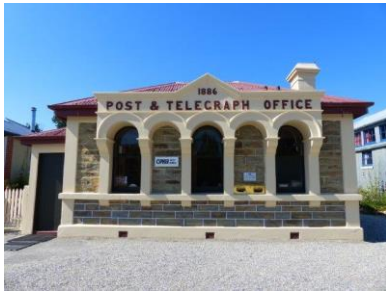


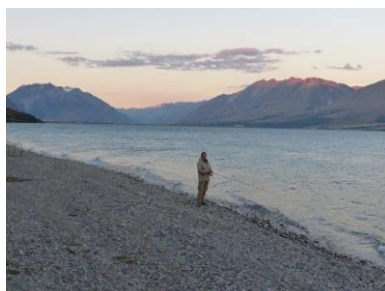
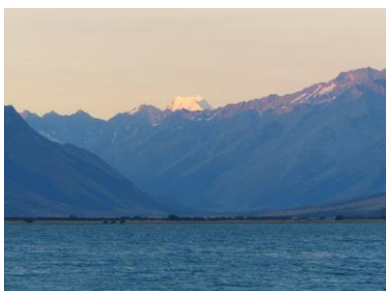
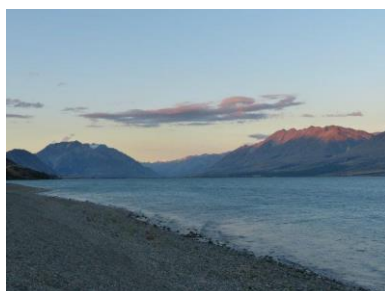
31.1.2016 Ophir, Lake Ohau

Ophir, only a few kilometers away from Lauder, is the place with the biggest temperature differences in the whole of New Zealand. Summer can be the hottest with up to +35C and winter can be the coldest with minus 20C. Ophir has the oldest still active post office established in 1886 and meanwhile a really nice restaurant 'Pitches Store' that draws many visitors.



The bridge Dan O'Connell spanning over the Manuherikia river has been built in the 1870ies! And is still standing...

We have to drive the same way North which we drove down South not long ago. In the evening we reach Lake Ohau and take camp at the Round Bush Campground in really beautiful scenery. The strong wind luckily won't let any of the bloody sandflies near us.

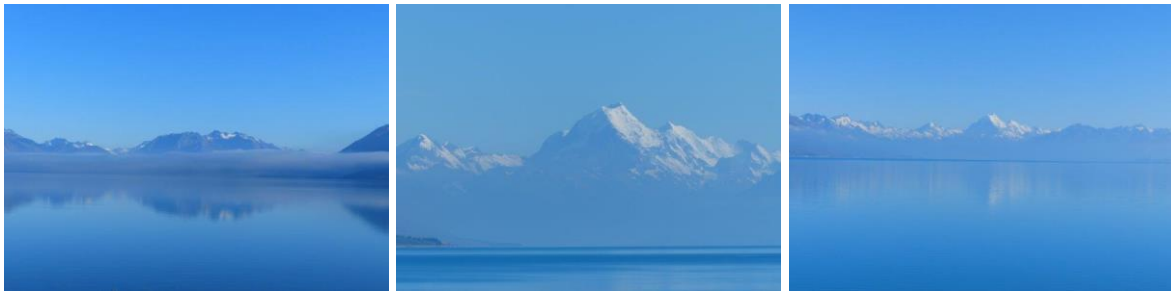


1.2.2016 Lake Ohau, Lake Tekapo, Church Farm

Lake Ohau really is a picturesque place!



Via Lake Tekapo and Timaru we get back to Church Farm. Today we have clear blue sky and a great view of Mt Cook („Aoraki” in Maori), which is the highest mountain of New Zealand. Until 1991 the official height was 3755m, but due to a huge landslide and erosion the official height is now only 3724m. Unfortunately, every year several mountain climbers fall to their fate from Mt Cook...



