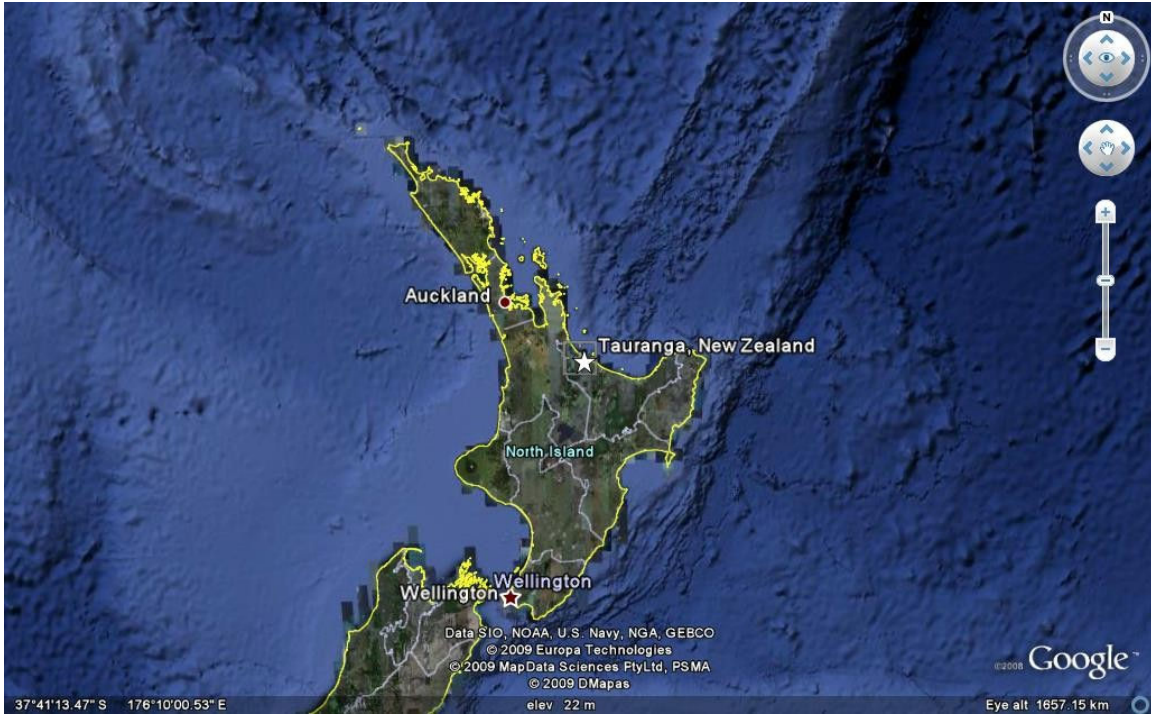
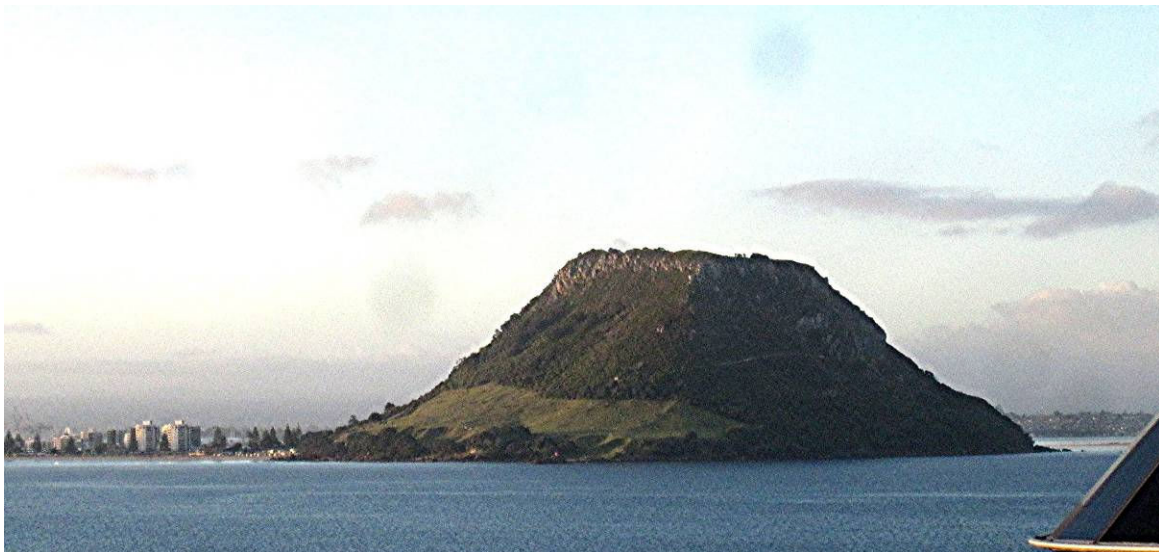


**Day 49 –Tauranga-Rotorua-Kiwi-Thermal Village–Tree Planting-14 Nov. 09:** The day started as the Amsterdam was entering the harbor at Tauranga, New Zealand. It was partly cloudy with the temperature in the low 60s so it looked like the start of a nice day. The location of Tauranga on New Zealand’s North Island is shown in the map below.

