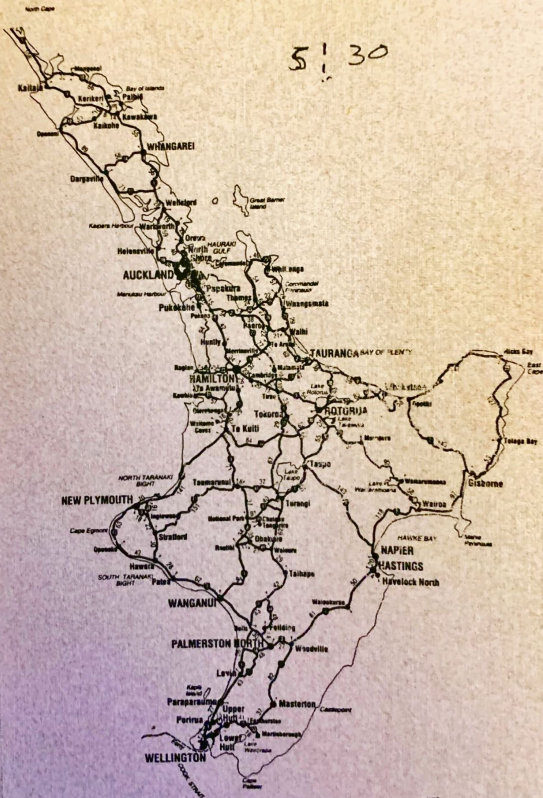


New Zealand

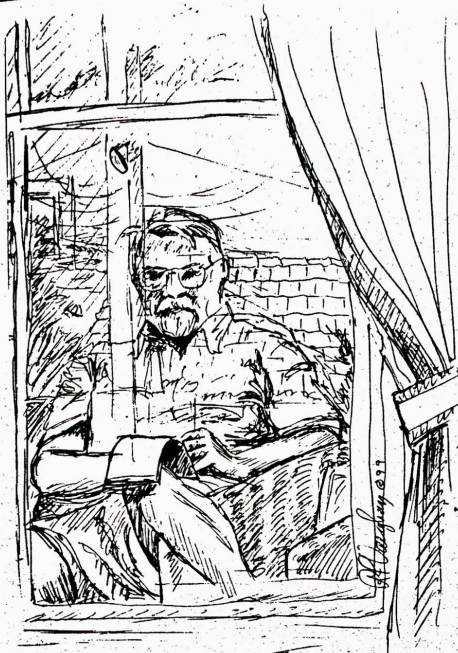
Up One Side



and...



Fred and Kay Vaughan, 1999



Upon Reflection

Preface

For our various reasons we had dreamed of going to New Zealand for many years so the eventual realization of those dreams was indeed very special to us both. This diary began as Kay's intention that we write down enough to help us remember pleasant occasions on duller days. My having taken up the pen first - and no doubt Kay's inhibitions at my unabashed verbosity - fixed it as my *sole* responsibility thereafter. You know how it goes! But an equal part of the substance and effort that went into this was hers as you can tell.

In our B&B at Sumner near Christchurch, New Zealand, our accommodations happened to be up over a garage looking down a slate driveway and over some tile roofs to where waves could be seen splashing to the beach. Through a side window we could see the white crescent line of breaking waves against the town with swimmers frolicking in the surf. In the evening as Kay reclined in bed reading, I sat in one of the wicker chairs, my leg dangling awkwardly over the other, looking out at the waves and variations of pink and azure sky. As I began writing up the day's activities dusk turned to darkness so that when I looked up again there was only the streetlight illuminating a few feet of wires from the light pole and the tile of a single roof. Much more evident with a little shorter focus was my own reflection upon which, naturally, I reflected. Accounts such as these ponderings on our travel in New Zealand are prone to transmogrification from objective observations to mere personal subjective ramblings about an unfamiliar country. But that is also much of the value of travel - we see ourselves and everyday things we take for granted at home in a new light. So I'll not apologize further for the rampant subjectivity with which this little tome is rife nor yet for my frivolous approach.

A much more serious hazard accompanies an endeavor like this of course. One way of saying this is that, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing," but I think that smacks of false humility and ignores a lot of the freshness one feels on a first encounter that can never be recaptured later. One trip "up one side and down the other" does, in fact, provide some level of completeness. There is value in the enthusiasm associated with that level of knowledge even though it is at best very superficial. And on that first trip one sees things one would never bother to really look at again.

Having been a career technologist, I have written numerous technical articles and scientific papers, and have of necessity read many times as many written by others. It was obvious to me from my earliest attempts at reading technical articles that one should not even hope to understand everything that is to be gleaned in a single reading. One can certainly, however, determine on that first scan whether an article addresses issues of interest to one's own purpose. Much more recently in reading the immanent mathematical physicist, Sir Roger Penrose's popular work *The Emperor's New Mind*, I was gratified to learn that even so great a scientist as he has acknowledged that he requires five or six readings of a seminal paper before he pretends to understand it. On the first pass, he merely tries to appreciate what the author was attempting. He looks at the equations but makes no effort to understand them. On subsequent passes he attempts to grasp the concepts and the *forms* of the equations. At any stage in this process he may abandon the effort altogether and still, I suspect, feel warranted in claiming to have read the article.

This description of our impressions of New Zealand after this one - necessarily superficial - pass may help others decide whether New Zealand is where they would want to spend their next vacation or per chance a country they (as we) would like to understand more fully.

Day 1 - February 18th or 20th - Devonport, New Zealand

This is the day after the one we lost to formality in crossing the Great Divide - the dateline.

Since getting up a few days ago (or was it weeks?) we verified that Kay had packed at least twice as much as we would ever need. We had time to nervously chatter about this and that, but not about our old dog Buddy whom we had had put to sleep some very few days before - this would be the first trip in sixteen or seventeen years that he would not be a major last minute consideration. We had avoided that subject. The 20 hours since we thanked our daughter Nola for taking us to the airport and finally departed from SEA-TAC airport were long but quite uneventful. It all began with the flight to Los Angeles on Alaska airlines. A layover and transfer to the large 747-400 Quantas airlines plane at LAX followed. There were of course the shudders of that large airplane that indicated some little difficulty focusing on its task of getting us skyward, but before long we were "400 kilometers" Southwest of LA and at 31,000 feet with the prospect of going up to 39,000 as we got lighter. We were informed that it was 25 Celsius in Auckland and no one has used our native "miles" and "Fahrenheit" since!

We arrived in Auckland about 5:30 AM local time - 8:30 AM yesterday by my watch, which I prefer to leave based on Pacific Standard Time when I travel so I know when things *really* happen. There were scattered clouds in Auckland after our scattered forty winks when we "touched" down with a "thud."

Once out of the airplane, we zigzagged through the roped off lines up to the customs booths which each had its own bronze-skinned maiden with an immigrations department uniform but otherwise taken straight out of a Gaugin painting. The purple skirt would have been removed quite unceremoniously I imagined before being replaced by this staid navy blue and white uniform, but I am very tired. These are very pleasant looking girls nonetheless. There has evidently been an influx of peoples from the South Pacific islands to find work.

We got our bags from the carousel and promised everyone who stopped us that we really did not have hiking boots. After a while it began to feel like an interrogation, like they were trying to catch us in a lie. There had been a major section of the immigration form dedicated to this data and they are obviously serious about it - I don't know why. As we wheeled our cart and bags with our booty past the sniffing dogs, we spied our previously arranged maori maiden taxi driver holding up a scrawled "KAY VAUGHAN" sign and she seemed convinced enough when I told her that was I. We got \$400.00NZ at a bank machine at the airport while she patiently waited. (The exchange rate was \$1.86NZ to \$1.00US when we left home.)

By 6:30 AM we were cresting the Auckland Bridge with its "Nippon Clip Ons." (These of course are the extra lanes stitched onto the outer sides of the original bridge by a Japanese contractor - a little *insider* information there compliments of Bob Widdice with whom we had lunched a week or so ago.) The sun was just then peeking over the horizon - a brilliant gold gloriously brightening the few scattered clouds and glittering the edges of the water - a "g'day," indeed even if that's essentially only for Australians.

Soon we were in Devonport overlooking the Auckland harbor - from the other side - looking back to the main Auckland skyline dominated by the Sky Tower and the Auckland Bridge. There were already some activities in progress at the waterfront. Tents were being set up for the annual New Zealand Wine Tasting Festival that would turn Devonport into a major tourist trap in a few hours. And then up to the B&B that Kay had secured exclusively over the Internet as our first two-day rest and recuperation spot. It was 7:00 AM by now and I was ready for R&R but no one was up yet. Eventually our host Phillip came to the door and accepted our baggage into the entry hall. We bade our hydraphobic maori maiden adieu. (In discussions with her in route, it had become increasingly



South Sea Maiden Welcomes the Weary Traveler



Everyone Wants to Know If You Have These

apparent that she suffered no little bit from this malady in contrast to typical Aucklanders, one quarter of whom are boat owners.)

Our host came back down eventually a little more completely dressed and showed us where we could toilet off of the laundry room and pointed us into a lounge where we could heat some water and

administer it to tea bags or instant coffee. He gave us a two-bit map tour of Devonport and assured us that we would feel much better walking all day than sleeping. Needless to say, I was extremely dubious! In accordance with this regimen, he laid out an ambitious plan for us that I resented no little bit. He said we couldn't expect our rooms to be ready until 11:30 - and he didn't mean by my watch which already read 10:30 two calendar days and three clock hours after I last crawled out of a bed I don't know how long ago! He also said that on top of Mt. Victoria - climbing which was part of his plan for us - there were cannons and I could "play toy soldiers!"

So I got rid of the cowboy boots in favor of my tenny's and wondered about kiwi incredulity that I would not have brought hiking boots. I hoped these tennis shoes were not the "sports shoes" everyone had been so concerned to discover and which I had denied. I also got rid of the cardigan sweater to proceed per his directions toward one of New Zealand's most "well-kept secret" beaches.

Women and dogs were jogging the beach at this time and so we proceeded along the lovely golden sand toward North Head, one of those volcanic prehistoric mounds that the Maoris had terraced as fortification around the Auckland area - One Tree Hill is probably the most noted of these. It was a nice brisk climb with ever improving views of the islands to the North and West of Auckland. Finally, having come completely around and upon the obstacle, Auckland loomed right before us across a gulf beautifully arranged with various water craft. Devonport and its less secretive beaches lay calmly in the fore. I forgave Philip then and Kay and I reveled in "it not getting much better than this!" We passed many walkers and joggers even at this time but not so many that you were not also quite private with your thoughts.

We lay down on the slightly damp grassy slope. Kay innovated lying with her feet up to work at the swelling in her ankles. I did it too - it felt good.

When we were finally sitting up again, a large black poodle proceeded up the path toward us. Upon hearing the dog being called "Fred," I commented to its owner that that was my name too. That began a most enjoyable conversation - Fred sitting on his haunches between me and his owner - a man somewhat older than Kay and I who lived in Devonport. I told him about having once met a woman in a meeting whose name was Nell that I had proceeded to tell that I had once had a horse by that name. She had retorted, "Oh, how interesting, I once had a dog named Fred!" But I hadn't actually believed her nor that in general anyone would name a dog, "Fred!" I did explain that I had told her that my mother's name had actually been Nellie too. Anyway, we got past that introduction and he told us about the surrounding islands



Where Maori's Once Stood Guard

and the competitors for the America's Cup that were just then being dragged out to sea before our very eyes to do their practicing. New Zealanders are proud of having *The Cup*. A smaller sailing race began in the harbor as we watched. Auckland is known for having one watercraft for every four residents - I guess I said that before.

Then we walked down on the town side of North Head walking along the shore. People were swimming. We proceeded down to Victoria Street - the main perpendicular - and ate an early lunch at a table on the street. Large crowds were gathering now for the festival. We bought our two required empty glasses and proceeded to taste the wine. We also had "whitebait and tau tau" fritters - pretty good. "Whitebait" is a native fish; I don't know what "tau tau" is. There was music for sitting and listening down by old "Albert" the gigantic inedible fig tree that is actually native of Queensland and of New South Wales in Australia.

Then we ambled back to our B&B - quite a walk really about a mile

from the heart of Devonport, arriving about 3:30 (12:30 PM NZ). Our bags had been deposited in our room. We went in and crashed for three hours. We woke up just a while back and I wrote this - not wanting to forget Freddie and Albert nor the bronze maidens that had all so impressed me earlier this day - the day after the one (February 19th) on which nothing happened! I mean *nothing* - like in not having one! That's something I haven't got straight in my mind yet and I do believe the world would be better off if every ones' clocks were synchronized. So what if some of us eat supper at 8:00 PM and others at 3:00 AM in the morning. We would get used to it. It would be no different than this half of the world thinking February is midsummer for heavens sake!

So...after the nap and laying around a little we decided to take the camera out and climb Mt. Victoria. It was a rather strenuous climb for me, although in all honesty there is a road all the way up. We left the road near the end and encountered what must have been a maori-carved boulder. I leaned on it resting while ruminating on whether the carver had intended it to represent a god or just an interloper who had happened to taste particularly good. I guess that's as close as I got to playing a soldier. Once at the top I didn't even look at the guns or the major pill box. There was a large bronze relief map of the area on a concrete base which was useful. The view was grand.

After spending a little time at the top enjoying the panoramic view of Auckland and surrounding areas, we came straight down the North face onto Victoria Street. That was now one wild place with

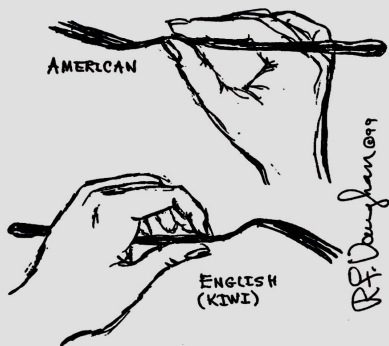


Coming Down Near Victoria Street

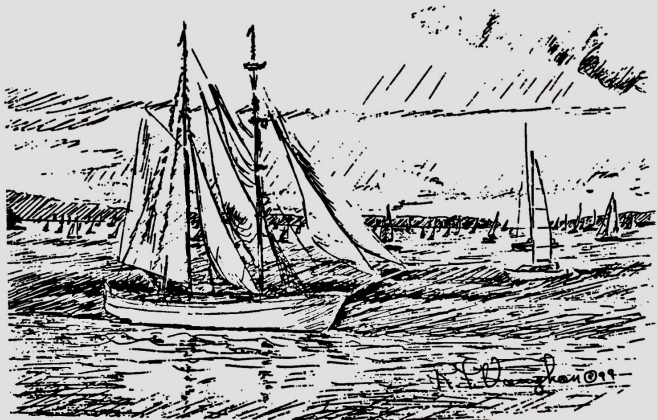
wine tasters that couldn't quit, having gone amok! One had to wade carefully through the swaying crowd – some swaying more than others.

We settled on an English pub and eatery for our evening meal and had delicious shepherd's pie! They actually had a "shepherdess pie" which, we were told upon inquiry was a vegetarian dish.

A great first day all-in-all!



Proper Ways to Hold a Fork



Sail Boats on the Way to Whaheke

Day 2 - February 21st - Auckland and Whaheke

We awoke with sun shining through the windows. It's summer! That was the longest and most blissful nights sleep I've had in a while.

We were showered and in the breakfast room by 8:30 AM to meet the other guests. Some were already eating - the two Australian ladies from Sydney and Melbourne. Some Arrived later - Dennis and what's-her-name from Taupo. Finally Steve and what's-her-name from across the bay in Auckland. [Kay tell's me that the elder of the Australian ladies and Steve's festival accomplice were both denominated "Joy," a reasonable enough supposition.] The pair from Auckland had evidently come in very late *and very drunk* after festivities of a wedding - to say nothing of the festival dedicated to the qualities of wine.

We had the full English breakfast (but without the bangars!). We were reminded right off of some of the differences between these closer relatives of the English and ourselves. They eat with their forks upside down in deference to that English tradition, scooping goodies onto it with their knives! Perhaps our having spent some time in the UK will stand us in good stead here, but I will *not* eat upside down.

We all joshed each other a little with international jokes. Philip, who has a pretty good sense of humor - certainly enough to realize that my "playing with toy soldiers" would be cute, told the story of the desperate conversation between an Admiral of the American Navy and a New Zealand mariner. The kiwi radioed the Admiral, "am at location so-and-so; recommend you alter your course Sir." The Admiral, seeing the light straight up ahead replied curtly, "This is the US Navy! We will *not* alter our course; strongly recommend you change your location quickly." The kiwi responded something to the effect of, "Respectfully Sir, strongly recommend that you alter *your* course instead!" The Admiral getting back on his radio quite irritated broadcasts one last warning, "Captain, our warships are on a collision course with your vessel. This is your last warning!" To which there is the response, "I am not a Captain, Sir; I am a light house keeper!" I told them the joke that Bob Park had told me: "What do you call a kiwi in a suit?" Philip had heard it. The answer being, "The defendant!" Then of course the New Zealand Prime Minister, Robert "Piggy" Muldoon's comment about the IQ's of both countries being raised whenever a New Zealander immigrates to Australia was aired.

We talked some about sights to be seen - one that was recommended was the island of Whaheke to which the two Australian women had traveled by ferry the day before. Then we got up and left for the Devonport-to-Auckland walk-on ferry.

We made the 10:15 for Auckland after the brisk mile walk. Once in Auckland we walked up the hill to the base of the Sky Tower. It was Sunday and so the city was not as busy as it would have been otherwise. We saw the spectacular from both decks and took some pictures.

We walked around the downtown area, noting similarities to all big cities, reiterating why we don't like them, *did* a book store where we bought an atlas of New Zealand and headed for the docks to take the catamaran to Whaheke - the largest habitable (one should probably just say "inhabited") island in the gulf. The bay and entire gulf was all sails today. There had to have been literally thousands of them. Absolutely beautiful in the bright sunshine (too many Celsius and probably 90+ degrees Fahrenheit) with the green waters. But then we hit Whaheke and while Kay was *doing* the bathroom, the buses all left for Oserno, so we took off walking after them - five miles, all uphill in scorching heat. When we finally arrived, we got something cold, checked out some art studios and saw the very nice beach down on the "other side" of the island. That was it! We hopped a bus back to the ferry terminal and found out that the next ferry would be a little longer in transit since it was stopping in Devonport. Kay concealed her joy about as well as you would expect, I maybe a little less.

At Devonport, finally disembarking after delays waiting for other ferries, everything was wall-to-wall people. We walked up to the local supermarket and got some baguettes and cheese and fruit to enjoy in our room.

Oh yes. We had had a large and quite delicious seafood and pasta meal back when we had waited for the ferry to Whaheke at the Auckland dock, so the snacks seemed like all we wanted tonight.

When we finally got back to the B&B, I soaked my feet in cold water and we ate plums and sandwiches lying on the sheet with most of our clothes off. Summer is so wonderful but there are "dog days" of summer too!



Maori Chieftain Bored by Rental Car Exchange

Another good nights sleep. Another beautiful hot summer morning. Another English breakfast. Two new co-B&B'ers - an accountant's wife from Melbourne quite full of herself and a couple (quite elderly) from Pennsylvania in the US - rather dull people - he quite proud of all his traveling for Kodak, quite sure the majority who are not interested in electronic images will hold, coming to Chehalis (in our home State of Washington) next week, having vacationed only one week in New Zealand. Busy, busy, busy! He *loves* travel he says but I think he just likes sleeping on airplanes; I'm not convinced he knows the difference!

When we had our bags in order, Philip took the bags and us to the ferry. We would be picking our car up at the Auckland ferry terminal - we thought. It had been a most enjoyable stay at Devonport. Philip and Yvonne have been a very fine host and hostess in spite of Philip's somewhat fatuous solution for fatigue.

We arrived in Auckland with our half ton of luggage but the rent-a-car wasn't there! It turns out that the stupid man had thought that by saying that he would meet us at the *Devonport* ferry terminal, Kay had meant *in Devonport*! But of course Kay (in her way) had meant *Auckland*! It was of little consequence now! Several phone calls and an extra twenty miles for the delivery man and his pick up support, but he and Kay were both most gracious in saying all the necessary, oh-no-it's-all-my-faults! Mostly I watched, being somewhat overheated after waiting with our luggage on a park bench in front of the huge Maori warrior statue that overlooks that part of the harbor. He is indeed a stately figure.

