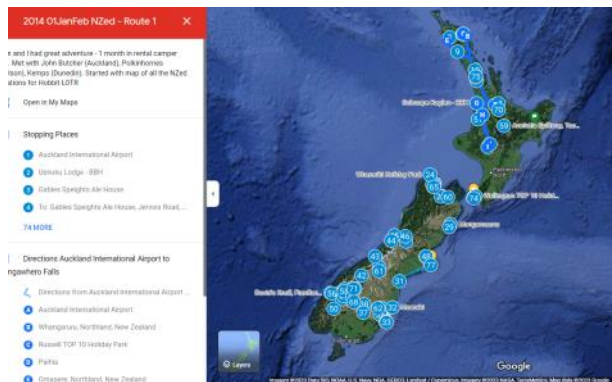


# Jan NZed First Month in Camper all by ourselves - updated

Monday, November 9, 2020 4:18 PM



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Glen and Kris fly to New Zealand (N-Zed) for a month. Rent a camper-van for flexibility and affordability. Goal to have dinner with John Butcher and wife Jenny in Auckland, then explore North Island for 2 weeks. Take the ferry from Wellington to Picton to visit Bruce & Diana Polkinhorne in Nelson and Kevin Kemp and his daughter Nadine Kemp in Dunedin. Explore South Island for 2 weeks. I decided to leave my Windows phone at home since I had difficult "unlock"ing it from ATT and the charges can be prohibitive. We will purchase a cheap cell phone once we arrive. John Butcher and I made all our plans via email. I take my Win8 notebook and iPad3. Glen takes his iPad2. I plan to purchase a wifi gadget once I arrive that can support multiple (i have 2 + glen has 1) connections

Vodafone store in Auckland airport sold me my mobile wifi device, 30 days, 1GB. Vodafone store on Ponsonby sold me 3 GB additional data. I think they included an additional 0.5GB as part of their promotion. On 24jan2014, my device said I had used 4 GB, which I thought meant I needed more data capability right away. Tried to handle on line, but they needed a phone number to call with the activation key and using our portable phone did not work. So I phoned and gave credit card number over the phone for Data 80 plan, 5 GB.

Have now registered my Vodafone wifi gadget and see a credit for \$80, but do not know how to apply it to my account.

vodafone.co.nz/myvodafone Ponsonby - got \$40 \$40 at the minimart down from the VodaFone store near Uenuku. login with `stewart@sdsu.edu` d0 bought another \$80 but did not know how to get the device to use it, accidentally purchased another \$80 online. so had to call the phone number to get a credit back for \$80 and have my "deposit" applied to my mobile wifi.

NOTE: I used to refer to New Zealand as NZ, but since the British influence is still very strong here and locals pronounce "zed" for "z" - I'm changing to NZed.

The system of i-site stores/offices/bulletin-boards in just about every city is a i-SITE location clearly mapped by street signs. I could go there to pick up brochures and ask about any hobbit places to check out.

Diana Polkinghorne taught me good food combos - biscuits (crackers) + cheese (those soft white ones with fruit) and anything with yogurt (used as cream) - so my store bought shortbread cookies broken up and in a bowl with greek yogurt became my favorite dinner dessert.

my diary -----

Tues 14Jan2014 11:30pm, we fly Air Tahiti Nui: 8 hours LAX to Papeete; 5 hours to

Auckland. Arrive noon:50 Thursday 16Jan2014 (Kris is air-sick as a dog!)

Pick up camper van at Auckland airport and drive to Uenuku Lodge for backpackers in Ponsonby, Auckland. I booked this beforehand to be near where we would be meeting John and Jenny Butcher for dinner on Friday, anticipating the long slight would "kill" me Thursday.

<http://www.uenukulodge.co.nz/>

Ponsonby is a very cute suburb of Auckland. We loved it - had to find a "drug store" (NZ = pharmacy) for my air sick stomach. On return flight I will have the Dramamine with me, instead of packing in my checked baggage, as well as antacids. At the Pharmacy, we asked about a good place to eat. The clerk helping me did not live in Ponsonby, so asked the "girls" in back. They recommended Bona Pizza

<http://www.menumania.co.nz/restaurants/bona-pizza-ponsonby>

Small place, great food - what a great way to start things on in New Zealand. The next morning we went to the bakery right across the street from Eunuku Lodge and had great coffee and snacks for breakfast.

"Ponsonby is an inner-city suburb of Auckland City located 2 km west of the Auckland CBD, in the North Island of New Zealand. The suburb is oriented along a ridge running north-south, which is followed by the main street of the suburb, Ponsonby Road.

A predominantly upper-middle class residential suburb, Ponsonby today is also known in Auckland for its dining and shopping establishments – many restaurants, cafes, art galleries, up-market shops and nightclubs are located along Ponsonby Road. Previously containing many rundown buildings, and having a somewhat 'colourful' reputation (due to its association with Auckland's arts and gay/lesbian scenes), the suburb has undergone extensive gentrification over the last two decades. Its postcode is 1011."

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ponsonby,\\_New\\_Zealand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ponsonby,_New_Zealand)

**Friday 17Jan2014.** As expected, after a good night sleep Kris is fine and raring to go. Right across the street from the Uenuku Lodge is a bakery. Great coffee. Tall Black, Americano. I prefer large, brewed coffee, with cold milk added so I can drink right away. NZed is big on espresso and so want to give you a double espresso with large hot water, when no brewed coffee is available. They also have "flat white", which Glen loves, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat\\_white](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat_white)

Give me a double espresso in a large cup that I then fill wit cold milk.

Auckland has a great bus system. Being on Ponsonby Rd, it was easy to spent the day exploring a bit of Auckland. I had checked online before we left for path from Eunuku Lodge to Gables Speights Ale House. There's the Inner Loop, Outer Loop and Rail. We took \_\_\_\_\_ to the Harbour for a walk about and ended up with lunch at Harbourside Restaurant , First Floor, The Ferry Building, 99 Quay Street, Auckland City

<http://www.harboursiderestaurant.co.nz/>

Walked through the Britomart Transport Center. Kris loves trains, ya know. We spoke with John Butcher on our new cell phone to finalize plans for dinner.

Friday dinner wit John and Jenny Butcher was at Gables Speights Ale House, walking distance from their home. The food was great and Glen liked the beer. We learned that the main brewery is in Dunedin. Jenny told us that most folks drive to Paihia to camp and take the ferry over to Russell, but we're already booked at Russell campground. Lots of email with Jenny now, sent this picture.



<http://www.gablespeightsalehouse.co.nz/>

**18 Jan 2014 Saturday** - we go to the Countdown Grocery store and use the "trolley" (NZed for shopping cart) to stock up on supplies as we drive to Russell for our 2 nights at the Top 10 campground. Our rental camper-van rep gave us a member card and we earn points that will pay for diesel for the vehicle. Join Top 10 for an immediate discount on camping along with a discount for booking the ferry to SouthLand.

The drive on Old Russell Road was beautiful and twisty/turney. Glen handles things so well, I'm proud to be his navigator. We passed through Whangarei, which is Jenny Butcher's hometown. In Russell, we had a great early dinner at The Gables and scout our the ferry systems for Sunday's adventure to Paihia. The people are so nice and helpful. Both other campers, e.g. thek Brit who told us how to dial our local cell phone - 09 is the key to start.

Top 10 Russell camp offers wifi for \$5 for 24 hours, so I sign up to help conserve my Vodafone allocation. The receptionist gives me the IAC rechargeable card and says it's useful cause I can just added additional funds later, using the same card. The card has User ID and you scrape off the password. Works okay, allowing me to check email at SDSU and organize plans for Friday with John Butcher. I purchase a second day also.

**19 Jan 2014 Sunday** - we tour the Russell Museum before taking ferry to Paihia.

"If you are interested in early Maori history of the Bay of Islands, the whaling industry that linked traders from New Bedford and throughout the Pacific, early European settlement in New Zealand or the beginnings of the game fishing and tourism industry, then a visit to Russell Museum is a must.

Visit the treasure house of Russell (Te Whare Taonga o Kororareka) and explore:

- Maori artefacts and early Maori history of Kororareka and Pewhairangi (Bay of Islands)
- A large collection of rare photographs of Russell and Bay of Islands people, places and history
- The largest collection of pieces from flagpoles chopped down by Maori chief (rangatira) Hone Heke in the 1840s
- Early US Consulate records and shipping lists of whalers, traders and settlers with links to New Bedford USA, England, Australia and Europe
- A 1:5 scale model of Captain Cook's ship Endeavour (yes it really has sailed)
- A rare whaling boat and river waka (canoe)
- The largest collection of artwork by acclaimed local Maori artist, Pauline Kahurangi Yearbury
- Contemporary exhibitions in which history and present day concepts meet"

<http://www.russellmuseum.org.nz/>

"On Maiki Hill behind Russell is a flagpole erected in the same position as the four that Hone Heke, the great Maori leader, cut down in protest over the treatment

of his people after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Hone Heke was one of the first signatories of the treaty but became disillusioned when the crown did not live up to his understanding of the document he signed."

<http://www.russell.nz.com/>

After museum,, we take the ferry to Paihia for lunch and tour the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. After lunch we walked quite a ways but turns out it was the Waitangi campground. Needed to go a bit further, across the bridge, but we were both tired and decided to head home.

"Paihia is a tourist town in the heart of the Bay of Islands in the Northland region of the North Island. It lies 23km south-east of Kerikeri with Waitangi immediately to its north and Russell on the opposite shore. Paihia is normally reached by passenger or car ferry from nearby Opuia. Adjoining Paihia 3km to the north is Waitangi, the site of the historic treaty signed in 1840 between Maori and the British."

<http://www.tourism.net.nz/region/northland/northland---bay-of-islands/paihia>

Passenger ferrys run every half hour during the summer

[http://www.tourism.net.nz/region/northland/northland---bay-of-islands/paihiaw.russellinfo.co.nz/Russell\\_Ferry\\_Times.html](http://www.tourism.net.nz/region/northland/northland---bay-of-islands/paihiaw.russellinfo.co.nz/Russell_Ferry_Times.html)

**20jan2014 Mon** - goal is to take auto ferry from \_\_\_\_\_ to Paihia and drive down the west coast, through the Kairi Forest- camping in Orewa Beach Top 10 powered campsite

Glen had a horrific drive today. we left russell early in the morning, after coffee and breakfast and headed to otua car ferry to get to paihia. it was good to have explored parhia sunday to have a better feel for finding the ... grocery store for supplies. thanks again to our camper rental folks for giving us the numbered membership to get the discounts from the start and have the points add up for free fuel later. Started raining in the morning.

the ferry cost:

we purchased good blue cheese and sesame/wheat crackers for me that made a great lunch. next stop was the Waitaingi Treaty Grounds. turned out to cost \$80 (?) for the two of us and we passed since it was rainy and "the story" seemed to resonate with what "we" did to the American Indians - not very nice & no respect for their local culture.

next stop was the ....Falls, which the nice guy from Sunday recommended when we chatted the GREAT flat bread pizza place for lunch in Paihia. Glen got to have another of his

\*\*\*\* lizard beer = ? their brewery is in wellington, we should all that to activities for our 2 days there before the ferry.



Drove to west coast, thru Rawene and saw the sand dune across the Hokianga Harbour. Then through the Waipoua Forest of Kauri trees. I got a good photo (shared on FB) of road narrows to 1 lane to fit between 2 huge

Kauri trees.



