will see us travel right around the Island State with arrival and departure through Launceston. Most highlights will be covered on the journey and it will see us using a local driver/guide throughout. Highlights include Cradle Mountain, Strahan and Macquarie Harbour and River Cruise, Port Arthur, Mt Wellington and Salamanca Markets in Hobart, Freycinet National Park and a Wildlife Park along with a host of other interesting places. Places are filling fast for this.

Top of the North Island: Have had an indication that some people would like to visit the area up there and we could put together a small group departure to include Coromandel, the Bay of Islands, Russell and Cape Reinga and of course places in between. Should that be of interest please let me know and we could look to doing this next winter.

Please note that we are away from 8th June to 5th July (as indicated above). Please take this into consideration when thinking about these departures. We will not be available during this time.

Not so much on offer this time as we begin to wind down a little more. We look forward to perhaps hearing from you in the near future in regard these offerings.

Regards

Patricia and Alan