We were given the instructions for driving on the *wrong* side of the road from the *wrong* side of the car - the *right* side albeit - and our delivery man disappeared into a crowd in the park pretty much as guardian angels are supposed to when you're done with them or as if we had just taken part in a *delivery* of illicit drugs or something! I sat there for a moment getting my bearings trying to convince myself with the story I told him of having driven fifteen thousand miles in the UK. Right then I wasn't buying it much more than he probably had no matter how true it happened to be. I attempted to signal to pull out in the wrong lane of traffic - but my windshield wipers wouldn't budge! Then I used the *other* turn signal. Subsequently, however, whenever I anticipated turning left, the very thought would inevitably be accompanied by the scraping of windshield wipers on dry windshield. Kay was laughing at me now, a car honked, and then I was out there and had to get over a lane to turn right right away. Then around a block and heading out toward the Auckland Bridge once more. I settled down a little except for Kay complaining about me driving on the white line on her side and that our windshield was already clean.

So! Now we were on our way to what Kay has usually referred to as the "Bay of Pigs!" although most New Zealanders refer to this section of Northland as only "The Bay of Islands!" This is all focused around the resort town of Paihia about 150 miles North of Auckland - our immediate destination - and Russell across the bay.

One drives through a lot of mixed pine, fern and palm forests on the way North - the diversity of specific trees is quite extreme. The variety of "bush" as they tend to refer to this diverse collection of foliage is one of the things one gets used to in New Zealand. There are also a lot of hilly farms and semi arid regions - at least now that they have been so short of rain for such an extended period. We stopped at a beach near Ruakaka on the Pacific side for a while. This was just before we reached Whangarei about half way to our destination. The beach went on for miles. There were very beautiful large waves. But across the bay further North there were high crags and cliffs. We sat there for a while the wind was blowing hard. It was hot in spite of the wind. There were beautiful yellow flowers growing in the sand dunes and out across one of them I found a baby blue penguin that hadn't been dead too long. It seemed indeed out of context in this hot weather.



Baby Blue Penguin "Resting in Peace"

We proceeded further up along the water to Marsden Point and One Tree Point. These are uneventful little towns, but we saw a refinery type oil tank at least a hundred feet across that was up on railroad cars. It was bent from the weight and it looked as though someone's "good idea" had gone awry. In a parking lot right by the Whangarei Harbor there were hundreds of what we would later learn were "variable oyster catchers!" These are black wading birds with long reddish-orange bill and legs and orange circles around their eyes. There were a few "pied oyster catchers" among them, which we would later see was the reverse of their usual numbers.



Pied Oyster Catcher

We lunched at an open café sitting on a porch overlooking a canal where large sail boats were moored.

When we reached Paihia, we noticed a shortage of B&B's. That is a major difference between here and the UK! There are some, but they are hardly a *cheaper* alternative here as they are there. But with the exchange rate being so heavily in our favor, nice motel rooms with kitchen accommodations are not all that expensive. We found us a nice one right on the beach in Paihia. The attendant at registration gave us clues to activities for enjoying the Bay of Islands the next day. We scheduled on to the ride out through the islands to the "hole in the rock" and looked forward to it all evening as we sat in our room looking out at the beach after having dined most sumptuously - I on lamb shank, Kay on seafood.

We breakfasted in our motel room overlooking Paihia bay. The motel offered this service for a charge.

Kay went to back the car to where we could handily load our massive baggage. One of the guests joyfully squealed, "flatty!" Damn that English sense of humor! Well, the right rear tire wasn't quite all the way flat, so the desk clerk helped us by calling a Shell station up around the bend and they said they would fix it for us. We had to be out of the motel room before we would get back from our arranged boat ride, so we drove carefully to the Shell station, deposited our car, and returned the extra half mile or more on foot walking along the beach. It was a most pleasant walk. We had time enough to pick up a battery for the camera before queuing up for the ride.

The large catamaran was great - very like the one on which we had returned from Waiheke a couple days ago. It was only about half-full or less on its first run, the 9:15 AM. It proceeded first across to Russell - yes! Now we have a town using one of my names! Russell was the first capital of New Zealand before being moved to Auckland some two weeks thereafter and finally, of course, the honor was moved on to Wellington. Russell is a rather quaint little town as you might expect, being circled rather closely around the small dock. It is actually on the peninsula that is part of the main North Island, but it seems like one of the islands when one approaches it in this way. It is a rather long and circuitous route out onto the peninsula to Russell by road.

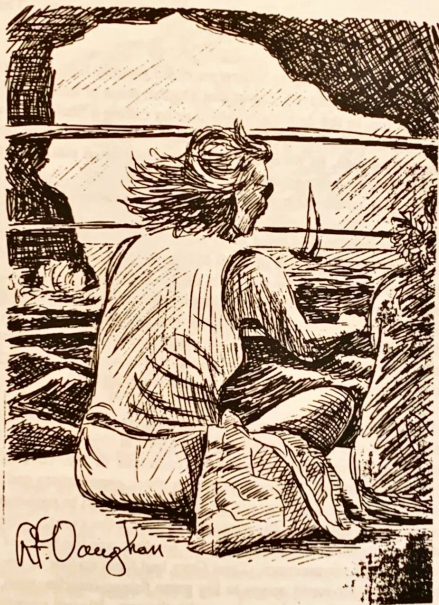
At Russell we picked up a couple of passengers and proceeded out through the islands with their historic tales of Captain Cook having stopped at this one in 1769 and Captain Fresne and his crew having been permanently detained by cannibals in this cove in 1777. (There seems to be some political incorrectness in much discussion about cannibalism and the massacres in New Zealand for, although the site was pointed out on the map provided to passengers, we did not go into the cove and there was no occasion for the captain to mention the event.) One of the islands was the home of the first man to be hanged in New Zealand. Another was the home of the well-known Robinson family, of whose history I am unaware. Zane Grey had lived on one of the islands much later, although a long time ago now, for rapid access to big game fishing (marlin, tuna, etc.) to which he evidently became somewhat addicted after his success with the pen. It's not something one could readily associate with the purple sage of his stories set in the old American West. There was a hotel that was actually built on that island to accommodate Zane's many guests but it was burned down in 1924 and never restored. Many of the islands have now been set up as bird sanctuaries - reserves for rare species including varieties of kiwi and a bird (one was perched on a rock for all of us to see) that lays its eggs right at the high water mark on beaches - hardly a safe place from humans in most locales. Virtually every individual of that species now lives on that one small island.

Then we proceeded to the lighthouse at Cape Brett out at the end of the peninsula. The huge light house had been moved from somewhere in the Coromandel peninsula.

Then we *did* the hole in the rock! Whoa! Now that's fun! Before the Captain of our boat proceeded through the hole, he waited for several minutes to get in sync with the ten foot swells (and no doubt to build up suspense in our frail little touristy hearts). Then, full speed ahead guns and waves crashing, Kay screaming with delight while sitting cross-legged (because the Captain wouldn't let her "dangle!") at the center of the bow of the boat. We also saw the hydroplane boat with the 50 or so seats strapped on the front of it do the dash with all fifty seats joining in a splendid chorus of A sharp or higher. That boat barely skims the water, leaving a fifty or sixty foot rooster tail. It makes our high speed catamaran look like it's standing still.

We went through the "hole in the rock" twice, saw the profile of the maori maiden looking out to sea on the Eastern side of the rock and headed back through the islands via a little different route. We encountered a pod of dolphins on the way back that were being courted by several boats. We went

right in among them. We were there for twenty minutes or so with many of them gliding around the bow of our boat, surfacing, blowing and doing it again. The tour which offered "swimming with the dolphins" had fifteen or twenty people on a net in the water right beside us. At one point, they were told that they could leave the net and swim out with their snorkels in pursuit of their favorite dolphin - none seemed to get very close - the dolphins had seemed to move on by then. We made one more pass by the dolphins, and as we sped up in departing, a couple hugged right next our craft keeping the speed. While we were among them, we could hear their high-pitched communications - all most exhilarating..



Thence to Russell and on back to Paihia. Someone was high on a kite being pulled by a boat which added to the color and glamour of the Paihia shore line and sky. We had been out a little over three hours, and it was a most enjoyable part of any trip!

We tried to get on one of the computers they rent at the terminal, but there was a long queue, so we decided to walk down to get our car and have lunch before trying again. The tyre (well, "tyre" if one accepts the idiosyncratic spelling of the English as the New Zealanders do!) had been mended. (We were shown the offending nail.) We patronized the station for gas. It was \$0.84NZ (per liter I guess it is) - \$26NZ for a half tank. Then we had venison burgers for lunch.

In Anticipation of Going Through the "Hole In The Rock"

We got on the Internet for an hour and ten minutes for \$12NZ - not bad compared to phone charges we had spent the night before when we had gotten hold of Sean. Only a very few minute of phone time had cost \$18NZ. Nola had still not been at home. We sent e-mail to Sean and heard back. He told us he's "in love!" Oh, oh. I checked my e-mail list and sent a few other messages and Kay wrote her sister Gladys (at nephew Bobby's e-mail address). We bought some post cards that we would write during the day and would post later.

Then we took off and headed North to Keri Keri.

Keri Keri is the fruit growing Mecca of Northland that is in quite a pretty setting but not a tourist trap. We encountered (or noticed) the tall dense bamboo hedges here for the first time. We also saw the stone building of some historic significance and the reconstructed maori village close by, but after a picture we went on to Waipapa pronounced as would every child and hence straight North on Highway 10. This is actually pretty remote farming country. Here you see "400 acre farms" for sale

instead of just "homes" as elsewhere - a lot of New Zealand is for sale. But then, as Mark Twain said, "everything's for sale - it's just a matter of the price!"

After waiting for some resurfacing of a one-way bridge at Whangaroa, we were before long in Waipapapkauri and stopped at a swamp-kauri wood working shop. This is ancient kauri logs that have been buried for from 30,000 to 50,000 years according to carbon dating. They have been preserved under volcanic ash and mud. Such sites are found at various places throughout the North Island. The shop was quite unique with major pieces of furniture having been carved out of these logs. A stairway to the upper floor is carved right into a huge log eight or ten feet across standing in the building for that purpose. We bought some gifts in the shop to take back with us.

Looking at the names on a map, you would think that the maori culture had predominated in New Zealand, but it seems to be a White Man thing to accept the names of things and reject the things themselves. It is a management technique that baffled me all my working life.

Then the navigator had me proceed North even though we had decided earlier to abandon the notion of going all the way to Cape Reinga to witness the Tasman Sea and Pacific Ocean meeting. We had acknowledged that we had many miles to cover before meeting the David Roscoes in Wellington. But we were at Waihara before we knew it and went out East a ways to verify that the country was the same rolling hills and dairy cows, so we re-confirmed that we really didn't want to spend the time to proceed all the way to Cape Reinga - this was in-part because the "Ninety-Mile Beach" road that coach tours use is closed to rent-a-cars. Too many cars are lost to parking in the soft sand and then covered with a rising tide.

So at Waipapapkauri we headed for the West coast beach. There was a fishing derby on at this time for the largest snapper -- \$200,000 NZ ! It was crazy out there! Ninety nine percent of all out there were men - probably sixty percent of these maori or other polynesian races and twenty percent four-wheeled red necks! We parked in the dunes with the pickups and walked out to this lower section of Ninety-Mile Beach. This beach is actually just about sixty miles long - perhaps those who named it were confused by the metric system as we sometimes are. It was 5:00 PM NZ by then and the beaches were lined with fishermen with more coming all the time - radios blaring. The beach looked somewhat like Copalis in Washington State, but you could tell that it went on forever - flat



Maori Maiden on the Sea Side of "Hole In The Rock"

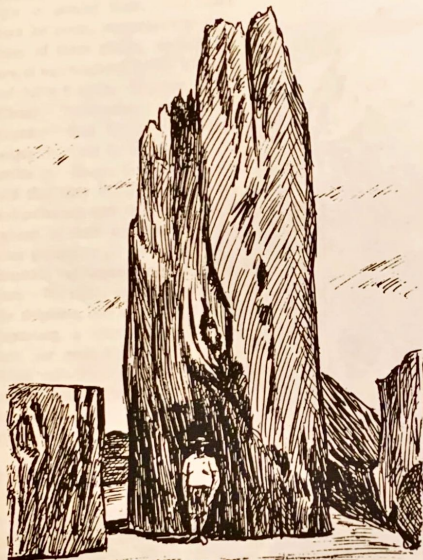
sand, waves, people, tall poles, and pickups. In the dunes there was party time music centering in a shack erected for the purpose with large rowdy crowds milling around.

So we got out of there and headed South to find a place to stay. There were no B&B's (well, there had been a full one and one Kay had not liked well enough to enquire about) in Waipapakauri. Similarly, all the motels were full in Kaitaia. So we continued on Southeasterly down the middle of the island though winding roads, up the mountains through the dense old Northland Forest that was not too tall. There was virtually no traffic on this major highway. Out of the forest region down through farmable hills past Lake Omapere at Okaihau to Kaikohe where we finally found a nice motel with a restaurant. The motel was great – the restaurant (at least what we go) awful. In the lobby were reproductions of the ancient tattooed maori chiefs with descriptions of the lives of each.

Oh. And and we saw some strange things this day. There was a fairly large black and blue bird with a large orange beak that I saw while

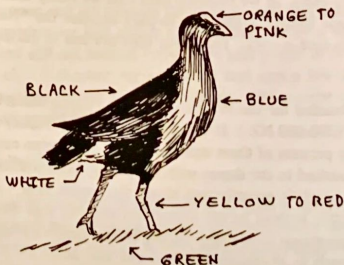
driving but she missed seeing it. I wanted a picture, but we were past it too fast. And wild turkeys! There are wild turkeys in Northland!

They grow lots of corn in the Northlands! Actually, they grow lots of corn everywhere in New Zealand, but it doesn't find its way onto menus in restaurants.



H. O'Leary

The Old Man and the Ancient Swamp Kauri



Pukeko

Day 5 – February 24th – Tane Mahuta to Taurangi

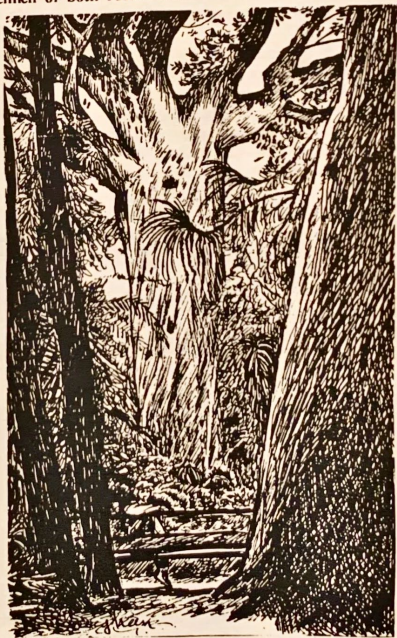
Kay decided to try driving while I finished this up. You can maybe tell how well she drives by the scrawling [fortunately deciphered and typed now]. Actually, it's very hilly with winding road through mixed forests and farms. The hills across the inlet from Opononi are just huge eroding sand dunes. One would guess that there might have been 500 foot waves here at one time. Opononi is where there is a memorial to the amazingly friendly dolphin that visited this harbor in 1955 and 1956. He was shot by an idiot. Driving up the winding road into the hills here, one looks back on very nice scenery of the town and harbor.

This day we saw the *Tane Mahuta*! She is a grand old lady of reputed ages anywhere from 1200 to 2000 years. The girth of this kauri tree is 13.8 meters; she's over 51 meters high. Her name as I understand it is maori for "separation of the earth and sky." The ancient kauri forests are truly spectacular. You'll find that there are some 200 – 300 other species of trees and plants in this native forest when you get out to trek. A veritable jungle. We stopped at various points of interest through this forest to get better looks at the trees. I picked up a limb that had fallen from a kauri tree and broke off a chunk that seemed small enough to take with us.

Our route took us down the Dargaville and thence down East of the Wairoa river which is very cloudy – the color of golden brown sand dunes. At Matakoho we went to the popular Kauri Museum. It was very interesting with many specimen of both recent and prehistoric swamp kauri. The

museum itself is quite large – big enough for me to have lost Kay for quite a while. Besides the many fine specimen logs, there are life-sized logging displays showing equipment used, saw mills, and photographs of the devastation of the virgin kauri forests. A complete cross section of the last giant kauri "harvested" (in 1962 I believe) was on display.

I noticed on one of the cross sections of a swamp kauri they had on display, which was said to have lived 2,800 years, that growth ring sizes would shrink for periods of maybe twenty years where only an inch of radius would be added, but then there would be periods when it would grow nearly a quarter inch a year for several years. These intervals continued throughout its life. In the latter end of its life, the amount of wood produced per year was phenomenal – but I've been on that soap box before. It was interesting to notice hand-painted signs throughout Northland – here as in the US, obsolete loggers blame conservationists for their being out of work. They say in essence, "No logger should ever be out of work while the Tane Mahuta stands!"



The Tane Mahuta – 2,000 Year Old Kauri

The kauri wood itself is very beautiful in the carvings on display. There was a carved face I would have liked to get but it looked too much like my friend John! We had "gum stickers" for lunch there at the museum. They are lamb pies with the dough folded over like calzone. They tasted good. But soon we had to hit the road again heading South toward Auckland, hoping to make it to Tauranga or Whakatane tonight depending on how tired we get. There is separated highway just North and South of Auckland heading toward Hamilton, and Kay is blowing the carbon out! We were through Auckland like a year in an old man's life!

We turned left at Pohoke or some such name (actually it was Pokeno) onto highway 2 heading now toward Waihi. At first it was rolling hills and smaller farm country, but then it flattens out turning into the huge flat expanse of the Hauraki plains centered more-or-less at Ngatea. Then along the Waihou river starting into extremely scenic mountains with the river winding down beside the road to Waihi. From there to Taurangi the ocean is never far to the left. One sees it in glimpses. We have figured out by now that B&B's are just not as prevalent in New Zealand as they had been in the British Isles. We found a nice motel right on the ocean just after Tauranga (the ocean tide flats and highway 2 in front, a large lagoon behind).

We went back to the waterfront in Tauranga for supper -- Mt. Maunganui is a dominant aspect of the Tauranga skyline North and East of the main part of town. A Japanese restaurant caught our eye; it was a little different cuisine than US Japanese. There had also been Mediterranean, French (or is that Mediterranean too?), Mongolian, Indian and more usual restaurants to have chosen from.

After trying without success to find a supermarket grocery, we settled for a "Superette." The little "dairy," as they call these corner groceries in New Zealand, was tended by an Indian girl about twenty years of age. She scooped me an ice cream cone when we got our groceries, talking excitedly the while about where we were from and about where *she* was from -- very recently brought over as a bride from India. She was very happy with her situation. It made one feel good about life in general. We got lost after that (we were probably lost when we found the 'dairy!) and it must be said that Kay and I differed somewhat on preferred ways to go or *have gone!* I was wrong at least once; she thinks it was more than that! But this was childish of course -- we too are very happy to be in New Zealand!

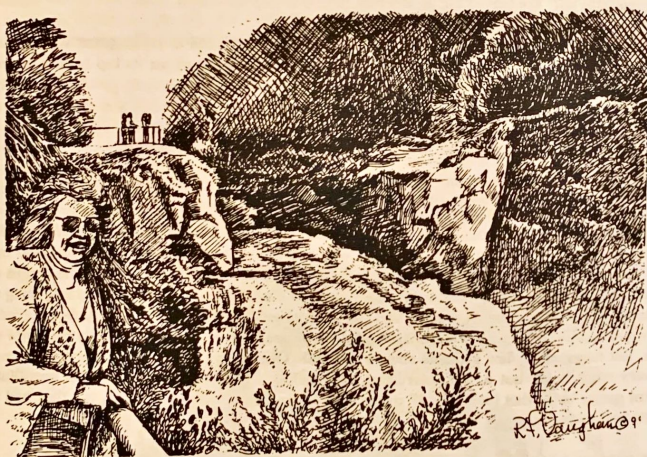


The Devil's Home

Just before reaching Taupo, we went to see the Wairaki river where it plunges through rock at high speed and volume and on over a falls; it is extremely blue water. Further downstream a hydroelectric dam at which several times a day they divert the water back into its original river. The impressive rapids on below the dam can be observed – probably more importantly a natural habitat can be preserved. A little closer to Taupo the natural steam processing facilities can be observed right by the highway where they convert the volcanic activity into electricity. Some pretty interesting projects!

The town of Taupo is very much a resort town! We ate in a restaurant along the strand and then found a motel. Still no B&B's to speak of. Our motel room had a fairly large spa in it and I persuaded me to use it with her before drifting off to the nether world. I was very tired! The spa was good though and by 8:30 we were sleeping. I woke up at a little after 2:00 AM and after a major hassle got a light on. Kay may want to explain this hassle since she's the one who figured out how to remove all power from our room in order to turn the fan off in the bathroom long after I was asleep and she, therefore was the one who figured out how to turn it back on! We just shut the bathroom door after that and let the fan run.

I read for a couple hours and then slept well again.