We drove through Dargaville and stop for Glen to nap and me take pictures of the wind storm on the river creating "standing waves". Our "buddy" from the day before told us about the "upside down" river - brown on the surface but clear water below. I sure saw the brown water on the top during explorations.

we camp at Orewa Beach on east coast. We knew the weather predicted a cyclone (Jane?) coming on shore. We hoped for some protection from the wind from Coromandel peninsula. Did not happen, but we saw lots of kite surfers and a guy going up and done the beach, above water line, in a "blokite".



6.2 Earthquake NW of wellington - kim FB told me.

**21 jan2014 Tues** - camping at Opal Hot Springs - Matamata NZ (nearest Hobbiton - 10am tour tomorrow at "the shire"

discovered iPad and its movies - flixster can download from the cloud but the other movie services cannot due to being in a foreign country

Matamata - Hobbiton - favs





**22jan2014 Wed-** Hobbiton tour in a.m. in Matamata; camp at Solscape, Ragland NZed

Glen made the observation that the refrig of this camper van would drain the battery in a day. We have a powered site, so no problem. Kris notes that this is perfect. She needs power for Internet and gadgets and so would not want to be "free" for more than a day. I don't think this was Glen's point.

**22jan2014 Wed** - stay for 3 nights (expanded to 4 after first night at Solscape, Raglan)

**23jan2014 Thurs**





Glen surfs Manu Bay

**24jan2014 Fri** - could see the Milky Way from our camper van. It was clear at night and there are not a lot of lights at Solscape. Once the quarter moon came up, the stars disappeared. But the windows on 3 sides of the camper van are ideal.

**25jan2014 Sat** - another clear night with Milky Way. took a while for the sky to clear, but it did.

**26jan2014 Sunday** - Top10 Campsite Okahune

Another great drive by Glen. We stopped at Waikomo Glow Worm for a 45 minute tour. Glen wanted to see this and I did know enough about it to realize how great it would be Sunday night, but Glen insisted and, as always, Glen was right. There's a great gift shop. We got there at 9am when it opens. I had read someone that tour busses start arriving at 10a, so there was value getting there early. Amazing four stage life cycle, but only the larvae can eat.

<http://www.waitomo.com/>

We camp at Top 10 Okahune.

I got to visit town Okahune while Glen napped. Nice lady at i-site shop told me how to get to "The Carrot".



Later dropped by for a chat about railroads in Okahune. She liked my Hobbiton coffee cup and mentioned some of the LOTR filming sites nearby that I can handle with my 30 min max for walking.





**27jan2014 Mon** - Top10 Lower Hutt, Wellington - need to visit Dick Smith Electronics in Manganui to get AAAA battery (for digitized stylus) and 2 traveler adapters 220 <->110 volts

We got going early and drove directly to Mangawhero Falls where LOTR was shot.

<https://moviemaps.org/images/3b4>



<https://d301pj1hd7018q.cloudfront.net/img/3b4.5bkgwi.940.jpg>

Drove on to Manganui and found Dick Smith. Its in the heart of town, lots of traffic, hard to get around with the camper van. So we got out of town after purchases, along with quite stop for candy and cookies.

Very pretty road with lots hills with sheep, they are so cute. We actually pulled over to watch a herd of sheep and the 8 or 9 sheep dogs organizing the sheep from their rough mountain meadow to eventually form a single file back to the farm. The farmer was directing the dogs effort. I took a movie

because it was fascinating to hear the sheep bleat and the dogs bark a bit. I need to get in the habit of traveling with a tripod because my hand-held camera was so wobbly.

Booked our WETA cave -- window workshop for noon Tuesday. we also need to get to store for eggs to make dinner omelets. and pick up good wine and coffee as presents for Bruce Polkinhorne.

**28jan2014 Tues** - Top10 Lower Hutt, Wellington. Talked with Top10 receptionist in a.m. to find how to get to Bus#2 to Miramar for Weta Workshop Cave and tour. Catch #81 bus into Wellington and switch to #2 to Miramar at \_\_\_\_\_. We had a bit of adventure finding the #81 inbound bus stop. I was told to go "under" the main road, but could not find the bridge down. So we crossed the street a couple of times, involving a round-about, which was "exciting". Finally got to the bus stop and there was a nice solar powered display giving the bus lines and when each new bus should arrive. We had 15 minutes, so I was determined to find where this "cross-under" was and found it. Consisted of a "look-kinda-portable" handrail and steps down under the road over the water. I crossed over and got back up to road level to wave at Glen sitting at our bus stop. Only barely visible, even with hindsight.

The bus ride was fun through downtown Wellington. We went through the tunnel to get to Miramar. Had only a couple of blocks to walk to Weta Workshop Cave. Seemed like a residential area without much commercial development, in terms of stores or coffee shops. We checked in at Weta for our noon tour and were able to bump it up to 11:30a. Got to explore the shop with a new batch of trinkets. Nifty poster on the door to the toilet of each of the award-winning effort Weta had been involved with over time. I ended up standing behind a family looking at the poster and finally asked if they were waiting for the toilet, they weren't and I got in. Whew! Bought more trinkets. Favorite is my Weta cap, with the insect stitched onto the back. A nifty print of hobbit holes in Hobbiton and a model of a specific hole. The tour allowed no photos or touching. Was filled with lots of details on the projects Weta has worked on. Learned that Weta split up into 2 groups - Weta Workshop which designs, models and fabricates all the items use in the movies, weapons and such. Big CnC machine does a lot of "heavy lifting". Designers use Maya for details, in layers to provide flexibility during the stages leading up to the filming. Costumes and props are very realistic looking and usually in 2 forms - all plastic which is lighter and easier for actors to use (and wear for armor and such). Actual metal for camera close up for faithful representation.

During the tour we learned about Roxy Cinema, which we saw from the bus on the way to Miramar. Turns out this theater has been through lots of owners and uses, but now is part of Weta (? wife of Sir Peter Jackson taken on as a pet project) and has many of the authentic props created by Weta Workshop. We learn there is also a restaurant, CoCo, within and I invite Glen to join me for lunch there later. The interior was stunning and the food very good.

Then back to the #2 bus to head for Wellington Cable Car. It's so much simpler and relaxing when traveling by bus. Traffic on the LHS and all the round-about make navigating complicated.

**29jan2014 Wed** - 9am ferry to South Island. Interesting process of packing the many-shaped vehicles into the Ferry. 3 or 4 hour trip, very calm seas but lots of wind. Took tons of pics. Take off to drive to Nelson on a very windy road.

**29jan2014 Wed** - park in Bruce Polkinhorne's driveway 2 nights - Nelson

We phoned Bruce as we got into Nelson and he came down to the highway to meet us making it easier to find his place - 72C Chamberlain - NuviGPS did great, so we could have found it ourselves, well we could find the driveway that has 72, 72A ....

Bruce sat down with our KimK map and provided great suggestions on how to proceed. We contributed crackers and cheese as "starters". Bruce and Diane cooked us a great fish dinner.

Must see - added with green marker:

Cape Farewell and Wharariki Beach Holiday Park (in the eye of the Kiwi)

Kaioura (surf). Also, watch out for the sand flies, they bite NASTY. Get lavender oil, bug repellent spray and a small tub of vitamin E & ? to deal with itching if you are bit.

Moeraki (Flur's Place for lunch) on way to Dunedin

\*\*\*\* Dunedin to hook up with Kevin/Nadine Kemp

\*\*\*\* 2 trains in Dunedin

Catlins, then just back track back to pick up highway to Albert Town / Puzzling Wood?

I took 2 pics of Bruce/Diana with their house in the background and then Nelson harbour in background. Posted to FB since Don Gilbert want to touch base with them. Don posted that he hopes to get to see them in March. Need to pass that message along. Also emailed the pics to Gunnar, Diana's mom ...

**30jan2014 Thursday** - afternoon swim for Kris - Nelson Yacht Harbour

Bruce gave us a great tour of Nelson. We saw their boat in the marina. We saw the park celebrating the sister city in China. I got rubber bands. Very cute town. No wonder they are so happy. We saw a pod of orcas in the bay as Bruce was driving down from their house. It was fun to see "locals" stopped on the road and "pointing". Big deal to all.

6pm Yacht Harbour swim was a lot of fun. Met Ralph and lots of other "very nice" folks. Glen took lots of photos and he and Bruce watched the events. I won my age group! Only one in the 60+. Wore the wet suit even though the water was 23o C (74o F). Felt like swimming in a sauna (in jello) but I did finish. A more reasonable person would have swum without the wetsuit.

Bruce/Diana cooked up a taco dinner which was great. We chatted for tons of time. Diana introduced us to the great combination of soft cheese (that we'd gotten at store) on a biscuit - tastes like cheese cake. Yum.

Taya, soon to be husband and new baby, and Orion are arriving on Monday, staying till Thursday. So we want to swing by Nelson on our way to Kaikoura. Bruce said we can park in our level spot, actually one of the neighbor's land but he worked things out, when we get back from Cape Farewell to meet up with Taya and the crew.

**31jan2014 Friday** - Heading to Cape Farewell for lunch at the coffee shop there and to Wharariki Beach Holiday Park (in the eye of the kiwi - great logo on their brochure)

Pulled over at several lookouts, as Diana had recommended. Stop at i-site in Takaka. Another cute town. We had a crepe from a vender in a little park with other temporary shops. We requested the Crème Brule crepe with blueberries, but he forgot to pack the cream. So he put together one with thin sliced bananas, blueberries, we request the brea (after learning from Diana how great cheese and biscuits can taste), and some sort of syrup. Glen and I split it and it was great. Glen now wants to get a crepe cooking surface like the vender had. Yeah!

Excellent primitive campground, eco-oriented so back out your trash. Great hot showers \$2 but the hot water never ran out for me. There are flies and no wifi so Kris does not want to stay for the 2nd night we paid for when we checked in. Glen and I took the hike to Wharariki Beach, was the edge of the rock caves at beach. Found mother seal and 3 pups in a cave - did not approach. On other side found another 3 pups frolicking in a pool in a cave on beach. Adorable. Remembered my sticks and was able to handle walk, even the soft sand at beach.

We loan our camper/van extension cord to a couple who want to park in our place. When we checked in we were given the choice 8A or 9B. Took 8A but never told the office. Turned out 9B site was the victim of campers, not in their vehicle, who did not park nicely and hooked up to the wrong power station.

**01feb2014 Saturday** - Glen heads off with surfboard on the 1km hike to beach

looking for surf. Check wind direction before leaving, so fingers crossed.... He had a "reasonable" session and we packed up and headed to Top10 in Pohara Beach, with Internet and power. We drove to Pohara Beach and check into Top10 campsite. There was a guy launching a kite surf that Glen got to help holding the lines on the small bluff above the beach. With the kite up in the air, he could walk it down to the surf and take off on his stubby board.

**02feb2014 Sunday**- Pohara Beach - The tides are amazing here. In the morning, low tide, it was all mud flats. We do for drive and try to get to Harwood's Hole from East Takaka. Later in the day, I walked from our campsite to the Able Tasman monument and talked to some nice ladies from Washington state, who took my photo, and I did same for them.

**03 Feb2014 Monday** - Nelson Anniversary Day (of the ton founding)

Not sure if this was the morning that I walked out on the mud flats ... all the way out. Glen ended up walking out there too ?while eating his bowl of cereal.

Going over Takaka mountain we try to find Harwood's Hole from the other side. When road changes from paved to gravel, there's a strong warning that camper vans should not attempt. Glen confirms that our vehicle is just too wide. We get to the correct turn off, but then the coffee/snack shop person confirms that the gravel road is too narrow. She also confirm that "Yes they were shooting the Hobbit right over on that hill".

