

1.1.2016 Queenstown, 25 Mile Beach

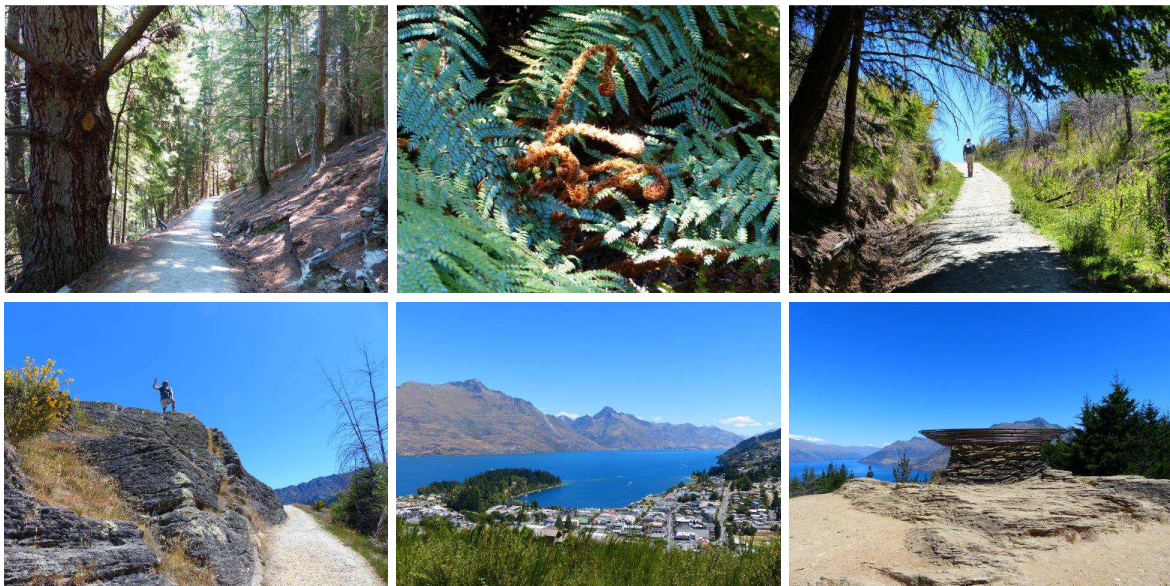
Happy New Year!! After our breakfast we drive back to Queenstown. It seems to be even busier here than yesterday...

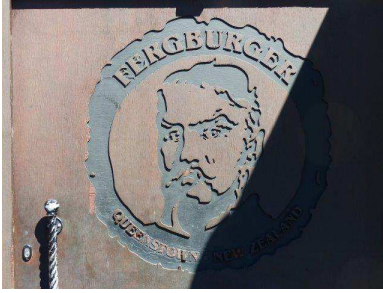


We want to visit 'Bespoke Kitchen' which has been voted the "Best Café New Zealand 2016". Indeed, it all looks very yummy and it is very crowded, too. If we had known that, we wouldn't have eaten our muesli this morning.

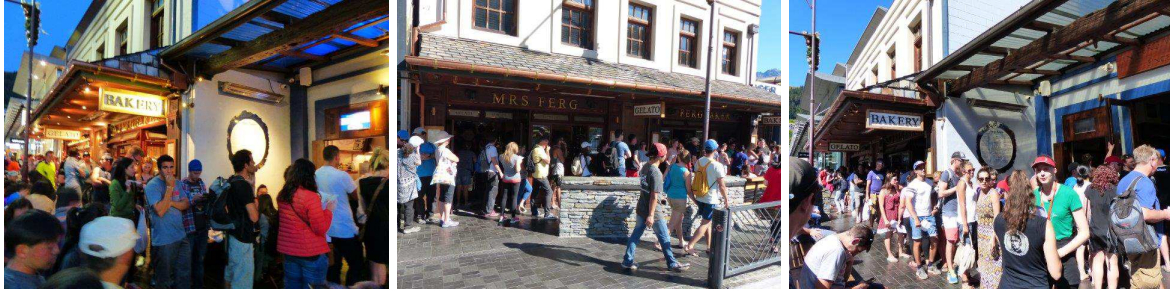


To burn off our calories we go for the two hours Queenstown Hill Walk and enjoy the nice scenery and views of the city.