Wairaki Falls

Day 7 – February 26th – On to Wellington

We slept till 8:30 AM. It was raining fairly hard, but it was not cold. More Muslix with the free carton of milk that we are now accepting at every motel as a matter of course. We finished up our fruit except for the oranges. We loaded back up and headed East to Napier on the coast. We made a bad turn and ended up back down by the lake. Idiots were hitting golf balls into the lake! Yeah! They had a green carpeted float way out in the lake (presumably with a hole in it), and they were just thrashing away as if they had good sense!

Highway 5 to Napier is quite scenic with mostly planted pine forests but some sections seemed to be ancient native forests – there is a very distinctive (non-made-in-America) look to this rich diversity. Their native rimu and other pines are truly unique. Coming out of the woods to the East, it was apparent that sheep were making a serious comeback relative to the former predominance of cattle in our travels. The cows we've seen have been mostly Holstein (black and white) but with a considerable number of Jerseys as well – very few if any Gernseys. There are a very few beef varieties also so that we've seen some Herefords and Angus. So much for New Zealand cattle!

The ocean is a pretty greenish hue again at from Whirinaki on to Napier. There's no more rain and it's getting quite hot. We stopped for lunch at Napier by the water. It's an interesting town – rebuilt about 1930 after the town was wiped out by an earthquake in which 256 died. All buildings are of about the same vintage and architecture. We went through an art exhibit at the Education Center. I saw two modern pieces that were exquisite to my tasted. I asked the woman in attendance if Peter McClure (I think that was his name) was young and whether he had exhibited abroad (aren't I quite the sophisticate?). She said she didn't think so; she thought he just showed his work here locally. "At any rate," she said, "he was the man that was just in here with the mustache." My age as I recalled, so I assumed he had no future and decided against buying one of his pieces. I was undecided well after I left the exhibit – I think he just *may* have a future!

Then we headed on South toward Wellington. Kay's driving again – you should be able to tell by how illegible my writing is, but we had a truce about riding each other on our bad driving. We each



In the Atrium of the Amphitheater in Napier

think the other is a bit wild and keeps the passenger lined up with the white line indicating the outer edge of the road. Truces are good!

The terrain here could remind one of that around Ellensburg in Washington State. Quite dry rolling hills, only this is sheep country rather than cattle.

Passing through Dannervirke one is repeatedly reminded that Danes and other vikings also took up homesteads in New Zealand. Those lemmings keep showing up on the other side of oceans! These particular Scandinavians arrived at Napier in 1872 and headed out into the bush to begin anew. Now it is all pasture and farmland and looks quite prosperous.

At Woodville we opt to go straight South through Pahatua rather than crossing over the low foothills between the Ruahine and Tararua mountain ranges that would have taken us to Palmerston North and then on down the West side. So we proceed on to Eketahuna, Masterton, Featherston and over the lower Tararua range. The road is topsy-turvy crazy! We finally reach the summit and just on the other side we are welcomed to Upper Hutt by a sign. Since we are actually going to Lower Hutt, this looks encouraging, but there are absolutely no houses as far as you can see! Strange. I've heard of extending city limits to get more tax dollars, but this is ridiculous. Gradually we encounter a few more signs of civilization snuggled in among the bush on the steep side hills. We finally come to a "Hutt City" sign, but this is not a designated spot on our map. Finally we even come to the sign for Maungaraki right on schedule. We turned off and drove up a winding Dowse Street with side streets roughly associated with the types of trees. This looks promising and finally at the top of the hill overlooking Wellington Harbor and Lower Hutt. Having located about where our friends lived, we set about to find a place to stay that would be handy for getting together with them when it was convenient.

We checked out Lower Hutt and found it to be mostly commercialized and our tentative look at Seaview convinced us that this also is a commercial and residential district. We decided to go on the few miles to Wellington to get a motel. We found one right near the waterfront. Other a little difficulty in access and some severe service problems at their restaurant and their waking us at midnight with sandwiches we hadn't ordered, the "Quality" hotel reached the level of "Mediocre!"

After we had eaten - which literally took hours - I called David and we arranged to meet him the next day.

Day 8 – February 27th – Saturday at Wellington

Kay did some calling for a motel in Petone – just down the hill from David and Jenni's. It's pronounced peony except that "e" is short and a "t" has to be slipped in after it. She found a vacancy in one right on the harbor looking right across to Wellington. The motorway access was handy and so Kay booked us for the next two nights there. We checked out of the "Quality" and were at David's at about 10:00 AM.

David is a most bubbly person and most hospitable. We talked hurriedly and got on extremely well right off! Finally about three PM we got on with following Jenni's instructions (she was working on Saturdays) to pick up baguettes. He cut some cheeses, tomatoes and liverwurst for too many open face sandwiches, all of which we ate. He made coffee as well.

I handed him two years worth of journals he had paid for but that his having changed residence without address changes had precluded sending to him. I also gave him the CD I had brought along to give him of Fredrik Ullén's World Premier of Ligetti's piano compositions. David and Jenni had a Ligetti CD already, but with different selections and with a different pianist. He was very appreciative.

We talked about Marilyn vos Savant's not having renewed her membership in our Society, about which David was very disappointed since he considered he an icon of the Society. He wanted to pay her membership but I discouraged it, insisting that the money was not her problem but the address vulnerability due to her celebrity status was. David got out a wad of US bills and insisted on prepaying membership fees for 5 years (six counting his current member in good standing status). I told him 3 years would put him a year ahead of anyone else in the Society. We settled on three and he gave me \$60.00 to take back with me for the Treasury. [We neither – or at least I had not – noticed that the non-North American dues would have made this \$90.00. He would rectify this during our subsequent visit.]

About 4:00 PM Jenni came home with her stories of the horrors of the day with regard to the rest home where she is cook. David had earlier called a restaurant at Lower Hutt to book a reservation for supper at 7:00. It was a restaurant they had never eaten at before but one which one of Jenni's friends had recommended highly.

In the afternoon David ad told us of his involvements at the Wellington National Museum as honorary curator or some such title pertinent to New Zealand land snails. He explained his activities with regard to on-going University course work and his pharmacy job that involved 12 hours a day. This particular weekend he also had a report due on a patient's approach to prescribed medication and what effects he perceives from the treatment. Unfortunately David's patient is schizophrenic and doesn't know what happened two minutes ago! The report is due Monday.

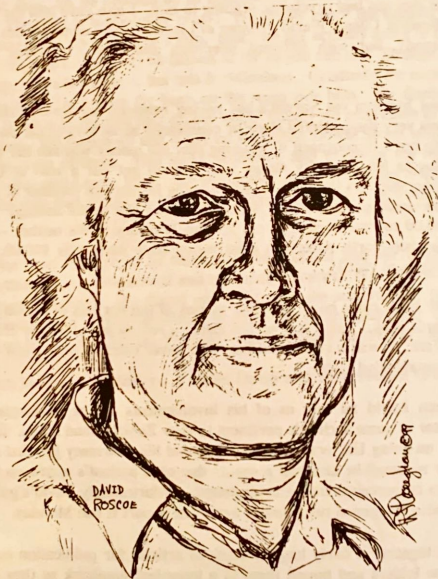
David had put together a fairly lengthy stack of articles for publication on our journal and placed them in glassine folders and bound them in a loose-leaf notebook so they would be easy for me to carry back with me.

We decided that we should confirm our motel room, so David and Jenni said they would follow (lead) us to the motel so we could check in and deposit our bags. They helped us carry bags and Kay opened the bottle of wine we had bought back at Devonport at the wine festival – actually it had been at the supermarket at Devonport we remembered! It was very good and it turns out that the wine was from a winery at Nelson where Jenni and David have lived. They were familiar with the winery and seemed to think it was good wine as well. We finished the bottle speaking of Fred Britton and Eva and the delicious wine that Fred is making in his new venture and other pleasant things.

We were all in good cheer as we left for the restaurant in their "pink" Honda that Jenni had bought! The restaurant was excellent. The waitress was delightful in all ways. We a different main entrée and each was apparently the best of its kind we had ever had! We also had French bread and wine and lengthy pleasant conversation.

David discussed the future of man backed by anecdotes and analogies. The interconnection of brains! The conversation was very fluid with much interaction and Kay and Jenni seemed also to be quite involved - if not quite so far out - in their discussion. We shared desserts and talked some more. They dropped us by our motel about 9:30 or 10:00 PM with the agreement that they would pick us up at 10:00 AM the next day to take us to the Wellington Museum.

A great day.



Our Friend David Roscoe

Day 9 – February 28th – Wellington Museum

We awoke and breakfasted in our room as has become our usual. Not quite such a good sleep what with all the thinking, surfeiting and coffee but well enough. Roscoes arrived right at 10:00 and we were off to the museum.

When David and I walked into the museum somewhat behind the women, one of the young girls who assist visitors began immediately describing where everything could be found and wondering whether there was anything at all she could help us with. It was a little embarrassing since David was my guide as I saw it. I told her something to that effect in David's silence and David immediately jumped in to inform her that I was one of the truly intelligent people in the world and that he had some minor position at the museum having to do with land mollusks or whatever. She thereupon became obsessed with knowing who I was. "I'm nobody!" I said honestly, rolling my eyes at how David had exaggerated. She looked totally bewildered, looking first at one and then the other of us and I was all this time just trying to move on past this situation! I saw little humor in it.

We went first to the maori exhibit. It seemed very shallow to me but then I don't exactly know what I was expecting. There is an apparent dearth of knowledge of origins – or a poorly presented story. The impression I have is that the maoris are a Hawaiian derivative and that they only arrived a hundred years or so before the white man. There is some evidence for an earlier race that populated the islands much, much earlier. No, they were not marsupials! This race was evidently wiped out by the maoris – actually cannibalized, I think, although that is not politically correct now. Nor is the fact that New Zealand prison occupants are predominantly maoris a politically correct, although factual, statement.

We went on to *natural* history – much better. The diversity of species was covered well with many authentic exhibits. We saw the land snail exhibit David had been responsible for – well done but small commensurate with the lack of allocated budget. We saw the picture of David's prime competitor in National Geographic magazine with no mention of the included species that had actually been discovered by David instead of him

We checked out the re-created Moa bird – it took a concentrated effort to find it. Then we had lunch in the museum cafeteria and walked to Jenni's pink car. They dropped us off at about 3:30 with plans to reconvene for supper at their place at 7:00. David would work on his report in this little window of time. We slept and then I read a couple of David's articles that gave more meaning to our earlier conversations.

We were at Roscoe's about 7:00 after having determined that we had to sail to the South Island early the next morning on the fast ferry. We would otherwise have had to wait a few days. Jenni's supper was superb. First we had a seafood soup prepared with a wine sauce, with which we had what seemed an expensive table wine. Then we had a chicken pastry dish with coos coos (whatever that is) and salad. All presented very beautifully and tasting delicious. Finally, for dessert an English fruit dish drenched in port with cream. All served up with delightful conversation.

The sadness and humor of David's life was a major topic. His mother having married her husband's best friend (David's father) after he had been killed in the war. The men had evidently both been pilots. David was two and a half years old when his father came back from war and the two had never related to each other very well. Two more boys and two girls resulted from the loveless marriage before the father ran off with his secretary. Mrs. Roscoe raised the children alone from that time. David was eleven when this happened. David's father was an accountant. He played the piano and had insisted that David take piano lessons from the time he was six. David was much further advanced than the others in his class when he started school and while still in the first grade, his teacher had paraded him to a fifth grade class to demonstrate that their books were so easy that

even a first grader could read them. That tended to make the children in the school not like David particularly well as he perceived it.

David married and had both a boy and girl. But his wife became unhappy and nothing David could do would persuade her not to leave. He tried for custody of the children but all he was allowed was occasional visitation rights. This trauma was followed by a long period of self-doubt, particularly since his wife had not found anyone else; she just wanted to get away from David. He went to a psychologist to find out what was wrong with him and at length the psychologist laughed and said David you are maybe a little obsessive, but other than that nothing. David said, "What can I do about being obsessive?" The psychologist said, "Well if I were you I'd just use it!"

When David's son was 12 he had begged David and Jenni to take him to live with them and they had told him to wait until he was sixteen when there would be no legal hassle. When he was 14 years old, he and another boy were playing with matches in a barn and were burned to death. That was ten years ago. It has been a terrible sadness. When his daughter was married, she had wanted him at the wedding but his former wife insisted on being the one to "give her away." Since then David and Jenni have become quite close to his daughter and her 3-year-old twins. David's former wife never re-married and has become somewhat of a hermitess.

David and Jenni's courtship and the occasion of their meeting initiated following some of David's pharmacy associates having run an add as a joke to which he received several truly ridiculous responses.

Before we left I reminded David that he had said he would play something for me on the piano. So we went downstairs to his piano near the computer room where he also stores his many previously unknown mollusc specimens that he has to finish filing properly for recognition. In the room with the piano was also Jenni's cello. Since I am so uncouth in recognizing good music, I can only say I enjoyed David's playing. He had a hard time stopping. Playing samples of several composers - one New Zealander who actually lives quite near David. We pulled ourselves away - then they both remembered that they were going to help with spots on our South Island trip, so 15 intense minutes went into that. Where to go in Nelson area, what to see. The value of doing Stewart Island, Milford Sound, Pancake rocks, Dunedin neighborhood - the round rocks - oh, and finally Renwick by Blenheim - a delicious wine we should not miss.

We promised we would call when we got back in nearly two weeks - the weekend his father who now lives in Auckland will visit them for the first time in twenty years! We insisted we would not stop by but it seemed that David was most sincere in wanting to introduce his father to me and get together again. We assured them we would definitely call on our return from the South Island and play it by ear.

So we left some of our very best friends and went back to the Motel for a shorter night than we're getting used to.

Day 10 – March 1st – Monday

Got up early – used alarms for the first time. It kept going off after being turned off – probably waking those next door. We were fourth in line for the ferry. It was a very clear day and nice views of Wellington as we left, but we were inside (on the fast ferry all seats are inside although one can step outside in the rear) and the windows had some spray so we didn't take pictures. We had a large breakfast purchased separately brought to us by stewardesses. When we left the harbor, there were pretty major swells in Cook's Strait. It didn't take long though until we were sheltered between the main South Island and a long peninsular island on the circuitous route to Picton. Once at Picton, we opted for the Queen Charlotte drive around the water to Havelock on the way to Nelson. It was very worth the twisting roadway with views of the Marlboro Sound virtually the whole way. At Nelson we had our last roll of film developed to see if it was working and had a camera man check over to see why it had been acting weird. He couldn't find anything and we decided to wait to see how the pictures came out. They were very good, so not to worry! We ate lunch there, checked on the Internet at a youth hostile – essentially there was nothing, but we sent a note to Sean.

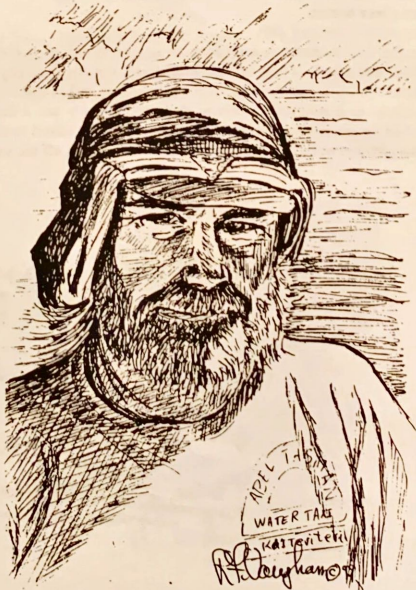
Then we headed west up around the bay to Kaiteriteri past Motueka – the most beautiful beach in the world. We got an excellent cabin for two nights up on the cliff overlooking it all. It is a completely private heaven some two hundred feet or so straight up over the beach. We walked around between beach islands hopping rocks – checking out the trapped sea life and we went swimming – well wading. I stepped a bit hard on a barnacle and will have to pay for that!

We contacted the driver of a water taxi to take us up the coast of Abel Tasman National Park in the morning. His name is Captain John. He wears a bandana over his cap draped down over his neck and long hair. His arms are like scaly lobsters with abscesses where the sunburn has broken the skin – a pleasant chap all the same.

We went shopping for groceries after arranging tomorrows entertainment – got strawberries and raspberries, watermelon, a baguette, loaf of bread, cheese, ham, peanut butter! Yum! Oh, and coffee! No more instant! So we ate supper here overlooking the beach and the little islands up close, Tasman Bay behind them and Nelson further away.

We watched the effects of the sun going down behind us on all this – taking pictures every few minutes as the most beautiful scenery you've ever seen continued to get better and better.

It don't get no better than this!



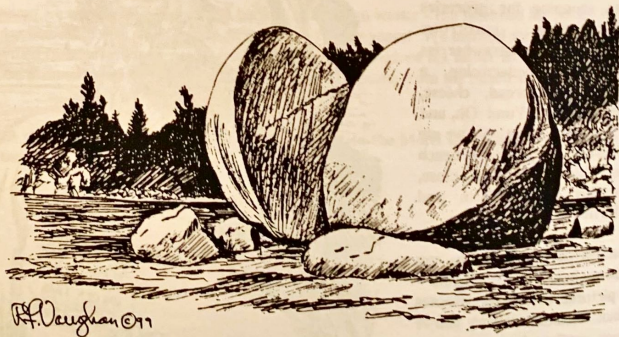
Captain John – Water Taxi Driver

Day 11 – March 2nd – Tuesday

Up early – we slept without the shade on our wall-width window – the sunrise was directly on us across Tasman Bay. We ate a delicious breakfast in our fantasimo “batch.” Kiwi’s refer to summer cottages as “batches”. When we were done we went down to the beach to catch the “water taxi”, a 20 seat boat with the wild Kiwi captain John! We had to wade out to get in the taxi and then the boat went over across the little bay to the other beach to pick up some more passengers.

Kaiteriteri is just on the southern edge of the Abel Tasman National Park. The taxi takes one up along the coast of the park where no road goes. He drops people off along the coast and agrees to pick them up at various places and times later. In our case, we were going up to Awaroa Lodge and Café to be picked up some three or four hours after drop off. The coastline of the Park is 70 kilometers of rocky cliffs and huge boulders and islands and beaches. There are 98 beaches along this route, all seem quite alluring with golden sand and gently waves. Enroute one sees strange rock formations including the "Split Apple!" And wild life – mostly birds – to say nothing of hundreds of kayakers. The Tonga Island enroute has a large colony of Southern fur seals that loll on the rocks with their young that are now several months old and a foot and a half to two feet long. There are also many species of birds I have not seen before. At Awaroa where we waded ashore is a café about 900 meters from the beach in a secluded clearing. It is very nicely done with natural furniture and excellent paintings on the walls. After lunch we trekked out a quarter or half mile along the perfect beach and both went swimming with all the privacy you could want. We swam for quite a while and dried in the warm sun. It was completely clear today – no clouds and yet only comfortably warm with a nice breeze.

On the way to Awaroa John took us up the mouth of a river a ways. The forest there is a tall primordial stand. These are not huge trees, but the diversity is quite amazing and mosses hanging from some of the trees. The water up this river and in the bay is very clear. On the way back John pointed out a stingray swimming along the bottom- not a large one maybe three feet across. We picked up stragglers on the way back and went by island further out in the bay. It is frustrating to take pictures when a boat is screaming along banging off the swells; we'll see how they come out.





Some of the Abel Tasman Wildlife

The tide was out and John made us jump out way out in the bay – water higher than the crotch. It was a pretty funny sight watching all those wary travelers carrying what they wanted dry high up. Kay got some pictures of it.

When we got back to our batch, we had sandwiches with fruit for supper. (We had had “Tramper Burgers” for lunch- these things had two hunks of meat in them – we took one hunk out of the burger to eat with the salad.) Kay washed clothes then and we hung them out on the clothesline with clothespins like our mothers used to use. The wind is drying them out nicely as we read and putter around.

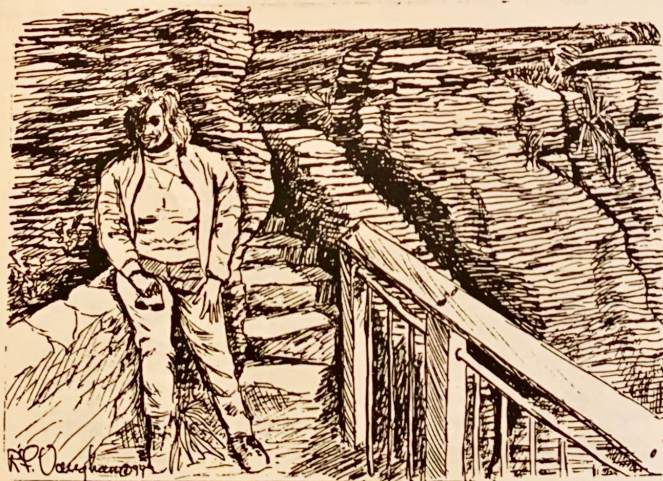


This day started early (sunrise at 7:00 daylight time) breakfast getting clothes off the line - all but a few thick places were dry, packed our bags, looked a few more wistful times out at the bay and at John wading in to prepare for the days boating. then we were on our way.

