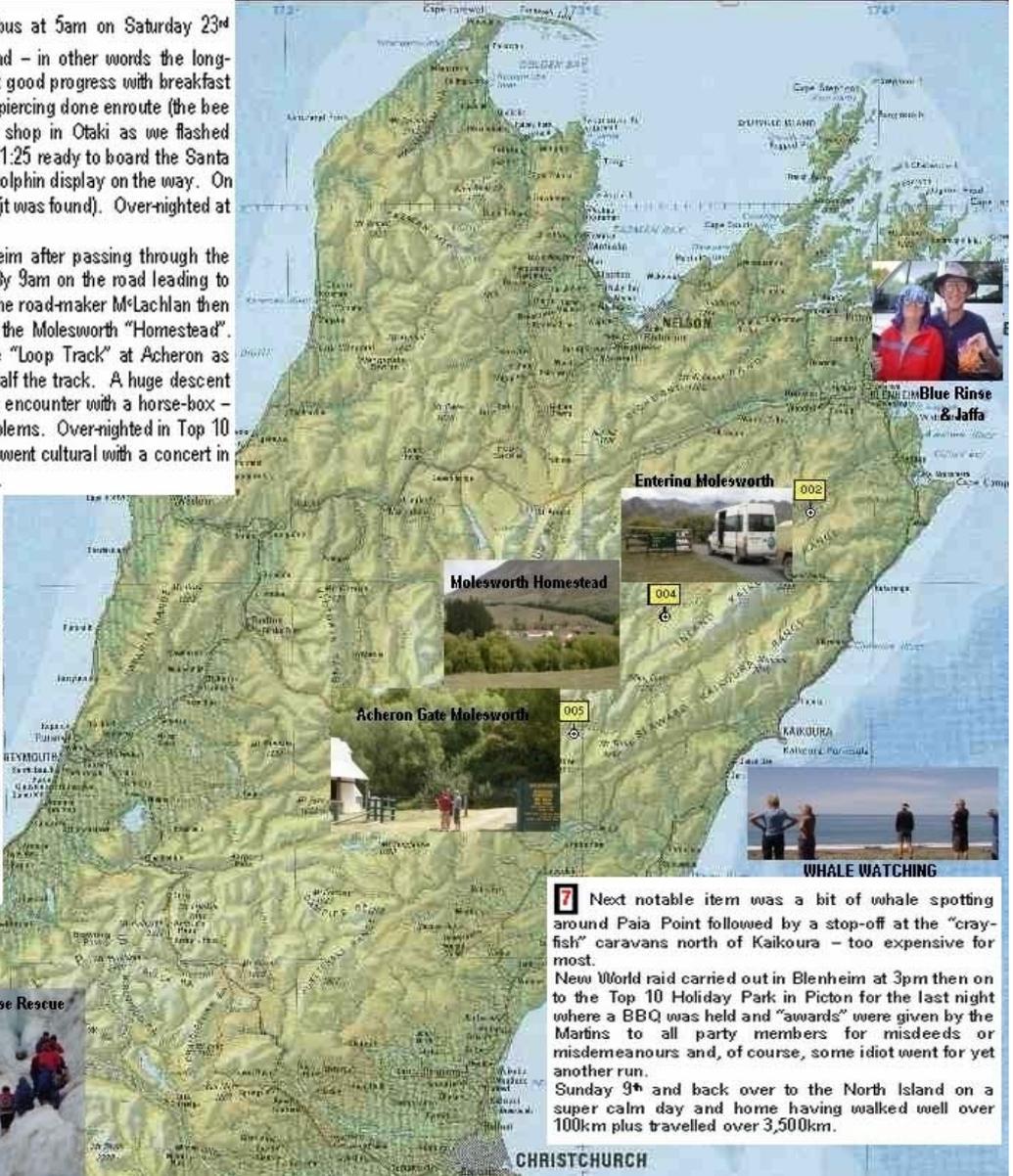


1 Twelve of TTC's finest left town in the Club bus at 5am on Saturday 23rd February with travelling and high adventure in mind – in other words the long-awaited trip to the South Island. A dull morning but good progress with breakfast in Huntersville, the driver (Colin) having some body piercing done enroute (the bee sting lasted for days), mention of the Ice Breaker shop in Otaki as we flashed through and arrived at the Blue Ridge Terminal at 11:25 ready to board the Santa Regina for a very smooth passage to Picton with a dolphin display on the way. On the boat the Hobbit lost his camera for the first time (it was found). Over-nighted at Picton Top 10 Holiday Park.

Left Picton by 8am and raided New World, Blenheim after passing through the extensive vineyards on the flat lacustrine plains. By 9am on the road leading to Molesworth with a leg stretcher at the grave-site of the road-maker M'Lachlan then at Cob Cottage for lunch after a wee walk to view the Molesworth "Homestead". The ladies and male Hobbit had a walk round the "Loop Track" at Acheron as Molesworth was left behind, but the men only did half the track. A huge descent followed and, on the way, the TTC Bus had a close encounter with a horse-box – but good driving and calm reactions ensured no problems. Over-nighted in Top 10 in Hammer Springs on a beautiful evening – Bernie went cultural with a concert in the park whilst the rest shopped, ate and rehydrated.