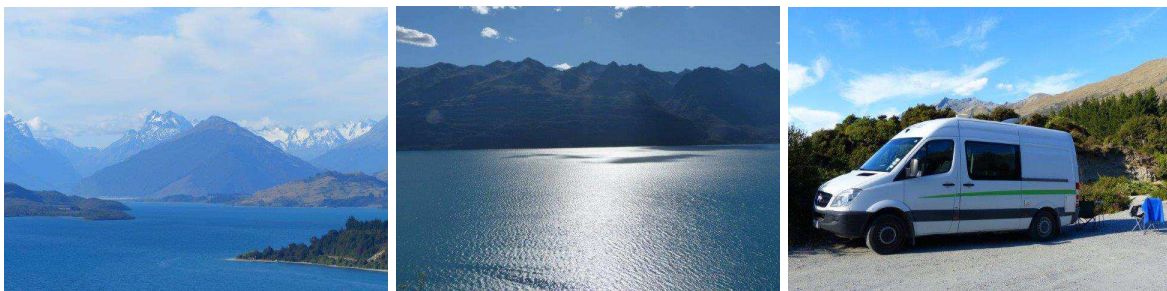


Already yesterday we were watching the long queues in front of „Fergburger“, there are long lines at any time of the day. Amazing how hungry customers wait patiently for an hour to be able to eat a burger. This phenomenon was CNN even worth an article (<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/02/12/travel/fergburger-new-zealand/>). We are not that patient and rather have a Ferg pie without having to wait for an hour.



It is time to leave the hustle and bustle of Queenstown, we want to camp at the „25 Mile Beach“, a DOC Campsite (Department of Conservation) at Wakatipu North of Queenstown.

Here we try for the first time the shower in the campervan – it works perfectly fine. All is good, except that we are back to sandfly-country. These bastards eat us alive...



Werner goes to work and comes back soon thereafter with our dinner, a landlocked salmon.



2.1.2016 Glenorchy, Paradise, Elfin Bay

In order to get to paradise one has to pass through Glenorchy first. We arrive there at 11am and find out today is horse racing day. No wonder there was so much traffic on the – usually quiet – road to Glenorchy, at the very North end of Lake Wakatipu.

Many horses and spectators are present, there is an excited vibe in the air...



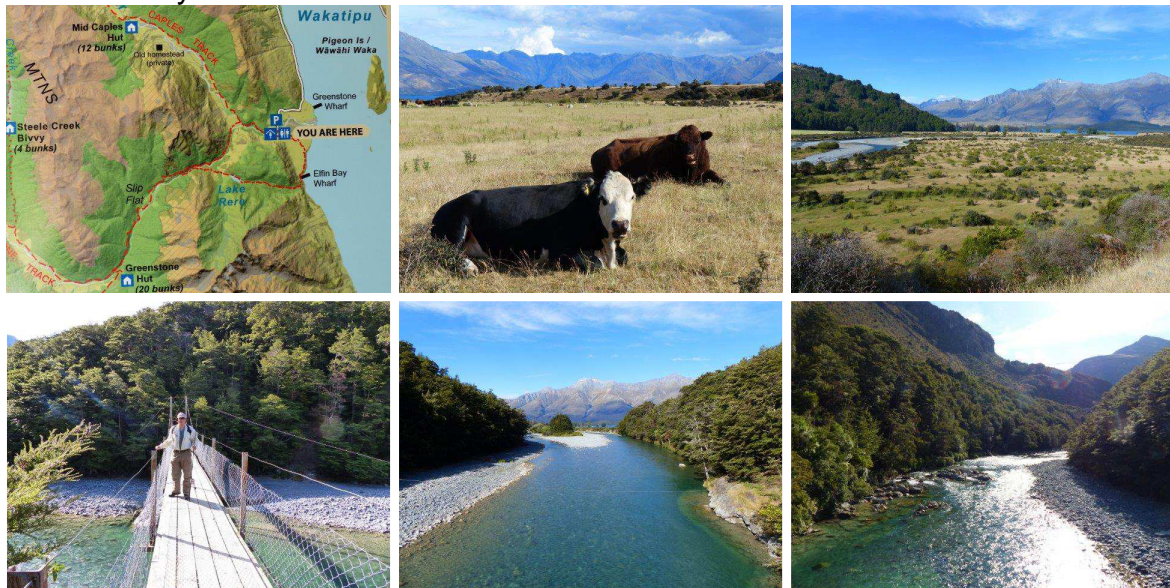
We wait for the 12pm race: The contestants have to take off their saddles and go back to the starting line 300m away. For the race they have to ride to their saddles, put them on and race back. The fastest back to the starting line has won. Not all horses do what they have to do, but all complete the race – no matter with or without saddle or with or without rider. What a fun game to watch!



