

AB EXPLORER TOURS

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Tour Director – Allan Boyer

BULLETIN May 2022:

Welcome to another instalment of where we are in the Explorer business. Covid pandemic issues still plague what we endeavour to accomplish. It seems as though we are getting through the problems with the majority of people being vaccinated and not only protecting themselves but those around them as well. This is all good news and hopefully we can now return to some sort of normality what ever that will be!

As many of you know we have had to cancel or postpone the majority of our overnight Explorer departures and hopefully we can reinstate those later in the year or early 2023.

Despite these problems we have been able to accomplish two departures to Stewart Island each for 4 nights. They both followed the same programme with a guided walk on Ulva Island to experience its wonderful bird life due to the predator trapping there. A four hour cruise out to the edge of Foveaux Strait to Bench Island to experience the feeding of a variety of albatross and other sea birds prior to heading into Paterson Inlet to view the remains of the Norwegian Whaling supply shore station and the enormous Aqua Farming operations. A road tour, garden and museum visits were also completed as well as numerous walks and futile attempts to spot Kiwi at night although their calls were heard. We would like to repeat this departure again but obtaining bookings is proving difficult now with the borders opening up so it looks like 2024 before we can offer that again.

A few days before the April departure Allan completed a flight around Stewart Island from Invercargill which lasted almost 2 hours. It's amazing just how big the island is. Prior to that, we undertook another flight over Fiordland via Puysegur Point and the southern sounds landing at Manapouri then back to Invercargill. Air Milford may repeat these at some future time so if you might be interested let me know and I can give you information when that is received.

Also a Day Explorer to the Catlins from Kaka Point to Fortrose was enjoyed by some of the regular group people and people who had not travelled before with us. 2 others to Walter Peak via Lakes Mavora and Mt Nicolas with lunch at the Colonel's House with the bonus of seeing the Earnslaw arrive from Queenstown which was a highlight for those who had not travelled that way before. All 3 trips experienced great weather conditions too. *These can be repeated if interest warrants.*

Patricia and I have been out and about on our own getting into remote places we have not seen for a while or completely new. We are breaking out in August and are spending a month in Queensland then in December 2 weeks on Norfolk Island. Hopefully an Explorer to the latter next year will eventuate from this visit and we are both looking forward to catching up with local friends and reacquainting ourselves with the Island again. One of our favourite places.

FUTURE EXPLORER TOURS:

With the deferrals mentioned above we intend offering them again so fingers crossed.

TOP Of The NORTH ISLAND: Hopefully 3rd time lucky the Top of the North Island will get away. There are still spots available on this departure set to depart on Monday 3rd October. Starting with a day in Wellington then by Northern Explorer Train to Hamilton to visit the International Gardens there. Next over to the Coromandel for 3 nights to experience Hot Water Beach, Cathedral Cove, Whitianga, Coromandel Town, Driving Creek Railway & Pottery. Through Auckland to Matakana and a rest day but also a visit to Morris & James Pottery. Imagine how spectacular the 3 days in the Bay of Islands will be from our hotel base in Paihia. From there you will experience Russell, the Hole in

the Rock and Island Cruise along with the Waitangi Treaty Grounds/Museums and free time. Passing through Keri Keri and seeing the Stone Store and other highlights we will arrive at the Taipa Beach Resort for 2 nights on Doubtless Bay and on our full day there the trip to the Top of the North Island and Cape Reinga. Next day it is west to Omapere on the Hokianga Harbour where Opo the Dolphin lived in an earlier time. Next day down to Auckland after seeing Tane Mahuta, the huge Kauri Tree and also the Kauri Museum at Matakohe. We depart Auckland airport on Day 15 for Dunedin or other places as required on the Air NZ domestic network. The Itinerary is now available should you be interested. Those booked previously on this departure have the new information.

WEST COAST EXPLORER: This departure was planned for March/April this year but was cancelled due to the Covid Red Light setting. We are planning to resurrect this to depart in November. Those people who were booked on that are advised that the route will be the same with some modification. Depart Gore and travel via the East Coast to Methven. 2 nights to experience the town and the new Hot Pools there. Connections to join from Christchurch will be arranged as needed. Next day over Arthurs Pass to Moana at Lake Brunner for a night. Continue to Reefton and Westport for 4 nights with a day up the coast to Karamea. 2 further days to explore the Buller region before heading south via Cape Foulwind and the Punakaiki Rocks for 2 nights in Hokitika. Perhaps free time in the town or a visit to the Hokitika Gorge and the Tree Tops Walk. Next down to Franz Josef and a call into Okarito on the way. There would be time to take a Glacier Flight, soak in the Hot Tubs or visit the Kiwi House. 2 days in Haast where there are many places to explore south down the coast beyond Jackson Bay. Conclude with 2 nights in Wanaka which will be a complete contrast to what you have accomplished already. You will have travelled as far north and as far south on the coast as roads allow. Even if you have been there with us previously then this will be the opportunity to see different places. We may even be able to fit in a White Heron Tour as well.

CANTERBURY VALLEYS & AKAROA EXPLORER: Held over due to Covid but will look to run this again in the summer or autumn. Two nights each in Geraldine and Methven and while there, journey up into the high country stations of the Rangitata and Rakaia River valleys. For a complete contrast it is then through Christchurch and Lyttelton to Akaroa for 3 nights. Now there is plenty to do there with a harbour cruise is included. The last night will be in Ashburton. Once again connections to join from Christchurch and other places can be arranged.

DAY EXPLORER TOURS: As already mentioned those that we did run over the past few months have proved really popular so we have been thinking of other places to visit in the Catlins and the Southern Coast and into Central Otago. If you would like information as to when we will perhaps do those then leave your name with us and we will keep in touch in that regard. We will repeat the Walter Peak Day Explorer next summer.

WHAT ELSE: Already mentioned is Norfolk Island. We were hoping to take a group there in April but of course that was not possible so looking for around that time next year to offer that. Also Tasmania may be a possibility for a very small group. Rarotonga perhaps with Cathy may eventuate as well so if you want to indicate your interest in these please do so. Over the Winter months the detail will be formulated for these.

As you can appreciate Allan has pulled back considerably with tour departures but is still keen to share places in New Zealand and occasionally overseas but not as much as in the past with the more strenuous ones as we have done over the years. Full retirement is still hard to find!

There are still many places on our bucket list for us two to visit in the next few years.

Regards
Patricia & Allan Boyer