We leave Pohara Beach to head back to Nelson. Went to Dick Smith Electronics to find an adapter from our camper power plug to regular home 3 prong plug. Nothing in stock, but the nice guy sent us another place that would likely have it in Nelson, but Jaycar Electronics 120 Hardy St. was closed, so no power at Polkinhorne's. It's a holiday and their store had reduced hours. We also stopped at a Nursery to purchase a fern for Polkinghorne yard, Diana is the gardener. But the place we saw on the road did not have ferns. Sent us to another nursery, Nikau Gardens, but it was closed for the holiday. So then we went to Countdown Grocery store to get fixings for dinner. Glen talked to them on the phone earlier and fish would be good. Bruce/Diana don't like salmon, so we got salmon + H?? fish, alooong with fixings for a cabbage salad - even found jalapeno peppers which Glen loves to use. Got to their housse but no one home, they told Glen they'd likely be at the beach. So we just rested. Eventually returned and we prepared dinner and had a great meal.

**04feb2014 Tuesday** - left Nelson after a break breakfast with the crew. Tom Buckley cooked me 2 fried eggs on board, and then added humous, avocado and tomato. Yum! Request from Diana for me to take family photo since it was unusual to have everyone there. Tom Buckley, Wylder Buckley, Taya Polkinhorne-Buckley, Arion P., Bruce P., Diana P. with my camera and Dana's cell phone camera and Arion's cell phone camera. This was taken in front of their "thermal wall" which is just one of the great designs by Diana and build by Bruce of this home. This is a special family that I am proud to be included in.



We left for the drive to Kaikoura, looking for surf for Glen. Checked into the Top 10 powered camper site & purchased 24 hr internet (\$7). Took a walk to the local surf store and purchased their recommend book on NZed surf placed. We also followed signs, and asked local for help, to train station. Turns out it's right across from our camp site and there was a "hole" in chain linked fence letting us get home very quickly.

Glen's getting in a good surf session at a mushy beach break - Mangamauna Bay. I'm working on this update. Glen reports the wave got a lot better and he had a good time - yeah!

**05feb2014 Wednesday** get past Christchurch today to Timura Top 10 campground. It's a stormy day so good one to be driving. Surf is blown out everywhere. I take a nice, long walk into town across the park the receptionist at Top10 described. Did shopping at Pak-n-Sav. Beer for Glen, milk for us (and yogurt). They had good looking green onions and mushrooms so bought them. Helped make space in frig on return by eating shortbread cookies with yogurt, surprising how good that is.

Glen expects a good surf session in Patiti or Jacks Point or Lighthouse Reef tomorrow morning, then head to Dunedin and park in Kevin Kemp's yard.

**06feb204 Thurs** Waitangi Treaty Day holiday dinner with Nadine Kemp and her younger sister Justina ?sp? - stay at Kevin Kemp's neighbor's house driveway. 102 Tomahawk, Dunedin, New Zealand. Anderson Bay, very beginning of the peninsula. Turns out another neighbor recently trmmed their trees and Kevin has an ocean view - of St. Claire. We can see white water from Kevin's kitchen and the wind is blowing in the correct direction. Another break, Murderers, than Don Gilbert FB recommended needs to have a largest sized swell to "work" and the wind direction would blow it out. Glen and I drive down to St. Clair and its next to a nice heated pool with hot showers - \$3 to use it all. The ocean temp has dropped as we travel south and this will be nice.

After dinner with Kevin's daughters at 101 Chopsticks, Kevin wants to take us touring Dunedin to show off his town, but Glen is really tired and we bail.

**07feb2014 Friday** First thing in morning, we chat with Kevin (he gets up around 8a) and coordinate our plans [surf and train ride]. If things go right, we will be back for dinner, else back sooner.



Glen has a great surf session at St. Claire. Shower, shave and a flat white delivered to our table, who can ask for more.



Kris & Glen take the 2:30 p Dunedin -> Pukerangi, TGR (Taieri Gorge Railway).  
Great train station in Dunedin and Hobbiton was in Taieri Plain and Taieri Gorge ...  
somewhere.



Great dinner with Kevin that night we were craving meat, so Glen and Kevin had peppered steak and Kris had venison at the ?Huntsman. Kevin highly recommended we check out Queenstown, which overcame Glen's ant-city attitude. Warned us it's all tourist oriented, but look past it.



**08feb2014 Saturday** - we head for Queenstown. We stopped at the i-site in Roxburgh and learn about the access to driving over the Roxburgh bridge. Cute little town, we have coffee in the cafe and then head back to truck for the drive. Nice picnic area at foot of Roxburgh dam, with apple trees. Glen is able to get a few for us, and a young kid who wandered by, to eat. Yum. Beautiful sunny day by the time we got to Alexandra, another stop for leg stretching. We see lots of motorcycles on the road and learned there was a big rally happening in Alexandra. When back on the road, we think to call Top 10 Queenstown, Creekside. Phones are hard to use in the mountains, but learned they are booked up. Check the Shotover Top 10 in Queenstown and they have space, but are 6km from the town. Good old Glen thinks we should head to the Top10 in Queenstown, so Kris has something to explore, and hope that when we show up they can fit us in. As luck would have it, yes we got a powered camper site right next to main reception area, so lots of foot traffic. Not a power and it was close to the showers (which we free).

Kris goes into Queenstown while Glen naps. Took my sticks to give me more walking time. Walking has to be my main source of exercise when we are on the road - finding a pool is not practical. I check out the i-site for Hobbit info. Only one shop and I go there, but nothing I hadn't already seen. Head back to our camp after an hour or so and run into Glen walking into camp. So the two of us proceed together to get his fishing license for next day, advice on fish (not much known at the store he got the license at). Also went to another store, that was mostly a clothing, outdoors, tourist place, but I asked the sales girl where to get to get fishing info. She said 46 Degrees - further down the street around the corner. Went there and a nice young lady helped Glen. She knew about the lake at Queenstown. We met a nice young lady from Portland. She and her dad were in the site next to us. She's a cartographer working with LIDAR and explained things nicely. Later had a great chat with her dad who lives in New Jersey. Glen cooks us a GREAT omelet (eggs, blue cheese, salmon, fried mushrooms/onions/green pepper).

**09feb2014 - Sun** - head for DOC Cameron Flats at the north end of Lake Wanaka. Just outside of town of Makarora, on the Makarora River, so Glen can fish. We also hook up by phone with Kevin K. and he drives out to join us. Gets here by

2pm or so and all three of us walk down to the river. Somewhat of a hard go through the weeds (brush? bush?) but I have my sticks and its okay. They walk along the river which has a big ledge, drop off. Then there's a road we could have taken, we 3 walk there and then Kris takes off for the camp site and "the boys" go fishing. Kevin brought his tent, so we'll have another evening together - yeah! We bought more eggs, so glen has the fixings for another GREAT omelet.

Pic4 glen setting up his gear



Pic5 can see glaciers on Mt. Aspiring (3027m) in the distance, to our south



Pic6 Glen and Kevin looking for fish





**10feb2014** - Fox Glacier Top 10 - it's clear and we see Mount Cook, 3754m, ? tallest in NZed? We had coffee with Kevin in the morning and nice chat. Around 10a Glen and I head to Fox Glacier and Kevin heads to Wanaka. Got past the road repair on the way to Haast <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/current-conditions/highway-info/road/8373/south-island.html>

SH 6 Haast To Makarora ( Gates Of Haast To Haast Pass - Diana Falls)

Impact: Road Closed.

Description: Rock falls

Comment: This Section Of Road Will Be Closed Every Night From 7pm To 8am At The Slip. The Road Will Close At Haast At 6pm And Reopen 7am. At Makarora The Road Will Close At 6:30pm And Reopen At 7:30am. Delays Or Closures May Be Necessary At Other Times In The Event Of Further Heavy Rain Or Slips.

Scheduled time:

Start: 10 Sep 2013 20:00, End: 1 Dec 2014 12:00

Detour route: N/a

Update received: 10 Feb 2014 19:01

Expected resolution: Until further notice

Glen had no trouble with the drive. There was a LookOut on SH before it leaves the coast that I wish I had been checking the map to see we would be losing the coast for a while.



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knight's Point](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knight's_Point)

"The construction crew informed the delegation from Wellington that the area had already been named Knight's Point. The officials inquired who "Knight" was and were informed that he was the surveyor's dog. Apparently Ministry of Works documents indicate that Knight's Point was named after "the obscure dog of an obscure employee of the Ministry of Works."

<http://doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-visit/west-coast/south-westland/haast/>

We just had snacks for dinner after a big lunch in town at Fox Glacier. Glen was concerned about the drive to Christchurch. Getting to Greymouth tomorrow, and Kris wanting to see the train station and stop along the SH73 when it overlapped with the Greymouth <-> Christchurch tracks, we reconsidered things. I found a camper van site near Arthur's Pass, which would be a requested stop for train tracks, and we both looked at the Greymouth Train Station on line. It was "not much", so we're going to skip that stop (and the Top 10 campground there).

I requested to stop at the I-site in Hokitika to learn about the Greymouth <-> Hokitika Rail - ?only during the gold years? - and see a kiwi at the National Kiwi Center there. We phone the Jackson <http://www.jacksonsretreat.co.nz/>  
South: 42 deg 55' 05" | East: 171 deg 01' 12"

The only holiday park on State Highway 73.

33km west of Arthur's Pass Village, 4464 Otira Highway (SH73), Jacksons, Arthurs Pass, West Coast Region 7832

How far is it to Arthurs Pass National Park? 30 minutes, 33km.

How far is it to Christchurch? 2 hours, 178km.

How far is it to Franz Josef Glacier? 2 hours 30 minutes, 202km.

**11Feb2014** - Jackson's Camper Retreat great find (online), only camper van place on SH73 and gets us closer to Christchurch for Glen's last drive day.

On the way from Fox Glacier, we stopped in Ross, where gold was discovered on the West Coast. Very cute little town. Glen parked the camper van and had breakfast and I walked into town to find the i-site. Turned out it was a ways into town, so I had a nice walk. When Glen caught up with me I had already toured the buildings that comprise the remembrance of the "good old days" of the old west. Their i-site had a nice \$10 History of Ross and 2 discounted pins that are now on my hat of a kiwi and of ross' nugget.



We carried on to Hokitika, which has the National Kiwi Center. We got tickets to tour when the kiwis were being fed at noon. They keep the exhibit in near total darkness and ask for silence to avoid spooking the little birds. Glen helped me get around because my night vision seems to be especially poor. They also have Tuatara on exhibit, aren't they cute?



But I did get to see a kiwi scamper on the ledge in the dark. Yahoo.

Another bragging item for Hokitika is their whitebait pizza. Unfortunately the Fat Pipi's Pizza shop does not open until 5pm on Mon and Tuesday. So we had a Whitebait patty at the Fish and Chips shop across from the i-site. Mostly an eggy pancake with these little fish in it, tasted good, did not notice the fish, though you saw them in the pattie.

