



Figure 1. Lake Wakatipu, Queenstown



Figure 3. Jet boating, Dart River



Figure 4. New Zealand stamp showing bungee jumping

TRAVEL



Figure 2. Mitre Peak, Milford Sound

New Zealand Close-Up, Part II

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RECAP, PART I

In the October issue of *The Post*, I detailed the first part of the trip my wife, Brigitte, and I took to New Zealand last year. I'll start this follow-up with a few salient points to help get us on the road again so I may share our further adventures, this time on its South Island. New Zealand's two islands are separated by the Cook Strait. The country is about 1,000 miles long with a population of over 4,000,000. In October I described our volcano walk on Mount Tarawera, the geysers near Rotorua, and reflected upon the minority Maori population (565,000, with 95% living on the north island). I also shared experiences during our visit to "Te Puia" – the Maori Cultural center. (The native name for New Zealand is Aotearoa, by the way). All this was on the North Island after landing in Auckland. Our 16-day trip was with Overseas Adventure Travel and our group consisted of 15 with a "kiwi" guide, Rosie Stewart. You may find the first article in the archives at petalumapost.com.

ONWARD TO THE SOUTH ISLAND

We flew to Queenstown, which is towards the middle of the island, and next to Lake Wakatipu, New Zealand's third largest lake [Figure 1]. The geography of the South Island is distinct from the north – wilder, with more mountains and lakes. Queenstown has become a quiet holiday spot because of its scenery and wildlife, with its population doubling to over 30,000 at peak times. We were bussed out to the Millbrook Resort where we would stay for a few days. It is nestled within the Southern Alps and consists of 500 acres with gently flowing babbling brooks, lush accommodations, 24-hole golf course and convention center. We breakfasted there every morning and one afternoon enjoyed a lean venison burger with local beer at its al fresco café.

The next morning we had a rather long bus ride to the lightly populated west coast and Milford Sound, which is part of Fiordland National Park, designated a World Heritage Area in 1986. It was worth the effort. There we enjoyed a leisurely 2.5 hour cruise in beautiful surroundings. Figure 2

shows Mitre Peak, which was voted #1 must see by New Zealanders. It was prominent in the background as we embarked.

The next day saw us sent westward again, this time for a more robust ride on a jet boat on the Dart River, part of the Mt. Aspiring National Park near Glenorchy. The jet boat was invented in New Zealand by a sheep farmer in the 1950s, and it works wonders where there are shallow drafts. Our skipper thrilled us by making a splashy 360 degree spin, resulting in requests for encores, which he was pleased to provide. Figure 3 shows another group enjoying a run.

It was time to leave Millbrook and head west towards Haast Pass and the Franz Josef Glacier Hotel, again on the west coast of the island. In the early morning, we made our first stop en route by the famous Kawarau Bridge. It's famous because it was here in the 1980s that AJ Hackett and Henry van Asch started the world's first commercial bungee jumping operation. Figure 4 is a New Zealand stamp, issued in 1990, showing a brave soul

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