

# Family fun

FOR both visitors and locals, Christchurch can be a fun place for children, and now, halfway through the holidays is exactly when you may need ideas about what to do or where to go. Here are just a few.

How about all the free places? The art galleries and the museum are great, just remember to do them in small portions and visit often.

The Christchurch Botanical Gardens has a superb children's play area and pool - it's easy to spend the day there if you take a picnic lunch (and bread to feed the ducks).

Just down the road are the Boatsheds. It's been a tradition in many families for generations to learn to row or paddle on the Avon. Even the youngest in the family are catered for with a separate child's seat to put in the middle of the canoe. On my last visit we got soaking wet so remember to bring a change of clothes. The Boatsheds has a frequent-user card - make a number of rides on the river (bringing a free change of clothes).

Beaches in Christchurch are fun too, the waves and pier at New Brighton, the cave at Sumner, magic Remembrance to swim between the flags and of course, with all outdoor fun, don't forget to skip, slop, slap.

Orana Park is another day's outing. A picnic lunch among the lions, meerkats, giraffes, zebras and the island of monkeys makes food taste so much better. Star attractions right now are the baby giraffe, pumama, and the baby meerkats. Kids love to have their face painted and becoming a lion or tiger for the day increases the fun of the park, as does the farmyard area where children can touch many of the animals. There are excellent paths (which are being added to by 600m annually) so having a wheelchair or pushchair is no bother and the jump-on jump-off tractor-drawn trailer (included in your ticket price) makes it easy to get around.

Still on the animal theme is Willowbank, where many parents recall their own school visits.

A large number of animals can be touched. Follow deer are eager to be handled and the noisy gibbons can be heard all over the park - not that they can be touched. Even the farmyard cat gets its share of welcome pats along with the highland cattle and goats.

Donkey rides, face-painting and a sausage sizzle were all happening when we visited last weekend. Solid boardwalks make it easy to get around and the damp smell of New Zealand bush is wonderful. Kids will love to get up close and per-

sonal with the variety of animals and birds, especially the water-fowl and eels, that they can feed. The old tractor and other farm things they can clamber over are great fun to the young ones too.

Willowbank has a superb native display and the walk-in kea enclosure and the kiwi area are absolutely the best I've seen in New Zealand. Take your overseas visitors here for a meal and nocturnal tour of the kiwis and I guarantee their satisfaction. This will be the only place they will see kiwi unobstructed by glass unless they are fortunate enough to see one while tramping in the Lewis Pass.

Also a must on this list of holiday activities is the International Antarctic Centre. What a change of temperature as you explore the frozen spaces (they supply thick warm coats for all the family) and for the really brave ones there's a chance to get a blast of cold air which plummets the temperature even lower. The ice slide is very fast and very cold and everyone - adults included - loves it.

I've voted New Zealand's best attraction, it is appropriate to have it situated in Christchurch, which has long been the jumping off place for Antarctic adventures. The audio visual display and other information can be studied at your own level. From the very young, playing with the life-sized penguin to the enthusiastic Antarctic wannabe-explorer there is something for you all. Finish off the visit with a joyride on the genuine Antarctic vehicle. For 10-15 minutes you will be racing around donuts, swimming through water, over a crevasse and up and down hills. This is a must-do for the adrenaline junkies in your group.

Another place all the family - except those with a fear of heights - will enjoy is Christchurch's gondola. The views on the way up and down, as well as from the restaurant or walking around the building are fabulous. The walk back through signs informative - showing events on the peninsula from its birth with the explosion of volcanoes through to the arrival of the tangata whenua and then the colonists. What great ancestors ours were to have landed the Pacific in the Maori migration or the long crumpled trip from (mainly) England, Scotland and Ireland all those years ago.

The Red Bus Company provides a bus service that connects many of the attractions in Christchurch and this site at Heathcote is also on the route.

(For all bus information call 366 8855). The train is also great value, its \$10 ticket (from \$5.50pm), accompanied children free) lasts for as long as you are in Christchurch.

This is wonderful value and the drives are child and tourist friendly. They are a great asset to our city, as are the cafes, shops that are children-friendly and give, or sell, small cups of babyinos or fluffies.