We cut South just after Motueka heading down through the dry farm land to Tapawera where main highway 6 is joined and we proceeded South through the beautiful Buller River canyon. We stopped at Westport for lunch. It is very much a NON tourist town. Thence South along the coast to Punakaki. Here the Tasman Sea has battered the coast into strange pancake stack formations with the wave action driving up through holes in the rocks producing geyser like action. It is totally unique. At the shop close by they had Opossum hides for sale. We nearly bought one to remind us of the familiar New Zealand road kill.

We then continued South to Greymouth, passing through Rapahoe and Runanga - a former coaling town that would remind one of the town of Black Diamond in Washington state - complete with the physical logo of a loaded coal car. Continuing South along the tattered coastline, the variety of pine encountered here are very tall with lacey looking needles high up and twisted trunks and limbs. This is actually just ancient "bush" I think. The diversity of plants and density of them is the strange thing. The canopy is smooth as if it were just bushes, but these are tall trees. This ancient forest continues for many miles with occasional farms along the flat margin by the sea. The white caps of the "Southern Alps" began showing up by the time we reached Hokitika. There are several 10,000 foot peaks that are snow covered. At Franz Josef Glacier, guess what - yes, there is a glacier. We tromped up a minor mountain to get a view of its face coming all the way down from the upper peaks. The glacier has receded a couple miles from where it was in 1750 - bear in mind it was discovered in 1886, so I don't know exactly how they know where it was in 1750.

We continued South past Fox Glacier where once again there is a glacier. We forewent that experience since we had miles to go. The little town was quite quaint however, and we extorted for



Pancake Stacks at Punakaki

gas at this berg. Then we proceeded unabashed on our quest for Hasst as a resting place, our biggest day in our plan. We finally reached Hasst at about 7:45, crossing the half mile river bridge, but there was no room in either of the two inns in Hasst. It is truly a one-horse town! I think we saw the horse looking woefully over a gate. So, nothing to do but proceed up Hasst Pass. It was very beautiful a wide river valley with cattle pastured on the lush grasses between the various channels of the Haast River.

I guess I didn't mention that the West Coast was full of boom towns in the 1860's. The tiny town of Hokitika had 50,000 residents back then. Some of the terrain is marred by excavations. Meanwhile up the Haast River there are beautiful water falls like Wild Billy or whatever it's called. We hoped to stop at Makaroa after navigating the pass, but there was no vacancy in there one Motel, so we proceeded on down the beautiful lake Wanaka - serene and lovely with absolutely no one on the huge lake, no cabins, no traffic, nothing but bare beauty. It is dryer with totally bare hills on

this side of the alps. We followed Lake Wanaka half its length till going across a small divide we proceeded down the lower half of Lake Hawea to the town of Lake Hawea. It was dark now, but we proceeded in to Wanaka and got the first available motel room. We have traveled very few miles in the dark on this trip and with all the possum road kill, we thought we would see some tonight, but we didn't. We did see a little pin cushion doing the Tim Conway shuffle and after thinking that perhaps we had seen our first kiwi, we realized that this was one of the Australian hedge hogs - another of the ill-conceived imports from Australia brought in to eat one thing but which preferred another.

After depositing our bags at the motel and freshening up a bit we drove into the town and found the café that the motel manager had recommended. It was closed but evidently they felt sorry for us and sold us their last two roast lamb dinners. It had been over a 400 mile day with by far the most of coming after lunch when Kay took over driving. We were very tired and hungry. This meal taste wonderful.

At least, this day has taken a lot of pressure off the rest of our trip.



Franz Josef Glacier

Beginning our day in Wanaka with our ensuite breakfast, we began promptly the drive Queenstown through dry barren hills along the Clutha river. A little past Cromwell we caught Nevis river and followed it most of the way to Queenstown. We found a motel early on and then went to town without worries to engage the steamship for up lake cruising. This old tramp steamer has been in service since 1912 and still runs on coal. One can watch the engine being stoked and watch the pistons and drive shaft turning what has to be turned.

The steamer goes along at 13 knots and heads up toward Glenorchy that is some thirty odd miles at the end of the lake. That's where John Sniedze went one weekend from Sydney to do some mountain trekking. No thank you. We went as far as the Walter Peak sheep station which turned into a dude ranch experience. We swapped dudes and unloaded some raw vegetables and clean silverware (cutlery, I guess) and headed back. We were handed song books and a large percentage of the passengers sat around the grand piano and grandma that banged out tunes soulfully. We went through some forty or more songs, although she hopped over "Good Night Irene," before tapering off with "Auld Lang Syne" as we bumped the dock! She was good!

We had both gotten pepper steak pies and coffee for lunch on the way up the lake, and watched a parasailing woman doing acrobatics near the boat. The captain told us the lake was 53 miles (yes, used Miles!) long and up to 1,400 feet deep, with temperature a chilly 52 degree Fahrenheit – now what's so difficult about using these units?

This reminds me: When we were in Wellington on the way to see David Roscoe the first time, I stopped off to get gas. Chatting with the attendant I had asked him if the heavy rain was supposed to clear up. He had said that it was not supposed to for a day or so, but he expected it to break the next day. He said, "Well we needed this rain, it's been up as high as 38 degrees and things are getting pretty dry." That's a translation of course! I said, well, I couldn't do the conversion in my head but I knew that that was quite hot – 20 degrees seeming to be about 70 degrees F. He seemed to understand my problem and asked what summer temperatures were like in the US. I said, "Well, we live in the Northwest where it doesn't get too hot – maybe 75 to 80 degrees in the summer." He said with a start: "Wow! Now that's hot!" I didn't even try to explain – just hopped in the car and got on the way. Later David told me it never got over about 28 degrees in Wellington.



Banging Out Oldies

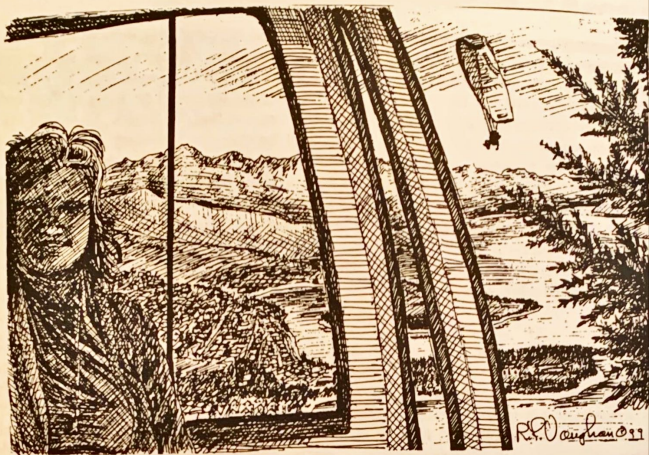
So then we walked the town looking into galleries and souvenir shops. Finally we trudged up to where the gondola lift rises upward to a lookout above the city.

An inquiry concerning reservations for supper in the restaurant indicated they were all booked up. At the foot of the gondola is a rare bird park where one can see New Zealand's unique species and since everyone I've asked about seeing kiwis has been evasive I decided I had to do that. So we paid our money and we were told that there were two Kiwi houses and we should go in one of them and wait for five or ten minutes till our eyes adjusted and see if we can find the Kiwi's. So we did that and in five or ten minutes you could in fact, tell that behind the glass was something other than solid wall, but not much more than that. One could make out a somewhat darker lump against a back wall. Kay said it actually moved once - sort of stretched itself a little. Outside of the Kiwi house, I was attacked by a white-headed brown duck. At the next house after ten or more minutes one could make out a moving lump that could be assumed to have been a Kiwi. At this point it occurred to me that the proverbial "snipe hunt" in the US may have been exceeded by the New Zealanders - I won't say Kiwi's because that may all be part of the hoax! One might think they had taken on the name of the Kiwi fruit - that would work, except that "Kiwi fruit" are in point of fact "Chinese current!" You tell me!

So then we went up the gondola. Now that is steep and high! A great view of Queenstown and surrounding areas. There was Kite gliding in tandem with a guide. These things take off like birds and soar out over the lake and all around the city. From up there it looks like they will come down in the trees across town but there is enough breeze to allow them to come back and set down much closer to where the gondola lifts off. There is also bungee jumping from a ledge built out from the cliff. No one did it while we were there to watch. There is a loge track that goes down the hill a little way that looks pretty exciting.

We had coffee and then headed down the lift. This reminds me - when David Roscoe and I were in the Wellington museum he asked me if I saw anything strange in the elevator being called lift as well as some presumably equivalent Maori name. I was getting used to ignoring the Maori name for





Going Up the Gondola at Queenstown

everything except towns and so I said, "No". He said, "can you imagine what the Maori's would call a "lift?" Well, there you go. Obviously some of the cultural extrapolations have gone am

After descending to the town, we hopped the internet and got a message from Sean in which the off-landlady seems to have been a manner of speaking. There is now Kim and Sarah!

We bought a couple horse figurine sculptures – one to be sent. Then we went to an "Irish Pub" for our lamb shanks and stew with Irish soda bread and Kilkenny's on tap! There was typical music including my favorite, "Fields of Athenreigh". The home tour alpine cottage motel overlooking (actually right on the lake) Lake Waktipu. A very nice day.

While I was writing up the day's activities a Persian cat mandered along the path in front of the cabin. I called him and he sauntered up and came in the door and hopped up on my lap. He didn't want to leave. Kay got him a bowl of our motel milk and I took him over to it. He lapped about half of it before getting bored and coming back to me. He sat on my lap for an hour or so. I took him over and put him on the bed by Kay. She's been reading Conrad's "Rescue" on and is at a particularly interesting part. The cat that has affectionately been called, "Bill" is nestled up on here left arm as she reads! We're going to have a hard time booting him pretty s

Another interesting(?) thing that happened today is that my shaver finally crapped out. I've been using it very sparingly so the charge would last as long as possible. From here on out it becomes Kay's third leg as far as priority of shaving is concerned.



Our New Friend Bill



Kay in Repose Reading Rescue

New Zealand
Day 14 – March 5th – Friday

Well, Bill the cat was ousted just before Kay dowsed the last glim. He was nowhere around this morning. What can you expect from a cat?

We had our cooked breakfast as promised and I think I'm getting tired of English breakfasts. Then checked out and left by 9:00 AM on the road to Milford Sound. We turned South at Frankton and followed the last leg of the zigzag of Lake Wakatipu down to Kington, then continue down to the non-town of Five Rivers where we cheat by diagonalling over to Highway 94 from 6. We stay on this to Te Anau.

The sheep population, alleged to be some sixty million in New Zealand has seemed to finally catch up to the cows! It's probably just an idiosyncrasy of the route we've taken through mostly lowlands, in the North Island and along the flat margin by the Tasman Sea coming south along the West Coast of the South Island. But in the uplands there are tremendous flock of sheep and whole areas of the country are called "sheep stations." But as we near Te Anau along 94, elk begin to make serious inroads in the census. In fact they are even calling them "Wapiti" to my advantage in this argument as Kay and I have had as to whether these domesticated animals were deer or elk. "Wapito" is of course the American Indian name for elk, although I imagine there are a few Maorphiles who would think it an ancient Maori term for long since vanished marsupial versions of elk.

As we proceed on past Te Anau we skirt along Lake Te Anau which is every bit as large as Lake Wakatipu. We leave the lake at Te Anau Downs after having crossed creeks Ewe Burns, Plato, Ten Mile, etc.. We proceed up a river valley that clearly resulted from more than this stream. It is the broad remnant of glacial activity. It is lush with chest high grasses and no ruminants pasture on this land at all! It's like the Serengeti with no Zebra nor Wilde Beasts. We enter Fiordland National Park; the first sprinkles of rain. The sky had looked somewhat ominous to the SouthWest when we awoke. We are now getting into it. The bush is thick and tall here with more and more moss on the trees. This is clearly rainforest type stuff. We accept the rain – good thing because there was no stopping it. Later we would learn that Milford Sound gets more rain than anywhere else in the world – around 25 feet last year!

We are actually climbing a rather steep mountain pass and are becoming totally amazed at the dramatic mountain scapes with



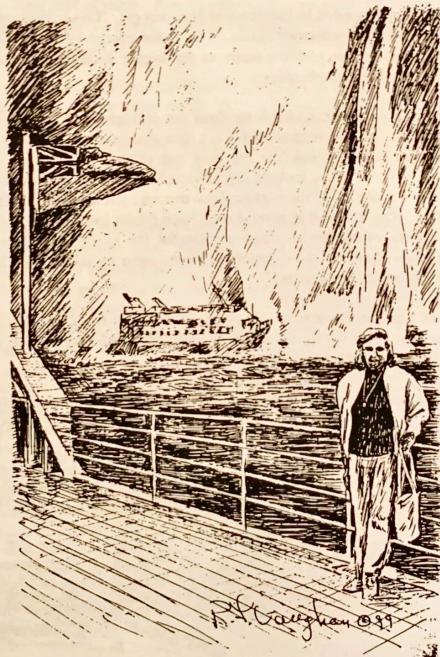
Fiordland National Park with Sobbing Mountains

NEW ZEALAND
cascading river and waterfalls more abundant than we've ever seen. There gets to be more and more larger and taller of these. We are exclaiming in unison, "look at that one!" This is spectacular stuff! Then we come to a tunnel 1400 meters long - over a mile in length with alternate single lane and passing areas in the tunnel. It starts at the summit of the pass and proceeds downward at a pretty good angle right through the mountain. When we come out the other wide the mountains on either side of us are veritable sheets of water cascading down. The road is extremely hazardous with pin hooks and one-way bridges and sections past rock cliffs. We are in a hurry so we can make the 1:00 sailing out from Milford Sound. The road is cluttered with tourist coaches also racing down to the Sound. They are hard to pass on this roadway. We got to the terminal on time - I dropped Kay off to get tickets (if we're not too late - which we weren't) and then we had to go park the car a half mile from the dock. There is a nice board walk-way to the terminal and with tickets we could take our time.

The tours had most of the good seats and prepared meals to eat on-board. But we got a good table seat on the outside under glass so we could see fine. There were waterfalls falling a thousand feet from near the tops of virtually vertical mountain faces. One in particular falls over a face and wouldn't touch a surface again for a hundred feet, but the wind would gust with such force that the water, instead of falling, actually flew out into the air and upward like Marilyn Monroe's dress, then completely dissipate into the general rain and there would be no waterfall below that point for minutes at a time.

Milford Sound is not actually a Sound at all. It is a Fjord. The water is a thousand feet deep, and at one point the fjord is only about that wide. So the wind is compressed down to extreme gusts. The captain said they reach a hundred fifty miles an hour although today they were not that extreme, although the sea was so rough that he did not venture out into the Tasman sea for fear of making too many people sick. The wind would take the caps of the waves and swirl them into the air almost creating a water spout. This disturbance would move across the face of the water with a vengeance.

On the way back Kay and I went up on top of the ship in the rain and wind. I had to hold on to my hat with both hands sometimes, and never could let go of it altogether. The captain piloted the ship right under a falls, the last free fall being over 500 feet. We were at the front of the ship with some hardy Germans laughing until finally we all had to duck under the front wall, which was at a slight angle to give us some protection. A little oriental man and wife were doing the Tim



Watching Our Sister Ship Going Under at Milford Sound

Conway pussy foot at hyper speed to get to the stairs to go down to cover. Kay and I were doing the "click-click-click" camera thing like the two-thirds of our shipmates who were made where cameras come from. When we docked, we crowded right in with the orientals and got out and ran to the parking lot so we could beat the tour busses. One of them beat me before I could run the half mile and get out of the parking lot, but I passed him before long after he stopped on a one-way bridge to accommodate the "Ah So, velly, velly nice, click, click, clicks." It took him longer to get up to speed than my little Japanese auto, so I beat the traffic jam.

The mountains we found had only been weeping on our way in. Now they sobbed!! It is a truly amazing sight.

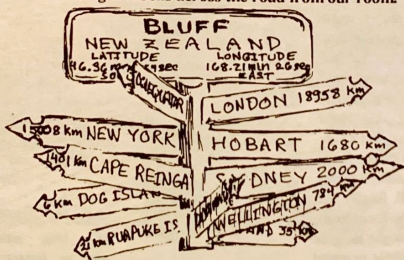
Retracking down to Te Anau, we gassed up and considered whether to stay there for the night or go on down to Invercargill to get a day ahead of schedule for going on down to Stewart Island. We opted for the latter, thinking we could see another cave another time that had equally spectacular glow worms! So back down through the Wapiti and into the lush bunch grass which is different than anything I've seen - a rich golden hue this time of year and with blades two to three feet long. There are thousands of square miles of New Zealand, which is lush pastureland with no ruminant to enjoy it. So if New Zealand has 60 millions sheep, 40 million cows and however many millions elk, it could clearly handle even more.

On South at Lumsden to Winton and Invercargill. This is lowland country - a few horses in addition to the ruminants mentioned above. This is not tourist country. Invercargill is virtually a ghost town. In the main section of town many of the bigger buildings are abandoned. One says "Bank of..." followed by a big blank space.

We went on to Bluff, which is the final dot on highway 1. It is strictly a commercial village, and the houses are all ramshackle with very few exceptions. We continued on around to try to find a restaurant and/or motel. At the very end of the road there is a B&B restaurant called the "Spy Glass" at Land's End looking out toward Stewart Island and Antarctica. But there was no activity there; we drove up to the parking lot - one car, obviously belonging to whomever had the washing on the line. Kay knocked at several doors and finally (and one must think reluctantly) a man came to the door from whom she acquired a room for the night. As we were leaving to go find supper, two gentlemen drove up and asked if they were open we told them what we knew. But they did not have luck raising the proprietor.

There was nothing Kay would consider edible in Bluff, so back to Invercargill. We finally found a restaurant with barely edible food. Kay admitted that the one place we found at Bluff might have been as good. Oh well, it was cheap!

At bedtime we saw a lone seal sitting on rocks across the road from our room.



The Sign at the End of the Road

Day 15 – March 6th – Saturday

Up early – down to breakfast at 8:00. “Bob” was waiting for us at the dining room and narrated our breakfast. We told him we had decided against going to Stewart Island since it was a pretty big commitment with weather contingencies at both ends and we had not arranged ahead of time for one of the late night Kiwi tours! No Lie! They actually take people out at night to do this stuff. Since I’ve decided Kiwi – like the Moa – died out long ago and live on only as legend, I’ll have none of that. Anyway Stewart Island is to a large extent about rare birds and some arrangement and commitment is required, we demurred. So the Northernmost Tip of Point Reinga and Southern tip of Stewart Island will withstand our relentless onslaught of New Zealand.

May soon joined Bob for breakfast just on the other side of the window from us. Bob was most enjoyable. We discussed where we’d been, where we were going, what Bob thought we should do on our way. (He had excellent suggestions it turns out!)

I once again tried “Wheat-abix” and once again it was like a section of cardboard box soaked in milk. With Bob and Mary watching I ate every “bix” and washed it down with pears. Then the English breakfast. No one ever asks you how you want your eggs so you always get two runny, orangish, cross-eyed gelatinous masses. I ate one. Also along with lots of good bacon there is the proverbial English sausage libation to Druid gods. I ate half of mine. Kay left all of hers. The coffee from the plunger was good – and again will have to last for 24 hours. Also orange juice of course – I prefer most any other kind – and toast. So, who could eat all that.

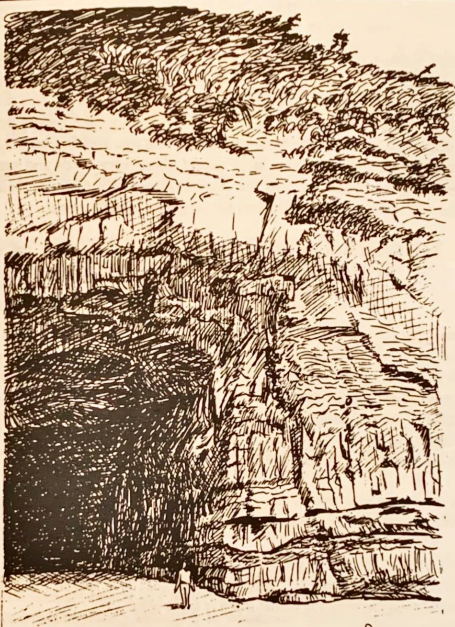
As we ate we saw two of the catamaran ferries returning from Stewart Island – that could also be made out against the clouds on the horizon twenty some miles away.

Bob showed us how to get up on the lookout point over Bluff. It was indeed a spectacular vantage, but not much to look at. One could see that if it weren’t for the smelter there would be a very touristy beach, but as it is, the town is quite ugly.