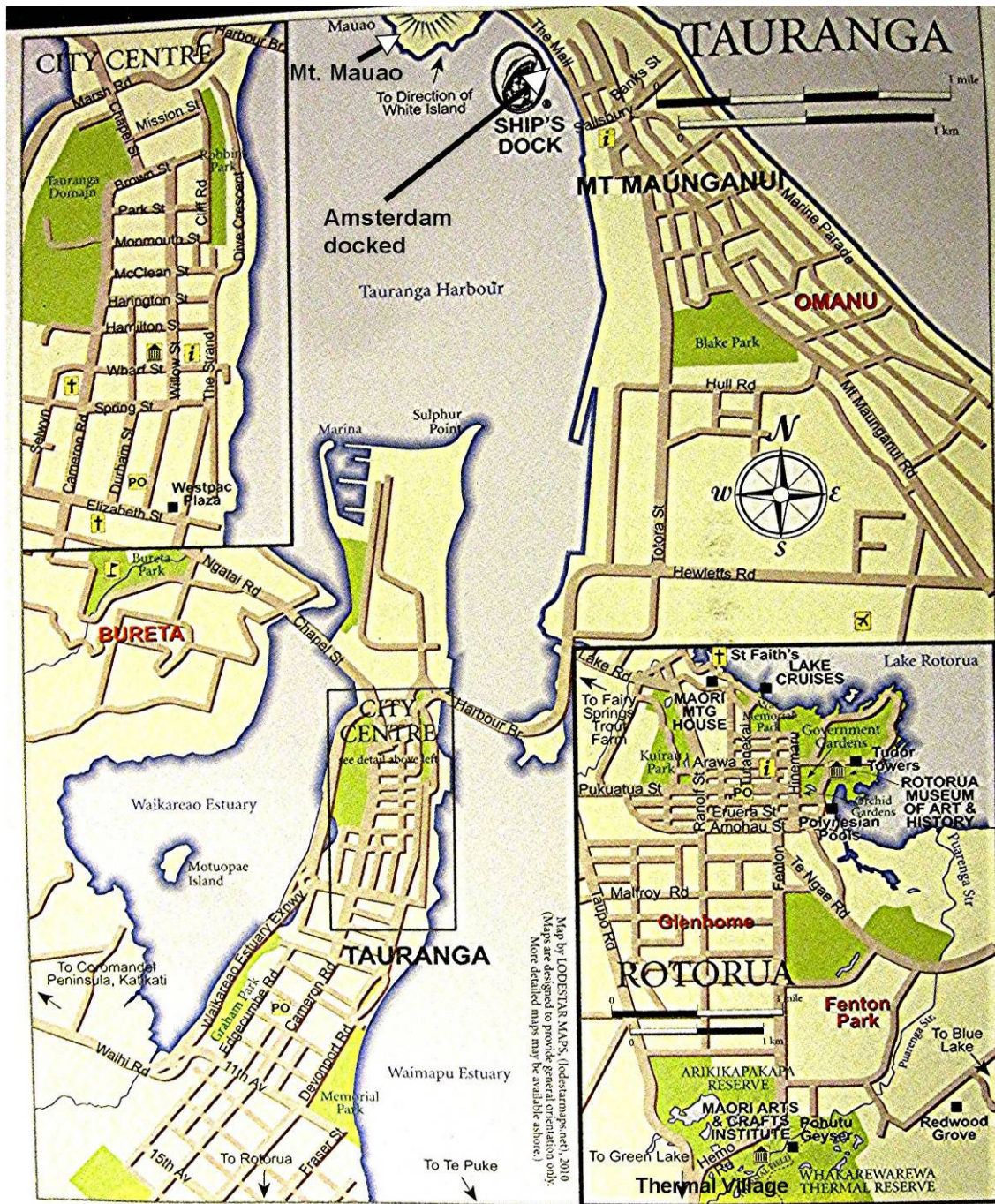


A prominent landmark of the Tauranga Harbor is Mount Mauoa that stands at the entrance with the tall buildings of the city at the base, as shown in the photo below.





A street map of the city of Tauranga and also the major city to the south called Rotorua is shown below. The location of the Amsterdam at a dock near Mt. Mauao is indicated on the map.





Some of buildings that we could see from the deck of the Amsterdam are shown below. The foot of Mt. Mauao is visible on the left in the picture of nearby buildings.

We always like to see the city's welcome sign on the roofs of harbor buildings when we pull into the port. Tauranga did not disappoint as can be seen in the photo below.