Jackson's Camper Retreat is a very nice camper van site. We checked in and I purchased their wifi since my Vodafone had no bars. We mentioned watching the train go by as we were checking in and the nice man changed our spot to one with a view of the RR tracks. We set up camp, got power and Internet and I was able to check when the TranzAlpine train goes by. Found <http://www.travelnewzealand.co.nz/Tranzalpinetimes.html>

Christchurch-Greymouth	Greymouth-Christchurch
Departs - Christchurch 8.15am	Departs - Greymouth 1.45pm
Rolleston (a) 8.34am	Brunner 2.04pm
Darfield 8.53am	Kokiri (a) 2.26pm
Springfield 9.15am	Moana% 2.42pm
Cass 10.12am	Jackson 3.07pm
Arthurs Pass # 10.42am	Otira 3.33pm
Otira 11.03am	Arthurs Pass # 3.57pm
Jackson 11.21am	Cass 4.19pm
Moana% 11.47am	Springfield 5.12pm
Kokiri (a) 12.03pm	Darfield 5.29pm
Brunner 12.21pm	Rolleston 5.47pm
Arrives - Greymouth 12.45pm	Arrives - Christchurch 6.05pm

So the afternoon train returning to Christchurch should have been at Jackson at 3:07pm. Luckily I was still scouting out a good place for pictures when I heard the train and was able to get some shots just standing there.



Then Glen wants to hike to river to do some fishing and I going along for a bit, with my sticks, to explore the area. Walking on SH73 is kinda tricky since there's only barely room for the two lanes of cars, but most drivers give me some space. Sure feel sorry for any bicycle riders on the route. I want East to see what sort of train platform there is for Jackson. Turns out there was a road sign for "Historic Jackson Tavern", but when I got to it, on the south side of road, it is now closed. It looks to be in good shape, can see tables, chairs, equipment inside that looks in good shape. Went on line and found lots of pictures of Jackson Tavern with "bikes" parked there. SH73 would be a great motorcycle ride route.

I notice the route of the RR tracks must make a nearly 90o turn from the trestle over the river to then run along SH73. I can't see how this is done. Try talking out on the bypass road that is parallel to the RR track path to find the angle, but there's just too much vegetation.

Don't think we bother with dinner tonight due to good meal at lunch on Hokitika. There was a freight train on the TranzAlpine track later in the day. There are sand flies here - nasty little bleeding sucking critters! The lavender spray that Diana P. suggested we get for Farewell Spit, works well for me. Glen isn't as lucky.

**12feb2014** - we need to drive to the Mighty/Maui/? Campervan location to turn in the van. Had to phone them to get directions and this work out okay.

There was another freight train in the morning. We leave before the morning TranzAlpine train will go by. We've decided not to try to wait for it in Arthur's Pass since we need to get to Christchurch and turn in the camper van and get to airport for our 6:30p flight to Auckland.

SH73 is a great road. They have these "rock sheds" similar to the "snow sheds" I would see in Truckee to protect the tracks from avalanche. Got some good pictures of these. Glen was also eager to pull over at Lookout points. We got a great view of the Viaduct of the highway with some kea, a dusty green parrot that has awkward walk and it wanting you to feed it. the signs all say it's an endangered species, so do not feed it. in flight it's beautiful, but we never saw this.

We stop in at Arthur's Pass and park to get some coffee at the "Wobbly Kea"

Cafe & Bar, but first go across the street to check out the store. I buy a great book on the Geology of the Southern Alps and start reading it. As we are driving out of Arthur's Pass, there's an unexpected TranzAlpine train headed for Christchurch. I did get a picture of the engines, cars, some of the train station and a good one (P1170908) of the cars and the stations sign from the truck. Glen offered to stop, but I figured destiny for an unexpected train said to just get whatever shots I could. It had puller and pusher engines.

We got the van camper turn in plane okay. It was raining lightly off and on and had stopped when we were cleaning up the camper van. It's kinda hectic at these places, so I was really glad we had no time constraint. Eventually got things turned in and our shuttle to the airport.

Glen got a "trolley" for our bags and his surfboard. I love walking around and airport with a guy with a surfboard. Still get funny looks. It was early to trip to check into our Air NZ flight, so we kicked around, Glen had a beer as we watched Olympics on TV in the airport bar. When the gate finally opened for us to check in, Air New Zealand made me pay for 2 extra bags, which is fine. Then checking in the weight of the bags was an issue. Checked bags are limited to 23kg. I had to do some shuffling and unloading of stuff, e.g. hand lotion, that was not needed, same for Glen. We both got our main bags down to 22.8 and 22.9 kg so got them checked in. My carry on was limited to 7kg (i think) but they are nice about computer bags so there was no problem.

I had found some homeopathic motion sickness pills and better packed all my "evening things" (teeth, nortriptyline HCL, acetomyocene PM and such) in my carry on bag. I had purchased some dramamine at Costco, but packed it in my checked bag. Turned out it was "non-drowsy" so would not have been a good thing to have used on the flight to NZed. This was a big mistake on the flight out. I think starting the flight with the short leg first and in the daylight and the motion sickness pills helped since I was fine on the flight. I just kept chewing one of the pills from time to time.

When we were on the flight, they started the Air New Zealand (Air Middle Earth) - Hobbit style <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAIZLDy7Ilc> Note, at the 1:38 mark you get to see Sir Peter Jackson picking up "the ring". It's precious.

We got to Auckland Domestic Airport and followed the green paint trail to Auckland International Airport with our luggage trolley and surfboard. Still LOTR art and Jean Batten (1909-1982) remembrance as "World-famous New Zealand Aviatrix". Checks into the Air Tahiti Nui flight with no problems. I got to have the window seat - thank you Glen. I still did not sleep, but did not get sick either. Walking from the plane in LAX there's a neat President Obama "Welcome Home" that I love. We got to LAX, picked up the bags, called the Parking Guys to fetch us. Good old Glen had gotten some sleep on the flight and felt fine to drive. Got out of LA by 2pm or so, maybe earlier.

Saw the Marines doing some war games practice as we went by Camp Pendleton. We stopped and had late lunch at Sammy's Wood Fired Pizza in Carlsbad. Then Glen was willing to drop me at BestBuy to check video and go to grocery store, while he picked up our held mail.

and we are home ...

----- Kayak.com booking for airfare

14 Jan Tuesday Auckland, New Zealand 11:25 pm PST 16h 25m  
Los Angeles (LAX) to Auckland (AKL) – Conf # OJMYNZ  
This flight leaves on Tue Jan 14 2014 and arrives on Thu Jan 16 2014.

Air Tahiti Nui Flight 101  
Takeoff: 11:25 pm PST Los Angeles (LAX)  
Landing: 6:00 am TAHT Papeete (PPT)  
Layover in Papeete (PPT) for 2 hours 10 minutes

Air Tahiti Nui Flight 101  
Takeoff: 8:10 am TAHT Papeete (PPT)  
Landing: 12:50 pm NZDT Auckland (AKL) terminal map

13 Feb Thursday Los Angeles, CA 3:50 pm NZDT 15h 15m

Auckland (AKL) to Los Angeles (LAX) – Conf # OJMYNZ

Air Tahiti Nui Flight 102

Takeoff: 3:50 pm NZDT Auckland (AKL) terminal map

Landing: 9:55 pm TAHT Papeete (PPT)

Layover in Papeete (PPT) for 2 hours 0 minutes

Air Tahiti Nui Flight 102

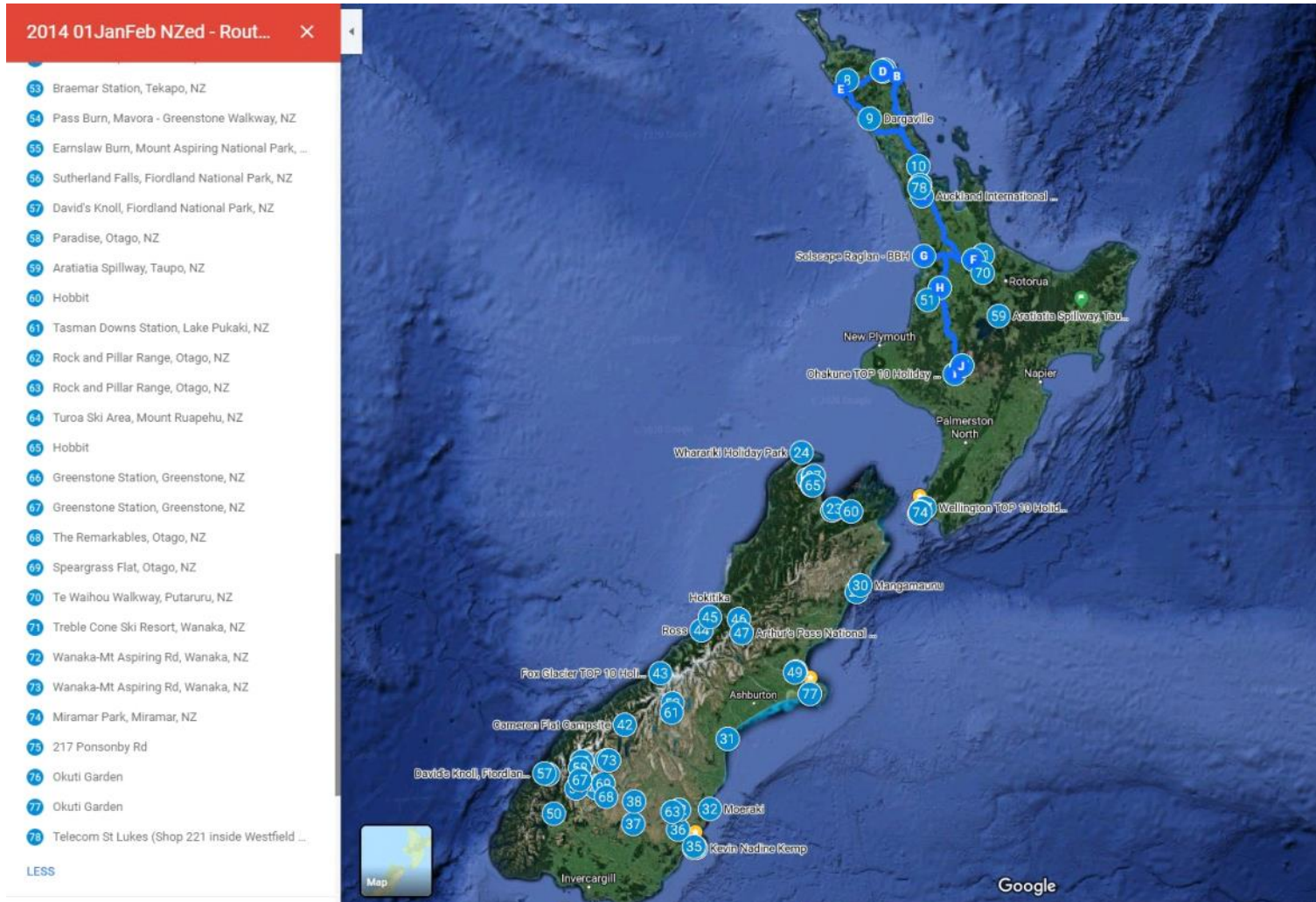
Takeoff: 11:55 pm TAHT Papeete (PPT)

Landing: 10:05 am PST Los Angeles (LAX) terminal

# 2014 Jan14 - Feb13 New Zealand - 1st Big Rd Trip in Kris' Retirement - Final Update 2020jan

Tuesday, January 14, 2020 2:23 PM

Started in the North Island, and took ferry to South Island.