2 Monday 25th was a bit wet getting over Lewis Pass and Hobbit 2 exercised superb bladder control to last until Reefton when a smoko stop was called and Bernie, plus A.N.Other, demolished huge pink iced cream buns! By-passed Greymouth, then the Coast to Coast start point at Hokitika but had lunch on the beach in sunshine and finally arrived in Franz Josef holiday camp. Beautiful morning so someone went for a 5km run and after breakfast all went into town and got geared up with boots plus socks, crampons, jackets and trousers for the three quarter-day "Glacier Walk". There is a separate write up of this adventure on the web page but it can be said that it was good fun and rather exciting – especially when a senior German gentleman nose dived into a crevasse and had to be rescued by our guide. The part day turned into a very full day indeed.



7 Next notable item was a bit of whale spotting around Paia Point followed by a stop-off at the "cray-fish" caravans north of Kaikoura – too expensive for most. New World raid carried out in Blenheim at 3pm then on to the Top 10 Holiday Park in Picton for the last night where a BBQ was held and "awards" were given by the Martins to all party members for misdeeds or misdemeanours and, of course, some idiot went for yet another run. Sunday 9th and back over to the North Island on a super calm day and home having walked well over 100km plus travelled over 3,500km.

3 Wednesday 27th was a long travel day with a detour at Whakapohai to see the "Cable Boat" and 10million sand-flies which were fought off till Haast was reached for smoko. Passed through Mount Aspiring national park then drove parallel to the Haast River passing Roaring Bull Falls then the flat, wide gravelly river flood plain and later a gorge. The many shelter belts around Makarora indicated the windiness of the area before Lakes Wanaka and Hawea then tried to have lunch at "Puzzling World" in Wanaka – no food on sale!

Stopped briefly in Cardrona to view the historic hotel then were intrigued by the bridges all being numbered (not named), as were the snow-chain fitting bays as we got over the pass – fantastic views of Frankton and Queenstown from the top. Interesting brake-smelling descent down endless zig-zags with warning notice near the bottom to "Test Your Brakes Now"! Hit Queenstown at 4pm where Colin was sent packing to the Medical Centre with a swollen jaw whilst the rest raided the supermarket. Continued on down the lake, with disgusting smoke-belching steamer considered not to be too environmentally acceptable, past Blanket Bay to arrive at the Glen Orchy holiday camp before 5:30pm.

Dropped off at 9am on Thursday 28th at the Routeburn Shelter in Mount Aspiring Park where the palatial shelter and loos were inspected – all a bit over the top and must have cost a fortune. Carried out anti-didymo boot spraying before setting off on the much manicured Routeburn Track. Three days were spent on the track with the rain starting as the Routeburn Falls hut was reached and then it never stopped. The full report on this tramp will be on the web site soon but suffice to say that we did consider renaming ourselves the Taupo High Altitude Sub Aqua Club – not much scenery on view but waterfalls were majestic or stunning and quite frightening at times. Hobbit No2 quite disappointed as her Oringi raincoat leaked like a sieve whilst the rest were acceptably good. Overall, a good tramp with all quoted times easily met and all emerging at the Divide with half an hour or so behind the first out. On exiting at the Divide a short trip made to Milford as some members of the party had never been before – the rain did not let us down and continued to pour meaning the waterfalls were really spectacular.

A snack was had at Milford where the waitress came up and said she recognised several TTC people – she was Dutch and had met up with TTC whilst on the Waikaremoana Great Walk in 2006. Drove on into Te Anau to the holiday park and all ate out at The Ranch and whilst doing so the heavens opened and there was a cloud burst with the street being flooded as were some houses.

Sunday 2nd March was washing and drying day with Felicity taking top prize for effort and endurance in the washing room. The bunk room was like a Chinese Laundry but eventually most gear was considered dry enough to set off on the Kepler on Monday morning. A lot of shopping was done along with trips to the cinema and other time-fillers; again someone went for a run to avoid exercise-withdrawal symptoms - from Te Anau to the Control Gates and back.

Monday to Wednesday was spent on the Kepler Track and the weather gods were fully appeased and supplied the best days imaginable for viewing the wondrous scenery on this walk. Day 1 was made easy by taking the boat across the lake to Brod Bay and all made it to the Luxmore Hut in very good time indeed – even the Hobbit who had a quick trot back down the hill and up again when the camera was lost for the second time; again it was found!

Day 2 just could not have been better with fantastic photo opportunities for all – apart from the Hobbit as his camera failed! Some mutterings were to be heard about ill-prepared runners when one lady asked if the water at the Hanging Valley Shelter could be drunk – she had absolutely nothing with her! Everyone enjoyed the day's walk but several did say the knee and toe torture of the 97 zig-zags down to the Iris Burn Hut took the edge off things for them

4 Day 3 was the long one with over 22km being tackled plus having to negotiate a couple of streams with bridges washed out, one very large landslip area plus a rough, steep up-and-over where the path had collapsed and was closed. A snack-lunch was had at the Moturau Hut surrounded by school kids who had walked in and were building huts in the forest and having a ball. Rainbow Reach was reached by all by 2pm then all returned to the holiday park in Te Anau for the night.

