

## Day7: Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012 Day in and around Dunedin

This morning when I woke up I thought it must have been around 6am as the sun was just starting to rise but was surprised when I looked at my watch and saw it was 8:15am. It wasn't until around 9am that the sun finally got above the hills and shone into Dunedin itself. By now we had finished our breakfast and ready to head out to view the sights of the peninsula and then into the city itself.



First though we could now see what the Holiday Park looked like in the light of day. We were parked directly opposite the facilities making it convenient just to cross the drive and in to the showers, kitchen and laundry.



Smails Beach with its impressive sandy beach and rolling surf but doesn't look as though it is visited all that often, or maybe it's because its winter and the smart surfers have flown across the ditch to Queensland or further north to Bali.

Either way, we loved it or the houses at the top of the ridge certainly have a great view. If I was living in Dunedin I would prefer a view like this rather than packed into a housing estate and it's not that far out from the city either.



First photo stop was Maori Head where we could view Smails Beach with the surf crashing on to the sandy beach. Up on the headland there are two gun emplacements set up for World War II and could be restored as a tourist attraction by placing information telling about the role it played. To the south is Highcliff and a small beach but the main feature of this part of the peninsular are the sheep.





We headed across Centure Road toward the Soldier's Memorial (which we couldn't find) and then on to Larnach Castle. When I read all the tourism information I was looking for the cost but couldn't find it anywhere. After winding through the narrow bitumen country roads that had a 70Km limit (not that you could do that speed in a car let alone a motorhome), we arrived at the gate to the castle to find there is a \$27NZ per person entry fee.

We didn't think this price was worth so we turned the motorhome around and headed for Portobello. If we thought the roads we had come along were narrow and windy we were in for what could be described as laneways. While they were all bitumen, the narrow pathways catered for one vehicle at a time, lucky we only came across two cars, one of which pulled over to the side in a passing area but the other with an elderly women driving simply kept going and shook her head at us.



Portobello is a quaint seaside town that overlooks Portobello Bay and has a couple of shops, a pub and a service station in the main street. After that drive we bought a cup of coffee (should have made our own) and headed along Harrington Point Road for Taiaroa Head for morning tea.

The drive is very pretty with the bays to the left and the lush countryside to the right. When we arrived at Taiaroa Head we set up the two fold away chairs that came with the motorhome and sat outside in the cold blustery conditions enjoying our luke warm coffee and bun.

We were told we would be able to see fur seals and possibly penguins out at Allans Beach, so we put that in our plans when driving back from the peninsula.

The Royal Albatross Centre didn't open until 12:30pm so we decided to take a little stroll around the perimeter taking photos from all different angles of Pilot Beach, Otago harbour, Taiaro Head and the Royal Albatross Centre.

Retracing our steps back to Portobello you could see the sea terminal over the other side of the harbour and as it was getting close to lunch time we stopped in at Broad Beach where there are toilets, picnic tables, yacht club and boat launching ramp.



As we drove back along the peninsula road we spotted the turn off and headed down this road or maybe it should be called a lane and track passing lakes, ducks and wildlife until we reach the end of the road and a sign pointing to Allans Beach.



The sign looked impressive so over the fence via the raised platform and out to the beach we went, only a short walk. At one are rocks and at the other end is a headland so we thought the seals would more likely be around the rocks so that's where we headed. Well all we saw was kelp the largest I have ever seen so something is health in the water for it to grow that thick and long.



We had planned on having lunch here as we thought we would be parked right alongside the beach but no, we were parked under pine trees next to a sheep paddock, nothing really impressive so we consulted our ever reliable Kea map and decided to head back toward the harbour, surely there would be a picnic spot where we could park next to the water and have lunch.



We found the perfect spot in the sun sheltered from the wind at Yellow Head which forms a little bay with a sandy beach where the bird life was disrupted by a bloke and his dog.



Why it is in New Zealand just about everyone has a dog? What's worse is unless there is a sign prohibiting dogs they take them everywhere.

After lunch we headed into Dunedin to find the Octagon, a bank and check out the shops. The information brochures suggest motorhomes should park at the railway station so that's where we headed, paying for 2 hours and displaying the ticket on the dashboard.

The temperature and wind chill factor made it feel icy when walked up Stuart Street past the law courts toward the centre of the city.



