



## Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



### Milford Sound and some Kiwi Madness

by Amaru & Suzanne, April 12th 2007

Another early morning for us and we were ready to leave Dunedin. It's getting cold to get up in the mornings now, you can tell that winter is on its way (we even slept with the heater on the night before, that's a first for this autumn/winter). After getting lost in Dunedin (Again?!? The town is quite small, how do we succeed?) we eventually found the right highway and headed south towards "Invercargill".

The weather was very pleasant to drive in, a few clouds here and there kept the sun out of our faces and very soon we made it to a small town called "Clinton". As we were driving through it we noticed a sign indicating how far it was to the next town "Gore", the sign also told us that this was the "Presidential Highway"....funny!

After reaching Gore we turned north towards Te Anau, this is a small town that you have to pass through if you are going to Milford Sound (not because there's anything to see or do here, it's just that the only route to Milford runs through the town).

We made our way to our hostel, checked in and were told that our room was an independent little cottage with our own bathroom, fridge and a TV...Awesome, more motel than hostel!!



Presidential Highway  
Clinton and Gore



Lake Te Anau  
Very calm and peaceful

After our pleasant surprise we went for a stroll around the town. Te Anau is situated right by a lake and there were lots of people out on boats, kayaks, paddle boats and also sea planes....

That evening we cooked a nice meal together and retired early. As we were packing and getting ready to leave the next morning and head towards Milford Sound I couldn't find my new Kathmandu jacket. I asked Suz if she had seen it and she mentioned that I had been wearing it last night while we were cooking....

I then remembered that I had been too hot with the jacket on and placed it on the chair in the kitchen and then obviously forgotten about it.... Well, I ran to the cottage in which the kitchen was located but couldn't find it anywhere, I asked some of the people there but they hadn't seen it either, it was gone (there is now one warm backpacker out there).

The only thing that I now could hope for was that Queenstown would have a store where I could get a new one (luckily it was 50% off when I bought it and the sale was still on).

One jacket less we headed off towards Milford Sound making several stops along the way. Among these stops were the "Mirror Lakes", "The Homer Tunnel" and "The Chasm". At the "Homer Tunnel" we had to wait since it's a one way tunnel which cuts through the mountain. The traffic lights run on a 15min interval.

2 and a half hours after leaving Te Anau we arrived in Milford Sound. We were staying the night here in the only accommodation that is located here, this gave us time to stay in the area, relax and not having to stress about seeing it all in one go and then leaving again.



We spent the day strolling along the water, gazing at the mountains that surrounded us and just waiting for the sun to set and when it did.....it was quite a sight!!

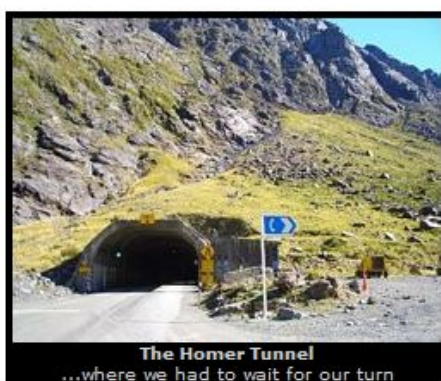
The next morning we got up early and boarded our boat that would take us for a tour of the sound (it's actually a fjord but someone misnamed it a long time ago). The weather was nowhere as clear as it had been the day before, it was quite cloudy and rainy. But in a way that didn't matter.....it made it seem more eery that way.

The boat ride took almost 2 hours and along the way we got to get up close and personal with the mountains and their waterfalls (Suz got a shower from a glacier waterfall).

Once we were back on land we got in our car and headed towards Queenstown, our next destination and the capital of craziness in New Zealand! The drive was easy and painless and offered great views (for the passenger that is).

Our first afternoon in Queenstown we spent familiarizing ourselves with the town centre (and as luck would have it we managed to find a Kathmandu store who had one jacket left in the size I required....lucky!!!).

The hostel we're staying at is in a great location, in between town and the Gondola (and even offers a free soup every night!!). One last thing that we booked that day was my Bungy jump, they didn't have any openings the next day so I had to do one on the day after, at least I get to jump!!



We had planned to do the Gondola ride to the top and then the luge on the next day but since it was raining it was closed for the day. We then got in our car and headed towards Arrowtown, a small town just 30min north of Queenstown. This is an old gold mining town which has decided to keep it's old buildings of wood and stone, a very quaint little town and we were lucky here with the weather, it was actually quite hot.

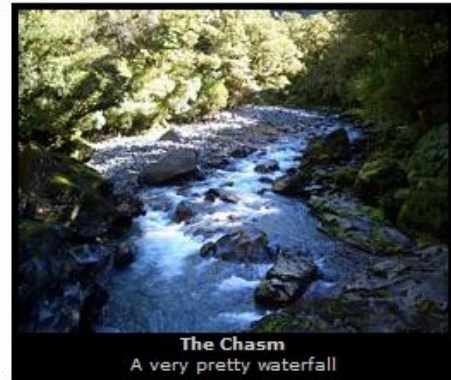
Heading back into Queenstown the rain hit us again - Luckily my Bungy jump was for the next day and fingers crossed, the weather would clear. And it actually did later on that afternoon, leaving behind snow on the mountain range The Remarkables, we got to see some snow after all =))

This morning we made an early start (yup, again) and since the rain had cleared we rushed to the Gondola and got our tickets for the ride and the Luge. The weather was quite cold and after the first luge ride our fingers were frozen stiff, yup should have brought some gloves (and we still had 4 more rides to go).