Bob also convinced us not to go up through Clinton and Gore on our way to Dunedin. That is very much like the lowlands you just came down through he said. You want to go along the coast. He gave us a map of the route – including a bypass of Invercargill that we have already been through 3 times! He told us the really nice spots we should go off the beaten track to visit. I told him that the rent-a-car agreements don’t cover us on “unsealed” road. He guffawed at that and said, “It’s really a very good road and since your map was made they’ve sealed a bunch more!” He lied of course. But we headed for Forest Rose anyway, forgetting Gore for the time being to go through the Mcklindon range. We trekked back into the bush where they had placards for various of the fauna. That was good; I’d been wondering what it was called, but I’ve forgotten it again now. But I have the book of Native New Zealand trees that David gave me so it will be a little easier to find now. Anyway, I noticed I only had one more picture on my roll of film so I saved it for the falls. We encountered a little different variety of fern that is larger than others we’ve seen. The trunk is a foot-and-a-half across and the fronds are very long. There were huge trees, both deciduous and conifers, with the cedar-like tree that I had noticed occasionally along turning out to be a variety of native red pine. The path got a little steeper and we began to hear cascading water. We crossed a bridge over a beautiful fast flowing stream and I was regretting my shortage of film. Up further we came to as beautiful a waterfall and clear pools as one could ever encounter anywhere. At Milford Sound the falls were going for world records, here it was serene beauty. The trail continued on, but I took my last shot here and sat and watched. Kay then climbed on ahead and after quite a while I had my mind back and I decided to go up to find her. She was at the “Upper Falls”. These falls had the beauty of Lower falls but were much more spectacular in height. Bob had done us well in suggesting McKlean Falls!

Then a few more miles and a sign to "Cathedral Caves". A woman at the falls had said she wished she had more time to look at the falls, but low tide was at noon and you had to see the cathedral caves at low tide. On the way back to the car I told Kay what the woman had told me, so we turned down the road when we came to the "Cathedral Caves" sign. It was just a little after 12:00.

There were quite a few people in the car park here. So we began what was alleged to be an "80 minute return" trek. That is how long it turned out to be, and it was a steep descent to a long crescent beach. Once on the beach there was a quarter to a half-mile trek to the large cliff at one end. The tide was away from the rock face still. When we got to the cliff and walked around to its Pacific side, there were huge vertical slits that went far back into the face of the cliff. The bottom of the caves were sandy beach and - far back under - the first two caves met so that one could go in one and out the other. Further around the face of the cliff were a couple more caves - one very deep. Kay was told (by the



Cathedral Caves

lady that told me of the caves) that this one had a waterfall way at the back. So we walked into the darkness a long ways until we passed the noise of falling water on our right and Kay and I had one of our notable disagreements, this time about whether that constituted what the lady had referred to as a "waterfall at the back of the cave". I probably don't have to indicate which of us held which position, but suffice it to say that I was more willing to forgo further explorations in the dark than Kay was. She walked into a rock race at one point!

So! Now we had to get moving. The tide had made some progress on it's high wave marks and I had to jump up on some rocks to wait for the water to recede at one point so I would not be forced to take off my shoes and socks. Once around the cliff face, the walk along the beach was nice; the sun, which had been pretty scarce the last couple of days, shone brightly and I decided to join Kay as a coat carrier. Then we reached the trail up through the bush and it was torture for an old man who had already done McKlean Falls! We finally - after a couple of bench sits - made it to the car and back on the unsealed road.

Then to Owako (or some such sounding town name) and then we came to the 16 kilometer washboard road out to Kaka Point (a town halfway along) and on Nugget Point that Bob had told us not to miss. There is a lighthouse high on the steep side of a mountain overlooking strange rock formations out into the sea - some ten or more small but tall jagged islands. These islands and rocks on the way to Nugget Point have the same pronounced sedimentary layers as the cliff at "Cathedral Caves," but



The View from the Lighthouse at Nugget Point

here the layers are on end. Clearly, some strange contortion of the crust had happened since they were first formed.

In walking out from the car park one notices people looking down to where the pacific waves spank the rocks. In pools in the rocks that are only occasionally re-soaked by a high wave, are tiny little black objects like swimming ants or tadpoles. Eventually one realizes these are seal pups playing. Then as the perspective gets more familiar, one can see the larger seals. I think they are fur seals, but there are three kinds of seals with colonies on these rocks and from a distance it's hard to tell.

We continued walking out toward the lighthouse in front of which was a viewing platform. It was a very scary hike actually even though the path was wide enough, because if you absent-mindedly stepped off the path, you would not stop for hundreds of feet until you hit the rocks at the bottom. There were also strange white-headed cormorant-looking birds nesting on high cliffs and yellow-eyed penguins are evidently observable early and late in the day. (Take binoculars to New Zealand!)

At Balclutha we asked a female service station attendant where we could get us a good meal. She highly recommended a greasy spoon that will receive no stars - ever! We settled for burgers that contained about a pound of a meat-like substance with Velveeta-sized squares of whitish tasteless cheese that allowed the meaty substance to slip around at will. The coffee was hot water on instant powder, the fries barely edible. We left much of our meal and I got an ice cream cone, Kay a soda. And back on the road again.

At Dunedin we looked up a B&B recommended by Bob, one of its proprietors being a "prominent water color artist," but predictably they were full. So we headed out to the peninsula that surrounds Dunedin and its harbor. It is out here where Royal Albatross nest and where the only castle in New Zealand is located - that guess who would like to see. B&B's are a bit short in supply out here, and we've seen no motels, so with our biological schedule of Kay having to find a toilet running down, she got her way of staying at the lodge on the castle grounds. There is a view of the harbor and it is close to Albatross country. We will breakfast tomorrow in the stables of the castle. Wowiee!

Showers and to the stables! In the stables of Larnach Castle, they've set up tables and chairs on the brick cobble in the breeding shed end of the barn. One of the stalls has been made over into a makeshift kitchen. The remaining three stalls have been left pretty much in working order. The stairs to the loft has a little sign indicating Rooms 2x - 2(x+2). I can't remember what x was. We had the continental cereal, fruit and coffee. Plenty good. Then the tour of the castle - certainly as good as any castle in Britain as far as comforts for the family and guests. There is a bathtub on the third floor hewn from a solid marble slab. Several pianos and organs and more than enough stairs. We even ascended the cramped circular stairs up to the tower. I think the stair go the wrong way though - to the advantage of right-handed swordsmen fighting up rather than down the stairs. I'm sure this way made sense to one who had no reason to expect to have to defend his castle from other than warring financial interests.

So we got away from there shortly after 10:00 A.M. and headed to Portobello and points beyond out further on Otago Peninsula to Taiaroa head. Just before reaching the end of the peninsula, we saw a little beach with seals laying around way up on the beach with a man, wife and child walking around among them. So, down we went. These seals were nearly oblivious to people as long as you stayed four or five feet away from them. They were sunning themselves, rolling over on their backs with their heads thrown back. I got up real close to one doing this and the click startled him awake - he snarled showing menacing teeth and then settled down when my apology was clearly not Japanese and my weapon no harpoon. These were the dregs of the colony from the other side of the point. They were the young bulls who had failed to win a harem from more experienced bulls. They clearly must have had their problems, but were taking advantage of the lazy days of their lives. I didn't see any with acne.

On this spit of land and the ledge above the beach were many holes with feathers strewn all around them. On closer inspection, when you looked back in them you could see penguins. They were the small "blue penguins." There was a well preserved dead one laying out on the sand and we got pictures of several "peekers" that were fairly close to the front of their holes. There was also a very large young gull that had just been dead a little while. Naively, I thought this might be a young albatross - that is until we visited the information center where one learns about as much as there is to learn about the huge royal albatross. They have wing spans of 13 feet and are about three feet long tip to tail.

We had to wait for the 12:30 nature walk but we decided that since this is the only place in the world where they nest on a mainland that we shouldn't miss the opportunity. We had a light lunch while we waited, promising to indulge ourselves later for supper.

There was a short film about the albatross first indicating that: They only land on land to breed. A young bird will not return to breed for four or five years. Birds mate for life but only associate during the breeding season. The male returns 3 days to two weeks before the female to prepare the nest - within a meter or so of where they nested the last time. When the female arrives she may refuse the nest he has prepared, in which case it reverts to her own responsibility, neither mate seeming upset about that. Their courtship is quite demonstrative. She lays one egg. They take turns sitting on the egg and nurturing the young for intervals from 3 days to two weeks. The one left on the nest sleeps most of the time. The babies are very soon as large as their parents are but they are cared for for a full year. Albatrosses nest on very steep windswept slopes because they don't truly fly; they just glide. They spread their wings and the wind picks them up. These wings can be locked into place so that they expend virtually no energy when they fly. They can fly 10,000 miles non-stop, the distance from Auckland to New York. They circumnavigate the globe many times using prevailing winds north of Antarctica. They do not nest every year. They take a year off after rearing an offspring.

Since they started banding birds at Taiwaroa head, one female they referred to as "grandma" returned biannually until she was sixty years old raising young every other year. She had three mates over this period of time.

When we got up to the observation deck there was only one albatross sitting on its chick. There were another ten or so on the other side of the point out of sight. While we were there, several huge specimens flew over.

Also from the observation point there was a large nesting colony of Stewart Island "shags" – a kind of cormorant of which there is a white-bellied and black-bellied variation. They sit on elevated chimneys of what must be bird shit.

So after this we headed back into Dunedin. Along the inlet are bays where nearly a hundred black swans swim gracefully, their huge long necks and pinkish beaks are quite the opposite of – and yet as pretty as – our white swans. There was one pair that had a little one – an ugly duckling if you ever saw one – it's critics would contend that it was gray and would never be the satiny black of a real swan! So where is M.C. Escher when we need him? There are also many of the black headed white chested "pied oyster catchers," but they are everywhere! There were also some of the black bodied, pink-bellied and long pink legged rarer shore birds. There were shags of many descriptions and heron that looked similar (if a little smaller) to our blue heron but with white on their heads.

Nearer Dunedin people were sail boarding faster than I've ever seen it done. They move extremely fast and gracefully, covering miles in no time. We parked near the "Octagon" and ate a chocolate cream puff and had some coffee. We also bought some bread and cinnamon rolls for later. We got pictures of Robert Burns' nephew and some of the more distinctive building. I also got a picture of two girls – at my request – who were very striking. Both had short hair mannish audacious clothes. One had Blackish-purple hair with metal rings inserted all the way around her ear and other places. I decided what-the-hell and went right up to where they waited for a street signal and asked if I could take their picture. One said, "certainly," in the sweetest genuine-sounding voice, "but we're not New Zealanders you know." I said, "That's alright; I didn't think you were and I'm not either." So click! Kay returned from the toilet, bringing me back to reality and we hopped in the car and headed North once more. It was hilly but fast road to Palmerston where we got down to the water again. Wanting to see the famed "Moeraki boulders," we turned off at the town of Moeraki, driving clear through the little no-nonsense fishing village. By the far end of town we had seen no round rocks except for two at the gateposts of the last house in town. We took their picture in case there should be no more. There is a heliport pad/parking spot at the end of the road. Kay got out here and climbed the fence to see if the rocks were up around the point. After while I got out and followed over the footpath steps that scaled the fence. There was a path going up around the bend so I followed it. The beach was all boulders about a foot across – but they were not special by any stretch of the imagination, but I watched along the shore as I walked the path (elevated about ten feet). I saw what had to be the rarer yellow-eyed penguin lying face downward in the rift of dried seaweed. It seemed clearly dead. The head was sort of dangling at an odd angle. I determined to find Kay and then have her take its picture when I found her. When I saw her coming back, she said there were no Moeraki boulders up to the point but that I should come up to look out anyway, so I did, telling her about the dead penguin I had seen. By then we had reached the end of the flat path and I looked down over the ledge and there was a yellow-eyed penguin looking up at me as if standing at attention. It seemed sad to me as if having lost a mate. Kay snapped it a few times and was impatient to climb up over the point to see what was on the other side. We did and it was treacherous at the top. There was just another sandy beach on the other side, but further out along a foot wide ridge we could see a shag. Kay walked out on the ridge, sneaking so as not to scare them, and got their picture in their nest.

We came back down carefully and without mishap and bidding penguin #2 adieu, we headed back toward the car looking for dead penguin #1, but couldn't find him, but finally I saw him standing up gracefully – big as life posing for his photo. So I guess nobody is grieving after all. Back in Moeraki

we asked a man where the Moeraki Boulders could be found. "Oh, just down the road a little ways. There's a big sign. You can't miss it." So we had done another dumb, but so what. We've seen yellow-eyed penguins now without hoards of tourists dropped off by tour busses and without having to go out in the dark.

This reminds me. When we were at the albatross look out platform, our guide told us that there are two females who think they are mates and each year they lay unfertilized eggs: "As if they're being faithful to each other," he added cagily. So whenever there is an abandoned egg or chick, they give it to these two to rear and they do a good job. One of a pair of women who were together said, "How wonderful! We could certainly learn something from them." The guide seemed somewhat confused by this like he didn't know how to reply. Another one of the women in our group asked the guide whether there was any difference between males and females. Her husband, the guide and I and maybe others dropped our mandibles and threw our heads forward, eyes bulging! She then clarified among much laughter saying, "You know what I mean." The guide obliged by saying that the males have appreciably longer beaks than the females and somewhat larger heads "as you would expect," he added.

Also, while at the visitor information center we learned that "line fishing" is the cause of most albatross' deaths. Squid is the preferred food of the bird and they dive for them and sometimes get baited hooks and are drowned. There was one picture of a Japanese fisherman holding a hooked albatross that was as big as he was. The interesting thing to me is that "line fishermen" let out 100 miles of line in one day with baited hooks all along it!

The guide also told us that the point is becoming too warm and dry for the albatross nesting. The fertility rate is dropping. The change in weather has required them to spray the birds and eggs to help them survive the breeding season. The eggs get too hard in 11 weeks of gestation without some rain or other moisture and then the chicks cannot peck their way out in the usual 3 days. They also had their first entire week without any wind this year. The birds can't exchange roles because they cannot take off without wind. They blame global warming.



Back on the main road (and subject) and there was indeed a sign saying "Moeraki Boulders - 500 meters" or some such. So we turned off, petted the elk and teased the ostriches before starting the trek to the beach. These boulders are spectacular. I don't think anyone has any idea why they are round - they just are, although David Roscoe did tell me there was no secret about how they formed. Some of them are on top of the beach, some half covered some with just the skull cap showing. They are all about six feet in diameter with various distinctive cracks at the surface. The few that have been broken show quartz-like surfaces between pieces of the overall boulder. Truly unique formations not to be seen anywhere else.

So then we headed on to Oamaru to bed down for the night. We got our motel room and got menus for some of the nicer restaurants in town. We settled for the "Last Post". Kay had a Greek Salad and Sautéed seafood. I got Seafood chowder and steak and kidney pie - the best I've ever eaten. We each also had a glass of wine, dining in the courtyard out behind. It was very nice. Then we got some breakfast goodies at the service station where we filled up on gas. Tomorrow we will head for Mt. Cook.



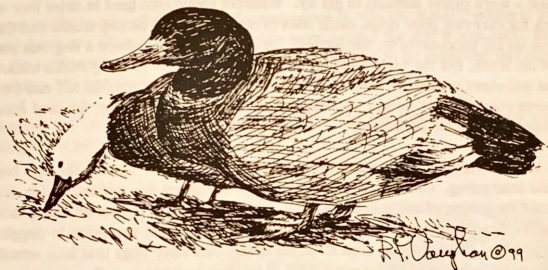
Where Mt. Cook Should Have Been

So as usual tomorrow turns into today and we are off for Mt Cook. Leaving Omaru heading North, we turn East in about 5 miles, once more leaving the sea. Till we reach Kurow it is mostly rolling farmland along the Waitaki river valley. After Kurow one encounters one hydroelectric dam after another, and the irrigation ditches we have seen in the farmland start to make sense. We are in higher country again with barren hills with occasional clay cliffs or rock outcroppings the only scenic attractions to go with the manmade lakes. The first of these lakes is a virtual mirror, but what is mirrored is not all that attractive. The next – larger – lakes are two choppy to reflect much and are sort of a milky blue.

Even through the hills, the road is straight and well surfaced. The traffic in New Zealand by US standards is so sparse that driving even on the two-lane, and sometimes single lane, roads is a real pleasure. I was bombing along on the wide open road and read a billboard that had a speedometer with the needle in the form of a white cross pointing at about 118 kilometers per hour. I looked down at mine and it was pointing right at 118 km/hour. The message on the sign said, "Speed Kills!" They are quite innovative in their speed limit propaganda down here. Yesterday I saw a sign that read, "In this town we have no doctor no hospital and one cemetery. Slow down." Later today I read one that says, "You're dead a long time. Why hurry?" But of course like most valid messages, they fall on deaf ears. Those who drive too slow and cause accidents by making people pass them on crooked roads drive even slower and the rest of us acknowledge respectfully but continue doing what must be done. Yesterday a lady passed me – a rarity of course – and I fell instantly in love and followed her all the way to where we had to turn off at Moeraki. Today I was motating at about 130 by lake Pukaki and noticed a car persistently gaining on me. At about the point he would have had to decide whether to pass or push, I saw an observation point for Mt. Cook and signaled to pull off. I even cut over sooner that I would normally so he wouldn't have to slow down. But evidently his wife noticed the same sign we had and back-seated (she was literally in the back seat) him to stop for the photo occasion. So Kay was back in the car again and I nursed my advantage till I saw him coming around turns I had very recently navigated. I talked Kay into taking another picture and pulled off the road. Just after he went by I noticed his brake lights flash and the car swerve. But he kept it going finally. I assumed there were arguments that correlated with the cars gyrations. Isn't it amazing how one can infer such things? So up the wide Pukaki and flat river valley between the Ben Ohau and Gammack mountain ranges we zoomed. The morning had been hot again at Omaru but as we approached Lake Pukaki there dark foreboding clouds drooped over the snow covered peaks of the Southern Alps in the distance. It was increasingly apparent that these would not burn off. At the lodge at the end of the road we got out for lunch. There were several of Mt Cooks glaciers that could be seen, but the upper half of the mountain we had to make out by imagination from the post card photos we'd seen. There was a black and white headed pair of "paradise shell ducks" outside the lodge with a bunch of Japanese tourists keeping their camera skills honed by snapping these two. I joined them!

While Kay was inspecting toilets, I noticed an internet capability advertised. I paid for an hour and tried using the password given. Kay soon found me and she and I and their local expert messed around for 20 minutes before finally getting the system to work. I had a few messages and Kay had a couple from her sister Gladys. She and Dave have just gotten an internet connection. Kay sent messages to Sean from whom we had not received another. This morning Kay had called Nola at her work – it's Sunday back home. Both kids have now told us that our place has not been burglarized and our ponds look fine.

We ate lunch then and headed back down as far as Twizel before heading North again on new road. More hydroelectric adventures at work. (In case you wonder why the wonders of modern technology or the history of various engines and weapons that are duly recognized in many of the museums in this country are not things we have indulged in, it is because I at least, being a technologist of sorts am not interested in them in the slightest. I certainly wouldn't come to New Zealand to learn such things!)



A Pair of Paradise Shell Ducks

The land from Twitzel to Fairly and beyond is as barren as most anything you'll see in the western half of the United States. The steeper parts are sheep country – the flatter parts beef cattle very like it would be in the US. Three or four times we had to stop and wait for herds of sheep to be moved from one pasture to another. The same sheep man and dogs stopped us both going and coming from



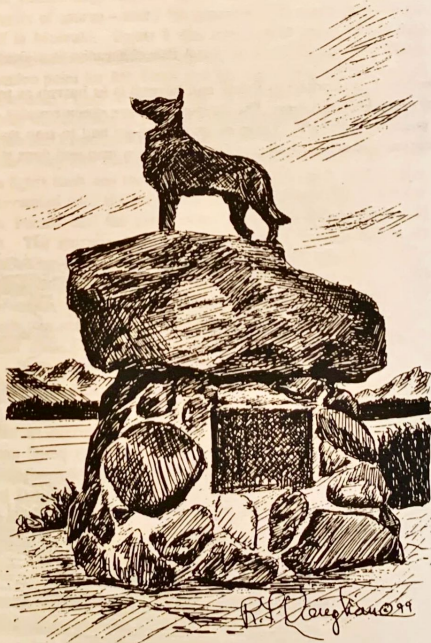
Twitzel to Mt. Cook. At the souvenir shop I bought a place mat with a picture of the guy moving sheep along the road with his dogs. He is so used to herding things around that he yells out commands to the drivers of the cars just like he does his dogs and sheep. "Move along Now!" he yells and you start your motion right into the sheep. They scatter, running pell-mell and then when they are completely clear they jump straight in the air and come down on all four.