We had signed up for a tour organized by Karen with the Indigenous Trails Tours Company and we were eager to get started. There was the usual warning on the ship's PA system about the agricultural quarantine blocking fruit and other food from leaving the ship. Shortly after that was the announcement that the ship had been cleared by the New Zealand authorities and we could go ashore. We went down to the Explorer's Lounge and met with the rest of our group of about 20 people. We then filed out onto the dock and waited for the Indigenous Trails bus to pick us up. Some of our happy little group is shown in the picture on the right.





Des, the owner of Indigenous Trails, arrived along with our guide, Janis. Des outlined the day's tour and then left Janis in charge of us until we met for lunch in Rotorua. We got on the bus and headed out of the dock area through the suburbs of Tauranga. Some of the housing we saw along the streets is shown on the left and below.



What we saw looked like prosperous, upscale parts of town.

We passed by a beautiful golf course, shown on the right.





Soon we were out in the countryside and passing by farms such as this one shown on the right. It turns out that beef production is one of New Zealand's important economic contributors and this farm was part of that activity.



We have often enjoyed the kiwi fruit but did not know that New Zealand was a major supplier of the fuzzy product. As we drove along Janis informed us of the kiwi fruit production in New Zealand and it appeared that we were in the midst of an extensive kiwi growing area. We learned that kiwi fruit grows on vines and not trees. We got our first glimpse of kiwi vines from the road as shown in this picture below.

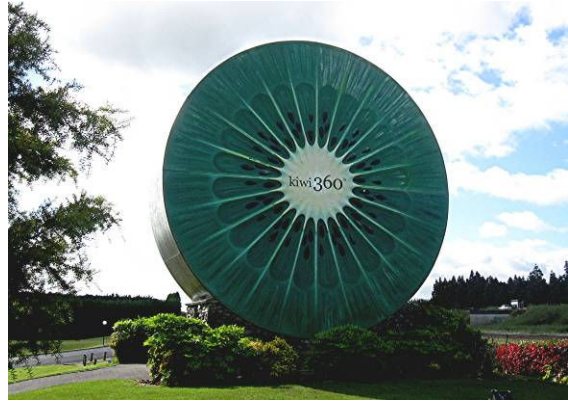


In many places the kiwi vines were hidden from the highway by tall pine and poplar trees like those shown on the right. These tree rows are called "Shelter Belts". The shelter belts provide the kiwi vines with protection from the wind. The wind causes the fruit to rub against the stems of the plant and that takes off some of the fuzz at the rubbing spots.



Apparently the fuzz is important to kiwi fruit lovers and if some is missing that lowers the price that can be charged. The wind also causes bruising of the fruit which is important to avoid.

We soon pulled into the kiwi fruit production facility known as KIWI 360. This operation has been set up to not only grow kiwi fruit but to also promote the export and consumption through an extensive advertising campaign and public tours of their operation here. A giant slice of kiwi fruit greeted us at the entrance to the parking lot as shown on the right.



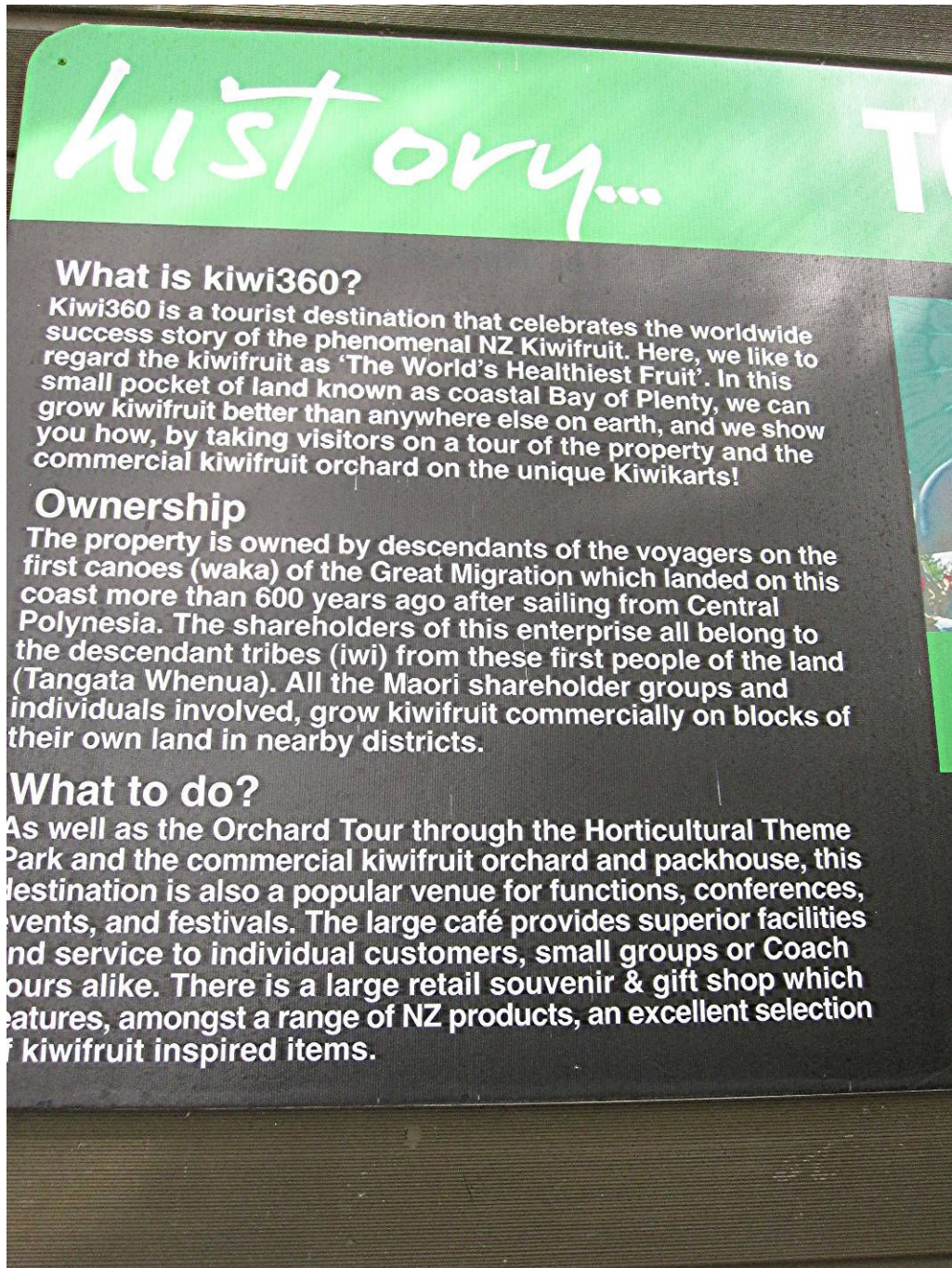
We all piled out of the bus and dove into the orchard of kiwi fruit vines that were on display. Barbara is surprised that she is tall enough to touch this low hanging kiwi blossom in the photo on the left. Jeff is giving a serious inspection to these vines as shown below.



