

# FRIENDSHIP EXCHANGE

# NEW ZEALAND 2019

**MARCH 15-30**

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## GILL AND CHRIS CAMPBELL'S GRATITUDE!

We left home on Feb 7 and arrived in Auckland late on Feb 9 due to crossing the date line! We stayed in a hotel that night and took a ferry to Waiheke Island to meet Marcel, the owner of the boat we would be borrowing. We spent 3 nights in a little cabin allowing us to relax a little. We were not killed by the New Zealand pigeon (it was enormous and seemed to be drunk) which was in the tree above us! Marcel had loaned us a vehicle, so we explored Waiheke by road and went to Man o' War winery. Then back to Auckland on Feb 13 to pick up the first camper van we rented. We toured around the Coromandal



Peninsula Bay of Plenty, East Cape, down to Napier then back to Auckland on February 24th via Taupo and Rotorua. En route we visited a water garden, the potter's railway at Driving Creek, the Aquarium in Napier (saw two kiwi), a walk near Taupo in the steaming areas, a ride on the gondola in Rotorua and soaked in hot springs in Te Aroha.

We dropped off the van on February 24th and travelled back to Waiheke meeting up with sailing friends, Renee and Duncan, from Canada and Marcel. That night we were on the boat with provisions but had to visit a dentist early the next day for Duncan who had a bad tooth. He was given antibiotics and told to see his dentist on return to Canada. We set off the next day, sailing as often as there was wind, to Bay of Islands, arriving on March 1st, taking three nights to get there.



We anchored in the same bay the first 2 nights, then moved to another anchorage on the third night and on March 4th were in the river near Opuia. The night of March 5th, Chris's 70th birthday, we were in the Opuia Marina, laundry was done and Chris and I re-provisioned as Renée and Duncan were leaving the next morning by bus. We motored to Russell for supper, tried to anchor twice and ended up rafted to a moored boat. We had a wonderful meal at the Duke of Marlborough restaurant. We motored back to the marina slowly and had problems with the tide in the marina so ended up in a different larger berth but left

early enough that no one noticed!

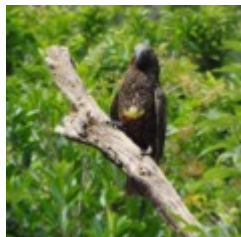
Chris and I sailed back south and decided to visit Great Barrier Island where we spent 3 nights, before returning to Waiheke spending our penultimate night on the boat on March 13th anchored in Man o' War Bay where there was a great winery we had already visited by vehicle.



We returned to the mooring after refueling on March 14th. On the 15th, we flew from Auckland to Wellington to join the Rotary group on the Friendship Exchange. In the cab from the airport we heard the sad news from Christchurch.



Four of the couples stayed at the hotel, one couple stayed with one of the Friendship Exchange and one couple did not arrive having cancelled due to a bad back.



The next morning, Saturday March 16 we all met our first hosts. Ours was Lynn McKenzie who lives high up in Khandallah with amazing views of Wellington. We



visited Zealandia with several visiting and resident Rotarians.

Zealandia is a protected natural area in Wellington, the first urban completely fenced ecosanctuary, where the biodiversity of 225 hectares of forest is being restored. It is amazing and totally fenced against predators so at night there are Kiwis wandering around. There are many native birds resident there.

That night Lynn organised a dinner party with exquisite food and two fascinating couples. On Sunday we visited many shops and galleries with Lynn. On Monday she had to work so we took the bus into Wellington and joined her Rotary Club for lunch after visiting the Maritime Museum. There was a wonderful speaker, Olie Body, who talked about menstrual cups which both reduce the monthly cost for women but also reduces the amount of stuff going to the landfill. In the afternoon we visited the Te Papa Museum and Lynn picked us up and took us home. Peter Lillico came and took one of our bags that had snorkeling and sailing gear and other stuff not needed on the Rotary Friendship exchange and offered to host us one extra night at the end of our exchange.

The next day all the visiting Rotarians, 5 couples, met at the railway station to travel to South Masterton. Coral Aitchison and Sandra Kyle arrived on the train to travel back with us. David Baker was our host there. He had stayed with Bill Robinson in Nanaimo last September and on the last afternoon in Nanaimo he, Peter Lillico and our visiting exchange Rotarians David and Raewyn Lusk came out on our sailboat. We had a very brief sail in Departure Bay then motored around Newcastle and Protection Islands. David took us around to look at several local Rotary projects before we visited his Rotary Club that evening. Robert and Sandra Kyle had stayed with Jim and Marianne Turley on the exchange to our district.



