

KiwiDogAgility

Agility people are real travellers. Here are two accounts from people who recently enjoyed mixing a bit of agility in with their travels.

A Judge's South Island trip

by Sharon Wagener

I was lucky enough to be invited to judge at Waimakiriri's Easter show, so we decided to make a holiday of it. We aimed to also compete at South Canterbury (Timaru) the week before and see some of the South Island sights that I had missed on previous trips. Mum (Noeline), Dad (Terry) and I packed up six poodles and a real dog (a non-competing Griffon) into their new motorhome and headed off to the Mainland. After a smooth ferry crossing we headed for Hanmer Springs and had the obligatory water therapy which was absolutely fabulous. The lifesaver on duty realised how adventurous all of us oldies were so offered us a free hydro slide – little did mum know she picked the side known as the black hole and could not see where she was going. She landed flat on her back and screaming at the top of her lungs then got up with a huge smile on her dial. Another one off the bucket list!

We spent half a day in Christchurch and went on the rebuild bus tour. This was a great way to understand what has happened since the earthquake. It made us realise how long it is going to be before the city is back to normal. We loved the pieces of art work that have been used to add interest to the empty spaces. There were several poignant moments when passing areas where people had been affected. The cardboard cathedral was very light and restful.

We then made our way to Timaru and stayed on the South Canterbury Agility Club grounds the night before the competition. Notably there were only about half a dozen campers – unlike at many North Island shows where lots of people camp and party until the body can't cope – usually about 9:00pm LOL. The grounds were well set out and had an embankment – just perfect for watching the great runs.

Everyone was super friendly. The show was small and none of the classes were split, so they alternated rings which made running four dogs much more viable. We had mixed results from the weekend – one dog ran out of the ring without doing a single jump whilst



Sharon and Byron

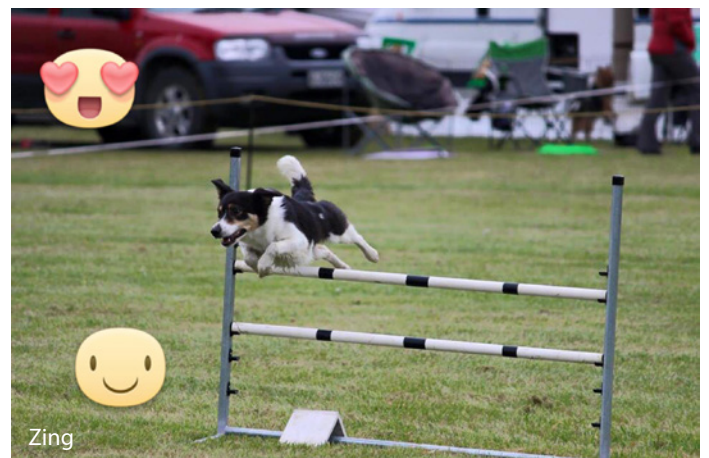


Lisa and Heather celebrate

another won a starters in fine style! We even managed a clear in ADX advanced despite falling over half way round. I was also inducted into the South Island cheese roll fan club and thought they were really tasty.

We hit the road after the show and spent a couple of days at the Catlins. Such a lovely place. We were walking the dogs on one beach and rudely interrupted a young sea lion's afternoon siesta. The dogs nuzzled off and thought it was great fun. The sea lion collected his dignity and ambled towards the water. We also had an off-road experience when a grader went down the middle of the metal road. The driver claims not to have noticed our slightly large vehicle so forced us off the road by taking up all the room. Lots of people stopped and offered us help while we were waiting for the tow truck. Fortunately the ditch wasn't too deep so we only got minor cosmetic damage to the new van and no injuries – so it could have been a lot worse.

After that, we meandered up through the centre of the island back to Christchurch taking in several tourist spots. We found the Mandeville sports grounds pretty easily, but took a little while to work out where the agility area was – again a scarcity of campers made it hard to spot. We had just managed to set up camp when several Waimakiriri club members came and set up the rings so we knew we were in the right place. I enjoyed the weekend of judging. This was a slightly bigger show than the Timaru one. Some of the classes were split and some weren't. As a mini dog handler



Zing

it was great to see some different mini breeds doing well – not just Shelties, Poodles and of course Schnauzers! There were Beagles, a Griffon, Terriers and Spaniels, and dogs that looked like farm dogs but a lot smaller! The helpers were amazing – great scrimers and the pole pickers were racing each other to get the poles. I was impressed with the standard of the dogs and handlers that I judged. Several handlers were trying out new moves after attending recent seminars and whilst not all of them worked, I saw a lot of good things happening. The handlers appeared to enjoy my courses so I hope they will want me back some time! I also managed to run in a few classes and got a couple of minor placings. My offsidars enjoyed catching up with friends that they had met on previous South Island trips so it was a great weekend.