Afterwards we indeed reach paradise. This Dart River valley is very beautiful. Also a few scenes of „Lord of the Rings“ have been filmed here.



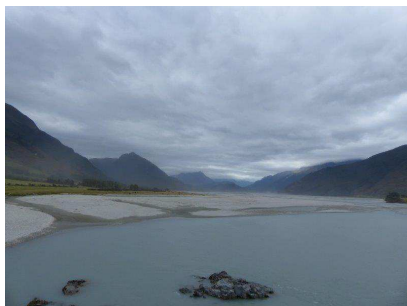
Our final destination for today is the Greenstone campsite on the other (West) side of Lake Wakatipu – it is almost directly across our campsite from yesterday. From this parking lot the Greenstone and the Capler track start. For our evening walk we walk to the Elin Bay Wharf.



Werner takes his fishing line along and secures us another two yummy landlocked salmon.



3.1.2016 Queenstown



The weather has changed, a very strong wind is blowing with only 16C. What a change to yesterday's summer day.

We have to drive back the same way we came yesterday via Glenorchy. The wind is blowing up impressive dust clouds, it looks like the landscape is on fire. Half of the dust seems to end in our car though.

Since we come through Queenstown anyways, we go one more time to Bespoke Kitchen, who knows when we will be back...After all the errands we had to do (the

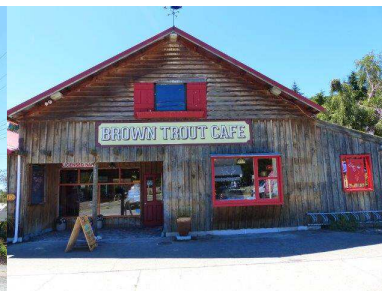
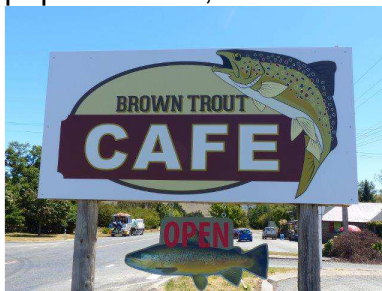
usual grocery, fuel, water) it's already late and the weather bad, so we drive back to our well tested place at the Shotover Bridge.

4.1.2016 Kingston, Southern Mavora Lake

It is amazing how the weather changes every day – under clear blue sky and fresh wind we leave Queenstown and drive South along Lake Wakatipu. Shortly before Kingston we pause and enjoy the view of the lake.



We have been driving the same route years ago, we remember and compare. There has been quite some development, many new housing areas have grown around popular towns, there are also a lot of new cafes and restaurants. Also in little Athol,



where the Brown Trout Café opened 2015. A café with such a name – of course we had to stop. The coffee was really good, locally sourced, and they had wifi, too.

Spontaneously we decide to drive to Lake Mavora, as we have never been there. It has a DOC campsite; little camping spots have been set up around the lake, some are in the forest with little fire places. It cost NZ\$6 per person per night, with self registration, the money has to be put into an envelope and dropped into the honesty box.



