



SCOTTSDALE TOURS

WONDERS OF WESTLAND TOUR 2011

Our Westcoast exploration began with our flight from Auckland to Queenstown to pick up the coach that had been waiting patiently for us after the High Country Spectacular tour. On arrival we called at Arrowtown for lunch before climbing up to take in the spectacular views from Coronet Peak where we were able to watch some late season skiing. After checking in to our Queenstown accommodation we made our way to the wharf to join the venerable Earnslaw for the trip across Lake Wakatipu to Walter Peak Station for a lovely buffet dinner and a chance to watch the Farm Show.

Making our way out through the Kawarau Gorge the next morning we had the chance to watch somebody jumping off a perfectly good bridge with a rubberband tied around their leg at the Hackett Bungy Jump Centre. After a quick visit to the Gibbston Cheesery we went on to the Mining Heritage Centre where we had a guided tour of the old gold workings and a golden opportunity to pan for some real gold. Cromwell was our lunch stop and then up the Clutha River to Wanaka where we discovered the Warbirds Museum had ceased operation but we were still able to have some fun at the Landsborough Puzzling World. Following our night in Wanaka we made the spectacular drive around Lake Wanaka and up into the majestic Matukituki Valley, one of my personal favourite spots. Back into Wanaka for lunch and then it was on through the mighty Haast Paas and on to Jackson's Bay where Margaret was able to see where her ancestors arrived in the 1870's.

Before leaving Haast we enjoyed a jet boat ride up the Haast River and then it was on to Fox Glacier in some rather inclement West Coast weather. Following a quick visit to the Glacier we spent the night in Fox. A quick trip out to another early settlement at Gillespies Beach before it was on to Franz Joseph for a view of the glacier and a visit to the movies. After lunch we continued North with a detour to Lake Kaniere on our way to do some shopping in Hokitika. We dined out at the Beachfront Hotel that night at stayed the night in Hokitika.

A beautiful morning greeted us so we headed up the enormous engineering feat of the Otira Pass viaduct for some great views and a meeting with some cheeky Keas who spent some time



Earnslaw – Lake Wakatipu



Coronet Peak



Matukituki Valley



Gillespies Beach - Fox

trying to dismantle the coach. Back down the pass and a trip around Lake Brunner took us to our next stop at Greymouth. Making our way up the Grey River through Blackball and Otarau (the base for the Pike River Operation) we picked up Paul, our guide, for a very interesting tour of the old mining ghost town of Waiuta. Then it was on to Reefton where we also had a tour (and a very nice whitebait fritter) before heading down to Westport for the next 2 nights.

The weather turned grotty the next morning so we were not able to do our planned Stockton Mine Tour so we turned to Plan B. We headed down to the Punakaiki Rocks followed by a visit to the railway at Charleston, this was a Scottsdale first. This little train takes you through a fabulous tract of pristine native bush and is used mainly to visit the limestone caves in the area. A little damp but very interesting. Following a picnic lunch in the coach we made the return journey to Westport visiting the smelly seals at Cape Foulwind and the very good Coaltown Museum.

The next morning we went up to 'Denniston Rose' country where DOC has cleared a lot of the jungle around the old coal mining settlement of Denniston so you can get a better perception of what used to be here. They have also done a lot of restoration at the head of the incline. We had a picnic lunch with the whitebaiters at Mohikinui before heading over the Karamea Bluff and on up to Kohaihai at the start of the Heaphy Track. Back to Karamea and anxious times for some of us as we watched the All Blacks deal to the Wallabies.

Retracing our steps to Westport the next morning we continued up the Mighty Buller Gorge and on to the Nelson Lakes with a little Scottsdale detour along the Braeburn Track. We stayed overnight in Blenheim with a lovely dinner at the Marlborough Club. A quick look around Blenheim next morning and on to Picton where we had another quick look around before boarding the Cook Strait Ferry for a nice smooth crossing to Wellington for our last night. The last leg the next morning was the trip home. Thanks everyone for a great trip. *Regards, Ross*



Reefton – Miners Tour



Punakaiki Rocks



Old mining works at Denniston

