

Who says you're too old?

by Paul Dugan



On receiving formal advice from the UK pension's authority advising me to collect my Old Age Pension, it suddenly hit me that the "Bucket List" is now really important and we need to get moving. So off To Australia and New Zealand we go to get a tick in the box for the first thing on the list "Sky Diving".

Sounds easy right; however before that we decided to take a helicopter ride to an active volcano on the North Island with the most beautiful scenery one could ever imagine, almost unreal though the very "young" pilot was reluctant to give too much "stick time" to a senior citizen! The Robin Helicopter is extremely durable and extremely easy to fly with amazing all round visibility. On arrival at Rotorurah and a pretty hairy landing on a few pieces of wood sitting on the valley floor was followed by the immediate flaring of nostrils and all your senses start struggling to analyze the pungent smell of volcanic sulphur. So after the hairy helicopter ride you are now well and truly sitting in the centre of an area dotted with active volcanoes that on a regular basis demonstrate their prowess and erupt! The return trip was less eventful with all enjoying the beautiful scenery that is unique to New Zealand.

The next adventure would prove to be even more exciting, the "Sky Diving". Driving towards the Wellington airport, looking for any excuse to divert to

the local pub and say what a stupid thing to do the weather was cloudy and it looked like rain. I was ready to wander in and say to the steely eyed jumpers, "not a good day for this sort of thing, right?" only to be greeted with, you know this is the only place in the world where you can legally do tandem jumps through clouds! My first thought is not "oh that's good!" After an extremely short briefing, dangers of jumping in cloud, clothing, helmets, parachute safety brief, the safety briefer left nothing to chance "in case the aircraft crashes on takeoff," although they skipped the part about "aircraft crashing on landing you will be able to watch it, we'll video it!"