Copy/Paste my recollections file from PC

Glen and Kris fly to New Zealand (N-Zed) for a month. Rent a camper-van for flexibility and affordability. Goal to have dinner with John Butcher and wife Jenny in Auckland, then explore North Island for 2 weeks. Take the ferry from Wellington to Picton to visit Bruce & Diana Polkinghorne in Nelson and Kevin Kemp and his daughter Nadine Kemp in Dunedin. Explore South Island for 2 weeks. I decided to leave my Windows phone at home since I had difficult "unlock"ing it from ATT and the charges can be prohibitive. We will purchase a cheap cell phone once we arrive. John Butcher and I made all our plans via email. I take my Win8 notebook and iPad3. Glen takes his iPad2. I plan to purchase a wifi gadget once I arrive that can support multiple (i have 2 + glen has 1) connections

Vodafone store in Auckland airport sold me my mobile wifi device, 30 days, 1GB. Vodafone store on Ponsonby sold me 3 GB additional data. I think they included an additional 0.5GB as part of their promotion. On 24Jan2014, my device said I had used 4 GB, which I thought meant I needed more data capability right away. Tried to handle on line, but they needed a phone number to call with the activation key and using our portable phone did not work. So I phoned and gave credit card number over the phone for Data 80 plan, 5 GB.

Have now registered my Vodafone wifi gadget and see a credit for \$80, but do not know how to apply it to my account.

vodafone.co.nz/myvodafone Ponsonby - got \$40 \$40 at the minimart down from the VodaFone store near Uenuku. login with [stewart@sdsu.edu](mailto:stewart@sdsu.edu) d0 bought another \$80 but did not know how to get the device to use it, accidentally purchased another \$80 online. so had to call the phone number to get a credit back for \$80 and have my "deposit" applied to my mobile wifi.

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NOTE: I used to refer to New Zealand as NZ, but since the British influence is still very strong here and locals pronounce "zed" for "z" - I'm changing to NZed.

The system of i-site stores/offices/bulletin-boards in just about every city is a i-SITE location clearly mapped by street signs. I could go there to pick up brochures and ask about any hobbit places to check out.

Diana Polkinghorne taught me good food combos - biscuits (crackers) + cheese (those soft white ones with fruit) and anything with yogurt (used as cream) - so my store bought shortbread cookies broken up and in a bowl with greek yogurt became my favorite dinner dessert.

my diary -----

**Tues 14Jan2014** 11:30pm, we fly Air Tahiti Nui: 8 hours LAX to Papeete; 5 hours to Auckland. Arrive noon:50 Thursday 16Jan2014 (Kris is air-sick as a dog!)

Pick up camper van at Auckland airport and drive to Uenuku Lodge for backpackers in Ponsonby, Auckland. I booked this beforehand to be near where we would be meeting John and Jenny Butcher for dinner on Friday, anticipating the long slight would "kill" me Thursday.

<http://www.uenukulodge.co.nz/>

Ponsonby is a very cute suburb of Auckland. We loved it - had to find a "drug store" (NZ = pharmacy) for my air sick stomach. On return flight I will have the Dramamine with me, instead of packing in my checked baggage, as well as antacids. At the Pharmacy, we asked about a good place to eat. The clerk helping me did not live in Ponsonby, so asked the "girls" in back. They recommended Bona Pizza

<http://www.menumania.co.nz/restaurants/bona-pizza-ponsonby>

Small place, great food - what a great way to start things on in New Zealand. The next morning we went to the bakery right across the street from Uenuku Lodge and had great coffee and snacks for breakfast.

"Ponsonby is an inner-city suburb of Auckland City located 2 km west of the Auckland CBD, in the North Island of New Zealand. The suburb is oriented along



a ridge running north-south, which is followed by the main street of the suburb, Ponsonby Road.

A predominantly upper-middle class residential suburb, Ponsonby today is also known in Auckland for its dining and shopping establishments – many restaurants, cafes, art galleries, up-market shops and nightclubs are located along Ponsonby Road. Previously containing many rundown buildings, and having a somewhat 'colourful' reputation (due to its association with Auckland's arts and gay/lesbian scenes), the suburb has undergone extensive gentrification over the last two decades. Its postcode is 1011."

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ponsonby,\\_New\\_Zealand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ponsonby,_New_Zealand)

**Friday 17Jan2014.** As expected, after a good night sleep Kris is fine and raring to go. Right across the street from the Uenuku Lodge is a bakery. Great coffee. Tall Black, Americano. I prefer large, brewed coffee, with cold milk added so I can drink right away. NZed is big on espresso and so want to give you a double espresso with large hot water, when no brewed coffee is available. They also have "flat white", which Glen loves, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat white](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flat_white)

Give me a double espresso in a large cup that I then fill wit cold milk.

Auckland has a great bus system. Being on Ponsonby Rd, it was easy to spent the day exploring a bit of Auckland. I had checked online before we left for path from Eunuuku Lodge to Gables Speights Ale House. There's the Inner Loop, Outer Loop and Rail. We took \_\_\_\_\_ to the Harbour for a walk about and ended up with lunch at Harbourside Restaurant , First Floor, The Ferry Building, 99 Quay Street, Auckland City

<http://www.harboursiderestaurant.co.nz/>

Walked through the Britomart Transport Center. Kris loves trains, ya know. We spoke with John Butcher on our new cell phone to finalize plans for dinner.

Friday dinner with John and Jenny Butcher was at Gables Speights Ale House, walking distance from their home. The food was great and Glen liked the beer. We learned that the main brewery is in Dunedin. Jenny told us that most folks drive to Paihia to camp and take the ferry over to Russell, but we're already booked at Russell campground. Lots of email with Jenny now, sent this picture.



<http://www.gablespeightsalehouse.co.nz/>

**18 Jan 2014 Saturday** - we go to the Countdown Grocery store and use the "trolley" (NZed for shopping cart) to stock up on supplies as we drive to Russell for our 2 nights at the Top 10 campground. Our rental camper-van rep gave us a member card and we earn points that will pay for diesel for the vehicle. Join Top 10 for an immediate discount on camping along with a discount for booking the ferry to South Island.

The drive on Old Russell Road was beautiful and twisty/turny. Glen handles things so well, I'm proud to be his navigator. We passed through Whangarei, which is Jenny Butcher's hometown. In Russell, we had a great early dinner at The Gables and scout out the ferry systems for Sunday's adventure to Paihia. The people are so nice and helpful. Both other campers, e.g. the Brit who told us how to dial our local cell phone - 09 is the key to start.

Top 10 Russell camp offers wifi for \$5 for 24 hours, so I sign up to help conserve my Vodafone allocation. The receptionist gives me the IAC rechargeable card and says it's useful cause I can just add additional funds later, using the same card. The card has User ID and you scrape off the password. Works okay, allowing me to check email at SDSU and organize plans for Friday with John Butcher. I purchase a second day also.

**19 Jan 2014 Sunday** - we tour the Russell Museum before taking ferry to Paihia.

"If you are interested in early Maori history of the Bay of Islands, the whaling industry that linked traders from New Bedford and throughout the Pacific, early European settlement in New Zealand or the beginnings of the game fishing and tourism industry, then a visit to Russell Museum is a must.

Visit the treasure house of Russell (Te Whare Taonga o Kororareka) and explore:

- Maori artefacts and early Maori history of Kororareka and Pehairangi (Bay of Islands)
- A large collection of rare photographs of Russell and Bay of Islands people, places and history
- The largest collection of pieces from flagpoles chopped down by Maori chief (rangatira) Hone Heke in the 1840s
- Early US Consulate records and shipping lists of whalers, traders and settlers with links to New Bedford USA, England, Australia and Europe
- A 1:5 scale model of Captain Cook's ship Endeavour (yes it really has sailed)
- A rare whaling boat and river waka (canoe)
- The largest collection of artwork by acclaimed local Maori artist, Pauline Kahurangi Yearbury
- Contemporary exhibitions in which history and present day concepts meet"

<http://www.russellmuseum.org.nz/>

"On Maiki Hill behind Russell is a flagpole erected in the same position as the four that Hone Heke, the great Maori leader, cut down in protest over the treatment of his people after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Hone Heke was one of the first signatories of the treaty but became disillusioned when the crown did not live up to

his understanding of the document he signed."

<http://www.russell.nz.com/>

After museum,, we take the ferry to Paihia for lunch and tour the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. After lunch we walked quite a ways but turns out it was the Waitangi campground. Needed to go a bit further, across the bridge, but we were both tired and decided to head home.

"Paihia is a tourist town in the heart of the Bay of Islands in the Northland region of the North Island. It lies 23km south-east of Kerikeri with Waitangi immediately to its north and Russell on the opposite shore. Paihia is normally reached by passenger or car ferry from nearby Opuia. Adjoining Paihia 3km to the north is Waitangi, the site of the historic treaty signed in 1840 between Maori and the British."

<http://www.tourism.net.nz/region/northland/northland---bay-of-islands/paihia>

Passenger ferry runs every half hour during the summer

[http://www.tourism.net.nz/region/northland/northland---bay-of-islands/paihiaw.russellinfo.co.nz/Russell\\_Ferry\\_Times.html](http://www.tourism.net.nz/region/northland/northland---bay-of-islands/paihiaw.russellinfo.co.nz/Russell_Ferry_Times.html)

**20jan2014 Mon** - goal is to take auto ferry from Russell to Paihia and drive down the west coast, through the Kairi Forest- camping in Orewa Beach Top 10 powered campsite

Glen had a horrific drive today. We left Russell early in the morning, after coffee and breakfast and headed to Otua car ferry to get to Paihia. It was good to have explored Paihia Sunday to have a better feel for finding the ... grocery store for supplies. thanks again to our camper rental folks for giving us the numbered membership to get the discounts from the start and have the points add up for free fuel later. Started raining in the morning.

the ferry cost:

we purchased good blue cheese and sesame/wheat crackers for me that made a great lunch. next stop was the Waitangi Treaty Grounds. Turned out to cost \$80 (?) for the two of us and we passed since it was rainy and "the story" seemed to resonate with what "we" did to the American Indians - not very nice & no respect for their local culture.

next stop was the ....Falls, which the nice guy from Sunday recommended when we chatted the GREAT flat bread pizza place for lunch in Paihia. Glen got to have another of his Tuatara IPA (lizard beer). their brewery is in wellington, we should all that to activities for our 2 days there before the ferry.

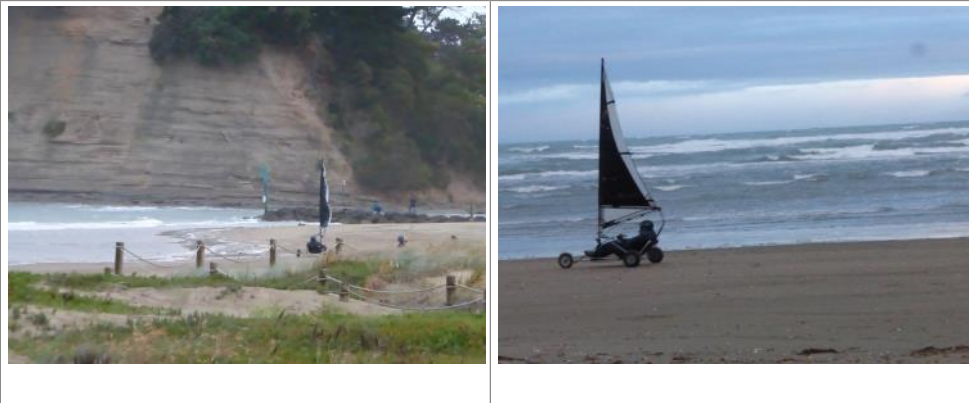


Drove to west coast, thru Rawene and saw the sand dune across the Hokianga Harbour. Then through the Waipoua Forest of Kauri trees. I got a good photo (shared on FB) of road narrows to 1 lane to fit between 2 huge Kauri trees.