Some pretty kiwi blossoms are shown on the left.



The Kiwi 360 organization ties itself firmly to Maori roots in New Zealand as explained in this plaque, shown below, describing the history and ownership of the company.



## history...

### **What is kiwi360?**

Kiwi360 is a tourist destination that celebrates the worldwide success story of the phenomenal NZ Kiwifruit. Here, we like to regard the kiwifruit as 'The World's Healthiest Fruit'. In this small pocket of land known as coastal Bay of Plenty, we can grow kiwifruit better than anywhere else on earth, and we show you how, by taking visitors on a tour of the property and the commercial kiwifruit orchard on the unique Kiwikarts!

### **Ownership**

The property is owned by descendants of the voyagers on the first canoes (waka) of the Great Migration which landed on this coast more than 600 years ago after sailing from Central Polynesia. The shareholders of this enterprise all belong to the descendant tribes (iwi) from these first people of the land (Tangata Whenua). All the Maori shareholder groups and individuals involved, grow kiwifruit commercially on blocks of their own land in nearby districts.

### **What to do?**

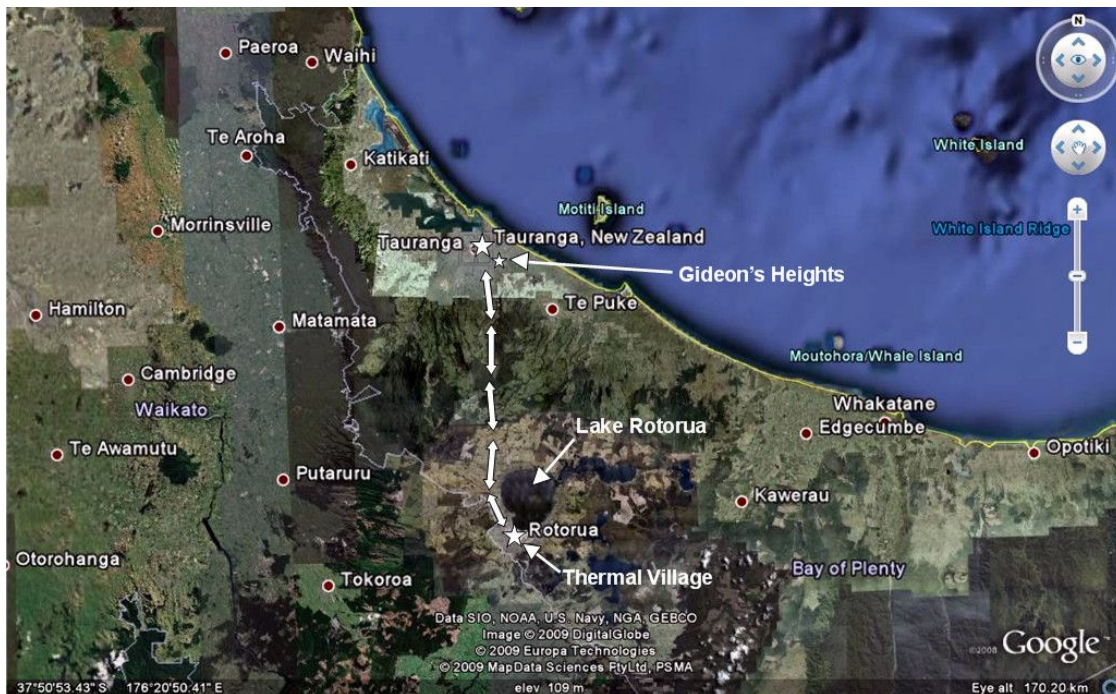
As well as the Orchard Tour through the Horticultural Theme Park and the commercial kiwifruit orchard and packhouse, this destination is also a popular venue for functions, conferences, events, and festivals. The large café provides superior facilities and service to individual customers, small groups or Coach tours alike. There is a large retail souvenir & gift shop which features, amongst a range of NZ products, an excellent selection of kiwifruit inspired items.



