

## Jill Worrall Tours – August 2020 Newsletter

Hi Everyone

There are more than a few signs of spring around Leeston as I write this, which definitely lifts one's spirits – as does the fact that there has been so much enthusiastic interest in my three November-December tours. Bookings for those tours (more about this below) really is a huge boost after what has been so far, as the Queen so aptly put it some years back, an annus horribilis!

### On the home front

We are all ticking along at Chez Worrall-Burrows-Gray- Meadowcroft. Jono has a new role at St John's and now gets to spend one week out of two out on the ambulance after many months being one of a very small team in charge of rescue helicopter dispatch throughout NZ. He really missed being out in the thick of it! He and Emily are hoping work will start on their new house about 20 minutes from us in about a month. Meanwhile our house is now even more full as they start to accumulate household items for their home! Then, of course, we also are tripping over a mini-John Deere tractor and sometimes a foot-powered car that we borrow regularly from the local toy library for Natey.



*I wonder if Amma and Big D would buy me this for Christmas?*

He loves being outdoors and any mention of going outside he gets his own gumboots on, finds his hat, demands his coat, and if we're being a bit slow brings shoes to us to speed things up. I'm waiting for the garden to burst into spring – often I'm not around to see this so one of the only few benefits of not touring is seeing my garden come into life first hand rather than my photos sent by Derek (who incidentally is very well and currently re-enthused about tracing my family tree having now got back to the 1660s!)

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*If it's fine for adults to drink coffee in their car, I can sit casually in MY car with my morning milk!*

## Tour updates

### The Chathams

My ex-Auckland tour from Nov 12 to Nov 19 now has room for only **ONE** more person - so if you are keen to join me on this tour you do need to contact Moray as soon as possible as Air Chathams needs confirmation of numbers soon and we won't be able to hold that remaining place for much longer.

There are a few more places available on my tour to the Chathams ex-Christchurch (Nov 3 – Nov 10) but again, time is running out to book for this tour as there is so much demand for trips to the Chathams at present and space on flights and on the island is at a premium.



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### The Deep South

The Deep South (this tour departs Dunedin on Nov 26 and finishes in Christchurch on Dec 8) tour is very close to being a confirmed departure but I do have a few places left. One of the very special features of this tour is the fact that we have managed to get cabins on the overnight Doubtful Sound cruise and to stay at the Milford Sound Lodge – both these amazing experiences are very, very hard to secure when overseas tourists are in the country. This really could be a unique chance to see these places when visitor numbers are so low.

Here's a little more about my Doubtful Sound cruise and Milford Sound lodge to whet your appetite!

A really special feature of the Doubtful Sound cruise is that also includes a short journey across beautiful Lake Manapouri then over the sub-alpine Wilmot Pass and down to Deep Cove. All three names are redolent with history and also, in the case of Lake Manapouri, landmark protests between 1969 and 1972 against the proposed raising of the lake for a hydroelectric project. I was at primary school at the time but remember my mother, a normally conservative woman with an inbuilt deference to authority, announcing she was signing the petition against the raising of the lake and would consider lying in front of a bulldozer if necessary.



We will certainly hear about the incredible feat of engineering that involved tunnelling out 1.4 million tonnes of hard rock to create the underground power station and the first tunnel that discharged water into the West Arm of Doubtful Sound.

We will board our overnight cruise vessel in time for an included picnic lunch aboard and then spend the afternoon exploring the fjord. It's more than 40km long with three main arms and is home to a range of wildlife, including a resident large pod of dolphins, fur seals, Fiordland crested penguins and albatross.



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Weather permitting there will be a chance to go kayaking or take a shore excursion by boat. There's a three-course buffet dinner in the evening and we all have en suite cabins for the night. Next morning after breakfast we return to West Arm and journey back to Manapouri.

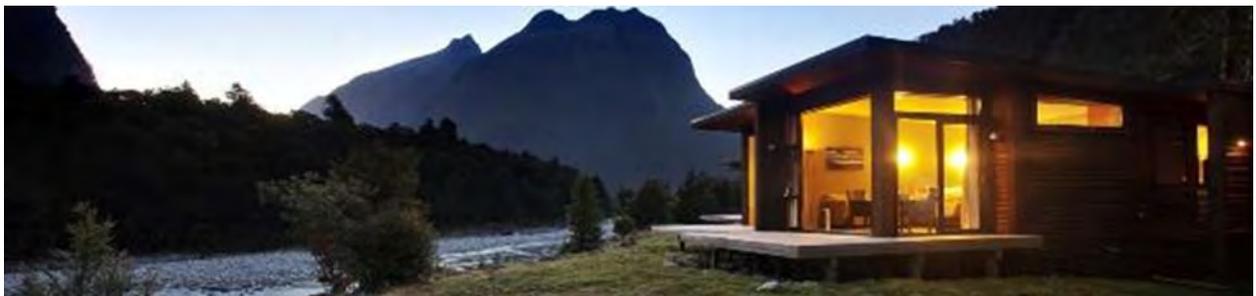
This is one of the most remote corners of NZ and one few people get to explore - it has been on my bucket list for years, especially since about 15 years ago I sailed into the fjord from the sea aboard a large German cruise vessel in a typical Fiordland deluge! I was lucky enough to be on the bridge but the visibility was awful, so I have my fingers crossed for second time lucky!