Over the past two weeks I have been road-testing all these places with a young family and the majority have been given an enthusiastic thumbs-up.

Well done Christchurch.

Canterbury Museum  
Rollleston Avenue  
Open daily

Christchurch Botanical Gardens  
Open sunrise to sunset

Orana Park  
McLeans Island Road.  
www.oranawildlifepark.co.nz  
phone 359 7109.  
Open 10am-5pm

Willowbank  
60 Huxley Road  
www.willowbank.co.nz ph 359 6226  
Open 10am-10pm

International Antarctic Centre.  
www.iantrcc.co.nz  
Phone 353 7726  
Open 9am-5pm

Meeting the penguin at the Antarctic Centre



Fun for all the family boating on the Avon river.

# in Christchurch



Great hands on experience - feeding the deer at Willowbank Wildlife Park.



All ages can enjoy a visit to the Antarctic Centre.

## Do you have a wanderlust?

I have wanderlust and consider it rather like a friendly disease or benign addiction - or are they oxymorons?



By Heather Campbell Hapeta

Maud Parrish 1878-1976 said: "Wanderlust can be the most glorious thing in the world. Imagination is a grand stimulating thing, like a cocktail, but to find reality is the full course with champagne." Nine Pounds of Luggage.

As she travelled around the world 16 times (with very little luggage and a banjo) I imagine she knew all about both wanderlust and reality. When I read the above quote I wondered, what do those words REALLY mean? Imagination, wanderlust, reality - they trip off the tongue so lightly and yet maybe when I say I have wanderlust you may not know what I mean, or, when you agree 'yes I too have wanderlust', maybe the attributes I give it on your behalf are way off beam.

Time for some research. The Oxford Paperback Dictionary & Thesaurus (Oxford 1997) tells me that wanderlust is an 'eagerness to travel or wander. Restlessness.' Yep. Got that.

My eagerness takes the form of an obsession with travel programmes on television or radio, travel pages in magazines and press, in fact I even buy magazines with names such as Wanderlust, Sojourner and NZ Wilderness. Why? So I can find new and exciting places to visit - places to add to my list.

So often the people who tell me "You're so lucky" have dreams of travelling too. But are they eager enough to do the necessary saving and budgeting at home in order to reap the benefits of being "lucky" enough to travel? Usually not.

However, I digress. Back to the book of words: imagination. This evidently means having a "mental faculty of forming images of objects not present to senses". Guess that's me thinking of lazing on an Indian river, or viewing polar bears. Being able to see the dollar or two saved this week as a coffee on the West Bank in Paris. Yes I have imagination too. Imagination that my back will always be able to carry a pack on it.

I also checked wander and just as separate words and I certainly qualify there. To wander is to "go from place to place aimlessly, diverge from the path". Well, I have done that all my life, and travelling has not changed it at all. I LOVE to get off the beaten track, in fact to be lost is ideal, that's when the wonderful, the unexpected, the amazing, the different happens. As long as I am found one more time than I am lost, I know all is well.

Last, Another word close to my heart. My trusty Oxford tells me it's "passionate desire". Well, been there, done that, still got it, intend to keep it - passionate for travel, new places, food, people and experiences.

And finally, last on my list of words to check - reality. This seems to be the boring one, the one that people often accuse travellers of trying to escape from. Not so. This is what can separate the traveller (with time) from the tourist (on a schedule) as the dictionary says it is "what's real or exists or underlies the appearances".

How often I have made some assumptions about people, places and things, about actions, beliefs and religions by believing the appearances - what I think my eyes are telling me rather than waiting a little longer and seeing what is real. We humans love to have order in our lives, so make up stories to make sense of things. However, that does not make them real.

Knowing the truth is like having a secret shared and I value the people I meet along the way who share their truths, or realities, with me.

Nevertheless, ask three people to describe an accident they witnessed and each will be different. We experience things from within our own reality or context. So do you have the wanderlust? Is your description of it the same as mine? There will be commonalities, and I suspect, for people with the overwhelming desire to wander aimlessly, most will not be seeking a cure.

I agree with you Maud, wanderlust is glorious, stimulating, and sure provides the meal of life with champagne-like bubbles for me.

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