



Hi Everyone

It's back in full "chained to the desk mode" here in Leeston now that I'm back from Mongolia. Well, I guess that's not totally accurate but more about that below.... also do read to the end to find out more about our Book-A-Friend Bonus and our carbon offsetting news.

### My most recent tour

I took five adventurous Kiwis with me to Mongolia in June and in short if you had been thinking about coming but didn't, you missed an amazing trip! The feedback included "awesome", "life-changing" (think one our member is considering a second career as a Mongolia yak herder) and "by far exceeding all expectations". So, you can't do much better than that. I'm so glad that Moray and I worked hard to get this tour up and running with such a small group. The number actually worked really well – especially during our many visits to Mongolia and Kazakh gers (the yurt-like tents used throughout the country). I think we were all surprised to find how many people are still living a truly nomadic lifestyle (even if they shift camps using trucks!).

There were so many highlights: Our camp beside the river in the Kazakh area of far western Mongolia was amazing. There was just us and a wonderful camping team – meal times and evening parties were all spent together, so we all got to know each other really well...so much so that the camp manager was quite keen to come home with me (but that is another story!)





We went horse riding, tried archery and perhaps best of all spent a morning with one of Mongolia's champion eagle hunters. What an amazing man and bird, plus we had lunch with his family too.



The South Gobi was stunning too – we stayed in one of the best camps in the country where we luxuriated in our gers with en suite bathrooms and were treated to a regional nadaam (festival) featuring wrestling, archery and horse-riding. Here were only a handful of overseas visitors there so it was a really authentic local experience.

We ended the tour in another wonderful camp where for most of the time we were the only guests – this was in an alpine meadow above the town of Kara Korum. There were cuckoos in the trees around us and herds of horses and sheep regularly wandered past.

We also tried ferment mares' milk and local vodka, Mongolia hotpot, climbed on to the head of the enormous Genghis Khan statue outside Ulan Bataar. saw marmots and rare Mongolian horses and were among the first people ever to see the skull of a dinosaur recently exposed on a cliff face!

### **On the home front**

It's never a dull moment at home either. My little grandson Nathaniel continues to delight us, and we're now officially approved child carers as Natey comes to stay occasionally when Rachel gets back into some teaching (relief days at his point). Derek is now a great grandfather for the fourth time too, after his granddaughter Sam and husband Josh welcomed baby Sage into their family.



Meanwhile, our household is set for a temporary expansion too. My son Jono and his partner Em are coming to live with us for the rest of the year. Jono, who was a paramedic in Wellington, has a new job with St John Ambulance in Christchurch. Em is going to continue to complete her Early Childhood teaching degree and do some part-time teaching in the district and when Jono's not at work he will be finishing off a cardiology paper with the Otago Medical School. They hope to be able to save up to buy their first house, or at least have time to find a good rental (never an easy prospect these days!) We're going to be setting up a second office with all that study going on! We're so excited to have them come back to the Mainland and really looking forward to having them come to live with us (They are both very good cooks which means Derek's looking forward to live-in chefs when I'm away!)





## **This Month's Feature Tours**

### **Explore Colombia**

**Feb 19 – March 7, 2020**

**\$16,995 pp, share twin**

This tour is filling fast so if you are interested in joining me with one of the first New Zealand groups in recent years to explore Colombia do get in touch with Moray soon. My tour is designed to reflect the rich diversity of Colombia – from its national parks on the Caribbean and in the mountains, it's fascinating history, abundant wildlife and intriguing array of architecture and cultures.

We hope to see pink dolphins, flamingos, visit the World Heritage sites of San Agustin and Cartagena and spend some time on a gorgeous Caribbean island. We will also stay on one of the best birdwatching lodges in all of South America, which is high in the Sierra Nevada mountains above the Caribbean Sea.

The tour cost includes all meals while on tour and all tipping.





### Romania and the Balkans

**May 3 – May 24, 2020**

**\$11,495 (approx, pp, share twin)**

This region of what was formerly known as Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia will take us through six countries, including Europe's newest nation, Kosovo, and includes Serbia, which is one of the least visited countries on the continent.

The tour is actually a combination of two very popular tours that I've run in recent years and is packed with a diversity of cultures, religions and landscapes, as well as providing a wonderful historical overview of an area with an incredibly complex and long history.

My tour begins in Romania before we head to Bulgaria, Serbia, Kosovo, Albania and finally the newly renamed North Macedonia. Tour members who have been with me before in this region have loved it and been surprised by how much there is to see. It's also much less visited than the rest of Europe - and Europe without the hordes has to be a good thing!

There will be some excellent meals out, along with time to do some independent sightseeing and a chance to eat out in countries where excellent meals and wines usually cost much less than in NZ!





### Jill's Journey Club

Welcome to eight more Jill's Journey Club members. All these keen travellers have been on at least two Jill Worrall Tours. We're now heading towards 80 members, which is wonderful and I'm always very grateful for all tour members' support. The new members are Patricia Garford, Derek and Carol Barnes, David Wilson, Lois and Duncan Farmer, Dawn and John Scott.

### Book A Friend Bonus

Moray and I are aware that many of you have recommended my tours to friends and colleagues. So, we are delighted to be introducing a special bonus scheme as a way to say thank you for continuing to spread the word about my tours.

From the date of receipt of this newsletter, if you recommend a tour to anyone and they then book and pay for a tour **you will receive a \$500 discount per person** off the next Jill Worrall Tour you book. It is important that after you have made a recommendation that you do let Moray know as soon as possible so that she can record who has recommended whom!

### Carbon offsetting

For some time now I've been researching ways in which I can offset the carbon emissions created by my many long-haul flights.

I'm now happy to say I've made contact with the World Land Trust and believe their track record, methodology and effectiveness make them the best possible organisation to recommend to tour members who would also like to find a way to offset carbon emissions created through flying..

It is probably sufficient to say that one of their four patrons is Sir David Attenborough (ex-cricketer David Gower is another!).

The World Land Trust has been operating carbon offsetting programmes since 2005 and works all over the globe to protect tropical forest habitats and other critically endangered habitats that store large volumes of carbon in their vegetation and soil.

The trust works with local partner NGOs to protect treated habitats and so far, has bought 770,000 acres of endangered forest and other habitats and has brought about four million acres of forest in total under careful management.



The process is very simple. Check out their website and then click on the Carbon Calculator tab. Then all you do is type in where you are flying from and to, whether it's a return flight or not and the calculation is made. For example, I tested it out for a return flight from Auckland to Beijing. That generated four tonnes of carbon, which equates to \$113NZ. I can then send this to the trust which will use this money in one of their current projects which are saving tropical forest in Ecuador and in the Annamite Lowlands in Vietnam.

Their website is: <https://www.worldlandtrust.org/>

And that's all for now! I'll be back in touch in August after my tour to Brazil!

*Jill*