It's good to be back home 😊

4.2.2016 Christchurch, Kaiapoi

Finally we are on our way to the North Island! We almost run the risk to never leave Church Farm and stay on the South Island until the end of our holidays...

A last visit in Christchurch and at the „Re-Start Container Mall“ is a must. As usual, a lot of construction is going on, rebuilding the city to its former beauty and even better. The new buildings are very chic and modern, the central bus station looks almost like a piece of art and is well thought through with separate boarding gates like at the airport.



We still drive to Kaiapoi 20km behind Christchurch, where we look for the local freedom camping site. It is allowed to stay overnight on the parking place of the Kaiapoi Club and after some search we find out it is indeed the parking space of the Kaiapoi Club and nothing else...

5.2.2016 Kaikoura, Wairau Rivermouth

We have to cover some distance and drive North on State Highway 1 along the East Coast. In Kaikoura we have lunch at the 'Original Kaikoura Seafood' booth. Fresh seafood, lobster... this attracts many Asian customers. Maybe therefore the food is accompanied with rice instead of spuds or bread?



Fully recharged we visit the seal colony in Ohau shortly behind Kaikoura. It is always fascinating to watch seals. We are lucky again and see also small seal puppies who are frolicking in the water. In winter, these small seals come up the Ohau river and play in the Ohau waterfall. However, now in summer unfortunately no seal is at the waterfall.



We still drive until shortly behind Blenheim. There is a nice freedom camp site at the Wairau rivermouth, inclusive fishing opportunity.



6.2.2016 Wairau Rivermouth, Picton, Wellington



The early bird catches the worm. It was worth getting out of bed early, Werner catches two Kahawai (Eastern Australian Salmon) this morning. These fishes are real fighters and resisted for minutes before losing their fight.

At 12:30 p.m. we reach Picton, here at the Queen Charlotte Sound the ferry from the North Island arrives. Latest at 13:15 p.m. we have to check in for the ferry. Enough time for a quick coffee as Picton is pretty but small.



The ferry to Wellington takes 3,5 hours and it was quiet ferry ride. First the ship went through the Marlborough Sound of the South Island, later a long time through Wellington Harbour.





At 18:00 pm. we are allowed to disembark from the ferry in Wellington. Without any break we go directly to the free campervan parking near the airport. Here are so many campervans, it looks a bit like at a camping exhibition. For dinner we have the freshly caught Kahawai – a yummy fish, tastes a bit like Makarel.



7.2.2016 Wellington

Today is sightseeing day. We visit the most important must-dos of Wellington, i.e. the parliament nicknamed ‚Beehive‘, because it does indeed look like a beehive, which was finished 1980 after 11 years of construction; the old government building which is constructed totally out of wood, even the columns, but doesn't look like a wooden building at all. We continue our walk along the main business streets Lambton Quay and Willis Street; we take the Cable Car, which is bringing people up the hill since 1902. Cities with a city beach always have certain flair. On the beach promenade Oriental Parade there were an incredible amount of joggers, we have never seen so many ever before.





Late afternoon we leave the capital to get to our planned camp site at Lake Wairarapa. To drive on the State Highway 2 is much less stressing than on SH 1... We pass by the Stuart Macaskill dam, which has been built in the 80ies to provide drinking water for Wellington and surrounding cities.



Via the Rimutaka Ridge we reach Featherstone, where we turn to Lake Wairarapa. The crossing of the Rimutaka Ridge was a rite of passage for about 60,000 soldiers who were finishing their training at the military camp in Featherstone and then sent into World War I. Featherstone was at that time the biggest military camp in Australasia. Nowadays this march is re-enacted.



The Lake Wairarapa See (literally translated ,shimmering waters’) is a quite shallow but big lake (approx 8000ha). Actually it is also a quiet lake – but today there were quite a few motocross bikers having fun; even kids on kiddie bikes come racing by.