The next day we all met to take 2 small buses to Cape Palliser where we saw many seals, some of us (not us) raced up steps of a lighthouse, then we had fish and chips in Lake Ferry. We drove home and David had left his slow cooker on all day with venison (amazingly good) for a dinner party with Coral and her husband and another a friend of David's.

The last day we all visited Hikurangi Station (Robert Kyle's farm before he retired) where we saw three sheep shorn by the Chair of the Golden Fleece, listened to a talk from Derek Daniell who is concerned about the amount of tree farming planned, watched Robert's son-in-law who whistled commands to 3 dogs to manage 3 sheep, and lastly we took all-wheel vehicles up to the high pastures for a lecture on pasture management up among the clouds!. On the way back, we stopped briefly where a small plantation of 25-year-old firs were being harvested. And then back to Robert's son's place for lunch. On the way home we stopped for a wine tasting at a small winery – only \$3 mill, for sale. In the evening we had a BBQ at Alan Holm's place. He was going to host the Rotarian couple who did not arrive.

On Friday March 22nd, David had a medical appointment so a Rotarian friend, Russell, took us to the Orlando Country Club where we met our next hosts, Terry and Joan Coxon, of the Whanganui Club. This was as far north as we got in the District so luckily David and Raewyn Lusk of the New Plymouth Club were staying with the District Governor Marion Johnstone and her partner Mike, so we got to see the exchange Rotarians we hosted in Nanaimo (but we did miss the dairy farm visits Chris had wanted!).

The next day we went downtown where there was an arts event going on. First, we visited the market, then watched glass blowing, followed by about 8 of us paddling in a Waka, a Maori canoe, awesome! Got pretty wet and I don't recommend it in a dress! Terry took us to quite a few of the open homes of the arts festival before we all met for supper (tea) at the DG's home. Great meal and Mike and family have quite a collection of old and race cars.



The next morning, we were taken to the Durie Hill lift where the visitors took the lift up and the hosts drove around and met us up top. We then went to Virginia Lake, where we



visited the Winter Gardens, then walked around the lake, had lunch, visited more art open homes before

visiting Bushy Park Wildlife Sanctuary. This has been a major preoccupation of the Whanganui Club who have laid quite a few trails and renovated several buildings.



That evening we took a smaller boat than the local paddle wheeler up the river for supper and visited a church, St Mary's Anglican Church in Ūpokongaro which



had a strange steeple that has four sides at the base but only three sides above.

The next morning, we travelled with our hosts to the Woolshed Café (great cheese scone!) in Sanson to be handed over to the Plimmerton Club.

Peter Lillico met us and took over responsibility for us for 2 nights of the exchange, (plus the last night we would spend on the North Island). We drove south to the Southwood Car Museum, where we had lunch and met Jan Palmer who would be our last host. Duane, the team leader and Chris, both really enjoyed the cars. Peter drove us to Plimmerton via some back roads with wonderful views. Then we got to his home, what a steep driveway, obviously no snow or frost! Great to see Bev again. Peter and Bev had stayed with Ed Poli and Anne Marie Jones.

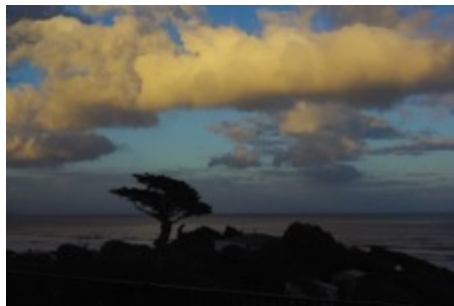
We went down to the Marina later that evening and got invited aboard a 46-foot Bavaria sailboat that a couple was living aboard. Only 2 foot longer than Marcel's with a different layout. Great to see another beautiful boat. We also chatted with the boatyard manager. Supper was with Peter and Bev admiring the view from their place.