The Kiwikarts referred to in the plaque above are indeed cute little things. They are made to look like a kiwi fruit with room for passengers provided by removal of the center section of fruit as shown in the picture on the right.



We didn't have time to take the Kiwikart tour of the orchard but everyone gave the souvenir and gift shop a good look. We soon were back on the bus and headed to the town of Rotorua. The map below shows the location of Tauranga on the coast of New Zealand and the route we took today, south to the region of Lake Rotorua and city of Rotorua. The scenery along the way was wonderful and when we arrived in Rotorua we planned to tour the "Thermal Village".





At several places along the road we saw stands of pine trees that had been trimmed to remove the lower branches as shown in this picture on the right. Janis explained that the New Zealand plan for harvesting the forests includes this trimming process after 15 years of growth. The removal of the lower branches causes the trees to grow very straight which increases the value and makes the



harvesting process easier. Later, back at the pier in Tauranga we got this photo on the left showing where trees like these eventually end up.

After driving along the shore of Lake Rotorua we arrived at the city of Rotorua. One of the first things we saw at a filling station with the price of gasoline and diesel posted. As shown in the picture on the right, the diesel was at the fixed price of \$1.079 NZD. Apparently for diesel burning vehicles there is some license tax that is levied based on the size of the vehicle. The variable tax compensates for road damage by large diesel vehicles while the nationwide price of diesel is fixed at a constant \$1.079 NZD. The price of gasoline here was \$1.659 NZD per liter. At the exchange rate of \$1.28 NZD per \$1 USD and assuming 4 liters per gallon that works out to \$5.18 USD per gallon which seems pretty typical for this part of the world.



Rotorua is a relatively small city and it didn't take very long for our bus to wind its way through to the Whakarewarewa Thermal Reserve on the south end of town. This is an area of historic significance because of the many geysers and hot springs that exist. It has



been used by the Maori long before Europeans arrived and now it is a tourist destination and resort area based on the presence of the hot springs. There is some controversy between the local Maori and the government over how the geyser area is displayed to tourists. The geyser area has been divided into two parts with one managed by the New Zealand government and the other by the local Maori tribe. Apparently the government has taken their part of the geyser area and presents it in the form of smooth concrete, tile and substantial modern buildings. We didn't see that part. The other part of the geyser area has been managed by the local Maori and maintained pretty much the way it has looked for the last hundred years or so. The Indigenous Trails Tours Company promotes the Maori tribal approach to displaying the geysers and that is the tour we took today.

We met our guide at the entrance to the Thermal Village. He was a tall handsome Maori gentleman with an authoritative demeanor, as shown on the right. He told about how the Maori had lived and thrived in the Thermal Village area for hundreds of years before Europeans arrived. For many years the Maori traditions were suppressed as the Europeans took over New Zealand. Now there is a resurgence of interest in preserving the Maori traditions.



They strive to retain and present the best of the Maori culture traditions in the Thermal Village. The development of Rotorua city to support the tourist industry resulted in many wells being drilled to tap the hot water below the city. As a result the hot springs that had been flowing naturally in the Maori village stopped flowing. The Maori people have been able to get the removal of hot water regulated so the water table is now rising and the hot springs in the village are working again.

The entrance to the village is impressive as shown on the right. We all walked across the bridge that spanned a creek flowing into Rotorua Lake.





Then we went first to the Maori tribal meeting house, shown on the right. It was dark inside and no flash cameras were allowed so we came away without photos but the outside of the building was beautifully adorned with carvings depicting the genealogy and history of the tribe. We took several pictures of the meeting house as shown on the right.

The peak of the roof represents the head of the



tribe and the rafters stretching down on either side represent the arms with three fingers extended to make the eaves of the house. The roof ridge represents the backbone and the house itself represents the body of the tribe. When you enter the house you are entering the body of the tribe. In this photo on the left our guide is explaining the genealogical significance of the totem like figures supporting the roof. In the belief system of the Maori ancestors are held in high regard and the carvings on the meeting house pay homage to prior chiefs and their accomplishments.