Cattle herders are more awkward about it. One herd of all Holstein bulls – yes, I'm sure they were bulls and not steers! – were rather difficult to get by. Whereas sheep men tend to drive four wheelers with a cage in back for carrying their dogs, cattle men drive snub-nosed pickup trucks and their dogs can dang well hang on for themselves on the flatbed. In one case, I saw where a dog was tied to the back of the cab of the truck, but the rope was just long enough to break the dog's neck when he went over the edge, but not short enough to keep him from falling. Dogs and cats do not run free in this country as a general rule. I think strays are trapped or shot as endangering the bird species that have evolved without concern for predators.

At Lake Tekapo is the famous chapel-by-the-lake. Its stark appearance against the pale blue of the lake is indeed quite interesting. Close by is the memorial to the sheep dog without which this part of New Zealand would have been of much less use. We got some pictures of that and sang some verses of "Old Shep" as we drove, thinking sadly of Buddy and his so recent ascension to doggie heaven. We've noticed that a few cattlemen and even a couple sheep men have dogs that look something like Buddy. Maybe he came by some of his extreme skills at herding horses naturally.

At Fairly we turned toward Geraldine – the somewhat longer scenic route to Christchurch that Bob (At Land's End) had suggested. The Canterbury plains around Christchurch are the largest flat area in New Zealand and, according to Bob, can get pretty boring to a traveler. So we skirted around the foothills to the South and East of Christchurch on route 77. The plains were off to our right. We were on the plains too as far as that goes, but in full view of mountains all the way. At Mount Hutt we crossed the Rakaia River Gorge. It was quite scenic. Then we turned toward Christchurch at Darfield and crossed those blasted plains! The weather was hot again when we got as far as Geraldine, pastures a lush green green totally unlike the higher country.

At Christchurch, Kay called a B&B she had found in a book and we got booked in at Sumner on the Seaside of Christchurch. Christchurch was a nice looking town going through (we'll come back for longer tomorrow or the next day). Sumner is a very unique town split



Memorial to great Dogs Everywhere

between cliff and beach. Our B&B room is over a garage [see the picture in the preface] of a Victorian style house high on the cliff over looking the busy beach. This is indeed the beach that has had by far the most swimmers we've seen so far. There are quite large waves, but the beach goes out very gradually. There are extremely interesting rock formations and caves along the cliffs and out into the water. At the point at the far end of Sumner are shags nesting (or taking care of their young in their nests) on the jagged slope.

We ate supper on the beach – the name of the restaurant is “On the Beach” which is where it is! The windows and doors are all open and until the sun went behind the cliff it was calm, but a brisk wind came up so the outsiders had to come in and the Umbrellas had to be collapsed and tied all in a major flurry of activity. We had seafood and it was very well prepared.

Then we walked the town of Sumner a little checking out the closed shops and open restaurants before settling down for the evening.



Ghoulish Rocks on the Way from Sumner to Akaroa

Day 18 – March 9th – Tuesday

Today we breakfasted on an English full breakfast but without tomatoes, mushrooms or sausages. Our hostess showed us several brochures of things to do at Christchurch and told us how to proceed to Akaroa – the only French settlement in New Zealand out on the peninsula formed as a volcano crater that erupted many hundreds of years ago. How the French were screwed by the English – again – is a story in itself, but not mine.

We drove up over the hill from Sumner to Littleton, which is the seaport for the area and then on around the harbor to Governor's Bay to Allandale where we drove over the Peninsula to turn onto highway 75 that proceeds out to Akaroa. There are very unique rock formations on this route – perhaps ancient volcanic rocks. One of the highland farmers on this route has evidently bred up a herd of Holstein cows with all black for and hindquarters with a broad white band around the middle. He has normal Holsteins as well, but keeps them separate.

Further along the peninsula, we had Lake Ellesmere on our right; it is a huge lake and I am not sure whether it is salt-free or not. There is just a narrow spit that separates it from the sea, and Kaitorete spit, as it is called, is nearly as flat and low as the lake itself. There are many species of shore birds along the lake – most obvious being the black swan. I noticed one bird standing up stretching his wings with large patches of white on his wings. I don't know if it was a unique species or if it could have resulted from a cross with the white European swan that supposedly inhabits this lake as well. On the way to Akaroa – which is at least 50 miles from Christchurch, we passed the cheese factory and winery that Jenni Roscoe had recommended for a lunch stop. We went on into the town of Akaroa first. It was a little disappointing. There were a few galleries and souvenir shops and the town was quite scenically situated – but hardly worth the drive. I bought *The Reed Field Guide to New Zealand Wildlife* at one of these stores. It goes well with the book on Native Trees that David Roscoe gave me. This book however is not so exclusive, including introduced species – by far the majority of species covered. It goes into wild turkeys, Canadian geese, mallard ducks, deer, wild goats, hedge hogs, rabbits, ferrets, opossum and "ferrie" cats and horses! Yes. There are about 1500 wild horses in New Zealand. All of these animals were introduced to New Zealand along with the starling, mice, rats and dogs, virtually all of which have taken a severe toll on native species.

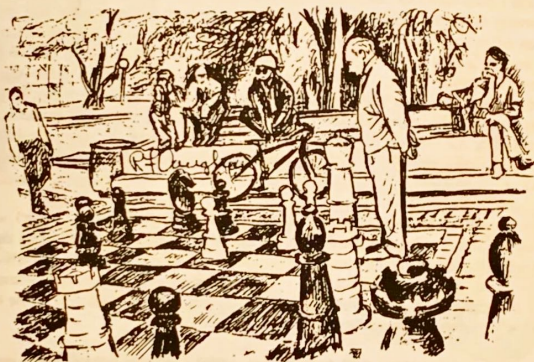
We looked at some bad local art and Kay bought some more razor blades for her legs and my face.

We stopped at the French Farm winery for lunch and had sampling of breads, cheeses, dried and fresh fruits and local wines – much better than the art! We ate out of doors even though it was a little chilly. Sparrows ate crumbs from our table and a New Zealand fantail sat in a tree right near us for our entertainment.

Then we high tailed it into Christchurch. We went directly to the "Art district" at the north of Hagget park. Christchurch is a very well laid out town of 300 plus thousand odd souls. Hagget park is the only notable exception to North – South streets.

In the cathedral square there is a large chess board laid out and there was a game in progress.

In the art district, there is a building dedicated to the artists themselves doing and selling their wares. We first saw a man carving the horses for old-fashioned rocking horses. They were very well done. Then glass blowing, pottery, leather work, beads, etc. Then after an Ice cream cone while Kay visited the toilets, we went upstairs to the painting gallery. There was a very bright water color of flowers by Kerian Gill. We both liked the painting and the price was reasonable for the quality of the original. I asked the lady on duty about Kerian Gill. "I'm Kerian Gill" she said. No, she had not exhibited outside of Christchurch and Timaru. She has three children and not enough time. We bought the picture. She reduced the price to take out the glass and replace it with stiff cardboard and wrapped it.



Chess for the Hardy

While she was doing that, Kay had found an Internet access facility on the same floor of that building, so we got on-line. Our stocks have survived without Kay's daily nurturing and we each had some messages as well as a message from Sean. I took care of a couple of more urgent ones of mine as well as joining on the message content to Sean. I went back to pick up the flowers and bought a little blown glass kiwi - why not keep the legend alive? Then we wondered on to a Maori art gallery where evident descendents were doing it as you watched - very expensively.

More wondering and we found our way into the nature museum and finally I found the *rest of the story* about the Moa birds. There were many skeletons and reconstructed exhibits of early Maori precursors who evidently survived on the hapless and helpless Moas and drove them completely to extinction some 1000 years ago. One can not help but wonder what is wrong with man that he seems never to be able to stop when all signs say stop! Maybe its like the signs intended to slow down us fast drivers. It just doesn't seem as urgent as it perhaps should. Anyway the museum was much more like old-fashioned museums I remember, with many artifacts and data and very little hype. The Wellington museum seems to be primarily hype and if I understood comments correctly at our first B&B in Devonport, the Auckland museum must also be very heavily favoring hype.

We dined on seafood in the artsy fartsy area and came "home" to Sumner quite tired again.

Today Kay and I both opted for only cereal and fruit for breakfast. The landlady had to go to work later this morning so we went easy on her - actually we've been feeling stuffed and decided we have to cut back on all we're eating. The people who run this B&B are a lawyer (him) who goes to work at 7:30 AM and returns at 7:30 PM. He is a child's *councilor*, which means that he represents the child's interests in divorce cases. The landlady says this approach to family law was innovated in New Zealand and now it has been adopted in Australia. The child has to be about 12 years of age to be represented separately. She didn't say who finances the counseling, but presumably the state although everything is evidently different over here. Family cases are typically handled by both parties, the child if old enough, and their counsels sitting down in one room and working out arrangements.

The landlady herself works as a counselor at a medical clinic ("women's" clinic) - like a family planning clinic in the US. She said she doesn't always tell her guests what she does since people are so polarized on this issue. Religious conservatives have been somewhat violent in New Zealand much like they have in the US. She said that a neighbor of their clinic had actually tunneled under the building and was going to set fire to it, but his wife reported him before he got to the torching stage. She also writes diet books for the elderly in her spare time.

Their son married an "American girl" from Boston, which - we did not tell her - many Americans would doubt! They are currently spending a year in the US. They have been in Chicago but he is just now working on an article about the Whistler Ski Resort in British Columbia, Canada. He is a journalist and is on leave from his job working for a paper in Christchurch. The landlady's father had also been a journalist - a local sports reporter of some rapport evidently.

So we threw our bags in the trunk after the after-breakfast ablutions and were off for one last hurrah in Christchurch. We wanted to see (and hear!) the noted "Wizard" of Christchurch. He shows up (when he does - he has evidently been a little more erratic recently) at 1:00 o'clock at the Cathedral Square. We wanted to be there when (and if) it happened today.

On our way to Christchurch from Sumner we passed a used furniture shop in a largely residential district on Fairly Road and noticed several fine bronze pieces on the sidewalk in front of the store, so we turned around and went back to check them out. There were many pieces - but very large and plumbed for fountains with dolphin pairs, nudes, etc.. Also some other smaller statues were very nice. In the back room was a bronze American cowboy riding a bucking bronco by Fredric Remington. It was only \$240NZ. I don't know, but I imagine it is a Chinese copy ignoring proper copyrights, etc.. We don't much care one way or the other for our purposes, and it is a very nice piece, so we bought it, making arrangements for shipping. [The story of how this was mishandled for shipping and the resulting damage is another sordid story you don't want to hear.]

Then once again we headed into Christchurch. We went through some more galleries and souvenir shops around the square and *did* the Internet -- all after parking illegally! I had just pulled into an open spot and noticed the sign indicating that a "city council" ticket was required to park in that spot. As we debated what to do next, with Kay busily rustling our Christchurch map, a policeman on the beat tapped on the window and asked if we were lost. Kay played her sweet little helpless act and he said he would be the only one on that beat today and he would not cite us for parking there if we wanted to since she had a "funny accent". So that's where the car stayed for many hours and when we returned, our wheels were not "clamped," which is evidently what they do to violators in New Zealand, leaving them with the embarrassment of having someone come to collect a fee prior to "unclamping" them. Signs that have threatened that punishment have gotten my full attention in contrast to those clever little eye-catchers like, "This town has no doctor, no hospital and one cemetery. Drive Carefully!" I want no part in that clamping charade!



The Wizard Arrives

We ate lunch at the cathedral coffee shop and then sat outside on a bench and waited. Across the square a rousing game of chess was going on with three foot high pieces moved awkwardly over the black and white alternately painted brick squares. An elderly man stood with chin in hand contemplating his next move. Some students were talking excitedly about the black-white situation.

As we waited a man hopped up on a bench and began preaching from the Bible very loudly. I heard him say something about the author of the words to "Amazing Grace" and then a harmonica somewhere picked up the strain. (Kay tells me that a one-legged man with an inverted hat had been sitting on the other side of the steps of the church all along playing to passers by for coins.) The *ad hoc* preacher was largely ignored and was replaced eventually by an older man who was less competent and obviously taking advantage of those of us that had come to hear the "Wizard."

As I sat there scanning the square desultorily to check for whether someone roughly approximating the description of the Wizard might have shown up, an old red volkswagon beetle drove right into the square. It was driven by an elderly, long-haired, long-bearded fellow. The beetle was unique - it had been altered so that the front and back were identical! Headlights fore and aft - even a steering wheel on the right side fore and aft. The car stopped right by the cathedral steps and the man got out carrying a black robe. He put the robe on and then a tall black cone with a brim - a witch's or wizard's hat. Then he reached into the car and pulled out a plywood portable card table and a bunch of large poster size papers and some books, and began walking toward the center of the square. Someone asked him what he was going to talk about today and he said something to the effect of how *bad* women are. He sat the table, papers and books on the ground and proceeded over to the other side of the square to where there was a locker near the chess players. He pulled out a red stepladder and brought it back to the center of the square in front of some broad steps. The crowd gathered and some began to sit on the steps. Kay and I situated ourselves on the steps next to the hand rail. When the card table was in place and the papers and books on it, he ascended his red stepladder which had a handy rail for his right hand and was decorated with flowers. The latest preacher seemed to be winding down in the presence of real greatness and the *Wizard of Christchurch* began.

"I am the wizard!" Then. "I am a *real* wizard!" First he elaborated on what is *real*, i. e., it has *authority behind it and you can see it*. The Archbishop of Canterbury has called him a "Wizard" (and it's documented in a book!) and thirty years ago the Dean of a University (in Sydney) said he was a "Wizard" - in fact he has been invited to Sydney to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of that event. So both the Church and a University acknowledge that he is a wizard, etc, etc.. Therefore he is - by God - a Wizard! This yelled out with *feeling*.

What is a Wizard? He works *magic!* In his case he has not paid income taxes for thirty years; he's done no work and only had fun, etc. - clearly *magic* - once again with *feeling*.

He then went into the various things that people believe to be *real* - fairies, gods and ~~more~~ recently - *nature!* Why do people believe these things? Because their *boss* tells them to. He believed in fairies because his mother told him they were *real*. He saw a picture of one in a book. It was the next significant woman in his life, (the little girl that lived next door that he fell in love with) - his second *boss* that convinced him they were *not* real. Priests and the church told people the gods were real, and they read about them in a book, but just like fairies, no one ever *saw* them. The church taught that your body was sinful and the only enjoyment was after you died. But more recently we have new bosses - *business and material things*. So *material nature* is said to be real and since our bodies are material and there ~~isn't~~ any heaven we need to take care of our bodies so everyone is out jogging to make their bodies *last*. Why? So they can enjoy *material things* - again with *feeling!* So people work hard for their bosses so they can acquire material things. So *nature* is the god of 9-to-5 city workers. It is not worshipped by farmers, seamen or people that we think of as being closely associated with *nature*. It is the god of *consumers!*



What's Wrong with the World According to the Wizard

And what is the cause of all this rat race? Women! They are our bosses and women are basically *shoppers* - for *material things* - hence the emphasis on the material! Etc, etc..

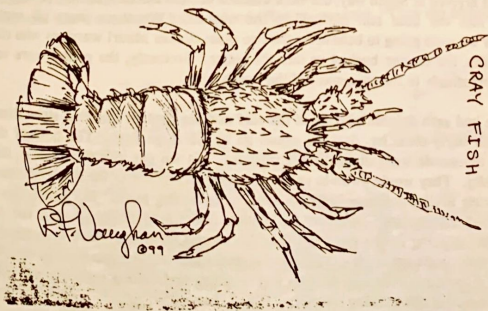
Then he went into the world being *upside down!* Antarctica should be on top. Why? Because *North* being up is just Yankee propaganda. Reasons include that he could get a majority of people in the world to vote for the other alternative - Mohammedans would prefer *Mecca* be above *Rome!* And since frames of reference are all relative..., etc.. The world is also just as reasonable *inside out*. We could be situated in a huge hole in matter, etc..

Finally he bragged a little about his new web site < <http://www.wizard.gen.nz> > and started selling maps, cosmological charts (of which I purchased a copy for \$3.00NZ) and his book.

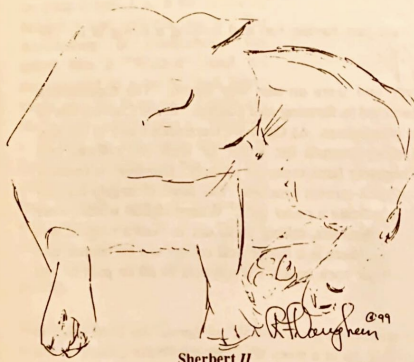
By and large the Wizard is a very shrewd old man just having fun and making a living at it. He certainly isn't taking himself too seriously.

We looked through one more modern art gallery and were on our way North. The Canterbury Plains become hilly by Belfast and are largely dedicated to farming and pasture. From Cheviot North the hills become steeper with more bush and pine plantations. At Oaro we were once more at the sea. Following the cliffs by the railroad there are many tunnels for either or both the railway and highway. In one place North and South lanes of highway have separate tunnels. Kaikoura is midway out on a peninsula. The shore is very rocky with rock-strewn beaches. The town is largely tourist-driven now although whalebone arches in the park indicate a ruder past. Where 10,000 whales were slaughtered in the sixties, whaling ships now exploit tourists, taking them out to watch whales, and dolphin. A mile or so from the town – to the South – there is a major seal colony out on islands and jetties in the rock surface that is very like a monolithic rock beach – it appears to all be part of one major *grain* of sand.

In town after we ate our crayfish (Australian Rock Lobster), we walked out across the little canal to the beach. It is comprised of small dark rocks pushed up at a steep angle with terraces caused by the wave action. The waves break very beautifully on this contour. We shopped for groceries and – not unlike Ishmael – went to our comfortable motel bungalow, looking forward to what adventure tomorrow might bring.



Rock Lobster – Crayfish



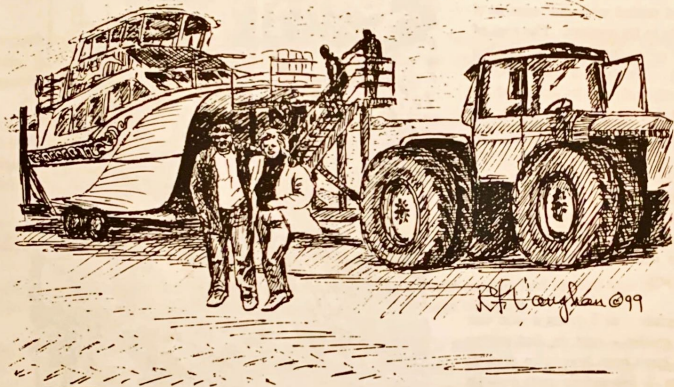
Sherbert II

We breakfasted in this morning. A look outside revealed that it had rained appreciably overnight which we wondered about in particular with regard to Kay having booked us on board a whale watching boat for ten o'clock. A cat, very like one we had used to own called "Sherbert," limped up to the door and Kay let him in. His limp was grim evidence to his having encountered a milder form of the traffic mishap that had "called Sherbert home." Sherbert II drank the remainder of our milk and some of a pat of butter and curled up on a chair. About 9:30 we booted him, went and paid our bill, loaded the car and were off to the "Pequod" in search of Moby Dick.

We paid the exorbitant fee, got our short safety film and the pressure bands to alleviate sea sickness - maybe. The 5AM trip had been cancelled for weather conditions, and ours was sort of on-hold. Anyone with any tendency to motion sickness was encouraged to cancel out. Only the few, the select, the hardy remained! We had a boat load! The deal was that if the activity had to be aborted we would get a refund and if we saw no whales we would get 80% of our money back. Then all fifty or so of us were lined up for a group photograph and loaded onto a tour bus and taken to South Bay to our boat. I wondered where this boat must be. You certainly couldn't dock one anywhere near Kaikoura! When we arrived at South Bay, our boat awaited us - on-a boat trailer! No lie! We were marched up steps into the boat still parked on the tarmac! When we were all seated and indoctrinated in how we were going to behave by the two plain clothes Maori warriors who should be our guards and guides, the tractor backed us into the water. Seriously, the guides were very nice fellows who added immensely to the enjoyment of the watch.

