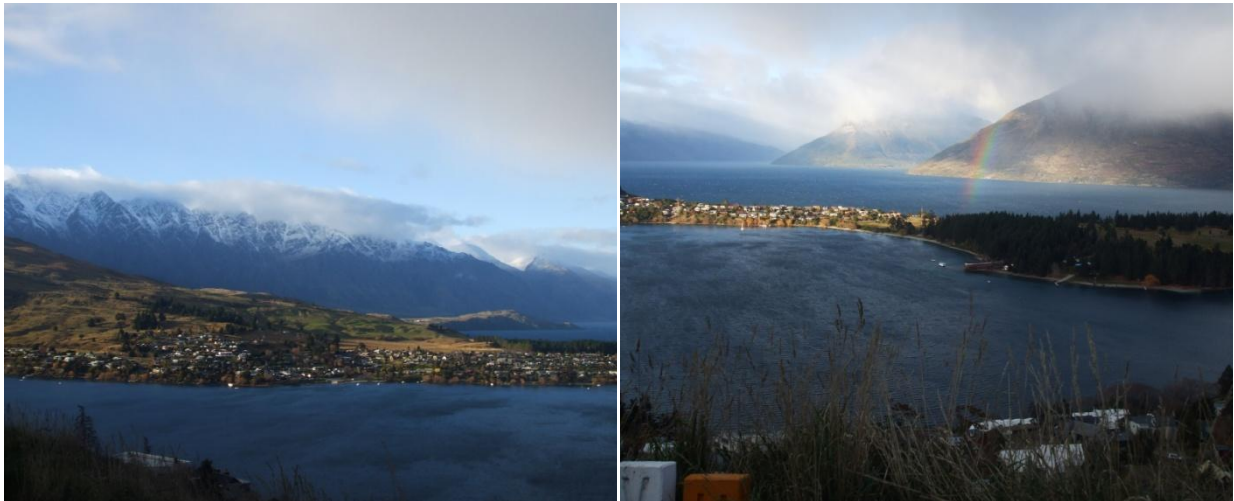


### Day 13: Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012 Combo: Morning Tour plus Jetboat

Didn't have to jump out of bed this morning as we weren't being picked up for our tour until 9:30am, a sensible hour especially since the sun doesn't come up until 8:20am, besides, this morning the minimum temperature was -2 degrees C with high forecasted for today being 8 degrees C. Switched on the radio to find out that New South Wales had beaten Queensland in the State of origin 16 to 12. Guess NSW has to win a game now and again just to keep Ricky Stewart happy.



Our limousine bus turned up on time and we were met by Chris our driver (from Chile) who was nice and chatty. Only three others were on the tour bus today so it really was personalised service. First stop as we drove out of town along Edinburgh Drive was to view The Remarkables, Lake Wakatipu and Frankton Arm.

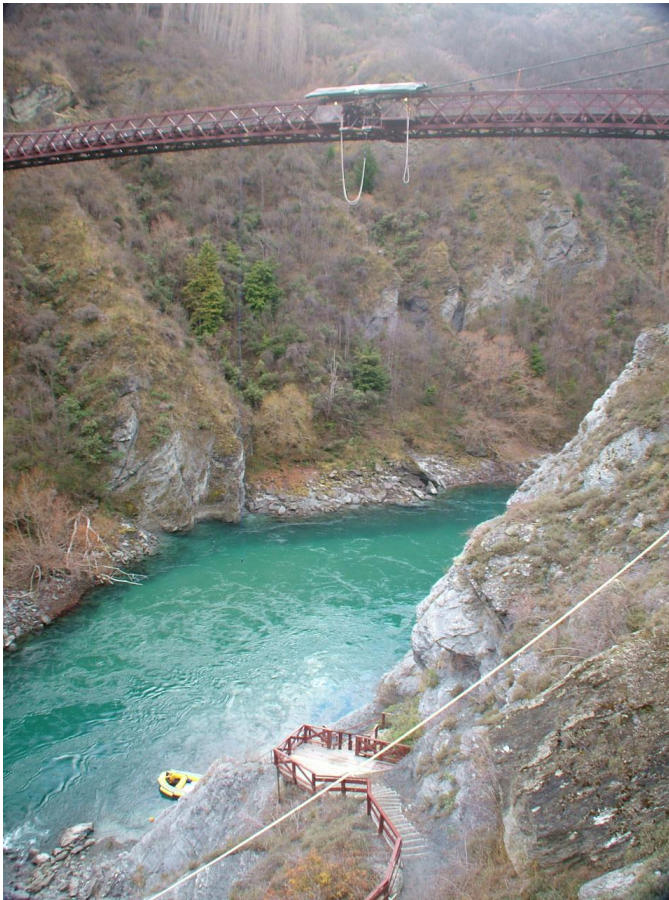
Chris filled us in on the local history of the establishment of Queenstown by Mr Rees who bought vast tracks of land in Queenstown and Arrowtown for sheep and farming but when he found gold on his land the New Zealand Government informed him the gold was theirs and not his.

Apparently he wasn't pleased about this but finally accepted an offer by the government of 10,000 pounds for parcels of land where gold could be extracted.

I wonder if I made an offer to the New Zealand government of \$20,000 AUD they would sell Queenstown to me?



We followed the Kawarau River to the Kawarau Bungy Bridge location, the original place where commercial bungy jumping was started (19980 by a kiwi and a pom that perfected the ropes used to prevent the shock of coming to the end of the rope.



We went down to the viewing platform and watched a number of people who paid around \$180 to jump off a perfectly good bridge.

I walked out onto the bridge and watched as a man around my age was being comforted/reassured, i.e. talked into jumping as he froze on the edge (43 metre drop) and he kept saying I'm not ready, I can't do it. The rubber dingy below looks so far down.

