



Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



Christchurch to Dunedin

by Amaru & Suzanne, April 7th 2007

When we last left off we had just spent a few days in Wellington, and time had now come for us to make it over to the South Island!!

After another early rise and some breakfast, we made it down to the harbour where we got on the Interislander Ferry. The trip between the north and south island lasted about 3 hours and during that time we just sat reading, napping and strolling around the ferry.

Upon arrival to the south island we made our way to the top deck, from here we had quite a nice view of the sound as we travelled into Picton....

Picton, our gateway to the South Island, is a very small town and if it wasn't for the ferries it would be a very sleepy town. We had a whopping 50 min to spend here before catching our train so we just strolled up and down the main street, 5 min later when that was done we ended up picking up some coffee and then headed to the train station.



Goodbye Wellington
...and the North Island



Cruising through
Marlborough Sounds

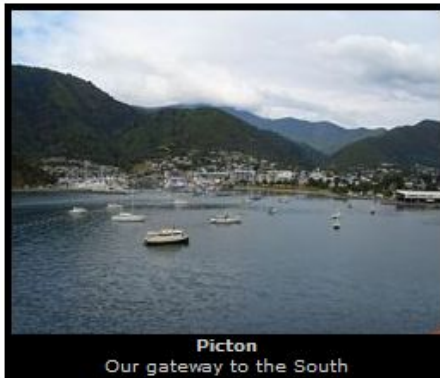
We caught the "TransCoastal", the train that runs from Picton to Christchurch. The train ride on its own was ok but since it was grey and rainy it was difficult to be able to really appreciate the views. I still made it out to the viewing cart to take photos, it's just that it was quite cold to do that, and since you are standing in an open carriage and it's raining you do get a bit wet.

The train passed through the Marlborough region, the famous wine region of New Zealand, and we could see grape vine plants all over the place. Later on during the trip we passed through Lake Grassmere where half of the country's supply of salt is produced. It was fun to see the mountain of salt and the different ponds along the trip, some of them were even pink due to some algae, weird and cool at the same time.

Before it got too dark to see anything outside we were able to spot some blue sky to the south, in our direction that is....we might have a good day or two in Christchurch.

Around 5 hours after we boarded the train we reached Christchurch, grabbed a cab and made our way to our hostel. The first thing both of us noticed is that Christchurch seems to be quite big compared to many other New Zealand towns and cities (it's in fact the second largest city in the country, Wellington is only the 3rd biggest). The second thing we noticed was that the train station was miles and miles away from the city centre.....they are usually right in the centre!

Our hostel turned out to be very nice, we got a double room, they provided towels and soap and we even had a TV in our room.....it was almost like a hotel room, sweet!! Our first night in the city we just made our way to the shopping centre and got some supplies for breakfast, lunch and dinner for a few days ahead.



We woke up to a beautiful day in Christchurch with the sun shining and we started out by walking down to Cathedral Square, the main square in the city. It got its name from the cathedral that can be found there and on the same square you can also find the 18m high "Metallic Chalice" sculpture.

Here we also saw many of the cities trams pass us by for the first time (there would be many more). We spent most of the day just strolling around the city centre, along its parks and river and sat watching people punting down the river (sitting in a small boat while a oarsman takes you ahead, kind of like a gondola from Venice).

Christchurch is called the city of parks and yeah....they do have one or two of them!! It's a very cute city and it's great to stroll in. We also found a place called "Dux de Lux" that was boasting to be the Pub of the year in NZ in 2006....well, we tried it out and it was very nice indeed!

We also managed to see the first sign of autumn, many of the trees are dropping their leaves so the parks are very pretty and colourful!

The next morning we were picked up by our rental car company and taken out to the airport where they have their office, where we signed all the necessary papers and picked up our car. We were finally free to travel as we wished =))

Our destination for the day was Dunedin around 360km south of Christchurch. We had all day so we took our time and didn't feel the need to rush.

Along the way we made a quick stop in Timaru for some coffee and then later on in Oamaru, just so that we could take a quick photo of me in front of the town sign....hehe with me covering the O of course!! We also passed a part called "Shag Point".....and no, we didn't stop there ;)



After around 5 hours we reached Dunedin and managed to make our way towards our little hostel (after driving aimlessly for a little while). This is supposed to be the smallest hostel in Dunedin and it's famous for its ghost, it just sounded too cool to miss when I was making the reservation a few weeks ago. When Suz heard about the ghost she was a bit spooked at first but I told her I would be there to protect her =))

At dinner we sat chatting to a Canadian guy who told us about an area with lots of seals and penguins in the wild which we decided that we had to visit the next day.

We tried to find a supermarket where we could get some dinner but since it was Good Friday everything was closed. Eventually we found a small 24h convenience store and could get a few small things, no alcohol though due to the holiday. We managed to get a drink at a pub - though they told us that we had to appear to be buying food with our drinks, so we did and at the end we just decided not to have any food ;))

Our first stop in Dunedin the next day was the Cadbury Chocolate Factory, YES!!! Unfortunately it was on a public holiday weekend so we couldn't get the full tour of the factory, but you take what you can....

We strolled around in a self guided area first where you were able to read the history of the cocoa bean and Cadbury's. After around 15min we were seated and were shown a short movie about the production of chocolate (and we got a bag each with some samples before the movie).

It was now time to step into the factory (not the full tour) where we were shown a very cool chocolate "waterfall", kind of like in the movie "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory", we almost felt like jumping in, Yum!! At the end of the tour we were able to buy chocolates at a very low price, so we stocked up a bit....come on, it's easter....hehe!!



