

Day 12: Wednesday 13th June 2012 Drive from Te Anau to Queenstown – 170km, 2:00hrs

We thought we would get up early again this morning, have breakfast, get the motorhome ready and head to Queenstown as we had to be there to catch the gondola up to the restaurant for 1:30pm. As we headed out of Te Anau the sun was trying to poke through the clouds and fog and that covered the tops of the mountains and drifted through the valleys following the countless number of streams.

The country side is much like we have in Australia between Cooma, Adaminaby, Kiandra, down the range into Talbingo and on to Tumut except all this land is farming sheep, cattle and deer. There are many small towns along the way and we decided to stop at the top end of Lake Wakatipu at Kingston where the run the famous steam train rides from Kingston to Fairlight October to May.

We parked the motorhome down by the lake where the clouds covered the mountains all around us and it was freezing outside so we sat in the motorhome instead of sitting at the picnic table. It was deathly silent but very peaceful.



The road to Queenstown follows Lake Wakatipu past The Remarkables, the devil's staircase, past the international airport where the planes have to fly between the mountain ranges over the city of Queenstown itself.



Arriving at the Top 10 'Creeksyde' Holiday Park our allotted bay (23) is directly under two big trees and yep, again no television. From here it is an 8 minute walk up the hillside past the primary school, fire station and medical centre to the Skyline gondola and restaurant station.

I must mention though that as we drove into Queenstown we saw the gondola from the main road and Robyn freaked out when she saw the height.

Lucky she had booked and paid for the ride and lunch in the restaurant on Bob's Peak otherwise I am sure she would have ventured up the mountain. As it was Robyn stopped at the bottom for a while before mustering up the courage to go into the building.

The picture shows the gondola making its way to the top where the restaurant from the Skyline entry point where you board the gondola, have your picture taken sitting in the cabin before it makes its way up the mountain.



We had arrived in plenty of time to take the ride to the top for our lunch time booking and do a little sightseeing at the top. On the way up Robyn faced the mountain too scared to look out at The Remarkables, Coronet Peak and the city as it quickly disappeared below us.

As you can see, Robyn loved every minute of the ride, totally relaxed, turning her head left and right, peered over the side through the window and never stopped talking Yeah as if.

Back on firm land at the top of the mountain Robyn settled down as we went up the stairs toward the viewing platform but would not venture out on to the observation deck preferring to go into the souvenir shop instead. The view from the observation deck is truly spectacular and even though top of The Remarkables and Coronet Peak were covered in clouds there was no rain so the view was breath taking.



We headed in for our 1:30pm buffet lunch feasting on South Island salmon, prawns, scallops, salads, roast meats, chicken, delicious variety of desserts topped off with coffee. When we were researching this on the Internet I jokingly said to Robyn about getting a table right near the corner of the restaurant near the window just like the advertisement on their website.



Guess what, our table was near the same corner right at the front window with uninterrupted views. We took a full 1 hour and by the time we finished were so full we both knew that we would have to do a lot of walking. From time to time paragliders would take off from a ridge well above the restaurant and fly past the restaurant windows heading to either the school playground or rugby club fields below. Every now and again a commercial jet aircraft would pass below our height as it made its way through the mountain ranges into the airport.

After lunch we took a walk up to the luge park rising to a height of 2560 feet above sea level before making our way back to the gondola to take the trip back down the hill. Although the gondola is at an angle of 37.1 degrees, travels at 4m per second the 730 metres top to bottom, it remains horizontal but that didn't help Robyn who was just a frightened going down and when she went up the mountain to Bob's Peak.



Back on land we walked down the hill into the town centre, what a beautifully designed and laid out streets, laneways and malls with every type of shop, restaurant, ski shop, tour booking agents, banks, pubs, hotels and laundry mats etc. Down on Steamer Warf we saw a group of young people

initiating a new girl no doubt by pouring flour and other ingredients all over her before tossing her off Maintown Pier into the crystal clear freezing waters of Queenstown Bay. When she climbed out she cracked an egg on her head and poured the rest of flour over her again, so the best way to wash it off was to jump right back in again. Once the fun was over she quickly took her back inside a shop no doubt to get her dry and warm once again.



I really can't get over how beautiful the town is, the only thing you have to watch out for are the cars driven by locals who don't stop and drive like maniacs around the streets. After we walked through most of the streets we headed back to the motorhome to confirm our booking to the Shotover Jet boat ride on the Shotover River tomorrow.

After having such a big lunch we decided to have an extended walk back into town to look for the Internet Cafe that was advertised in most of the brochures. I think we walked up and down every street, laneway and mall, along the pier and back to the motorhome, a very interesting and pleasant walk. Queenstown is coming to life as the ski season starts this Saturday so there are large numbers of young people who will be working on the ski resorts in town congregating in the pubs.



Tonight we just had soup and toast for tea and since it is State of Origin I will go over and see if it is on in the park lounge, but sitting here writing this diary I don't mind listening to all the oldies rock music being played on 97.6 FM. Well no telecast of the State of Origin so back to the motorhome and finish off today's events.

Tomorrow we can sleep in a little as we don't have to be at reception until 9:15am so I will get my downloaded photos up to date and get ready for tomorrow.