

Karen Jackson

High School: Burnside High School, Christchurch

1982-1987 Studied Japanese from Yr 9 ~ Yr 13

In Yr 12 the Japanese class started fundraising and visited Japan on a short-term exchange.
(This was Karen's first time to Japan)

After High School: Christchurch Polytechnic

1988-1989 Karen studied at Polytechnic on a 2 year intensive diploma course. During the 2nd year at Polytechnic the whole class went to Kurumayama in Nagano-Ken for a work/language experience.



After graduating: Karen worked as a tour guide for Mt Cook Tours. She guided Japanese tourists around Christchurch and the South Island. The season normally started in September and went till after Golden Week in May. During the winter months Karen would use the money she had saved to travel overseas.

While in England: Worked as a tour guide for JTB, England, meeting and greeting Japanese tourists when

they arrived in London.

Karen was able to combine her language abilities and her love of travelling and work in England. While she was based in London she travelled throughout Europe.

Back in New Zealand: Karen returned to New Zealand and started working 1993 as a tour guide in Queenstown for Mt Cook Tours. Once again the winters were quiet so Karen worked as a meet and greet driver for Ski Express. That summer she went to Japan and worked on a Japanese ski field as a waitress. She improved her skiing and also used her Japanese so that when she came back to New Zealand she was able to work as a ski guide for Ski Express. Summer/Winter: During the summer Karen worked for a company as a driver guide and showed tourists around Queenstown. Sometimes over the summer she would go on 1 day hikes with the Japanese. When winter started Karen continued to work as a ski guide/host for the Japanese and other nationalities coming to New Zealand with Ski Express Holidays.

Canada 2000 Karen headed back overseas for a holiday and this time didn't come back for the winter. She stayed on in Canada as a hiking guide for Japanese for a large Canadian hiking/mountain guiding company. While she was in Canada she continued to enjoy the outdoors and did more rock and mountain climbing, she was able to do a mixture of multi pitch alpine and rock climbs.

Back to Queenstown: Karen returned to New Zealand and went straight back to guiding Japanese up the Routeburn on 1 day walks. She was also able to work as a guide/translator for a Japanese climber and photographer climbing Mt Aspiring. That winter Karen worked as a heli-ski guide in Queenstown.

Deep South 2002. Karen was employed by a visiting film crew from Japan as a translator when they came to New Zealand to film a documentary on penguins. During that job Karen traveled around the South Island looking for penguins, she also went down to the Antarctic Islands by boat to film more penguins.

Karen has managed to travel using her Japanese, not only to Japan but also throughout Europe. She has always wanted to climb mountains since she was a young girl. Now she enjoys climbing and skiing and also gets paid to speak Japanese while she guides in the outdoors. Speaking Japanese has allowed Karen to work doing something she loves and allows her to meet a variety of interesting people.

profiled by Kerri Dann, 2004