We drove through Dargaville and stop for Glen to nap and me take pictures of the wind storm on the river creating "standing waves". Our "buddy" from the day before told us about the "upside down" river - brown on the surface but clear water below. I sure saw the brown water on the top during explorations.

We camp at Orewa Beach on east coast. We knew the weather predicted a cyclone (Jane?) coming on shore. We hoped for some protection from the wind from Coromandel peninsula. Did not happen, but we saw lots of kite surfers and a guy going up and down the beach, above water line, in a "blowkite".



6.2 Earthquake NW of wellington - kim FB told me.

**21 jan2014 Tues** - camping at Opal Hot Springs - Matamata NZ (nearest Hobbiton - 10am tour tomorrow at "the shire"

discovered iPad and its movies - flixster can download from the cloud but the other movie services cannot due to being in a foreign country

Matamata - Hobbiton - favs





**22jan2014 Wed-** Hobbiton tour in a.m. in Matamata; camp at Solscape, Ragland NZed

Glen made the observation that the refrig of this camper van would drain the battery in a day. We have a powered site, so no problem. Kris notes that this is perfect. She needs power for Internet and gadgets and so would not want to be "free" for more than a day. I don't think this was Glen's point.

**22jan2014 Wed** - stay for 3 nights (expanded to 4 after first night at Solscape, Raglan)

**23jan2014 Thurs**





Glen surfs Manu Bay

**24jan2014 Fri** - could see the Milky Way from our camper van. It was clear at night and there are not a lot of lights at Solscape. Once the quarter moon came up, the stars disappeared. But the windows on 3 sides of the camper van are ideal.

**25jan2014 Sat** - another clear night with Milky Way. took a while for the sky to clear, but it did.

**26jan2014 Sunday** - Top10 Campsite Okahune

Another great drive by Glen. We stopped at Waikomo Glow Worm for a 45 minute tour. Glen wanted to see this and I did know enough about it to realize how great it would be Sunday night, but Glen insisted and, as always, Glen was right. There's a great gift shop. We got there at 9am when it opens. I had read someone that tour busses start arriving at 10a, so there was value getting there early. Amazing four stage life cycle, but only the larvae can eat.

<http://www.waitomo.com/>

We camp at Top 10 Okahune.

I got to visit town Okahune while Glen napped. Nice lady at i-site shop told me how to get to "The Carrot".



Later dropped by for a chat about railroads in Okahune. She liked my Hobbiton coffee cup and mentioned some of the LOTR filming sites nearby that I can handle with my 30 min max for walking.





**27jan2014 Mon** - Goal Top10 Lower Hutt, Wellington - need to visit Dick Smith Electronics in Manganui to get AAAA battery (for digitized stylus) and 2 traveler adapters 220 <->110 volts

We got going early and drove directly to Mangawhero Falls where LOTR was shot.

<https://moviemaps.org/images/3b4>



<https://d301pj1hd7018q.cloudfront.net/img/3b4.5bkgwi.940.jpg>

Drove on to Manganui and found Dick Smith. Its in the heart of town, lots of traffic, hard to get around with the camper van. So we got out of town after purchases, along with quiet stop for candy and cookies.

Very pretty road with lots hills with sheep, they are so cute. We actually pulled over to watch a herd of sheep and the 8 or 9 sheep dogs organizing the sheep from their rough mountain meadow to eventually form a single file back to the farm.

Continued driving to Lower Hut and saw this road sign.



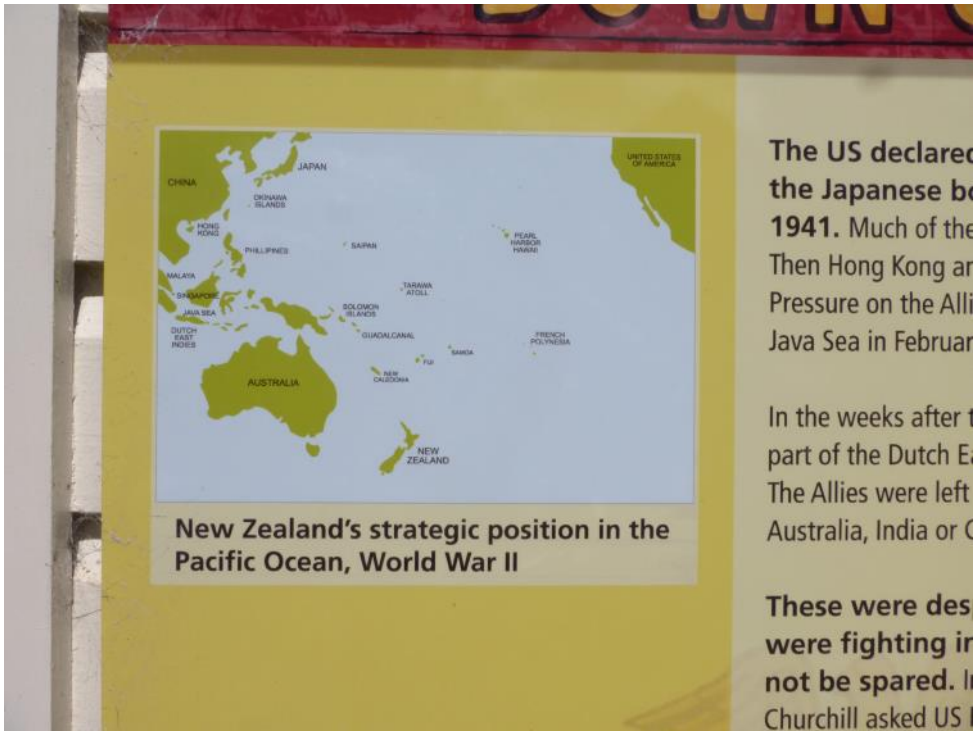
Luckily, Glen was willing to pull over.

About Marinenz.com

Marinenz.com is the website of The Kapiti US Marines Trust and part of a major project to collect, preserve and promote World War II US Armed Forces history from 1942-1944 in the Kapiti district, north of the capital city Wellington, New Zealand.

While our focus is the history surrounding Camps Russell, MacKay and Paekakariki we also have an interest in Marines camps in other parts of the Wellington region and in the social history and friendships between Kiwis and Americans during this brief but all-important encounter.





The farmer was directing the dogs effort. I took a movie because it was fascinating to hear the sheep bleat and the dogs bark a bit. I need to get in the habit of traveling with a tripod because my hand-held camera was so wobbly.

Booked our WETA cave -- window workshop for noon Tuesday. we also need to get to store for eggs to make dinner omelets. and pick up good wine and coffee as presents for Bruce Polkinhorne.

**28jan2014 Tues** - Top10 Lower Hutt, Wellington. Talked with Top10 receptionist in a.m. to find how to get to Bus#2 to Miramar for Weta Workshop Cave and tour. Catch #81 bus into Wellington and switch to #2 to Miramar at \_\_\_\_\_. We had a bit of adventure finding the #81 inbound bus stop. I was told to go "under" the main road, but could not find the bridge down. So we crossed the street a couple of times, involving a round-about, which was "exciting". Finally got to the bus stop and there was a nice solar powered display giving the bus lines and when each new bus should arrive. We had 15 minutes, so I was determined to find where this "cross-under" was and found it. Consisted of a "look-kinda-portable" handrail and steps down under the road over the water. I crossed over and got back up to road level to wave at Glen sitting at our bus stop. Only barely visible, even with hindsight.

The bus ride was fun through downtown Wellington. We went through the tunnel to get to Miramar. Had only a couple of blocks to walk to Weta Workshop Cave. Seemed like a residential area without much commercial development, in terms of stores or coffee shops. We checked in at Weta for our noon tour and were able to bump it up to 11:30a. Got to explore the shop with a new batch of trinkets. Nifty poster on the door to the toilet of each of the award-winning effort Weta had been involved with over time. I ended up standing behind a family looking at the poster and finally asked if they were waiting for the toilet, they weren't and I got in. Whew! Bought more trinkets. Favorite is my Weta cap, with the insect stitched onto the back. A nifty print of hobbit holes in Hobbiton and a model of a specific hole. The tour allowed no photos or touching. Was filled with lots of details on the projects Weta has worked on. Learned that Weta split up into 2 groups - Weta Workshop which designs, models and fabricates all the items use in the movies, weapons and such. Big CnC machine does a lot of "heavy lifting". Designers use Maya for details, in layers to provide flexibility during the stages leading up to the filming. Costumes and props are very realistic looking and usually in 2 forms - all plastic which is lighter and easier for actors to use (and wear for armor and such). Actual metal for camera close up for faithful representation.<sup>13</sup>

During the tour we learned about Roxy Cinema, which we saw from the bus on the way to Miramar. Turns out this theater has been through lots of owners and uses, but now is part of Weta (? wife of Sir Peter Jackson taken on as a pet project) and has many of the authentic props created by Weta Workshop. We learn there is also a restaurant, CoCo, within and I invite Glen to join me for lunch there later. The interior was stunning and the food very good.

Then back to the #2 bus to head for Wellington Cable Car. It's so much simpler and relaxing when traveling by bus. Traffic on the LHS and all the round-about make navigating complicated.

**29jan2014 Wed** - 9am ferry to South Island. Interesting process of packing the many-shaped vehicles into the Ferry. 3 or 4 hour trip, very calm seas but lots of wind. Took tons of pics. Take off to drive to Nelson on a very windy road.

**29jan2014 Wed** - park in Bruce Polkinhorne's driveway 2 nights - Nelson

We phoned Bruce as we got into Nelson and he came down to the highway to meet us making it easier to find his place - 72C Chamberlain - NuviGPS did great, so we could have found it ourselves, well we could find the driveway that has 72, 72A ....

Bruce sat down with our KimK map and provided great suggestions on how to

proceed. We contributed crackers and cheese as "starters". Bruce and Diane cooked us a great fish dinner.

Must see - added with green marker:

Cape Farewell and Wharariki Beach Holiday Park (in the eye of the Kiwi)

Kaioura (surf). Also, watch out for the sand flies, they bite NASTY. Get lavender oil, bug repellent spray and a small tub of vitamin E & ? to deal with itching if you are bit.

Moeraki (Flur's Place for lunch) on way to Dunedin

\*\*\*\* Dunedin to hook up with Kevin/Nadine Kemp

\*\*\*\* 2 trains in Dunedin

Catlins, then just back track back to pick up highway to Albert Town / Puzzling Wood?

I took 2 pics of Bruce/Diana with their house in the background and then Nelson harbour in background. Posted to FB since Don Gilbert want to touch base with them. Don posted that he hopes to get to see them in March. Need to pass that message along. Also emailed the pics to Gunnar, Diana's mom ...

**30jan2014 Thursday** - afternoon swim for Kris - Nelson Yacht Harbour

Bruce gave us a great tour of Nelson. We saw their boat in the marina. We saw the park celebrating the sister city in China. I got rubber bands. Very cute town. No wonder they are so happy. We saw a pod of orcas in the bay as Bruce was driving down from their house. It was fun to see "locals" stopped on the road and "pointing". Big deal to all.

6pm Yacht Harbour swim was a lot of fun. Met Ralph and lots of other "very nice" folks. Glen took lots of photos and he and Bruce watched the events. I won my age group! Only one in the 60+. Wore the wet suit even though the water was 23o C (74o F). Felt like swimming in a sauna (in jello) but I did finish. A more reasonable person would have swum without the wetsuit.

Bruce/Diana cooked up a taco dinner which was great. We chatted for tons of time. Diana introduced us to the great combination of soft cheese (that we'd gotten at store) on a biscuit - tastes like cheese cake. Yum.