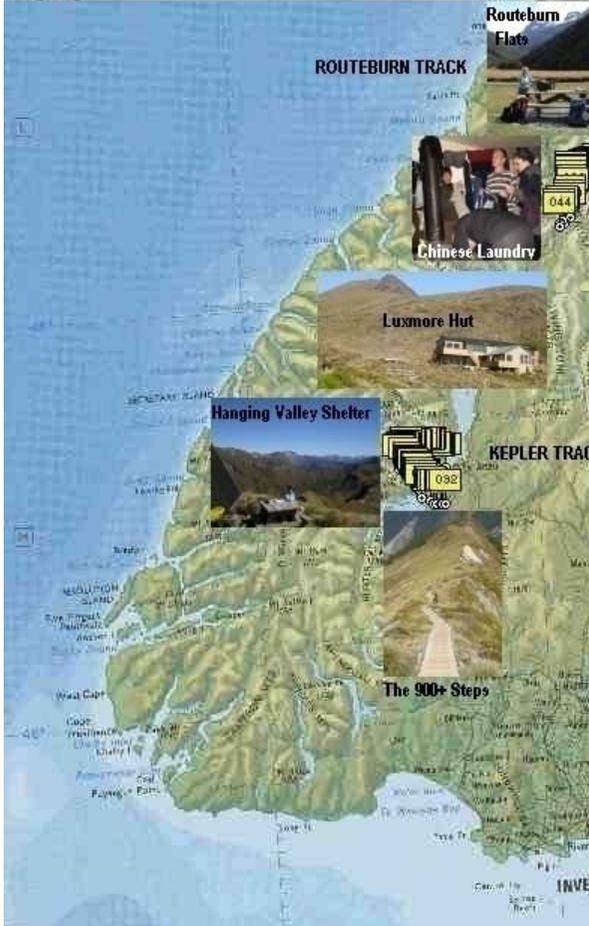
Thursday Mar 6th was spent travelling and sight-seeing from Te Anau to Twizel via Queenstown, Mossburn, Athol and the gold fields in Otago as well as passing deer farms, seeing wind-farms and wondering if the Romans had been in the area as the roads were so straight. A comfort stop plus smoko taken at Arrowtown which was considered quaint but expensive though the Chinese Gold Camp was intriguing.



Cable Boat



Bernie Hat Hunt
MOUNT COOK



6 One of the noticeable events mid-morning on Friday, north of Geraldine, was the "humpy" bridges over the Rangitika River plus the huge, wide windbreak hedges. The agricultural potential of the areas passed through was very good with virtually every form of irrigation seen from basin and channels for flood to high-tech centre pivots - the farmer and the soil scientist had long discussions on these developments. A change in route was taken to drop Bernie at Christchurch airport to allow him to go visit his sick brother in Wellington whilst the main party headed for Pukeko Junction for smoko. By this time some wall-to-wall vineyards had been noticed and then there was a cycle race to pass - some really bad driving and overtaking seen here demonstrating the impatience of some drivers - unlike the TTC who were driven expertly throughout the tour! Then the Kaikoura Ranges came in view as we passed through the Alpine Triangle with conifers on the slopes and native broadleaf species in the valleys.

6 Hobbit No 2 was happy when the bus did not stop at the A.J.Hackett bungy for her birthday treat. Drove down the side of Lake Dunston, up and over the Lindis Pass, lunched at Omarama then on to Twizel where a birthday cake was supplied for Hobbit 2 and several bottles of wine were disposed of and, as usual, someone went for a run.

Friday was spent in the Mount Cook area then travelling to Geraldine. At Mount Cook all, including Colin, walked in past the Mueller Glacial Lake to the Hooker Glacial Lake - smoko being taken at the Sticking Stream Shelter - where the scenery was fantastic. Despite any tall stories being told there were no penguins on the ice floes on the lakes. On the return most stopped off at the Memorial and were reminded just how inhospitable Mount Cook can be. Lunch was taken near the Old Mountaineers café before a side trip was taken by driving in then walking the few minutes to the edge of the Tasman Glacier Lake.

After lunch it was back on the road up through the flat, dry barren Otago Plains passing Lake Tekapo, the ancient Church of the Good Shepherd and McKenzie's dog then over Burkes Pass in to greener more fertile areas and on into Geraldine for the night.

Trampers: (with TTC awards given or comments relevant to this outing): Colin McLeod (driver), Jill and Dave Martin (organisers), Peter (money-man) and Kelvin (jaffa) Drew, Felicity "Nancy" Clancy (washer-woman), Ken Sutcliffe (where did I leave my beer this time?), Eric Carr (two TT- issued speeding tickets), Val Wilkinson (blue rinse) and Isabel (highly visible Hobbit 2) and Austin (gadget man and stirrer Hobbit 1) Hutcheon