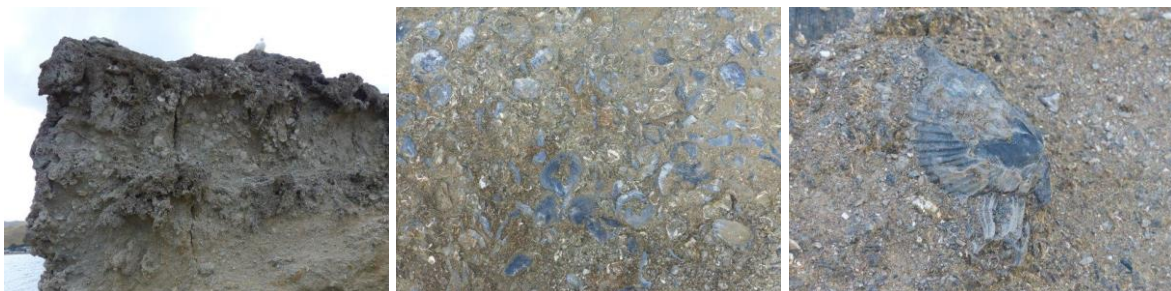
8.2.2016 Carterton, Castlepoint

Along State Highway 2 we drive through Greytown, which was the first inland town build in New Zealand. Many pretty houses in Victorian style line up along the road. We pass through Carterton and Masterton, the latter being the biggest town and supply center of the Wairarapa Region. There we take a turn towards the coast, we want to get to Castlepoint. The weather is just grey in grey, we take our time.

The coast of Wairarapa is one of the most remote of the North Island. Castlepoint is a real special place, harbouring a protected lagoon, a light house and the Castlepoint itself, at 162m height. Good that we took the detour down here.



Much more fascinating however is, that the whole rock consist of fossile seashells which are over 2 Million years old – still considered ,young’ in geological terms however... About 2,4Mio years ago, this reef was lifted to reveal these treasures. Obviously, similar fossils are only found in the deep seas of the South Island.





Just in time for dinner, the sun comes out for short episode.



Today, Werner was successful and brings back a Red Cod for supper.

9.2. Pongaroa, Wimbledon, Porangahau

During our morning walk around the Castle Rock we walk around the whole lagoon and have pretty sights of rock, lagoon and sea from all different angles.



Its time to drive to Hawkes Bay. We pass through wild Pongaroa and ponder how it is to live in such a remote place... At least, local clients take off their shoes before entering the local store!



Finally we have been to Wimbledon! At the school we discover a little swimming pool, which is open. We just complained how hot it is, suddenly the pool appears. 50cents are to be dropped in the honesty box, and then the pool is ours.



Last attraction of the day is the place with the longest name place in the world. It is indeed even longer than the famous place in Wales, the Guinness book of records proves it. The name means „The place where Tamatea, the man with the big knees, who slides, climbs and swallows mountains, known as the land eater, plays the flute for his loved ones”.



For the night we camp at the freedom campsite near the beach of Porangahau.



10.2. Waipukurau, Waipawa, Hastings, Haumoana

At 'Bucks Veg Market' in Waipukurau we discover Kamo Kamo, a pumpkin-like vegetable which is much more juicy than normal pumpkin. We are instructed to eat Kamo Kamo mashed up with salt and pepper. It tastes quite refreshing indeed.

In Hastings the passenger door won't close! Something with the door stopper is wrong, nothing we can do, but to call our rental company again. After two hours of wait, Al shows up and can solve our problem. However, instead of using the saw, he rather took out the broken door stopper hinge with the help of Werner.



Hastings is an Art Deco town because during the big earthquake of 1931 Hastings – and neighbouring city Napier – have been destroyed and then rebuilt in the Art Deco and Spanish Mission style, which has been fashionable at that time. Hastings is also an agricultural centre, with apples being an important crop, but not only.

At 17:00 p.m. the car door is done and we can take a walk through the city. Of course everything is closed already.



We still drive to the coast to the freedom camp site in Haumoana.



For dinner we have the last portion of hare. A warning from the kitchen: We ask for your kind attention, as this is a natural product traces of shotgun pellets are possibly to be found.



While Werner takes his fishing rod for a dip, Dewi is having a walk.