His main problem (so the attendant said) was he kept looking down and not straight ahead. Finally he just jumped but never made a noise and I watched him slowly walking back up the track after being released from his harness and brought ashore by the rubber dingy.



Back on the bus and off to Gibbston Valley Vineyard and cheese tasting centre where we sampled various types of cheese made by the company before heading over to the wine tasting cellar and restaurant. We ended up buying a bottle of their Le Fou Riesling 2010 vintage, a nice and sweet wine we will have with one of our meals along the journey somewhere.





Back on the bus and out to Arrowtown where they discovered gold and so a small town was established and many of the original building from the 1930's still remain. The narrow streets and laneways are flanked with shops but down on the creek banks there still remains some of the original huts built by the Chinese miners who were bought out to help with the gold minding.



The information panels tell the story of how NZ wanted the Chinese workers but they were not accepted by the local community. It got so bad that the council had to buy building materials for them so at least they had some shelter from the harsh conditions. It reminded me of Kiandra on the Snowy Mountains in New South Wales and how the Chinese were exploited for their cheap labour.



The three photos above show the general store and toilet, it's a little fancier than the outside dunny we had back on the farm when I was a kid.



Last stop on the tour was to the Shotover Jet Boat Base on the Shotover River for a wild boat ride on the river. After we were rigged out with wet weather cloak and life jacket we hopped into the boat with 4 other people and we were off. The skill of the boat driver together with the scenery is very impressive especially the way the manoeuvre the boat through the narrow paths through the rock ledges, over the rocks and right angle bends. The 360 degree turns with the wash and water spray is thrilling and while you would like the trip to last longer, it doesn't take long before your back at the wharf.

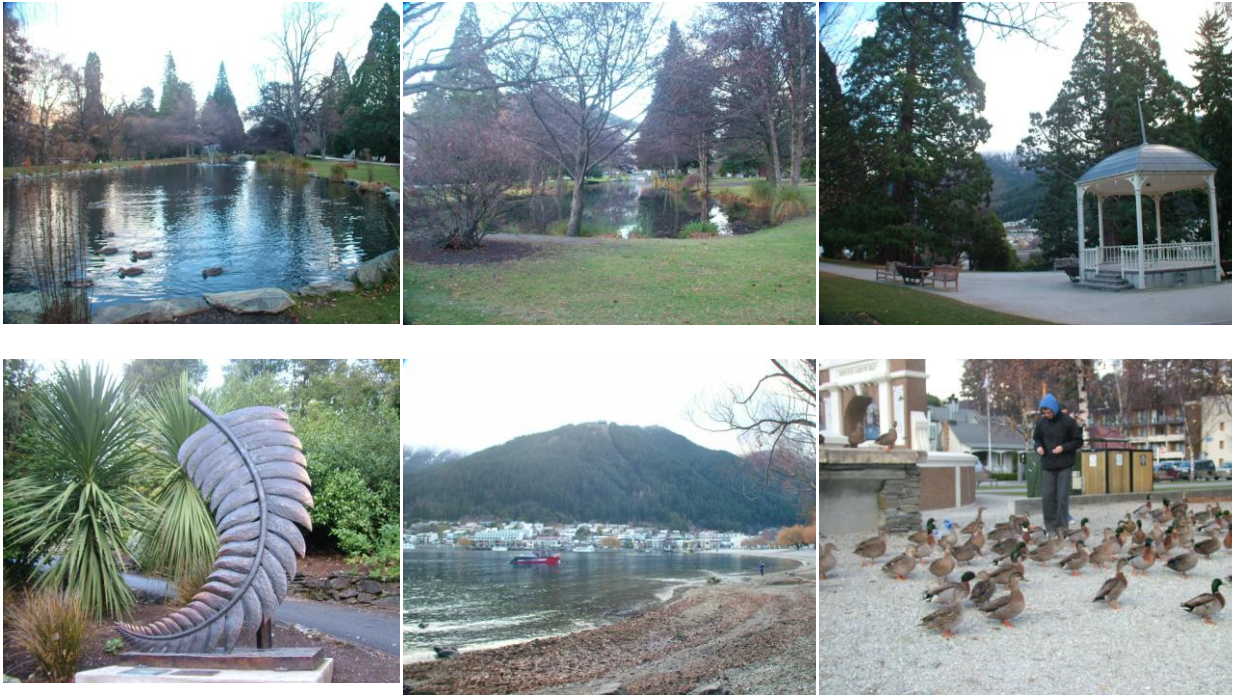


We hopped on board the courtesy shuttle back into Queenstown and headed over to the Queenstown Gardens to have a look of the city from across the bay. As you walk along the roadway or pebbled beach toward the gardens you pass this quaint restaurant with a crown on top of the roof before walking over a little bridge where there is a bronze silver fern, the symbol of New Zealand.

The collection of trees and flowers come from all around the world including the Gum Tree from Australia. The gardens has an ice skating centre, a lawn bowls club with synthetic lawns, a fountain and ponds together with large numbers of ducks. As we walked back there were two people feeding the ducks with bread and they made such a racket.







Tomorrow we head for Franz Fosef and not knowing what the township has to offer in the way of supermarkets and what time we will be getting there we decided to do our grocery shopping tonight, then go down to the Internet cafe to check emails, put in footie tips, check out the newspapers online from Australia and how our finances are holding up.

Having finished these activities we headed over the road to the Fush and Chaps shop for two pieces of Hoki and two servings of chips. The battered fish were large and tasted beautifully and the amount of chips should be for 3 or 4 people, a great meal.

We knew the drive of 404Km would take around 5 hours not including stops so the alarm was set for 7am and an early start, besides tonight the minimum temperature will again be -2 degrees C.