After seeing the meeting house we moved on into the village. The guide pointed out these simple huts shown on the right that were made from the trunks of the giant fern trees that grow abundantly around here. Huts like these were used by the Maori for sleeping only. During the day they occupied themselves with gathering food or social events.



Our next stop was at one of the many steaming hot pools of water shown below. These pools are fed by springs bringing hot water up from the volcanic strata that lies beneath the village.



These pools are fed by springs bringing hot water up from the volcanic strata that lies beneath the village. Our guide explained that the Maori use the hot water for cooking their food. They had set up a stand for selling sweet corn cooked in the hot water but we didn't take the time to try eating some of it.





Our guide showed us cooking stations set up for more elaborate cooking than just boiling vegetables. These were enclosures built into the ground over a steam vent that was not a geyser but just emitted steam. By use of different utensils the whole range of cooking, broiling and baking could be carried out in enclosures like the one shown on the left.



We also got to see the village hot tubes used for bathing. These were essentially concrete bathtubs with water from the hot springs piped in to them. In the picture below Barbara is testing the water temperature which she found very inviting.





After seeing the bathing area it was time to attend the cultural show where traditional dances would be performed for us. We gathered in a large open area with a shade cloth spread over the seating area. The Maori ladies performed the traditional dance while singing and swinging what is called a poi, as shown in the photo on the right. The poi is a ball made of soft material and it is twirled around in complex patterns periodically colliding with the dancer's arms or a second ball and making a rhythmic slapping noise. After the performance of the ladies it was the male dancers who came on stage and did the famous Haka Dance. The Haka Dance was traditionally done to boost the courage of the warriors in preparation for battle or frighten the enemy during a confrontation. The intention was to look so



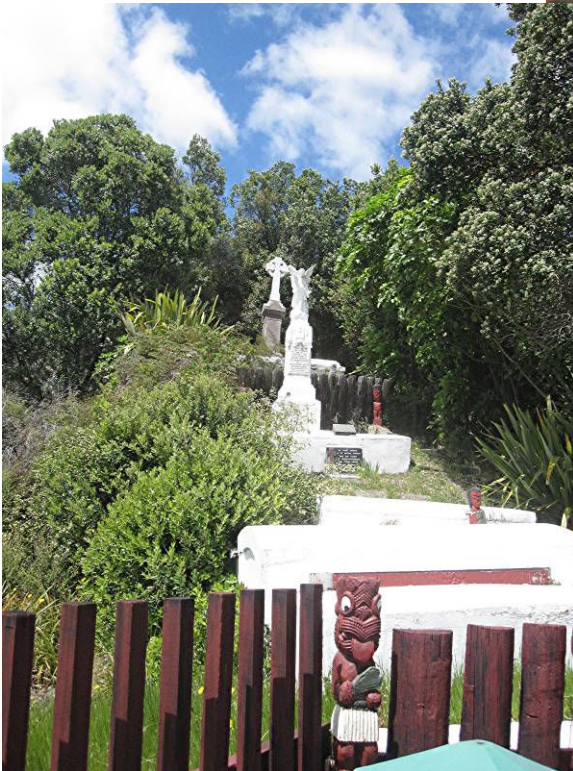
ferocious that the enemy would back down and flee without the need for bloodshed. The signature move in the Haka Dance is sticking the tongue out and opening the eyes as wide as possible to show the whites of the eyes. The appearance of the Haka Dancers is shown in the picture on the left. They were pretty good but we had seen more fierce



looking Haka Dancers a few days ago in the cultural show on the Amsterdam while in Christchurch. The sticking out of the tongue is the ultimate warning to any foe. Many of the wooden carvings show the tongue of the carved image sticking out. Later we did the normal tourist thing and bought a couple wooden carvings, in the shape of a small mask with the tongue sticking out.



After the cultural show our guide took us by a small wooden building in need of paint. This was the building where they taught pre-school age children the basics of the Maori language. They are trying to keep the Maori traditions and language alive and this is their way of moving in that direction. The building is called the Language Nest, as shown on the right.



There was also a grave yard with the tombs of past chiefs as shown on the left. The grave markers reflected the fact that the Maori have adopted Christianity. Christianity has many similarities with the ancient Maori religion that included belief in a single God.



We could now hear the geysers booming in the distance and a little mist was drifting across the landscape from the geysers. Our guide hustled us over to the geyser area and we were able to get some photos of the steaming water shooting into the air as shown on the right.



Pictures of geysers tend to all look alike but we couldn't stop ourselves from taking at least two pictures so here is another one below.



After successful viewing the geyser show it was time to get back on the bus and go to lunch.



Des, the owner of Indigenous Trails Tours, had joined us by this time. We had a high quality buffet lunch at a busy restaurant called Valentines in Rotorua. Des claimed that the restaurant was owned and operated by indigenous people. One of the missions of Indigenous Trails Tours is to support Indigenous New Zealand people and culture and they seem to be doing that. On the right and below are views of the buffet line in the



restaurant. The Haka statue helped make the Maori connection.