Another thing that Dunedin is famous for is that it has the steepest street in the world, Baldwin street (well, some say that a street in Pittsburgh in the USA is supposedly steeper but it's yet to be proven).

We parked at the bottom of the street due to two reasons; one, we didn't feel like driving it (never know with a rental car) and two, since we were here we felt that walking it would be a lot more fun. Well, it was fun in a sado/masochistic kind of way, it's a VERY steep street. Once on top if you look down there is a section where you can't see where the rest of the street goes....it's that steep.

Once this was done we got back into our car and drove out to Aramoana, the place the Canadian guy had tipped us about. The road there is very small and windy along the coast....and not just along a beach or so, next to the road it's actually a small drop of a meter and a half down to the water. So I was staying quite close to the middle of the road (even more to the right of it).

The road there was well worth it though, we walked on a small spit that goes for about 700m out into the ocean and at the end we were able to see quite a few seals and ONE penguin, well at least we saw one =)) The best thing about all of this was the fact that there weren't that many people there. The main tourist event is across the bay on the Otago Peninsula, we were quite happy that we had chosen this small and secluded area.

Driving back to Dunedin we considered visiting the local brewery, the Speights Brewery. We thought of doing the tour here first but after consulting our guide book we noticed that there is a different brewery in Greymouth which is one of our last stops on the South Island. And I like the Monteith beer better than the Speights anyway =)

Well, that's pretty much all we've done so far, stay tuned.....





Trams!!
They have them here as well



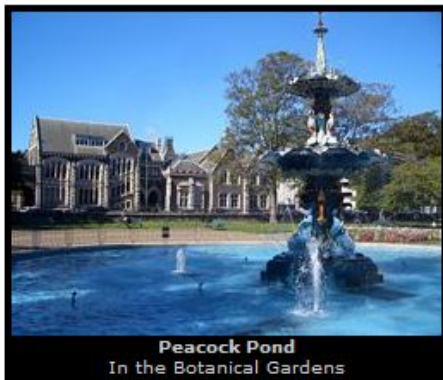
Lunch along the Avon
Nice and relaxing



The city of parks
Lovely in autumn time



Walking past the
Arts Centre



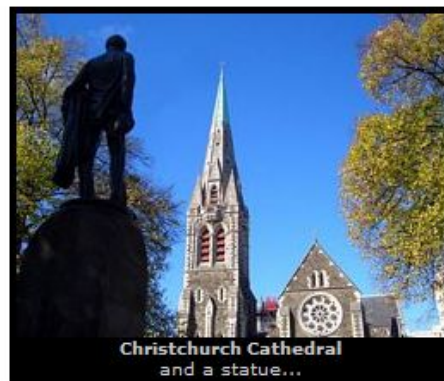
Peacock Pond
In the Botanical Gardens



Trying out the best
pub of 2006



The Cathedral and
the "Metal Chalice"



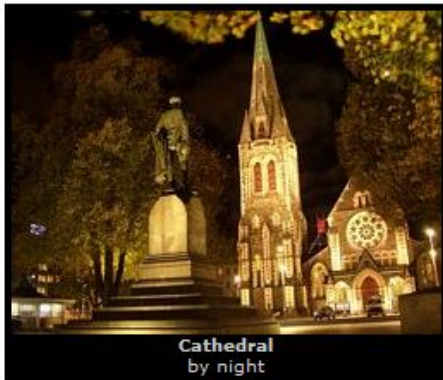
Christchurch Cathedral
and a statue...



Fancy a game of Chess?
Quite funky!



Sunset
on the Avon



Cathedral
by night



Same Cathedral
Different setting on the camera



Our car!!
Ours for the next 11 days



Oh Amaru
Yes, I just had to



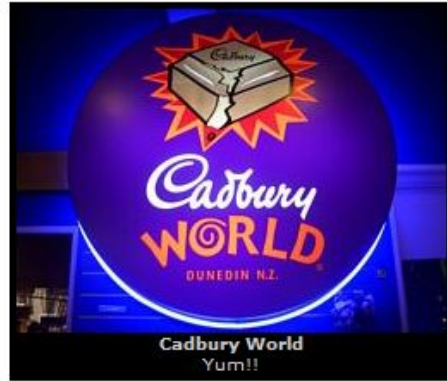
Town Hall
In Dunedin



The view
from our hostel



At the Cadbury
Chocolate Factory



Cadbury World
Yum!!



Amaru
wants them all!!



The impressive
railway station of Dunedin



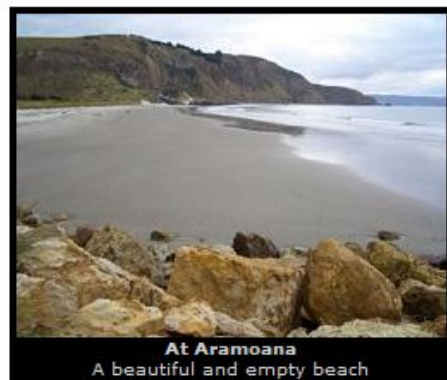
Baldwin street
The steepest street in the world



Suz
on her way up the street



It really is
quite steep



At Aramoana
A beautiful and empty beach



The Spit
It goes on forever



A Seal
One of many



Another sleeping Seal
What a good life



Our lonesome
Penguin

[Back to Top](#)