

Day 4: Tuesday 5th June 2012

After having a continental breakfast at the hotel we took the AirBus (Blue Bus) back to Auckland Airport, this time to the domestic terminal for our flight to Christchurch. Although the Qantas booking number said QF4953, we were booked on JQ247 departing at 12:25pm.

Arriving at the airport in plenty of time to check in our bags and get our boarding passes, with one hour to spare plenty of time to relax and have a cup of coffee, buy Mum a postcode and post it back to Australia. We found out later there are three mail contractors in New Zealand and if you post an international letter it must be put into a blue DX Mailbox otherwise it goes to Singapore with all the other mail, sorted, and returned to New Zealand. We might arrive back in Australia before Mum gets her postcard from Auckland.



As we went through the boarder screening and security check the men were ever so chatty giving us all sorts of advice and tips on where to go and what to do. By the time we reached gate 23 there was only 10 minutes to spare, at least we didn't have to rush or sit around waiting for long. As we were in row 17 we had to board the plane by the rear stairs meaning a short walk across the tarmac and up the rear stairs.

JetStar is certainly no Qantas and should be renamed JetSquash or JetCramped. The cheap and not so cheerful relation of the Boeing 737-800, the airbus has three seats either side of the aisle and while the plane was relatively new, the seats are cramped together with little leg room and the back of the seat in front nearly in your face. There we sat like stuffed JetSardines in the upright position and then the dreaded announcement, JetStar announces that one of the passengers and his daughter will not be joining the flight today and by law we have to remove the luggage from the hold below before we could depart. With no onboard entertainment system in the back of your seats or hanging down from the ceiling, all we could do was to read the JetStar book in the seat pocket and bide our time. Finally the doors were closed and we took off around 12:40pm climbing rapidly to the cruising height of 32,000 feet for a relatively smooth flight south to Christchurch.

It didn't seem long before the announcement said we were passing over Nelson and will shortly start our decent into Christchurch airport arriving around 1:50pm and the weather is fine and around 12 degrees. We waited until the cattle had gone before disembarking through the front door as we didn't go down the rear steps just too walk up the stairs into the terminal. After collecting our luggage we walked to pick-up place, rang the people at Kea to let them know we had arrived and waited around 10 minutes when one of the representatives arrived to pick us up and take us to the motorhome depot to start the paperwork and learn about the motorhome.

The short distance from the airport to the Kea depot was filled with small talk. We accepted their offer of coffee while Robyn saw to the paperwork and I was lead outside to be shown how it works including how to fit snow chains. Little did we realise the weather was about to change overnight. The motorhome is well appointed and most of the operations are straight forward even dumping the human waste canister. Armed with our trusty map we ventured out of the depot in our 6 speed manual Ford 6 berth motorhome following the map they provided to get to the Christchurch Top 10 Holiday Park at Papanui. The traffic and the roads were kind to us so there was no problem until we reached markings on the road which in Australia, means don't cross so we kept going until an

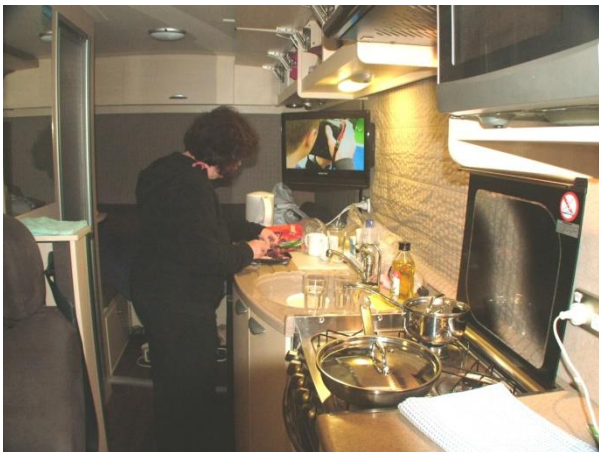
intersection. Later we saw cars pull up on the markings before making a turn left or right, you live and learn.



Having arrived at the Holiday Park and checked in via the drive through office we were directed to the powered site at bay 4, time to plug in the power cable and unpack some of our stuff.



We already had our scotch, brandy, margarine, jam and drinking water from Auckland but decided to walk up to the Countdown shopping centre around the corner and up the road about 400m to purchase some food. Because we walked we had to limit our food supplies to what we could carry in a cardboard box to last us one or two days only. Back in the motorhome the only problem we had was trying to get the satellite dish (covered in a dome) to lock in so we could watch TV. It kept telling us there was no signal and the orange light didn't come on to show it has locked on to the satellite, oh well, like we said the television in New Zealand leaves a lot to be desired.



Dinner was a hot half the cooked chook, potatoes, beans and cork, what a relief from the frozen packaged food of the last couple of nights. Not long after we put things away and cooked tea it started to drizzle but as we were close to the amenities block we had our showers there instead of in the motorhome, more room and saves on the water, besides we were not sure if the water was hot enough for two showers. As we sat in the motorhome we could feel the temperature started to get colder and colder and our gas and electric heaters were working overtime to keep our home warm.

Tomorrow morning we are booked in for the 'Christchurch Grand Tour' and being picked up outside the entry at around 8:30am so we set our alarms for 7:30pm. We turned in around 11pm, I climbed into the bed above the cabin while Robyn made up the bed at the rear so she didn't have to listen to my snoring (wasn't like this on our honeymoon in 1974, wonder what changed over the years lol). The sound of the light rain on the fibreglass roof was soothing and soon put me to sleep. Good night.