We are in the middle of nowhere in the forest, freshly showered, for dinner we have fresh fish cooked on the campfire... Picturebook camping...



5.1.2016 Te Anau

The Lake Mavora is separated into a Southern and a Northern part. We camped at Southern Mavora Lake and in the morning go to explore the Northern Mavora Lake. Many local Kiwi campers are crowding the area, this place seems to be a hidden gem. It is a very colourful scenery with boats, water ski, kayaks, quads.

Early afternoon we reach Fjordland and Te Anau at Lake Te Anau. Lake Te Anau is the second biggest lake of NZ's (the biggest is Lake Taupo on the North Island).



Te Anau is small nice town, it even has a free gas BBQ at the yacht port. We choose the cafe at the lake, not in town, as we want to enjoy the view. However the tour busses just park in front of the terrace and block the view. The drivers even let the engines run! We were not amused!



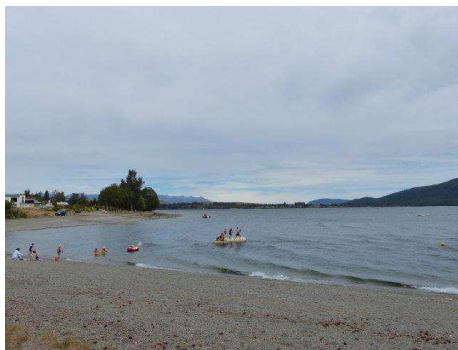
Almost every bigger town has now a dump station that also provides fresh water. Progress in camping! This makes it all much more convenient.

For tonight's camping we drive to the DOC campsite Henry Creek North of Te Anau. It is located in a little forest directly at the lake, a few minutes walk down there only.



After our dinner Werner goes fishing, but despite his most beautiful bait they won't bite...

6.1. Te Anau, Lake Monowai

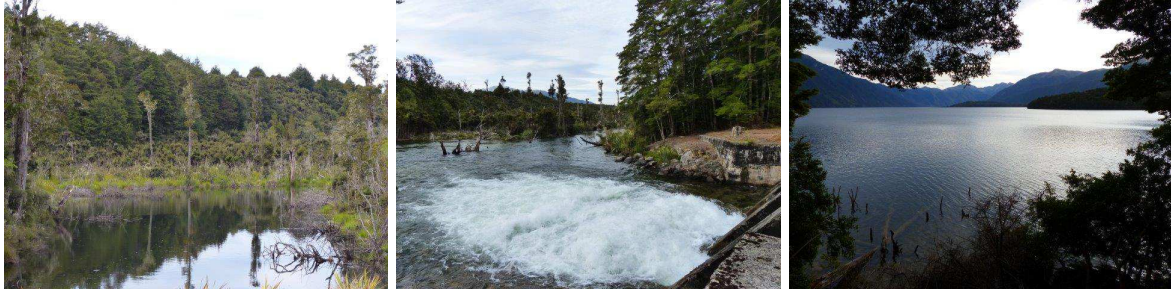


From Henry Creek we have to drive back through Te Anau; so we stop for another picnic at the lake before heading of to Lake Monowai. The children are having fun in the water, although it's not remarkably warm... neither the water nor the air.