Robyn claims the reason why we missed seeing the octagon was because I was walking too fast, either way we ended walking through the Octagon and down George Street until we found the bank to withdraw some cash. Across the road was a shopping centre that had a Coffee Club on the first floor, so we headed up the escalator to have a coffee and get our bearings.



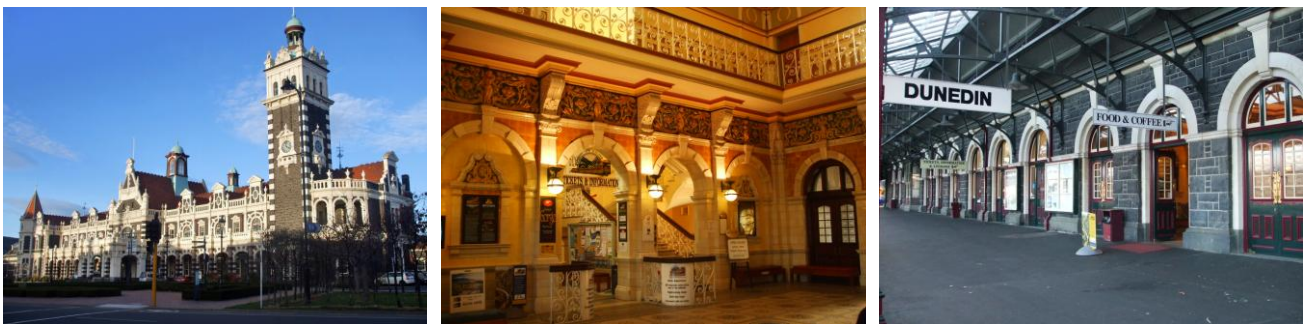
While being served I asked one of the staff where do we go to find the octagon. She replied I just get the chips and I'll be back to explain. I thought she didn't know where it was and was going to get the cook to come over until we saw she got a plate of chips off the counter and took it to a couple of girls then came back to our table. It wasn't until then we realised that she wasn't going to get a couple of the chaps from the kitchen to explain how to get to the octagon, she was going to serve chips (get it New Zealand, chips) then come and give direction. Anyway, she explained that if we head back up George Street a couple of blocks and there is, you will be standing in the octagon. Dur, so evident when you walk up to the octagon itself with the impressive St Pauls Anglican Cathedral and the statue of Robert Burns.



Dotted around the octagon are a Hoyts cinema, art gallery, pubs, restaurants and a variety of shops including two stores that sell merino and possum cloths, hats, rugs, gloves, scarfs, slippers you name it. The products are very expensive but the blend of merino and possum keep the garment light but very warm. We chatted to the sales person for a while asking all sorts of questions and left wondering why on earth does Australia protect possums when in New Zealand they call them squashims, run over them, flatten them, sorry Greenies you have no hope in New Zealand.



We headed back down George Street then down a little lane where a guitar singer should be digging ditches instead, past the snazziest police station I have ever seen, down to Countdown to buy some food, past the Cadbury chocolate factory and back to the railway station. The historic railway station is still in operation but only the ticket office seems to be open.



Back at the Holiday Park it was time to empty the toilet canister and grey water at the dump station (terrible name) before parking the motorhome and fill up with fresh water. That over and done with it was now dark and night had set in around 5:00pm. One last task for Robyn was to go online and enter the NRL and Aussie Rules footy tips for herself and Greg. I had already put in my AFL tips before I left as I wasn't sure how fast the wireless Internet networks would be in New Zealand. Well to say they are slow is still giving them too much credit and after our 1 hour was up Robyn headed into the kitchen area to go online with the fixed connection. That also was slow but much faster than their WiFi connection.

Last stop was the corner store for fush and chups (fish and chips). The store sold three types of fush (fish), cod, hoki and tanner. Well we knew what cod is but on the advice of the chap behind the counter we bought 2 pieces of tanner as that is deep sea fush. With our two pieces of tanner and two serves of chaps we headed back through the freezing night wind back to the warmth of our motorhome. The choice of battered tanner turned out to be the right one so in the future we know to order tanner if it is on the menu.

The plan for tomorrow is to travel to Invercargill via the Southern Scenic Route a distance of 254Km that should take around 3 hours minus all the stops. After the alarm was set for 7:30am time to drift off and sleep.