Below is a picture of some of our group at the dining table. At one point during the meal, a man, who Des claimed was a Maori chief, along with



Janis, and Des, came to our table and welcomed us as guests of the Maori tribe in the area. Then they sang a song in the Maori language that

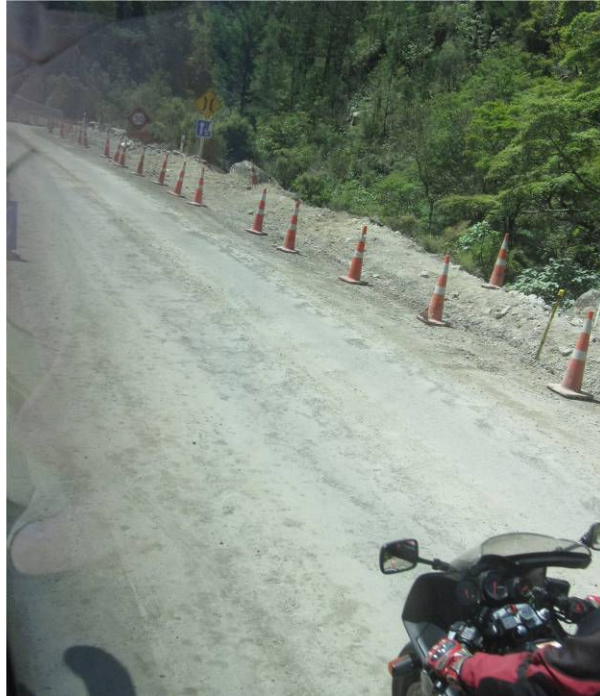


welcomed us to their land. A picture of the trio is shown on the left.

The Maori people we met as part of this tour all emphasized that we were being greeted as guests and not as “tourists” a term that they implied was pejorative.



After a satisfying lunch we got back on our bus and headed back to Tauranga. Des said that he wanted to give us a taste of the countryside. He said he was taking us back to Tauranga by an alternate route through the mountains. This road had recently been closed to traffic but had just been opened after some roadwork. We did travel through some pristine looking countryside and eventually came to the roadwork. We briefly had some concern when the bus was held up for three or four minutes but we were soon on our way. We snapped this picture on the right as a motorcycle passed us and we pulled out of the construction zone.



The ride back to Tauranga was just as beautiful as the ride in the opposite direction had been earlier in the day. As we rode along Des pointed out a small volcanic peak in the distance and then told us the Maori legend of how Mount Mauoa had ended up in Tauranga Harbor where we saw it this morning. It goes like this. Mount Mauoa was originally inland near the mountain we could see in the distance just now. Mount Mauoa loved the small volcanic peak but she rejected him. Mount Mauoa then wanted to commit suicide and convinced the fairy people to put ropes around him and drag him out to sea where he would drown. The fairy people were busy dragging him to the sea when they got delayed at the Tauranga harbor. The sun came up while they were delayed and since the fairy people can't exist in sunlight they disappeared and left the frustrated Mount Mauoa stranded in the bay at Tauranga. That legend explains how the mountain got its name of Mauoa which means first morning light. Then Des said he was taking us to a place where there still remains a gouge in the earth left from when the fairy people dragged Mount Mauoa down to the Tauranga harbor. Later it seemed that he may have been referring to a place called Gideon's Valley that we visited for a tree planting ceremony.

As we approached Tauranga the bus turned off the main road and we took secondary roads through the hills. The scenery was terrific, like these hedgerows shown on the right. There were also avocado orchards as shown below.



Finally we came to a spot where we could see Mount Mauao in the harbor at Tauranga as shown below.





Then Des had the driver take the bus down a narrow gravel road that followed a valley that presumably was gouged out when the fairy people dragged Mount Mauoa through here. This valley was called Gideon's Valley and it is part of a piece of property called Gideon's Fields and Gideon's Heights. It was owned by a non-denominational religious organization. While it was never explained completely, a brochure from the organization said that the purpose of the organization was to bring young people to this site for character development and training in the understanding of multi-cultures and helping to make a positive contribution in every arena of society. Apparently as part of Indigenous Trails Tour Company mission Des wanted this group from the Amsterdam to contribute to the history of Gideon's Fields and Gideon's Heights by planting a native New Zealand tree in Gideon's Valley today. He had started to introduce the idea by telling us about the legend of Mount Mauoa but he got distracted and most of us didn't know exactly what was happening as the bus bounced down the gravel road.