### A night in Milford Sound

Again, I've been waiting for years to be able to do this – actually stay in Milford Sound (I've overnighted on a boat but never on land). As the luxury Milford Sound Lodge is often totally full with overseas guests it's normally very hard to get in here so this has been my chance! The lodge is just a 1.5km walk from the boat terminal (and thus those amazing views), is right beside the Cleddau River and has its own spectacular views...and great food.

This is one of the few places anywhere where you can stay in comfort inside a World Heritage-designated area. Can't wait for this overnight stay!



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### Australia ....bubble, bubble

My two summer of 2021 Australia tours are completely ready to go. We're just waiting to see what happens over the next few weeks before we officially launch them.

But the full itineraries ARE ready so if you want to just see what I have planned do ask me or Moray to send you one.

As you know, each of my tour itineraries has a list of tour highlights at the end and the highlights for each of these tours is, as they say, as long as your arm.

The Tasmania tour includes a night at the iconic Cradle Mountain Lodge, Port Arthur, wineries, Hobart's Salamanca market, Freycinet Peninsula, Peppermint Bay and Gordon River Wilderness Area cruises and a chance to see rare Aussie wildlife, including platypus and the Tasmanian Devil.



The Great South Western Edge of Western Australia tour takes in Perth, Fremantle (including a Swan River cruise), Margaret River, Fitzgerald River National Park, Recherche Archipelago Wildlife Cruise, the Great Ocean Drive Tourist Route and the National Anzac Centre.



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Both tours have a very good balance of included quality meals and independent time to do your own thing.

If the Australia-NZ bubble does not open in time for us to run these tours in late January-February as currently planned, we will just move them further into 2021.

**The booking process:** All Australia and NZ have been priced competitively so these tours need to be booked directly with Moray.

### A note on money

I know that there's still anxiety out there about deposits and tour payments. As those of you who had booked postponed tours with me this year know we've done everything we can to get back insurance money, flight payments and so on for you.

Without labouring the point, here are a few important things to keep in mind:

- 1) When you pay a deposit and any subsequent payments your money is kept in a client fund account. This money is never, ever touched until we have to pay a third party (such as an airline or a tour supplier).
- 2) Eventually, of course, we do have to pay our suppliers for the services they provide us. Our first course of action will be to post phone the tour BUT we can assure you that if, a tour had to be cancelled by us because of a Covid-19 related situation we will do everything possible to get as much of your tour costs back as we can.
- 3) All our suppliers are trying to be as flexible as possible in terms of payment deadlines so that we can give you, my travellers, as much security and as much time as possible to assess the current situation as we can.

### And meanwhile overseas

I received a lot of positive feedback about what my friends and colleagues overseas are doing as international tourism around the world has taken such a hit. Here's Part 2!



**Xavier Munoz** – (Colombia 2020 and Brazil 2019). Xavier was under full lockdown in his home city of Quito, Ecuador, for many weeks but is now able to get out and about a little into the countryside. He's still enthusiastically planning tours and taking locals out to view wildlife and is even doing some night sky photography and riding his horse He's really keen to bring some fellow birders to NZ once we're all allowed out and is planning something special for me for an Ecuador tour as well!

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**Zlatko Maticevic** – Zlatko spent some of Croatia’s lockdown period in the north of Croatia but is back home now in Dubrovnik. Like everyone else he has no tours and although Dubrovnik is now busier than it was a few months back they now face a resurgence of the virus both in Croatia and in surrounding countries. We talk regularly and all the arrangements for the tours postponed from this year to 2021 are still firmly in place.



**Frank Walsh (Ireland, Morocco and Spain, NZ)** – Frank is really chafing at the bit to get travelling, especially as Ireland is not doing so well at present and there are certainly no walking tours operating. He now has a Kiwi son-in-law who regrettably has influenced Frank to support the Hurricanes rather than the Crusaders but I’m working to reverse this lapse. In the meantime, he’s been helping a son with his oyster/mussel business but says social distancing has taken the “craic” out of his beloved local pub.

That’s it for this month. I do love hearing from you all, so do stay in touch and here’s hoping for better travelling days to come.

Jill