Well, once your fingers get numb you don't worry too much anymore and just have fun.....and did we ever!! The luge was a lot of fun and the views over Queenstown are "Bloody Awesome"!!

Now for the main event of the day, it was time to Bungy!!

Suz opted out of this event but came along to watch me jump. Transport was provided since the last part of the road is VERY steep and requires a 4WD. 45min after we had boarded the mini bus we were at the location for the "Nevis Bungy Jump". This is the second highest bungy jump in the world at a 134m. You can read about it, you can look at photos about it but once you're there you realize how high 134m actually is!



Both of us were strapped in a harness each so that we could travel to the elevated pod in safety. The ride to the pod was an event in itself....specially since the wind was quite strong. Once on the pod you get to look down through a glass platform and yup, it's quite high up. After being strapped into some more safety equipment I got to sit in a chair while my feet were attached to the bungy cord. And then it was time to jump.....

Up to this point I hadn't been very nervous or anything about the jump, once you stand on the platform and get ready to jump you realize how seriously crazy this is, come on!!! I'm standing 134m above ground with nothing holding me but some rubberband.....and you want me to jump!?!?

Well of course I did....and it was AWESOME!!!! It's a crazy rush when you jump out, start free falling and your brain just catches on what's happening. That's when you start freaking out (that and the fact that the ground is coming towards you really fast!!), and it's at that point that the cord kicks in and saves you!

Would I do it again? In a heartbeat!!





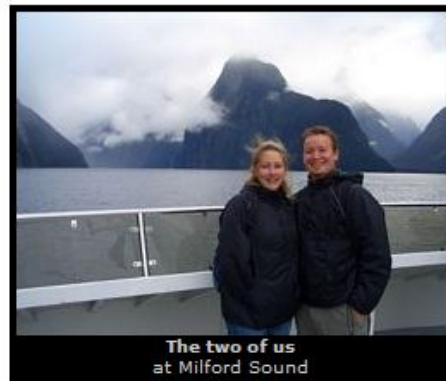
**Bowen Falls is one of the permanent waterfalls in the sound**



**Although it was raining it was still beautiful**



**Milford Sound on a rainy day**



**The two of us at Milford Sound**



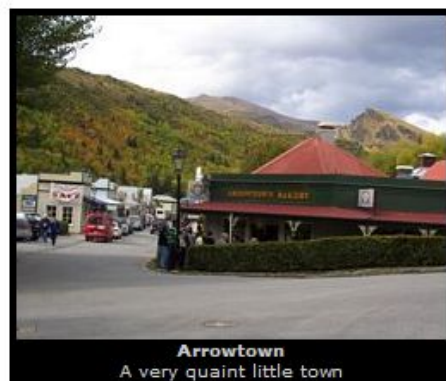
**Another waterfall Plenty of them around**



**On a rainy day like today there are waterfalls all over the place**



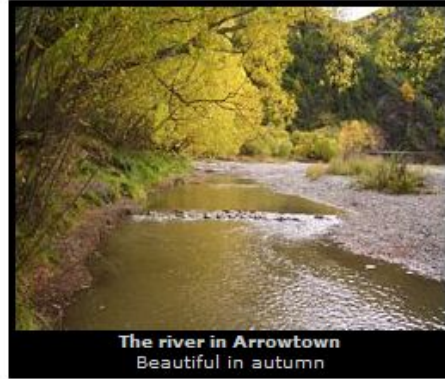
**A last look at the sound for this time**



**Arrowtown A very quaint little town**



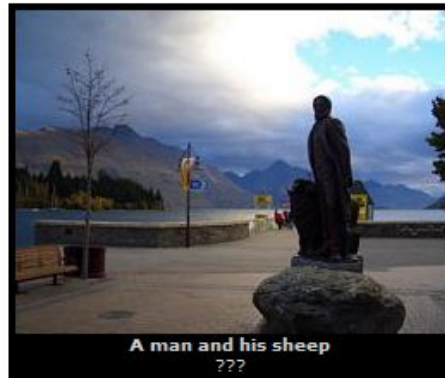
**Main street**  
Very old fashioned



**The river in Arrowtown**  
Beautiful in autumn



**One of the Chinese cottages**  
from the gold rush period



**A man and his sheep**  
???



**Queenstown**  
Main street



**The Skyline**  
The Gondola ride



**Suz and I**  
Getting ready to Luge!!



**The view from the top**  
Jawdropping



**Going down the hills**  
...as fast as I can



**"Look at me!"**  
Not a bad view either



**Suz is winning**  
They are about 20 years younger



**View over Queentown**  
Not bad huh?



**Suz and the town**  
Gazing out over Queentown



**This is as close to Bungee**  
as Suz will ever get!



**The Nevis Bungy**  
134m high



**A small pod takes you there**  
Quite scary to ride them as well



**Getting ready**  
It's almost time for the jump



**All strapped up**  
It's all about safety



**Final leg straps**  
Setting up the Bungee cord



**Here we go**  
Seconds before the jump

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