Taya, soon to be husband and new baby, and Orion are arriving on Monday, staying till Thursday. So we want to swing by Nelson on our way to Kaikoura. Bruce said we can park in our level spot, actually one of the neighbor's land but he worked things out, when we get back from Cape Farewell to meet up with Taya and the crew.

**31jan2014 Friday** - Heading to Cape Farewell for lunch at the coffee shop there and to Wharariki Beach Holiday Park (in the eye of the kiwi - great logo on their brochure)

Pulled over at several lookouts, as Diana had recommended. Stop at i-site in Takaka. Another cute town. We had a crepe from a vender in a little park with other temporary shops. We requested the Crème Brule crepe with blueberries, but he forgot to pack the cream. So he put together one with thin sliced bananas, blueberries, we request the brea (after learning from Diana how great cheese and biscuits can taste), and some sort of syrup. Glen and I split it and it was great. Glen now wants to get a crepe cooking surface like the vender had.

Yeah!

Excellent primitive campground, eco-oriented so back out your trash. Great hot showers \$2 but the hot water never ran out for me. There are flies and no wifi so Kris does not want to stay for the 2nd night we paid for when we checked in. Glen and I took the hike to Wharariki Beach, was the edge of the rock caves at beach. Found mother seal and 3 pups in a cave - did not approach. On other side found another 3 pups frolicking in a pool in a cave on beach. Adorable. Remembered my sticks and was able to handle walk, even the soft sand at beach.

We loan our camper/van extension cord to a couple who want to park in our place. When we checked in we were given the choice 8A or 9B. Took 8A but never told the office. Turned out 9B site was the victim of campers, not in their vehicle, who did not park nicely and hooked up to the wrong power station.

**01feb2014 Saturday** - Glen heads off with surfboard on the 1km hike to beach looking for surf. Check wind direction before leaving, so fingers crossed.... He had a "reasonable" session and we packed up and headed to Top10 in Pohara Beach, with Internet and power. We drove to Pohara Beach and check into Top10 campsite. There was a guy launching a kite surf that Glen got to help holding the lines on the small bluff above the beach. With the kite up in the air, he could walk it down to the surf and take off on his stubby board.

**02feb2014 Sunday** - Pohara Beach - The tides are amazing here. In the morning, low tide, it was all mud flats. We do for drive and try to get to Harwood's Hole from East Takaka. Later in the day, I walked from our campsite to the Able Tasman monument and talked to some nice ladies from Washington state, who took my photo, and I did same for them.

**03 Feb2014 Monday** - Nelson Anniversary Day (of the ton founding)

Not sure if this was the morning that I walked out on the mud flats ... all the way out. Glen ended up walking out there too ?while eating his bowl of cereal.

Going over Takaka mountain we try to find Harwood's Hole from the other side. When road changes from paved to gravel, there's a strong warning that camper vans should not attempt. Glen confirms that our vehicle is just too wide. We get to the correct turn off, but then the coffee/snack shop person confirms that the gravel road is too narrow. She also confirm that "Yes they were shooting the Hobbit right over on that hill".

We leave Pohara Beach to head back to Nelson. Went to Dick Smith Electronics to find an adapter from our camper power plug to regular home 3 prong plug. Nothing in stock, but the nice guy sent us another place that would likely have it in Nelson, but Jaycar Electronics 120 Hardy St. was closed, so no power at Polkinghorne's. It's a holiday and their store had reduced hours. We also stopped at a Nursery to purchase a fern for Polkinghorne yard, Diana is the gardener. But the place we saw on the road did not have ferns. Sent us to another nursery, Nikau Gardens, but it was closed for the holiday. So then we went to Countdown Grocery store to get fixings for dinner. Glen talked to them on the phone earlier and fish would be good. Bruce/Diana don't like salmon, so we got salmon + H?? fish, along with fixings for a cabbage salad - even found jalapeno peppers which Glen loves to use. Got to their house but no one home, they told Glen they'd likely be at the beach. So we just rested. Eventually returned and we prepared dinner and had a great meal.

**04feb2014 Tuesday** - left Nelson after a break breakfast with the crew. Tom Buckley cooked me 2 fried eggs on board, and then added humus, avocado and tomato. Yum! Request from Diana for me to take family photo since it was unusual to have everyone there. Tom Buckley, Wylder Buckley, Taya Polkinghorne-Buckley, Arion P., Bruce P., Diana P. with my camera and Dana's cell phone camera and Arion's cell phone camera. This was taken in front of their "thermal wall" which is just one of the great designs by Diana and build by Bruce of this home. This is a special family that I am proud to be included in.



We left for the drive to Kaikoura, looking for surf for Glen. Checked into the Top 10 powered camper site & purchased 24 hr internet (\$7). Took a walk to the local surf store and purchased their recommend book on NZed surf placed. We also followed signs, and asked local for help, to train station. Turns out it's right across from our camp site and there was a "hole" in chain linked fence letting us get home very quickly.

Glen's getting in a good surf session at a mushy beach break - Mangamauna Bay. I'm working on this update. Glen reports the wave got a lot better and he had a good time - yeah!

**05feb2014 Wednesday** get past Christchurch today to Timura Top 10 campground. It's a stormy day so good one to be driving. Surf is blown out everywhere. I take a nice, long walk into town across the park the receptionist at Top10 described. Did shopping at Pak-n-Sav. Beer for Glen, milk for us (and yogurt). They had good looking green onions and mushrooms so bought them. Helped make space in frig on return by eating shortbread cookies with yogurt, surprising how good that is.

Glen expects a good surf session in Patiti or Jacks Point or Lighthouse Reef tomorrow morning, then head to Dunedin and park in Kevin Kemp's yard.

**06feb2014 Thurs** Waitangi Treaty Day holiday dinner with Nadine Kemp and her younger sister Justinca ?sp? - stay at Kevin Kemp's neighbor's house driveway. 102 Tomahawk, Dunedin, New Zealand. Anderson Bay, very beginning of the peninsula. Turns out another neighbor recently trimmed their trees and Kevin has an ocean view - of St. Claire. We can see white water from Kevin's kitchen and the wind is blowing in the correct direction. Another break, Murderers, than Don Gilbert FB

recommended needs to have a largest sized swell to "work" and the wind direction would blow it out. Glen and I drive down to St. Clair and its next to a nice heated pool with hot showers - \$3 to use it all. The ocean temp has dropped as we travel south and this will be nice.

After dinner with Kevin's daughters at 101 Chopsticks, Kevin wants to take us touring Dunedin to show off his town, but Glen is really tired and we bail.

**07feb2014 Friday** First thing in morning, we chat with Kevin (he gets up around 8a) and coordinate our plans [surf and train ride]. If things go right, we will be back for dinner, else back sooner. Glen has a great surf session at St. Claire. Shower, shave and a flat white delivered to our table, who can ask for more. Kris & Glen take the 2:30 p Dunedin -> Pukerangi TGR (Taieri Gorge Railway). Great train station in Dunedin





**TAIERI GORGE TO PUKERANGI**

One of the world's great train trips.

Price: from **\$91**

From: Dunedin To: Pukerangi

Duration: 4 hrs return

Distance: 116 km Operates: daily

[learn more](#)

[book online](#)

and Hobbit was shot in Taieri Plain and Taieri Gorge ... somewhere.

[Trip of a Lifetime - Taieri Gorge Railway \(HD\)](#)



Great dinner with Kevin that night we were craving meat, so Glen and Kevin had peppered steak and kris had venison at the ?Huntsman. Kevin highly recommended we check out Queenstown, which overcame Glen's anti-city attitude. Warned us it's all tourist oriented, but look past it.

**08feb2014 Saturday** - we head for Queenstown. We stopped at the i-site in Roxburgh and learn about the access to driving over the Roxburgh bridge. Cute little town, we have coffee in the cafe and then head back to truck for the drive. Nice picnic area at foot of Roxburgh dam, with apple trees. Glen is able to get a few for

us, and a young kid who wandered by, to eat. Yum. Beautiful sunny day by the time we got to Alexandra, another stop for leg stretching, We see lots of motorcycles on the road and learned there was a big rally happening in Alexandra. When back on the road, we think to call Top 10 Queenstown, Creeksyde. Phones are hard to use in the mountains, but learned they are booked up. Check the Shotover Top 10 in Queenstown and the have space, but are 6km from the town. Good old Glen thinks we should head to the Top10 in Queenstown, so kris has something to explore, and hope that when we show up they can fit us in. As luck would have it, yes we got a powered camper site right next to main reception area, so lots of foot traffic. Not a power and it was close to the showers (which we free).

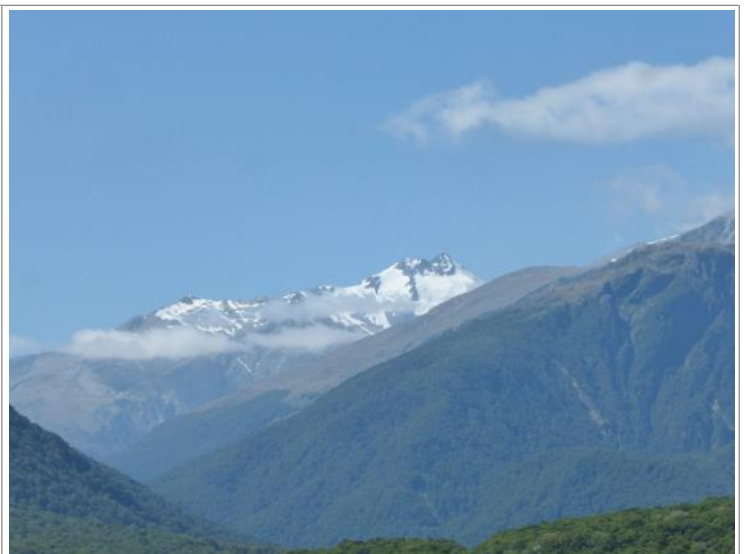
Kris goes into Queenstown while Glen naps. Took my sticks to give me more walking time. Walking has to be my main source of exercise when we are on the road - finding a pool is not practical. I check out the i-site for Hobbit info. Only one shop and I go there, but nothing I hadn't already seen. Head back to our camp after an hour or so and run into Glen walking into camp. So the two of us proceed together to get his fishing license for next day, advice on fish (not much known at the store he got the license at). Also went to another store, that was mostly a clothing, outdoors, tourist place, but I asked the sales girl where to get to get fishing info. She said 46 Degrees - further down the street around the corner. Went there and a nice young lady helped Glen. She knew about the lake a Queenstown We met a nice young lady from Portland. she and her dad were in the site next to us. She's a cartographer working with LIDAR and explained things nicely. Later had a great chat with her dad who lives in New Jersey. Glen cooks us a GREAT omelet (eggs, blue cheese, salmon, fried mushrooms/onions/green pepper).

**09feb2014 - Sun** - head for DOC Cameron Flats at the north end of Lake Wanaka. Just outside of town of Makarora, on the Makarora River, so Glen can fish We also hook up by phone with Kevin K. and he drives out to join us. Gets here by 2pm or so and all three of us walk down to the river. Somewhat of a hard go through the weeds (brush? bush?) but I have my sticks and its okay. They walk along the river which has a big ledge, drop off. Then there's a road we could have taken, we 3 walk there and then Kris takes off for the camp site and "the boys" go fishing. Kevin brought his tent, so we'll have another evening together - yeah! We bought more eggs, so glen has the fixings for another GREAT omelet.

