

Day 19: Wednesday 20th June 2012 at Akaroa Top 10 Holiday Park

Today is the shortest day in New Zealand as well as being the Maori New Year, there is talk about making this day a national holiday. No alarm this morning but we both woke up around 7:30am anyway and sticking my head out the door it's foggy, heavy moisture in the air and cool going on cold.

After breakfast we drove out to see the first non-denominational church in New Zealand. Te Whare Karakia o Onuku was built in 1876 and had its opening in 1878. It sits across the road from the main marae buildings and the cluster of kaik houses that snuggle under giant walnut trees.

In 1939, it was restored to its original state in time for Akaroa's 1940 Centenary service. As the number of families on the kaik diminished, it closed for services in 1963 and is now primarily used for baptisms, weddings and funerals. The poupou standing to one side of the front of the church is Tumuki, a gift from Te Wai Pounamu Old Girls Association in 19978. It was carved by Pere Tainui.



Heading back into Akaroa we parked off the main road and went for a walk around the village around Main Wharf. Once again the quaint little houses, businesses and historical buildings have taken our interest. This morning the view across French Bay is totally different to yesterday with fog covering the tops of all the surrounding mountain ranges.



After smoko we walked out past the yacht clubs to the lighthouse past to have a different view of French bay looking across Akaroa and up toward the Top 10 Holiday Park.

As this is the winter season, most businesses are closed for winter, seems to be a common theme where ever we went in the South Island except for the main cities like Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill and Queenstown.

On display is a whaling tripot Designed to be encased in a brick oven a fire was lit underneath it that melted chunks of whale blubber and allowed the whale oil to overflow into another tripot. It was then bailed into barrels.



The last church we wanted to visit was St Patrick's Catholic Church built in 1864 and while very nice, wasn't as picturesque inside like St Peter's and the old pipe organ. The old architecture however is something to admire and they are all in great condition given their age.



After walking around for a while time to head back to the Top 10 Holiday Park for lunch, check our emails on the Internet, watch a bit of sport on the television before heading back to our motorhome to settle in for the evening.

We intend to head back into Christchurch tomorrow morning and go straight out to the Antarctic Centre out near the International Airport as we have been told you need to set aside around 4 hours to take in all the centre has to offer.