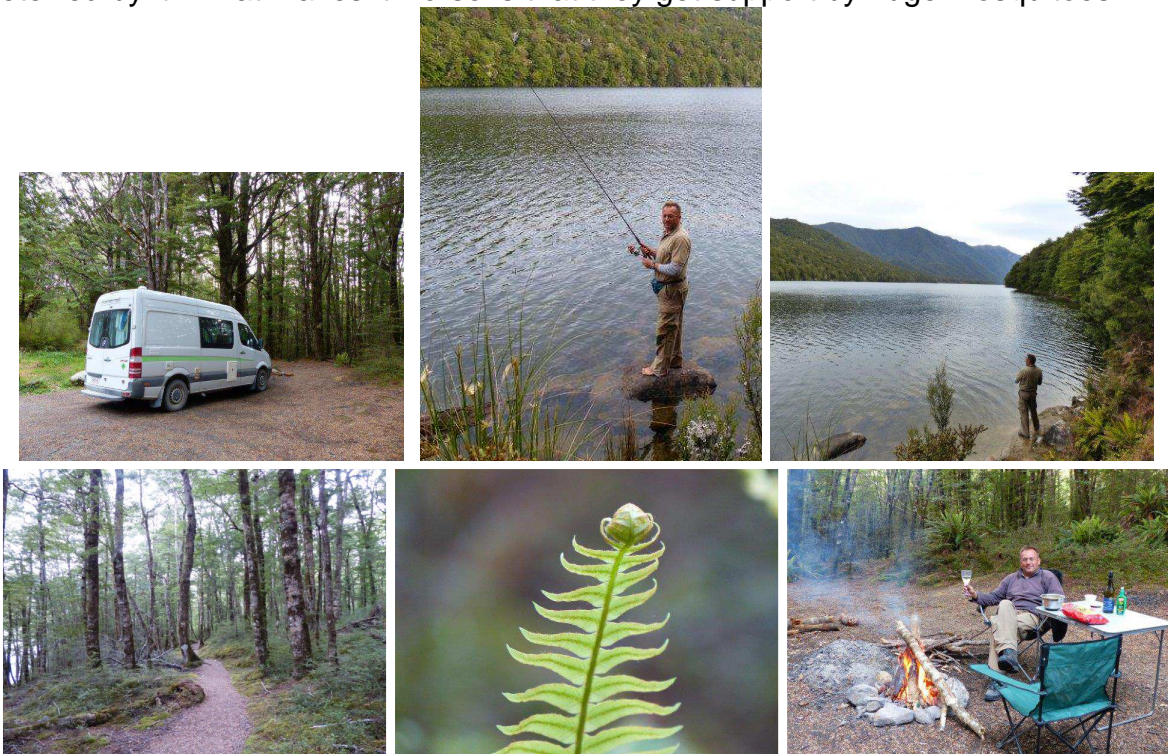
On the way to Lake Monowai one passes through the little town Manapuri at Lake Manapuri.



At Lake Monowai there is one of the oldest water powerplants of New Zealand (from 1925). The water level had been raised and dead trees are sticking out of the water, but already much less visible than during our last visit.

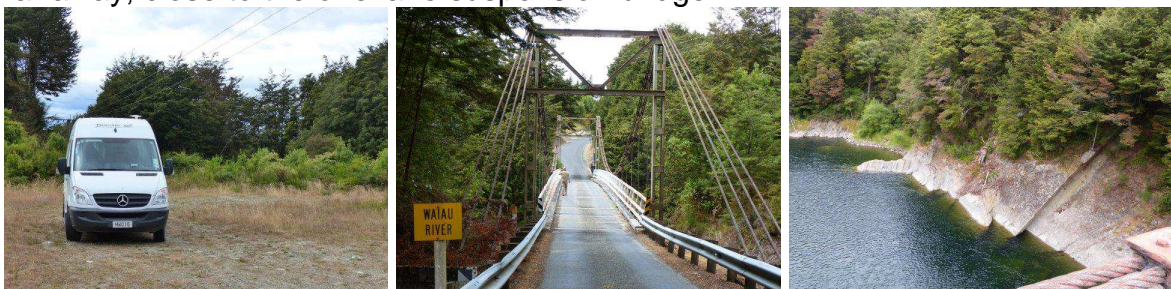


The free DOC campsite near the lake in the forest is very idyllic – if there just wouldn't be so many sand flies... Werner goes fishing, Dewi walks to the lookout. For dinner we have a camp fire, although unfortunately those sandfly are not really deterred by it. What makes it worse is that they get support by huge mosquitoes...