We then took off for Golden Bay and Kaiteriteri at the bottom of the Abel Tasman National Park, then had the last day in the only real rain we got – waiting for another smooth ferry crossing.

It was great to be judging when Lisa Duff got her final challenge to make her dog, Zing, up to jumpers grand champ and to be there to see Natasha Neame make Heather Broomhall's dog, Spar, up. Congratulations to both teams. They had amazing runs. Thanks to everyone in the South Island for their hospitality. We'll definitely be back!

My Trip to the South Island

by Lorraine Hazlewood
DAWG Club

Recently I decided it was time to go and see my Mum who lives in a place called Hampden, south of Oamaru. My mum was keen to meet my two agility dogs (Bella and Biff) as she had not met them before, so I decided it would be great to take them and straight away went to the Agility website to see what shows are on in the area. North Otago had a show on 14 and 15 March 2015 so the trip was planned around those dates – definitely must have the agility bug!

As I couldn't stay with my mum because I had the dogs I needed to organise accommodation. The first place I went to and recommend is www.holidayhouses.co.nz. On that website you can find dog friendly accommodation. I managed to book a house at Moeraki for \$120 per night which slept up to 10 people. It had the most amazing views of the sea and of course dogs were allowed inside. We stayed at that place for four nights and then went to one in Hampden called Plum Cottage for \$70 per night – lovely warm cottage which was fully fenced so the dogs could have the run of the place and I knew they were safe.

Our journey started with going across on the Interislander from Wellington to Picton, and although they offer kennels I always prefer to keep the dogs in the car. Each time I have sailed and come back to the car I always find the dogs curled up sound asleep.

Once in Picton we always go to the dog park which is a great place to run the dogs after being cooped up on the ferry for three hours. The park is called Auckland Street Reserve and access is from Auckland Street or Wairau Road. Great off lead park with a stream running through it.

We stayed overnight in Blenheim at another great place that allows dogs called Na Clachan cottages – www.naclachan.co.nz. Owned by two lovely ladies who always make a fuss of you and your dogs. Have a great property and fruit trees which you can help yourself to. One cottage has grapes at the bedroom window which you open and pick and eat – yum.

The next day was the big seven hour drive south. We got up and ran the dogs and ate out for breakfast to keep us sustained for the journey. My dogs have always travelled well so I am very lucky there. We made sure that every three hours we stopped in a safe rest area that was not too close to the road and let them out to toilet and water them.

Our first morning there we woke to a glorious day so as we were staying at Moeraki and my mum lives in Hampden we decided to walk along the beach from Moeraki to Hampden. It took 1.5 hrs each way, but is a great walk. We had to pass the Moeraki boulders and my dogs loved jumping on them. The tourists just loved seeing them and they became very famous dogs with many photos taken of them on the rocks.

Weekend came and it was Agility time – ya. Up early and packed for the 30 minute drive to Oamaru. The North Otago show was held at the A&P grounds in Oamaru. Nice large grounds with plenty of place to run your dog. The weather was sunny but unfortunately the grounds are close to the sea so we got the cool breeze blowing in. I was a bit nervous going to a show where I didn't know anyone but after a while saw some faces I recognised from NZDAC

shows. I really enjoyed the show and felt quite welcomed. Both my dogs came home with ribbons – Bella 2nd in Intermediate, Maxi and Biff 2nd in Jumpers C.

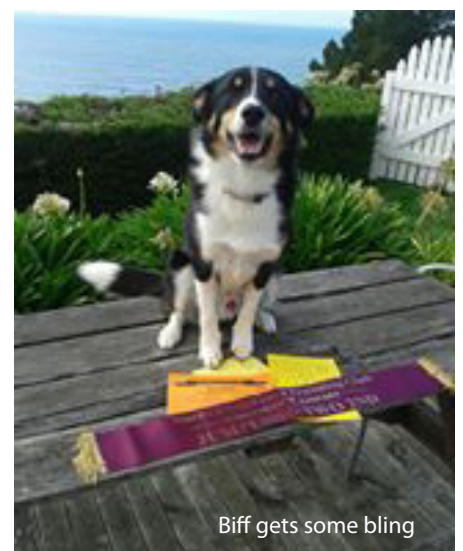
I found with some good planning and finding some great accommodation that allows dogs you can have a stress free holiday that you and your beloved dogs can enjoy. Oh and don't forget to check out when you are on holiday to a new area what Agility show is on – always good to compete at another club and get different ribbons!



View from Lorraine's Cottage



Bella on holiday



Biff gets some bling