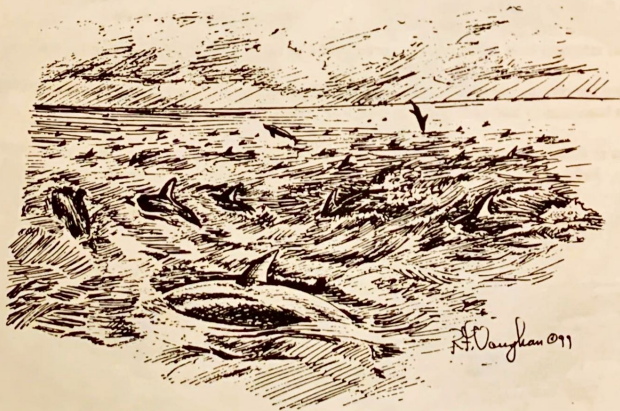
Even in the bus, we had seen dolphin playing in the surf and the captain said that since there was a large pod of dolphin fairly close by, that we would go to see them first. The bulk of them like hundreds, or even thousands were about a mile offshore. As we got into their midst, they were cavorting about wildly. They would swim in unison, ducking in and out of the water - some leaping extremely high in their arched rainbow flight as graceful as sailing birds. But some, like children showing off were not content with mundane acrobatics, and would leap high into the air doing somersaults in flight, slapping to the water on their backs and stomachs. One in particular did a tremendous number in succession, each a little lower than the last until he was so tired he could hardly break the surface. Everyone on board our ship was laughing and talking excitedly and click, click, clicking. Kay was laughing and clicking merrily.

Eventually we moved on heading out to sea to look for whales. Kaikoura is a feeding ground for the large male sperm whale - like Moby Dick. Other whales are also sighted on occasion since Kaikoura is enroute on several of the other whale species migration routes. The female and baby sperm whales are only seen occasionally in summer since they are quite a bit smaller than the males without as much blubber to keep them warm. Kaikoura has been a whaling town from earliest days - about 1831 I believe it was. In the 1960's alone, over 10,000 whales were killed around Kaikoura. One of the films before we left showed the speed boat with a man at the bow aiming the harpoon gut that would shoot out to puncture the whale. It was hardly as sporting nor required the daring of the likes of Captain Ahab and Ishmael.



One Strange Whaling Ship and Crew!

We were moving very fast across rough water. There were huge swells, but the captain seemed to be able to follow a crest for a long way. Up ahead a few miles – five or ten, it would be hard to say – a plane and helicopter seemed to circle the same general area. Our captain was heading for the same place. Eventually I saw a spout as of steam a long ways off. After a while another – now closer. The captain announced that a whale had been sighted. But no one said, “Thar she blows!” Everyone got



Dolphin at Play

up to get out on the bow or rear of the ship except for the two who were laid out puking in their bags as they lay on the floor. Others remained seated with dull eyes as if not ready to be awakened. The rest of us were again laughing and talking excitedly. This was a sperm whale and mostly only his fin ahead of his tail and his back up to about his blow hole was visible above the water. After a while the captain said "Ok, now get your cameras ready because he's going to dive." And as if on command the tail gracefully lifted into the air and slid into the water following the whale downward.

The captain - or I guess it was one of our guides - told us that sperm whales have been known to dive as deep as 3 kilometers and remain underwater for over two hours. They are a "toothed" whale and eat large fish and giant squid. Whales have been known to have eaten 10 and 12 foot sharks that are bottom feeders. Giant Squid get up to sixty feet long. There is currently a research vessel on location which he pointed out to us that is sending a submarine fixed with cameras down to get video of a live giant squid. All previous attempts have failed and they are hopeful of being able to get the job done now.



The Sick Bay on the Pequod

At Kaikoura the continental shelf is only about 800 meters offshore and the floor drops down to over 600 meters immediately and goes down to well over 1000 meters.

The whales at Kaikoura usually only stay down for from 40 to 60 minutes, but we were off in search of another. Before long another was sighted and the same procedures were undergone except that



Sperm Whale Sounding



Royal Albatross

now there were dolphin in appearance around the whale and around our boat playing and showing off for us. Again – evidently from how hard they blow – the captain knew this specimen was about to dive. Again all eyes and cameras catch the characteristic flip of the tail and we were off looking for another.

Throughout our watch, albatross were nearby. These were “wandering” royal albatrosses, not nesting birds, of course. A fur seal shot out of the water at one point and the porpoises were frequently accompanying us, moving at tremendous speeds.

Eventually we had to settle for seeing the first whale again. There were two other boats watching him this time and many dolphins around. The captain said they can identify the whales by their distinctive scars and that this one has been around for as long as the whale watch has been operating for about 12 years.

After he did his tail flip, we headed back in. The weather was still uncertain but much better than when we went out.

To get ashore our captain piloted headlong onto the trailer that the tractor had backed into the water for us. He dragged us out of the water and a very fun whale watch was over.

Once the bus returned us to our cars, Kay and I headed through Kaikora to the promontory about a mile or two south of town where a seal colony hangs out. The tide was in much higher than when we came by here last night and so the seals were much closer to the car park. In fact one of the seals was laid out on the retaining wall of the car park. So we drove right up to where he lay. He didn't budge. We got out and Kay went up next to him and even touched his coat as I did the camera honors. She got talking to him about how irritating the noises of the gulls must be and he reared up and snarled letting out a fierce growl. Kay said it was like he said, “You can do whatever you like, but just don't bug me!”

There were many seals lying around and many black headed terns as well as all manner of gulls.



Kay Discussing the Gull Problem with Her Seal Friend

We got back in our car and ate cheese sandwiches and fruit. A little red-beaked gull stood beside my door watching so I held out my hand with a little bread in it and gulls converged on my hand. So I feed them quite a few pieces of bread with them tugging pieces off while hovering in flight. There were gulls sitting on my side mirror, gulls all over the hood and evidently all over the top of the car. The lady in the car that had driven up next looked disdainful and shooed the gulls from their car. Oh well, I'm on vacation too.

After lunch we strolled a little and I got some rocks with interesting pockmarks in them and some of their tough laminated seaweed to show my friends and family back home.

We bid adieu to our various friends and Kay took the chore of driving us North to Blenheim. The scenery on the way was not unlike what we had seen many other places in these fair islands, but with Blenheim being the New Zealand city that gets the most sunshine of any, it is not surprising that the rolling hills of pasture land should be quite parched. Nor is it surprising that by the time we reached Blenheim the sun should be shining brightly and it was very hot. On the way we crossed several fords which are unique cemented ditches across the highway which clearly allow passage of large amounts of water from the steep hills. Around each of these is a small one lane bridge on a by-pass road to be used *as necessary*.

I had not slept well last night, waking about 3:00 AM and not getting back to sleep for some time. So when we got our motel arranged, we slept for an hour or so and then went out to an Irish Pub for Kilkenny's, chowder and "guinness and beef." That filled us up and we have no reason not to sleep in in the morning.

Or at least so we thought then!



My Gull Friends

Well! I awoke with a start at ten to nine with Kay exclaiming, "We've missed our ferry!" Jeez! Kay and I have argued ever since she made the round trip reservations on the ferry whether we were returning on Friday or a Saturday. I repeatedly told David Roscoe Friday and Kay as repeatedly corrected me, saying "Saturday!" Ok, so we scheduled our entire South Island trip around a return on the second Saturday. Well that was wrong! Kay found her tickets when she first woke up and verified it was Friday the 12th - not Saturday! Also she noticed that the time was 10:45 AM and not 3:25 PM as we had planned. AND (as if we needed another one!) we were supposed to be there an hour early!

So we scrambled! No showers, no breakfast, just wall-to-wall unmitigated holy terror! It turns out it was only 28 km to Picton from Blenheim (not 75 as one of us argued!) so we actually made our check-in time quite easily and had time after check in to go and get an apple turnover with coffee. Whew!

Now, about women's intuition: We were having a great time in Christchurch and with the extra time we had freed up by our big travel days, I thought Kay would enjoy Hanmer Springs as recommended by Bob from Lands End, but she decided she'd rather go straight to Kaikura. I had argued that if she didn't want to go to Hanmer Springs we had time to spend another day at Christchurch, and other than the whale watch there wasn't much for us in Kaikura. But Kay felt quite strongly about it, so we went to Kaikura. We had a great time in Kaikura but Kay was in a hurry to get to Blenheim even though there was nothing there for us. OK. So there was a whole day left over at Blenheim since we could do the winery tour in Renwick Saturday morning. So it turns out that Kay's oversight on the ferry schedule and her stubborn insistence of an extra day in Blenheim played together to make this whole thing work. Women! Of course you could say that if I had done this stuff myself or had insulted Kay by verifying the tickets...Oh well.

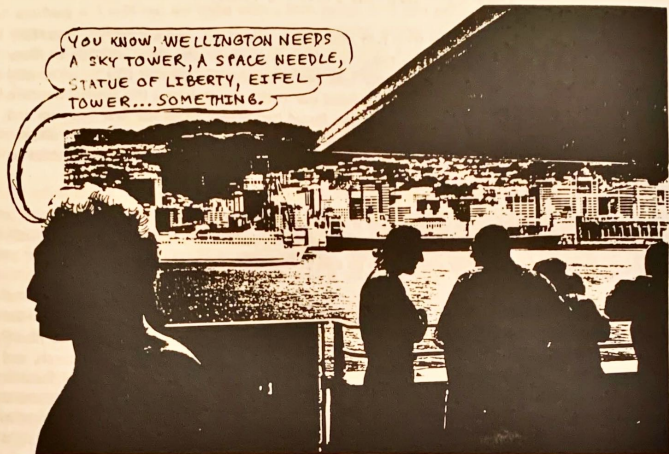
So...other than that, the day was wonderful. There was hot sunshine and smooth water. I stood in the back of the ferry all the way from Picton to Wellington and it was a grand ride. I talked with a man from Dorset, England who was here for six weeks - four of them now gone. He had done the sights of the South Island at about the same days we had. He did Milford Sound in the rain and loved it as we had. He came up the coast from Invercargill and in addition to McKlean Falls and Cathedral caves, had done the petrified forests at Curio Bay. He was quite impressed with the petrified forests, which were exposed at low tide. He made me wish we had done them too. He was also impressed as we were with the falls and caves.

He had done Kaikura yesterday as we did, but he was on the smaller boat and had to wait until 1:30 PM since his 7:30 AM trip had been cancelled because of the rough seas. He also did the swimming with dolphins and thought that was a lot of fun.

His parents had moved to Christchurch from England 12 years ago and when they visited England five years ago his father had said he would never return to England again what with all its traffic and other problems.

Coming into Wellington harbor was very impressive this time with sunshine, although there were ominous clouds to the North [that largely burned off in the afternoon]. Coming into Wellington by sea is by far the most beautiful entry. Quite honestly though, for a city so uniquely situated from a geographical perspective, it sure is boring! It needs something so that a picture of it doesn't look like any other seacoast city in the world. It depends on every other city having something to distinguish it from Wellington!

We went straight to Petone and booked into the same motel we stayed at before, rested for a few minutes and had a sandwich. Then we headed for downtown Wellington on our way to the Zoo at Newton. We found the Zoo nestled in a cleft between hills. It is very well laid out. And here, for the



Wellington Entered via the Water Gate

first time I actually saw a Kiwi bird – a brown kiwi as it turns out. It also was housed in a nocturnal species building that is quite dark, but there are low level artificial lights to which the species seem oblivious that were sufficient illumination for Homo sapiens. The kiwi went merrily along probing with his long beak through the leaves etc., that were a very credible forest-floor environment. The indigenous fruit bat (the only native animal of New Zealand other than the seal) was also housed in



the building and they were interesting to see. The Morepark (an owl indigenous to New Zealand) was also in the house as was a large nocturnal insect unique to the islands.

Elsewhere in the zoo were other endangered bird species of New Zealand as well as many of those that were introduced from Australia. The Kea parrots could be seen as well as the terr...(?) pigeon.

The Zoo also had the usual lions, tigers, zebra, giraffes, leopards, cheetahs, antelope, chimps, lemurs, baboons, kangaroos, etc.. They complained publicly of not having enough money to buy an elephant.

After the Zoo we returned to Petrone where we dined at the Cobb restaurant just down the esplanade from our motel. The beach here was grand with many bathers out in front of the restaurant. We ordered a big meal and enjoyed it immensely. Then back to our room.

Kay called Nola tonight and all is well there, little Sierra has four teeth, is starting to walk on her own and is saying "doggie" to the terror of Smoky and Gina, no doubt. Sean was at Nola's also so Kay talked to him.

Just now lightning has boomed very loudly and the cars moving along the esplanade are making splashing sounds. New Zealand is finally getting some of the rain they have been wanting and happily it has held off till near the end of our visit - and once again, it happens in Wellington.

Tomorrow I will call David and arrange to meet him again, but first we'll go into Wellington and check out some galleries.



This morning we were awakened to the sound of the window banging in the wind and heavy rainfall. We secured the window and slept a while longer. We breakfasted in. Then after welcome showers we donned our coats and my hat and headed for town. We went to the Arts center where they were having a Keith Haring exhibit at the City Art Gallery. His work is strange indeed. Haring died of AIDS in 1990. He had been the New York Subway Artist who had been arrested for defacing public property and persisted even after he became known and established. His art is basically line design with very primitive figures that became stereotypical in his work - the baby, the dog. His art is also highly sexualized with primarily homosexual motifs. Birth is also a theme in some of his work. The guards in the museum watch you watch his work and smirk very discretely.

After leaving the City Museum, we wandered from shop to shop near the Arts Center seeing some very interesting carvings and paintings. Then home to Petone and cheese sandwiches before calling David. David's phone doesn't get answered, so I'll write a little bit about some things that have happened at home and here abroad recently. It's, as they say, a *slow news* day!

Monica Lewenski is continuing her media exposure and the news stands have had her picture and the quote, "I lifted my dress and he said, 'nice!'" for weeks now. Her pudgy smiling cheeks are everywhere. The newspaper carried an article today about another Arkansas woman coming forward to maintain that she had been raped by Bill Clinton twenty years ago. The paper also reported Hillary as saying on a TV show that she no longer shared the same bed nor bedroom with her husband and it was conjectured that that is the reason she is not currently travelling with the president rather than the alleged bad back. Oh my!

Meanwhile here in New Zealand the youngest alliance MP is a woman, Laila Harre who has scuttled the short hair of her early political successes for the more glamorous image. The Wellington paper The Dominion says, on page 20 "Ms. Harre can be idealistic, as her maiden speech demonstrated: 'Society has been replaced by economy. The breadth of human and ecological diversity has been squashed with unparalleled arrogance by a simple ideology,' she earnestly told Parliament. And two years of politics hasn't knocked the idealism out of her." That's good. We need some idealism - some concern for social and ecological successes. Hopefully we will have a return to such idealism in America.

The Prince of Whales - no, excuse me I guess its Wales! - was caught tangoing in Buenos Aires yesterday,



PRINCE CHARLES
TANGOS AT
BUENOS AIRES

Most Recent Tango in Buenos Aires

so that sort of rounds out the political images other than France being embarrassed about something or other.

On a related subject, I've been going to say something about road kill on our travels. I know that sounds a bit morbid and tasteless but since we're doing that sort of thing today, let's just have done with it: We didn't actually do much of any driving today, but this topic has been evolving in my mind since we first began driving in New Zealand.

In the US - at least on the West Coast, cats and dogs are the primary pedestrian casualties that become usual spots on the road. After that, skunks, rabbits, raccoons and possums (very different looking than the Australian ones that were introduced from New Zealand). Then, of course crows and magpies (non-Australian species!) that become too preoccupied with road kill become road kill. Maybe there's a lesson here! There is also the occasional coyote, badger, woodchuck or pheasant, and in some parts, deer become a real hazard that may in some cases wipe out a carload of homo sapiens along with them.

In England foxes and rabbits were the staple with crows added as a garnish.

But in New Zealand 90% of road kill is the Australian possum. The remainder is harrier preoccupied with road kill, or Australian magpie with some little bit of a percentage of hedge hogs and rabbits in the far South. This is significant in a couple of ways. First of all, this entire road kill phenomena is to one extent or another imported meat. None of these species existed in New Zealand until the English in their wisdom brought them here. The hawks (harriers) hunt primarily for road kill. So far we have not seen a living possum on this side of the planet, but then we have seldom had occasion to travel at night. The one occasion when we were forced by no vacancy sign to drive into the night, we did see a little hedgehog waddling with fast little steps effecting very slow locomotion. I thought at first that the clothes brush appearance might have been a little kiwi, but clearly on fly-by inspection, it could not have been. There are allegedly 70 million possum in New Zealand now and they are blamed for most problems, no doubt being thought to have substantially reduced New Zealand's gross national product. Wild ginger is blamed for a certain amount as well, which leaves nothing to blame on Caucasians. It was the pre-maori race that obliterated the moa birds and the maori canoes must certainly be responsible for millions of board feet of Kauri although luckily they were stopped in time to save the Tane Mahuta.

I finally got through to the Roscoes phone number. (You and I lucked out - the soap box was getting a bit rickety!) We arranged to meet for coffee mid-morning tomorrow and take it from there.



The Australian Possum - New Zealand Scape Goat

We breakfasted, abluted, packed, checked out of the motel and were waiting in the car for the Roscoes when they came by our motel. We honked and followed them around the North side of Wellington harbor to a café with a nice covered courtyard at Eastbourn (the end of the road). Waves were striking the rocks on the beach so hard they splashed up onto the road. It was raining torrents this morning and the wind was quite extreme - but not so much that sail boarders were discouraged from frolicking in the surf at extremely high speeds. There were signs out toward Eastbourn, which said to be careful for blue penguin crossing the roadway night and morning to their nests. But no road kill! (I think possum must be targeted, poor creatures!)

Jenni's niece was spending a few days with them as a part of getting her masters degree finished up, so she came along. We had coffee, cakes and talk. As usual with David, our conversations wandered along tangents and digressions - all of them of interest to us both I believe. This was of course after the usual, "What did you do in the South Island?" "How did your class paper go?" etc., etc..

David had evidently been thinking and reading about the meteor impact and meteor mining topics. He cited an author I no longer recall and facts to the effect that Boron in particular would be very effectively mined in space. Calcium in the bones of astronauts being affected by weightlessness was something we discussed with regard to whether centrifugal forces could effectively simulate gravity, he having thought he read somewhere that it could not. I mentioned by skeletal bone growth development model which seems to me to explain some of the apparent growth in height of astronauts in prolonged weightlessness and their apparent calcium problems (bone weakness thereafter).

Then we discussed whether the pine plantation approach that New Zealand is using to make use of otherwise arid hillside provided any hope for reforesting areas like the Sahara, etc. David thought it did, but he felt the Monterey pine which New Zealand is planting is particularly hard on the environment because it does not create soil by breaking down rock structures; it merely uses whatever nutrients are in the soil so that after a couple generations the soil will be completely ruined. Other species could actually create a forest structure that could be harvested over and over again without destroying the habitat, but actually add to its richness.

After a couple hours we all decided to go back to Roscoes for baguette and cheese sandwiches. Jenni also had fruit cake and more coffee. David and I discussed more of the future of the Society. At some point in our conversation he and Jenni indicated how much they had enjoyed Fredrik Ullen's rendition of Legetti - one piece in particular was the best they had ever heard.

We parted with all the usual regrets of not anticipating a renewing of the in-person exchanges we have enjoyed and we were on the road again. This time heading North on highway 1 to Levin where the steep hills that dropped right to the water's edge with only a narrow passage, broadened out into a broad plain.

At Bulls, we branched onto highway 3 heading for Wanganui through flat dairy country. Then up to Hawara along the coast where now Mt. Edmont was visible except for a cloud covering the peak. The weather was definitely much warmer and nicer out along the West coast than the storming weather at Wellington. Then across farming land into New Plymouth. The new home of 19th century settlers from Plymouth who wrestled the land from Maoris who had held it before. Evidently some Maori slaughter had been involved. We drove through the town just checking it out before finding an extremely nice restaurant in which we were the clientele. Kay had the salmon and we both got salad bar. In addition to seafood chowder, I had venison for the first time here in New Zealand. They must export a lot of this stuff because one sure doesn't see it on menus very often.

Then in our motel room Kay fixed us each a large bowl of strawberries left over from what she had poked down me while driving after the stop at a fruit stand. Tomorrow we will see glow worms!

Day 24 – March 15th – Monday

We ate in for breakfast again, then on the road north from New Plymouth. Before leaving town, we saw Mt. Edmont with a little different perspective. Last night clouds shrouded the top. This morning the shroud covered the left side (NorthEast) while the right was very visible. There were no clouds West over the Tasman Sea, but there was a cloudbank to the South and East. As we traveled north it was very warm, getting warmer throughout the day. We noticed that on the West of the North Island the grass is green and lush quite like the West on the South Island. Leaving the sea at times up through the lush vegetation of the Western bush it was quite nice and Kay mentioned that for all the folderol about the South Island, she liked the North Island better.