Finally the bus came to a dead end and we all got out. Then we were told about the Gideon's Fields and Gideon's Heights organization. Des explained that he wanted us to walk down a nature trail to plant a tree for future generations to enjoy. Those of us who



wanted them were given yellow wooden walking sticks to help us over the trail. We walked a few hundred feet to an open amphitheater-like place overlooking Gideon's Valley, as shown on the left. Janis took over as master of ceremony and had us sit down while she recited a prayer in the Maori language giving thanks for our presence there today, as shown below. Some of us became

a bit uneasy about this religious ceremony which in this beautiful natural setting seemed almost like some sort of incantation. Nevertheless, we got up and followed Janis and Des along a well tended pathway further down the valley.

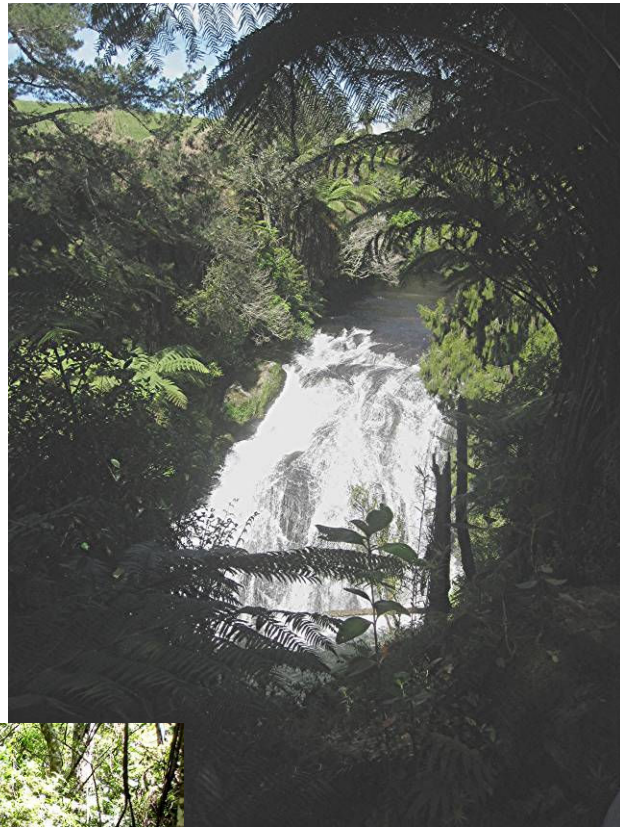


We passed by wonderful tree ferns and tall pine trees. Des explained that the long range plan was to cut down and remove all the pine trees and other non-native plants so that the native New Zealand plants could thrive. At one point we passed a well constructed signpost pointing toward countries around the world. We recognized the Maori name for New Zealand, Aotearoa (land of the long white cloud), at the top of the post. This place definitely had indigenous roots.





We stopped at the most beautiful waterfall near the bottom of the valley. Here is a picture of it on the right.



There was a place to sit down so we all just took a break and enjoyed a few moments surrounded by all this natural beauty, as shown below.



While we were sitting Des said that we were part of a series of groups he had brought here to plant a native tree. The usual procedure

was for the group to give the tree a name that would be recorded and kept with the tree. That way if we ever wanted to visit again and check on our tree we could find it. After a little discussion our group came up with the name of SPANZ which was the acronym for the Cruise Critic message board that kept track of tour arrangements for the South Pacific Australia New Zealand (SPANZ) cruise. Everyone agreed that was a good name. With that decision made, Des led us back up the trail to where a small tree and a bucket of water were waiting for us.





Janis told us that the tree was a Pyriri tree and it was native to New Zealand. We will have to look this one up when we get home to see what it looks like when mature.

Des dug a hole and put the Pyriri tree in the hole. Karin helped him put soil back around the tree, as shown on the right.

Janis then said a prayer for the tree.



We all then headed back to the bus and the short ride back to the Tauranga harbor. Before leaving this beautiful spot Barbara gave little SPANZ a love pat, as shown on the right.





On the way back to the harbor Des invited us all to have an ice cream cone before we parted company in Tauranga. That was an offer too good to pass up. We stopped just outside the harbor gates and everyone lined up at the ice cream counter of a little store. We appreciated this gesture by Des at the end of a long day. The tired tourists enjoy their ice cream cones in the picture on the right. This had been an enjoyable and action packed day. While we



could have been introduced to the tree planting ceremony in a bit more up-front way, in the end we were glad that Des and Janis included our group in this activity that ended our visit in Tauranga. In touring New Zealand we had wanted to learn more about the Indigenous people of New Zealand, both ancient and current. This tour with Des and his Indigenous Trails Tour Company gave us what we wanted.

We had one unfulfilled task and that was to get a picture of Barbara's library card to prove that it had visited Tauranga, New Zealand. While licking our ice cream cones we



spied an opportunity. It was just a short distance away so we snapped this photo of the library card with a Tauranga City sign on the left. Barbara was still clutching her ice cream cone.

We returned to the Amsterdam and said our goodbyes to Des and Janis. The ship got underway about

5:30pm. We left the harbor and turned north for the short trip up the coast to the city of Auckland, New Zealand. We expect to arrive at 7:00am tomorrow morning.