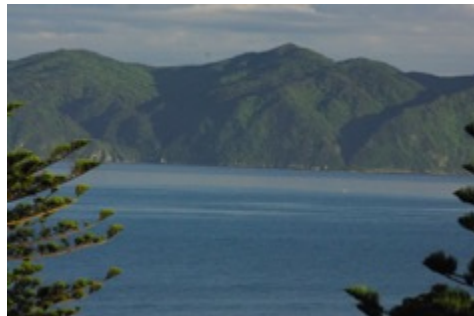
Next morning, we watched a short movie about the boardwalk the Plimmerton Rotary Club had built over the previous 15 years, then we walked part of it in the rain. In the afternoon Peter had arranged that we go to a talk from a trainer who uses simulation to teach nurses and paramedics. Amazing. Then we visited an art gallery. We had been to the same gallery with Lynn for a craft event

less than 2 weeks previously! At first, I did not recognize it as we entered via a different door! We ended up at their weekly Rotary meeting on Tuesday evening March 26th. Plimmerton also raises funds by selling firewood and has an annual book sale. Peter is a major player in the wood sale, says it keeps him fit and saves on a gym membership. When we returned on the 30th to Peter's, we visited the book sale where Bev, as a member of their Inner Wheel, was serving refreshments. They have to store everything offsite and only are open for one weekend a year – a lot of work for a couple of days! Supper was with his son and family for Peter and Bev's wedding anniversary.

Jan Palmer picked us up at the Pahatanui Lighthouse Theatre where we had watched the video about the boardwalk, and we travelled north to her home which had an even steeper driveway and amazing views. Her husband is a realtor and chief cook and



since he was working that night we went out to their club where he joined us for supper. The next morning,

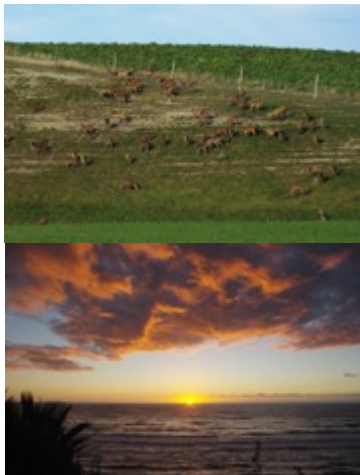


we set off and returned in sunshine from a walk with her dogs where it started to rain hard just after we left and stopped just before we returned. We got very wet. Jan has been a member of the East Hutt Rotary Club for many years and when she moved away she decided to stay at this Club despite the long drive of about an hour each way. Anne Abbott and Christine Meredith from East Hutt had visited us in September 2018. Anne had been hosted by Barney and Sarah Sharpe and Christine had been hosted by Lynne Hannay.

On the 28th we went for a picnic that Jan's husband prepared with Jan, and Christine who was hosting Duane and Patti, our team leaders, in a park east of Wellington. That evening we all went out to supper at an excellent restaurant, Sea Salt in Lower Hutt, then the long drive home.

Each morning we walked the beach with Jan and her dogs and only the first day in the rain. On the 29th we took a tour of the Weta Studios which Christine had booked followed by fish and chips which was supposed to be at the Rotary venue, but due to a mix up we adjourned to the hosts of Geoff and Beth Crooks where we had fish and chips and great desserts and lots of wine.

The next morning, we walked again with Jan and her dogs before Peter came to pick us up. He found the driveway rather steep! In the afternoon, Peter and Bev took us into Wellington where we rode the cable car up with Bev and walked down through the Botanical Gardens after Peter joined us having parked his car. We had supper that night with Peter and Bev's son and family and realized it was their wedding anniversary.



The next morning Peter took us with our repacked bags to the ferry to the South Island. Jan met us, gave us an orientation of her van, much more modern than the first, we provisioned and off we went. We were not sure where we planned to go, but a fierce storm in late March wiped out a bridge between Franz Josef and Fox Glacier so many choices were taken away. We ended up going along the coast road south to Kaikoura where we

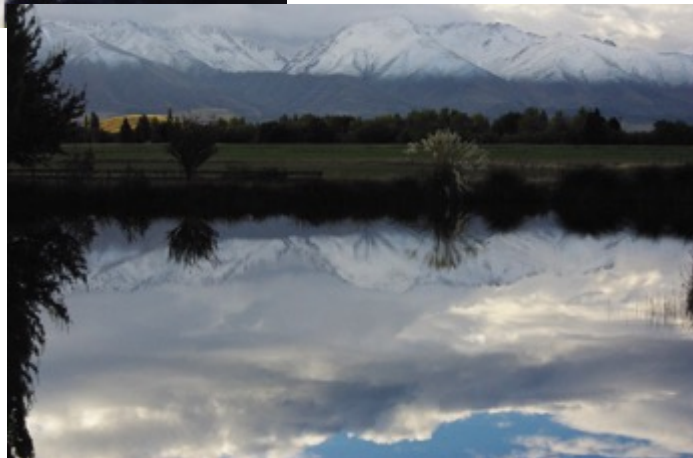


turned inland to Hanmer Springs where we visited and swam in the wonderful. Then on to Westport then crossed over Arthur's Pass avoid Christchurch and on to Mt Cook.