Kay was driving today and I told her that if we saw a pukeko today, I would like her to stop so we could get a picture. Well, we did see many today. These are pheasant-sized birds that show even less propensity for flight. But they are dark with short tails, black on the back, blue in front, with pinkish red bills that extend up over the head. Their legs are red there is a little white on the bottom of their tails. At first I thought I saw one out across a field that had just been plowed. Then we saw a pair in a grassy wetland not far from the road. One of the two seemed to have a game leg that could not support weight. Then we saw two in a ditch by the road, but there was a truck bearing down on us so Kay had to drive on to a wide spot to turn around. We went back and they were still there so I stepped out of the car on the opposite side of the road and what had looked like grass turf gave way and I nearly fell all the way to the river. Recovering from this, I began approaching the two on foot, taking a photo or two in progress. As I approached, they proceeded up a sharp incline covered with thick bush. I could hear them but not see them. Later on we saw one with a fluffy black chick. Again I got out and pursued, but the chick was hidden in berry bushes – actually Himalaya berries like we have back home – and the mother (I presume) began a major squall of noises.

At Awakino we left the Tasman Sea for good. The road becomes quite steep and the detour we were forced to follow most of the way to TeKuiti was reason for alarm for a passenger with Kay at the wheel. TeKuiti is the “sheep shearing capital of New Zealand,” whatever that means! They do at any rate have a large statue of a bloke doing just that as one enters the town. We stopped for a bit of lunch here before going on, checking out the shops Kay found a cute little sheep doll with a curly wool body bag coat that zipped off leaving a skinnier version of the same sheep – cute. She bought it for Sierra.



Statue of Dreaming Sheep Shearer

Back on the road heading for Waitomo caves, we continue to encounter strange rock formations similar to those at Punakaki only in smaller stacks of pancakes rather than the towering stacks of the West shore on the South Island. At Waitomo these rock formations are abundant.

We get tickets for a 1:30 PM showing and boat ride out of the caves. Our guide led us down a path through the bush to a padlocked gate that he opened and we proceeded single file into the darkness. We weren't exactly spelunking since there were lights every few feet. The narrow passageways opened up into wider caverns every now and then. There was a tremendously deep hole we could stare into and the major cavern was some sixty feet high and supposedly the acoustics are good in limestone such that there are no echoes. We were told the Kenny Rodgers had performed in here and that major dinner functions have taken place here on occasion. The nature of Stalactites and stalagmites were explained as always and we were told that the stalagmites in this cave grow only a centimeter or so a year. (This is very different from the Ainwee cave at Bally Vaughan in Ireland in which the tiny little icicle-like stalactites grow only a centimeter or so in a century as I recall.) There were the usual drapery effects of the limestone on the walls very like I remember in the Oregon caves as a child, but in those caves they had used various colored lighting which gave a somewhat false sense of variety to the limestone coloration.

Our guide told us that sometimes when the river is high that the water gets as high as the platform in the large cavern. He pointed out a few glowworms and explained the life cycle of the fly for which they are the larva stage. The fly only lives a few days, as it has no way to eat. Basically their role is just to copulate. The female uses odors to attract the male; to create more glowworms and life goes on - more or less. The glowworms dangle their chemically fluorescent materials from a mucous string that hangs down 4 inches or so to attract moths and other insects that become ensnared in the snot.

After this lesson in the birds and bees we were ushered down some steps into a lower cavern that did not have lights but which had a dock and a boat - more or less like the river Styx. Our boatman helped us into the boat and drug us along using ropes we could hardly see in the dark. About us were abundant glowworms putting on a stellar performance. They looked almost identical to stars on a clear night, but whereas stars are known to look about a mile away, these looked closer. There were veritable constellations of them and it was quite spectacular.

Our boatsman-guide got us to the "other side" where we looked back at the wet scar in mother earth from which we had emerged. Then we climbed up out of the bush and went about our lives.

There was a Maori village that looked pretty well presented, but we opted against this concession. On the road again North toward Hamilton, we noticed a road sign to Cambridge from TeAwamutu. This road had not appeared on one of our maps and since Kay had wanted to see the New Zealand thoroughbred horse country, we changed our route to go to Cambridge prior to Hamilton. This whole area is one broad plain crisscrossed with fences and hedges. Coming down the gentle hills into the plain one gets a definite impression of an English country side - particularly out around Cambridge in England I would say - where thoroughbreds are king. Of course a town called Leamington in this vicinity refers to a great American race horse of the 19th century and not some maori name for "Race Horse." Entering Cambridge, one goes across a high bridge over a gorge with what may presumably be Waikato River based on a brief perusal of the map tracing blue lines up to Lake Arapuni and beyond. Leaving Cambridge we head North West toward Hamilton through white fences and paddocks with blanketed horses that one would have to think were yearlings soon to be sold at auction - the life blood of this industry everywhere. None of the studs that we passed welcomed visitors so we took a couple pictures, bowed our head a few moments for the ill-fated Phar Lap and went on with our travelling plans which now included travelling on up to Thames today.

So in the outskirts of Hamilton we turned North Easterly toward TeAroha. This is a vast (by New Zealand standards) plain that continued right to the base of Mt TeAroha. On a beautiful clear day like today - it must be 90% Fahrenheit - the mountain provides good perspective to our journey. It

is the high point in the Kaimot mountain range that proceeds to the South and East. Further North it meets up with the Coromandel range at about Paeroa which is where highway 26 crosses highway 2 that we traveled on our way South several weeks ago. We proceed through Paeroa to Thames.

We checked Thames out for a nice motel or B&B by the sea, preferably with a beach access. We saw nothing remotely approaching this and we decided that there must be places along the coast proceeding north toward Coromandel. We stopped a couple times intending to inquire but on further inspection of the situation moved on. After Tapu we decided we might as well go on to Coromandel. The road gets treacherous going around little bays and up over steep peninsulas. On one of these vistas we looked across the water to Auckland with its sky tower clearly visible. That would have been 40 miles away to the North West.

We had looked up motel rooms at Coromandel in our motel book by now and the only one on the beach was at Wyuna Bay. So that was our newest destination. At Coromandel – a beautiful little town not nearly as touristy as one might think – we gassed up and inquired about Wyuna Bay. “A few kilometers up and over on the peninsula.” We were told, and if he had pointed, it would have been easy. We drove along the ridge high up over water on both sides – blue and wonderful with boats, the works.

We got the unit in the second row that first night with the promise of the “right on the beach” unit if we stayed the next night – with a deal offered if we stayed two more. “You can make the airport in three hours easy from here,” he said. He also told us of “The Pepper Tree” restaurant in town and of the sights we just “had” to see while we were here. We Pepper treed and went to bed very tired.



Statue at Driving Creek Pottery and Railroad!

Immediately after showering, eating and suit case zipping we rolled back the drapes and proceeded to put the bags in the car waiting for the occupants to our next night's lodging to move on. As soon as I was out the door Patricia scurried over to tell us they already had unit #1 made up for us. So we moved in all our bags this time since we will be doing our final packing for air transport from here - I informed Pat and Stephen that we would indeed be in unit #1 for two nights. This unit has a living room, kitchen, laundry room as well as the usual. The living room has a big sliding glass door opening right out on a little verandah with chairs and steps down to the lawn and on down to the beach. The view is grandiose looking out to Coromandel township across the bay. We are at the end of the road, so there is no noise.

We had only ten minutes now to make it to our train ride at "Driving Creek Pottery and Railway," so we left directly. We rushed through town and on up to Driving Creek where a science teacher had decided to chuck it all and do what he wanted. He had started doing pottery here - large pieces in brick-like clay, red of course. He got the clay out of the hills nearby (part of his 60 acres). Since he had always been fascinated with trains he decided to build himself a little narrow gage railroad up to where he got his clay and to the second growth pines he used to fire his kilns. He also started planting native trees like kauri and rimu pines to replace the transplanted specimen he used for fire. He appealed to the government to support his project but was rejected. Now many years later he has set up a trust to leave it to the government after he dies. But he is still in good shape and still insists on doing much of the work in extending his railroad further up the mountain and through new tunnels and over new bridges.

The ticket booth is a pottery shop as you might expect, the clerk one of the potters. The character who runs the train and entertains those who embark on the train is a slow speaking dry-witted fellow who knows how to drag a story out a bit. Along the railroad there are clay statues, most of which are definitely feminine in nature, but only vaguely human. One in particular is, as I whispered to Kay, "A titty tree." Both times we went by it, our engineer suggested that we try to figure out what it was and let him know if we did! (I didn't air my insights.)

At the top we got out and he showed us Auckland, Whaheki Island where we had gone by ferry from Auckland. He told us about the ancient Kauri stands that were cut and dragged down "Driving Creek" to the bay where they would float for six months or so waiting for English ships to take them to England for use by their Navy.

How many countries have had their forests devastated to keep that Navy afloat? At Portsmouth in England on the HMS Pinaphore we were told that one ship required 2500 oak trees. That Ireland was where the English went after there were no more forests in England. Wales and Scotland are devastated. New Zealand! Who else?

Meanwhile, back at Driving Creek; We were told that after the "bush men", their name for loggers, the farmers cleared the remaining bush for pasture. Finally, for one reason or another the pastures were let go - maybe because of the gold rush of the 1850's, which brought disappointed Californian 49'ers. Some California pines were planted and the bush gradually returned - the ferns and bushes - not the trees. So most of what is called "bush" in New Zealand is what's left after waves of unconscionable waste.

So, back on the railroad and down through Eucalyptus trees where he told us to look carefully for Koala bears and if we could document seeing one, we should inform them down at the pottery store and they might refund our fare. Hmmm.

We headed back to town after purchasing a couple books - one on fern species in New Zealand and the other a child's book for Carrick on kiwis. In town we inspected the exhibit at the small art

gallery and then the shops. I bought a tautau lizard-like creature in clay – it was kind of cute to sit on the edge of a bookshelf. In that shop they had the most delightful terra cotta mermaids. These were old hags of the sea that played havoc with every preconception of what a mermaid should be. They were flabby and ugly with sagging breasts and bellies. If they were not so big and heavy – and expensive – we would have bought one.

At another shop we bought a reproduction of a Maori child looking at Maori carved canoes overlooking water by Lauderbach. We had hamburgers for lunch with a large piece of real meat and beats and lettuce. That's the good part! The rest was fried onions and the universal New Zealand salad dressing that tastes like it's made with sugar and a little vinegar – awful! Then we grocery shopped and came home for cheese and baguettes with wine. When we got home we napped for an hour or so with the windows wide open for the breeze. After that Kay went swimming down at the beach and I started to catch up on yesterdays meandering. Kay used her goggles and snorkels for a while to check out the whole bay. At one point I saw a whole school of little fish jump about four inches out of the water and do that about three times in covering quite a distance and then I never saw them again. A couple other people went in swimming and left before Kay was done, exclaiming how wonderful it was. But of course to Kay, "wonderful" is easy.

When Kay was back in her civvies, we headed back to the Pepper Tree, this time for fish and chips. The lamb shank had been curried last evening, which I didn't enjoy so much. The half dozen oysters on the half shell had been fine, but they actually gave me eight, and without cocktail sauce the eighth one almost stuck in my throat. Six raw ones is about my limit without good old American cocktail sauce. I asked if they could please leave the "sauce," salad dressing, or whatever they chose to call it off my salad. I was partially successful.

Because I hate moths, Kay and I sometimes argue about whether windows should be left open in the evening. I'm sure you can readily figure out who argues what. Anyhow, it was very pleasant this evening and the temperature seemed to overrule moths tonight. Gradually we noticed one fly and then another and the doors and windows proceeded gradually to close. One of these critters landed on my writing and I noticed that he was, in fact, just a little black cricket, so we began to think more kindly of them. But their numbers continued to grow prodigiously, so we secured all orifices of our abode and Kay began a massacre of some proportions. You couldn't step on one if you had to, but once batted down while flying around a light, they can be smashed quite easily. They do play possum though so you have to get tough! Naturally, we would not have been so heartless if there was any reason to believe these creatures were endangered by extinction. So we're about ready for bed. Tomorrow will be our last full day in New Zealand this trip.



Crickets at Wyuna

Day 26 – March 17th – Wednesday

This, our last full day in New Zealand, we have chosen to spend relaxing in the splendor of summer – still so far off for those of us living in the Northern hemisphere. We had our cereal, toast and freeze-dried coffee and sauntered out to meet this day, both wearing bathing suits under our very casual street clothes. We determined to head out to Colville – the end of the surfaced road on the peninsula in search of a private beach. We went through hilly terrain and a long rocky beach up past Paproa and found what looked like a very sandy beach down over the cliffs and through some trees from where a dirt road angled off. We decided to keep looking all the way to Colville to see what else beckoned. Colville is a non-resort, very tiny village. Other than horse trekking and the starting point for four-wheeling or backpacking, there seemed to be nothing, but we did notice a pukeko at the end of the road. Then we noticed a heard, or flock or whatever a bunch of turkeys is called. There were chicks in the band as well. We photographed them as proof of the claim that there are such feral turkeys in this fair land.

As we proceeded back to our pick of beaches we began to notice large numbers of pukekos. In one place where we stopped there were twenty in another eight, still other places after our swim we saw more than twenty; clearly the wetlands up North of Coromandel Township are ideal for them and the weather today – very warm and sunny – very much to their liking. They are funny birds, the way they flip their white tails when and how they run. It makes me laugh to think how much I worried that I would not see another. Now we wonder what they would taste like – strange beings we.

We came to the beach we had spied earlier and I drove down along the road where there were several houses high up overlooking the bay. Then at one end there were a couple ruts of a path that vehicles had driven and we proceeded down it through the trees along a ravine and actually got very close to the beach. So we climbed down the rest of the way and put our shoes and pants, camera and towels down on large rough rocks whose surface was virtually completely covered with oysters some still with a top shell, but in all cases the lower shell firmly attached to the rock. The beach was golden sand with practically no stones at all, only a few smoothed pieces of oyster or clam shell. The water was warm and went out very gradually so that at chest height, we were out a long way. Kay was in her element frolicking in the surge out past where the waves break. We left our sunscreen on the rock with everything else so I feel a little tinge on my arms and face tonight, but we were pretty well baked ahead of time. We stayed in for an hour or so. An older couple came down while we were there and explored the beach. And then I went up to let my shirt and suit dry out a little before getting into the car. I sat on the oyster bed rock and watched a shag watch me. A kingfisher swooped down going right over the top of me and into one of the pines nearby. Presently Kay came out of the water and we meandered along the edge of the surf to the far side of the beach to where the roots of a



large pine extended way out into the air directly overhead – a quite unique sight. We came home after three Maori men and a little girl came with snorkels and fins with bags for gathering something. One of the men stayed with the little girl, playing with her on the beach. The other two were out much further than where we had gone. It was a trick backing all the way out the two rut road with the Maori's van having completely eliminated any chance of turning around.

We came back to our accommodations at Wyuna bay and rested a little and then walked out the private road around the hill to where three or four houses were situated on a private picturesque beach. We walked back along the rocky beach.

We then began gathering up our belongings with a mind to which bag would this fit into. We went into town to get some tape to help consolidate all the flat objects into a single unit. Kay also called the airline to confirm our flight. When we were done with the initial allocation of objects to containers we rested for a little while and then went back into town to eat.

I had been less than enthusiastic about the Pepper Tree, so we decided to try "Success". It was a great choice. We each had seafood extravaganza, Kay giving me her lightly steamed oysters and I gave her my smoked salmon. The vegetables were done just right – no garlic, no yucky sauces, just delicious food as God and I had intended it to be served. We had glasses of our own uniquely colored wine, and desserts to each of our liking and fine coffee. And all this while relaxing on an open balcony looking out on the activities of main street Coromandel. What had at first appeared as an ominous cloud to the North dissipated into frilly miniatures of thunderheads and the white lace turned pink in a beautiful sunset with the darker portions of the cloud the nicest compliment.

While at the restaurant we saw an advertisement for the "Cyber Place" with address given and the clue, "Open from 10:00 AM till late!" We found the "place." It was a ramshackle dwelling with a hand scrawled sign: "Cyber Place," but clearly "late" had been fairly early tonight!

We went home and Kay decided to finish her (my!) book – so I guess I'll finish it on the way home tomorrow (that lasts for two days!) Meanwhile I was reading in the Selected English Classics, a 1912 beauty that I got for \$1.00 NZ in the "collectibles" in Coromandel yesterday. First I read David Hume's essay on what constitutes fine writing. Then I noticed Charles Lamb's, "The Superannuated Man". This essay describes his thoughts on retirement and no one could have expressed my own sentiments any better! He begins:

"If peradventure, Reader, it has been thy lot to waste the golden years of thy life – thy shining youth – in the irksome confinement of an office; to have thy prison days prolonged through middle age down to decrepitude and silver hairs, without hope of release or respite, to have lived to forget that there are such things as holidays, or to remember them but as the prerogatives of childhood; then and then only, will you be able to appreciate my deliverance."

Fine writing indeed! My heart thrilled to the so eloquently expressed song of my heart. He concludes (page 220) "...I have worked task-work and have the rest of my days to myself."

Amen!

So this morning was quite exciting. We got all our packed bags into the car and bid Patricia and Stephen farewell and were off to the wild blue yonder. It was a beautiful hot day and how we wished we could stay longer in such a fair land.

Kay planned for us to go to a tourist attraction near Tapu on our way down the Peninsula. It offered koi ponds and waterfalls that, of course, would have relevance to us at home. It was indeed in a very nice setting and the falls which required some mild trekking were nice. Along the way, bell birds and fan tails did the Aloha thing! Driving back from mid peninsula to the main road, through the road resurfacing work, we noticed that the crew were the same as had been working the road some 40 miles further North the day before.

Kay also noticed to both our dismay that the \$200.00 US that she had kept in her bag for safe keeping until we returned was missing. So we began playing the recreation of what happened game. She had had it the morning before she was sure. At the stop at Tapu, we were sure that we had locked the car, so it hadn't happened there. Going back in time to supper last night - she had had her bag with here. Then back to the beach where we swam and had left the car windows rolled down because it was so hot. Ah, maoris! They had parked right next to us in their van and could easily have looked into our car - and their van would have been between us in the water and our car. So that was it then!

We decided there was obviously nothing to be done but learn by the experience and be on toward the airport. We got to Thames and then headed West toward Auckland along the "Firth of Thames" - the bay North of the Hauraki plains. We saw pukekos everywhere now.

We were getting nervous about our flight departure even though we had plenty of time. You know how that goes. We argued about little stuff like our memories of where and how to leave our rental car. And then from Manakau City to the airport we were lost most of the time. Reaching the airport was a relief indeed. We gassed up and washed the car - it did need it - to hide the fact that we had done many "unsurfaced roads" that had not been in the rental car agency's plans for us. We parked our car where we understood we had been instructed when we had picked it up in Auckland a month ago, but an airport attendant insisted that we should not! We did. We got our bags into the airport where we could wait for an hour or so till they would check us into our flight. Kay called the rental car joint and found out we had done right with the car.

So we waited. And finally we flew. It was a long night back in time - picking up some of the hours we had sacrificed a month before but we were insufficiently grateful! LA was a hassle. They were training personnel and the lines took forever, but when we were finally through them we got to sit and wait for another hour or so. We were tire and the people look strange!

When we got back to SEATAC International, Nola was waiting for us with Sierra. It was great to see them. Sierra changed a lot in one month. She would be a year old shortly. I called day and Jean when we got back to our home. Everything looked good - our ponds had held up. The fish were alive. But Buddy, of course was not there. We half expected to hear his bark as we stepped in the door. We saw Sean and Carrick the next day and had the opportunity of trying to explain to Carrick where we had been so long.

Things settled back into the routine fairly quickly. But the memories of New Zealand are now part of that routine. We wonder when would be a good time to go back.

A Special Note of Apology

Throughout this illustrated diary – or annotated sketchpad, whatever it is – I have treated the maori people, traditions and language with condescension and rather frivolously I'm afraid. There are probably a lot of reasons for that stemming from my disappointment at not having learned more authentic information about their ancient customs. I have suspected most of what I learned of having been polished by political correctness and have rebelled against accepting it hook line and sinker. But I'm sure I have been unfair and there is one thing that I think should be corrected here – I'm doing it in this way rather than rewriting earlier comments because those comments were, in fact, what I thought then.

With regard to the \$200.00 that we too readily assumed had been stolen by the three maori men who joined us at the beach up beyond Coromandel, I have thought much. It is the kind of prejudicial thinking that is a lot of what's wrong with our world on both sides. In recreating events over and over again on the flight back and since, I see the old couple coming down to the beach after we had been there a while. (They were an elderly couple we had seen inquiring at the Wyuna Motel about lodging but had not stayed there.) On the beach they walk together enjoying the sand and the wife enjoys the ankle deep surf. The husband gets bored before long and goes back up where the cars are parked while the woman remains there near us. He putters around the cars as old *white* men are supposed to for quite a while before the woman returns to the car and leaves with him. We can associate very directly with them – they are like us!

Then the maoris came. They are quite charming actually with their joshing each other and playing with the child – but they are maoris! But...they too are like us! One does not steal from others and then behave as they behaved – free and easy in their minds. Just having fun with a child.

That's about it! No conclusions. But then, that's where fairness begins – "Innocent until proven guilty!" An old English tradition that is a very nice concept.