7.1. Lake Hauroko

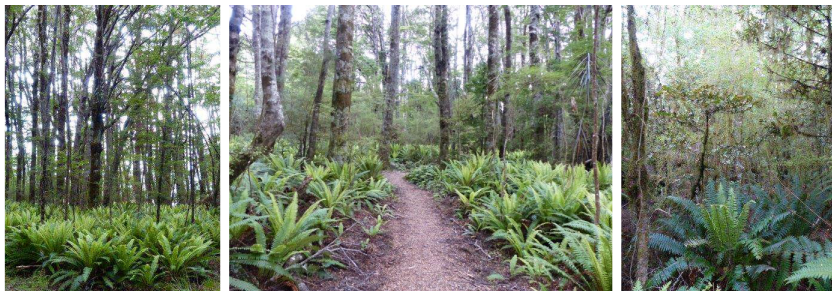
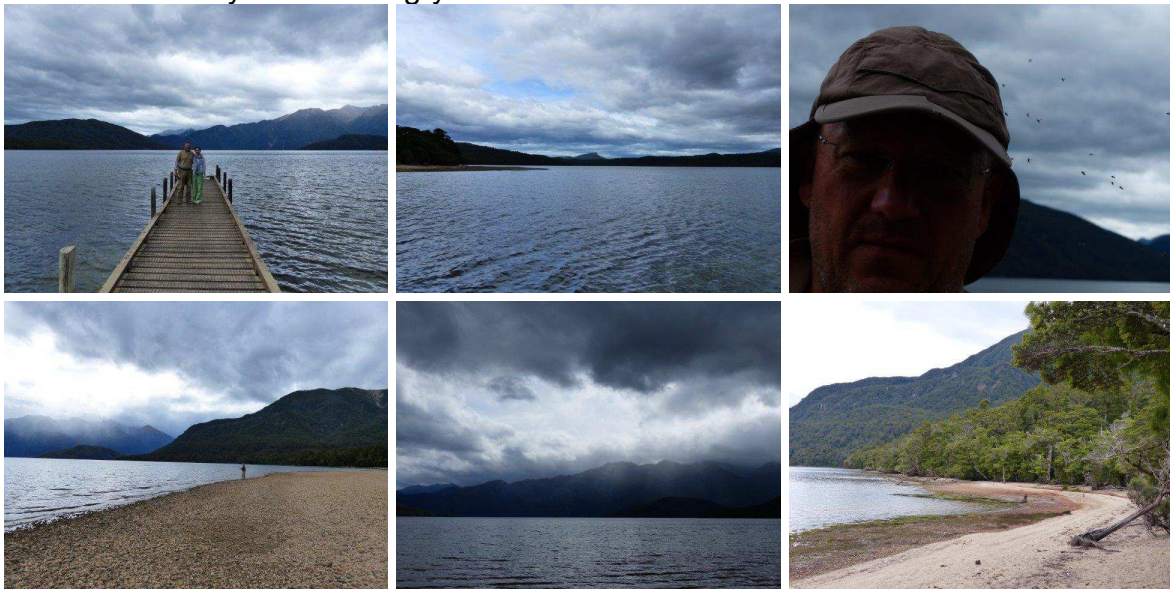
Oh what a night! Until 2 am we had to chase mosquitoes, somehow they constantly managed to enter our car and attacked us – loud as fighter jets – relentlessly. Every 5 minutes we had to turn on the lights again to hunt down new mosquitoes. At 2 am we declared defeat and fled the scene. Luckily in the dark we found a good spot not far away, close to the one lane suspension bridge.



Today there will be not much driving, we want to visit Lake Hauroko, the deepest lake of NZ, located in the Fjordland Nationalpark. On our way we pass through Clifden, from here we departed years ago to Lake Poteriteri. The famous suspension bridge was officially opened in 1899 and reopened newly renovated in 2013.



Lake Hauroko is not only the deepest lake, but it seems also the one with the most sandflies... They are so hungry for fresh blood ☹️



A short bush walk leads through the forest next to the lake; the fern in the forest is always so interesting.

For the night we drive back to the Thicke Bush Picnic area, only a few kilometers away.

An open gras paddock with *sigh* almost no sand flies and mosquitoes.