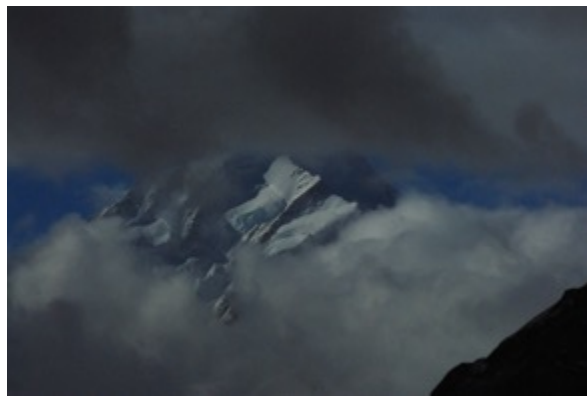


Hot Springs which were and south to Greymouth. We and went on minor roads to

Brian and Sharon Blanchard live in Twizel which is close by Mt Cook, so we accepted an invitation to park the van there and sleep in a real bed and have long showers! Sharon has just finished a PhD and now is the proud owner/operator of the only ice cream store in Twizel. They look out onto Mt Cook with amazing reflections in the pond in front of their home, ruined often by the ducks swimming around and leaving ripples!

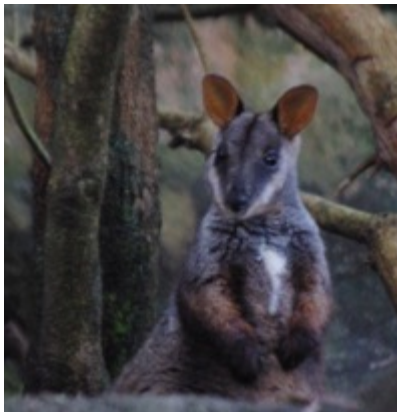


Brian runs Mt Cook Alpine Salmon and loves living and working in a country where aquaculture is understood and popular. The last morning there I went out to discover the van peeing like an elephant. The temperature had gone down to near freezing and the van had an auto-drain to avoid freezing!



We headed off to Akaroa, close to Christchurch. It's a very French tourist trap but great fun. Then back to Picton, gave back the van and Jan took us to Blenheim airport where we flew to Auckland for our last night in New Zealand. We stayed in an apartment in Princes Wharf, ate well and flew to Sydney, Australia for our last 5 nights down under.

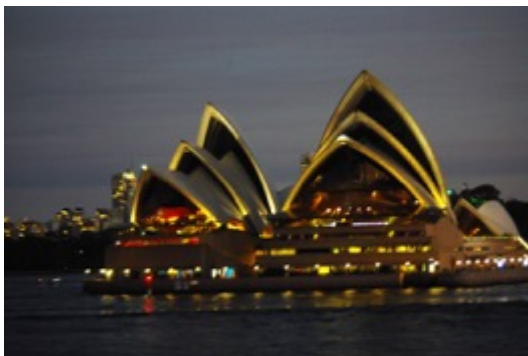
In Sydney we unpacked into a hotel room for 5 nights. The first day I had an agenda, about 4 places to go to, we walked to the first, the Australian Museum, after 4 plus hours we left exhausted (only one done!) but having discovered it was quite a bit cheaper if we said we are old! That worked at almost all the attractions! Out for supper at a French restaurant near our hotel.



Next day, we took the ferry to Taronga Zoo, lots of koalas and kangaroos, and when we got back booked a dinner cruise out of Circular Quay for that evening. The next day we visited the Maritime Museum, getting there by Light Rail and by then having wised up to get an Opal card. And supper in Darling Harbour.



We went on an organized outing to the Blue Mountains, great fun and ate supper at Circular Quay. Our last day we visited the Botanic Gardens and the Opera House and ended having an extravagant supper at Sydney Oyster.



Then we came home, left the hotel at 7.30 on the 15th and landed in Vancouver at 7.30 on April 15th after a 14 hour pretty sleepless night. The joys of crossing a date line! We stayed up till about 9.00 so not much jet lag. Home...