Pic4 glen setting up his gear



Pic5 can see glaciers on Mt. Aspiring (3027m) in the distance, so our south



Pic6 Glen and Kevin looking for fish



**10feb2014** - Fox Glacier Top 10 - it's clear and we see Mount Cook, 3754m, ?tallest in NZed? We had coffee with Kevin in the morning and nice chat. Around 10a Glen and I head to Fox Glacier and Kevin heads to Wanaka. Got past the road repair on the way to Haast <http://www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/current-conditions/highway-info/road/8373/south-island.html>

SH 6 Haast To Makarora ( Gates Of Haast To Haast Pass - Diana Falls)

Impact: Road Closed.

Description: Rock falls

Comment: This Section Of Road Will Be Closed Every Night From 7pm To 8am At The Slip. The Road Will Close At Haast At 6pm And Reopen 7am. At Makarora The Road Will Close At 6:30pm And Reopen At 7:30am. Delays Or Closures May Be Necessary At Other Times In The Event Of Further Heavy Rain Or Slips.

Scheduled time:

Start: 10 Sep 2013 20:00, End: 1 Dec 2014 12:00

Detour route: N/a

Update received: 10 Feb 2014 19:01

Expected resolution: Until further notice

Glen had no trouble with the drive. There was a Look Out on SH before it leaves the coast that I wish I had been checking the map to see we would be loosing the coast for a while.



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knight's Point](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knight's_Point)

"The construction crew informed the delegation from Wellington that the area had already been named Knight's Point. The officials inquired who "Knight" was and were informed that he was the surveyor's dog. Apparently Ministry of Works documents indicate that Knight's Point was named after "the obscure dog of an obscure employee of the Ministry of Works."

<http://doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/places-to-visit/west-coast/south-westland/haast/>

We just had snacks for dinner after a big lunch in town at Fox Glacier. Glen was concerned about the drive to Christchurch. Getting to Greymouth tomorrow, and Kris wanting to see the train station and stop along the SH73 when it overlapped with the Greymouth <-> Christchurch tracks, we reconsidered things. I found a camper van site near Arthur's Pass, which would be a requested stop for train tracks, and we both looked at the Greymouth Train Station on line. It was "not much", so we're going to skip that stop (and the Top 10 campground there).

I requested to stop at the I-site in Hokitika to learn about the Greymouth <-> Hokitika Rail - ?only during the gold years? - and see a kiwi at the National Kiwi Center there. We phone the Jackson <http://www.jacksonsretreat.co.nz/>  
South: 42 deg 55' 05" | East: 171 deg 01' 12"

The only holiday park on State Highway 73.

33km west of Arthur's Pass Village, 4464 Oira Highway (SH73), Jacksons, Arthurs Pass, West Coast Region 7832

How far is it to Arthurs Pass National Park? 30 minutes, 33km.

How far is it to Christchurch? 2 hours, 178km.

How far is it to Franz Josef Glacier? 2 hours 30 minutes, 202km.

**11Feb2014** - Jackson's Camper Retreat great find (online), only camper van place on SH73 and gets us closer to Christchurch for Glen's last drive day.

On the way from Fox Glacier, we stopped in Ross, where gold was discovered on the West Coast. Very cute little town. Glen parked the camper van and had breakfast and I walked into town to find the i-site. Turned out it was a ways into town, so I had a nice walk. When Glen caught up with me I had already toured the buildings that comprise the remembrance of the "good old days" of the old west. Their i-site had a nice \$10 History of Ross and 2 discounted pins that are now on my hat of a kiwi and of ross' nugget.



We carried on to Hokitika, which has the National Kiwi Center. We got tickets to tour when the kiwis were being fed at noon. They keep the exhibit in near total darkness and ask for silence to avoid spooking the little birds. Glen helped me get around because my night vision seems to be especially poor. They also have Tuatara on exhibit, aren't they cute?



But I did get to see a kiwi scamper on the ledge in the dark. Yahoo.

Another bragging item for Hokitika is their whitebait pizza. Unfortunately the Fat Pipi's Pizza shop does not open until 5pm on Mon and Tuesday. So we had a Whitebait patty at the Fish and Chips shop across from the i-site. Mostly a eggy pancake with these little fish in it, tasted good, did not notice the fish, though you saw them in the pattie.

Jackson's Camper Retreat is a very nice camper van site. We checked in and I purchased their wifi since my Vodafone had no bars. We mentioned watching the train go by as we were checking in and the nice man changed our spot to one with a view of the RR tracks. We set up camp, got power and Internet and I was able to check when the TranzAlpine train goes by. Found <http://www.travelnewzealand.co.nz/Tranzalpinetimes.html>

Christchurch-Greymouth		Greymouth-Christchurch			
Departs - Christchurch	8.15am	Departs - Greymouth	1.45pm		
Rolleston (a)	8.34am	Brunner	2.04pm		
Darfield	8.53am	Kokiri (a)	2.26pm	ringfield	9.15am
					Moana%
	2.42pm				
Cass	10.12am	Jackson	3.07pm		
Arthurs Pass #	10.42am	Otira	3.33pm		
Otira	11.03am	Arthurs Pass #	3.57pm		
Jackson	11.21am	Cass	4.19pm		
Moana%	11.47am	Springfield	5.12pm		
Kokiri (a)	12.03pm	Darfield	5.29pm		
Brunner	12.21pm	Rolleston	5.47pm		

So the afternoon train returning to Christchurch should have been at Jackson at 3:07pm. Luckily I was still scouting out a good place for pictures when I heard the train and was able to get some shots just standing there.



Then Glen wants to hike to river to do some fishing and I going along for a bit, with my sticks, to explore the area. Walking on SH73 is kinda tricky since there's only barely room for the two lanes of cars, but most drivers give me some space. Sure feel sorry for any bicycle riders on the route. I went East to see what sort of train platform there is for Jackson. Turns out there was a road sign for "Historic Jackson Tavern", but when I got to it, on the south side of road, it is now closed. It looks to be in good shape, can see tables, chairs, equipment inside that looks in good shape. Went on line and found lots of pictures of Jackson Tavern with "bikes" parked there. SH73 would be a great motorcycle ride route.

I notice the route of the RR tracks must make a nearly 90o turn from the trestle over the river to then run along SH73. I can't see how this is done. Try walking out on the bypass road that is parallel to the RR track path to find the angle, but there's just too much vegetation.

Don't think we bother with dinner tonight due to good meal at lunch on Hokitika. There was a freight train on the TranzAlpine track later in the day. There are sand flies here - nasty little bleeding sucking critters! The lavender spray that Diana P. suggested we get for Farewell Spit, works well for me. Glen isn't as lucky.

**12feb2014** - we need to drive to the Maui Campervan Hire location to turn in the van. Had to phone them to get directions and this work out okay.



There was another freight train in the morning. We leave before the morning TranzAlpine train will go by. We've decided not to try to wait for it in Arthur's Pass since we need to get to Christchurch and turn in the camper van and get to airport for our 6:30p flight to Auckland.

SH73 is a great road. They have these "rock sheds" similar to the "snow sheds" I would see in Truckee to protect the tracks from avalanche. Got some good pictures of these. Glen was also eager to pull over at Lookout points. We got a great view of the Viaduct of the highway with some kea, a dusty green parrot that has awkward walk and it wanting you to feed it. the signs all say it's an endangered species, so do not feed it. in flight it's beautiful, but we never saw this.

We stop in at Arthur's Pass and park to get some coffee at the "Wobbly Kea" Cafe & Bar, but first go across the street to check out the store. I buy a great book on the Geology of the Southern Alps and start reading it. As we are driving out of Arthur's Pass, there's an unexpected TranzAlpine train headed for Christchurch. I did get a picture of the engines, cars, some of the train station and a good one (P1170908) of the cars and the stations sign from the truck. Glen offered to stop, but I figured destiny for an unexpected train said to just get whatever shots I could. It had puller and pusher engines.

We got the van camper turn in plane okay. It was raining lightly off and on and had stopped when we were cleaning up the camper van. It's kinda hectic at these places, so I was really glad we had no time constraint. Eventually got things turned in and our shuttle to the airport.

Glen got a "trolley" for our bags and his surfboard. I love walking around and airport with a guy with a surfboard. Still get funny looks. It was too early to check into our Air NZ flight, so we kicked around, Glen had a beer as we watched Olympics on TV in the airport bar. When the gate finally opened for us to check in, Air New Zealand made me pay for 2 extra bags, which is fine. Then checking in the weight of the bags was an issue. Checked bags are limited to 23kg. I had to do some shuffling and unloading of stuff, e.g. hand lotion, that was not needed, same for Glen. We both got our main bags down to 22.8 and 22.9 kg so got them checked in. My carry on was limited to 7kg (i think) but they are nice about computer bags so there was no problem.

I had found some homeopathic motion sickness pills and better packed all my "evening things" (teeth, nortriptyline HCL, acetomyocene PM and such) in my carry on bag. I had purchased some dramamine at Costco, but packed it in my checked bag. Turned out it was "non-drowsy" so would not have been a good thing to have used on the flight to NZed. This was a big mistake on the flight out. I think starting the flight with the short leg first and in the daylight and the motion sickness pills helped since I was fine on the flight. I just kept chewing one of the pills from time to time.

When we were on the flight, they started the Air New Zealand (Air Middle Earth) - Hobbit style <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAlZLDy7Ilc> Note, at the 1:38 mark you get to see Sir Peter Jackson picking up "the ring". It's precious.

We got to Auckland Domestic Airport and followed the green paint trail to Auckland International Airport with our luggage trolley and surfboard. Still LOTR art and Jean Batten (1909-1982) remembrance as "World-famous New Zealand

Aviatrix". Checks into the Air Tahiti Nui flight with no problems. I got to have the window seat - thank you Glen. I still did not sleep, but did not get sick either. Walking from the plane in LAX there's a neat President Obama "Welcome Home" that I love. We got to LAX, picked up the bags, called the Parking Guys to fetch us. Good old Glen had gotten some sleep on the flight and felt fine to drive. Got out of LA by 2pm or so, maybe earlier.

Saw the Marines doing some war games practice as we went by Camp Pendleton. We stopped and had late lunch at Sammy's Wood Fired Pizza in Carlsbad. Then Glen was willing to drop me at BestBuy to check video and go to grocery store, while he picked up our held mail.

and we are home ...

----- Kayak.com booking for airfare

14 Jan Tuesday Auckland, New Zealand 11:25 pm PST 16h 25m  
Los Angeles (LAX) to Auckland (AKL) – Conf # OJMYNZ  
This flight leaves on Tue Jan 14 2014 and arrives on Thu Jan 16 2014.  
Air Tahiti Nui Flight 101  
Takeoff: 11:25 pm PST Los Angeles (LAX)  
Landing: 6:00 am TAHT Papeete (PPT)  
Layover in Papeete (PPT) for 2 hours 10 minutes  
Air Tahiti Nui Flight 101  
Takeoff: 8:10 am TAHT Papeete (PPT)  
Landing: 12:50 pm NZDT Auckland (AKL) terminal map

13 Feb Thursday Los Angeles, CA 3:50 pm NZDT 15h 15m  
Auckland (AKL) to Los Angeles (LAX) – Conf # OJMYNZ Air Tahiti Nui Flight 102  
Takeoff: 3:50 pm NZDT Auckland (AKL) terminal map  
Landing: 9:55 pm TAHT Papeete (PPT)  
Layover in Papeete (PPT) for 2 hours 0 minutes  
Air Tahiti Nui Flight 102  
Takeoff: 11:55 pm TAHT Papeete (PPT)  
Landing: 10:05 am PST Los Angeles (LAX) terminal