

From Boyd Raeburn for FAPA Mailing #150. February, 1975

As usual, after my usual good intentions to not wait for the last moment to do at least the minimum eight pages for FAPA, I have left it until the last moment. Well, not quite, as the calendar goes, for it is but January 12, but I have been tentatively planning to go to New Zealand again this month. If I go it will have to be pretty soon, because I want to spend some time there before my nephew goes back to school on February 3. However, while I would very much like to see Philip, my nephew again, as well as my sister and various aged relatives of whom I am fond, somehow I just don't feel like going. Also, there may be something coming up which will prevent me from going, but this won't be resolved for almost a week, which makes things pretty close. But in an effort to preserve my membership, I am starting on cutting stencils, hoping that the somewhat worn type on this typewriter will do an adequate job, and that I can get access to a Gestetner to run them off.

At the moment the Superbowl is in progress, and instead of watching it I am cutting stencils. Is that not noble of me? Not really, I'm not that much of a football fan, and I do not have a yen for a particular team to win.

Two years ago this time I was visiting the Greg Benfords, with Dean and Jean Grennell, for I had stopped off in L.A. to visit the Grennells on my way to New Zealand. I suggested that it might be an idea to have the TV set tuned to the Superbowl, so that its progress could be monitored occasionally? "Why on earth are you interested in the Superbowl?" asked Greg. I explained that I was rooting for Miami to beat the pants off Washington, as Washington had been making such a public parade of their piety, and had been ascribing their victories at least partially to God's Help, although why God should favor them over other teams was not explained, unless the rationale was that the Washington team were Pious Believers, and the other teams Unworthy Philistines, who deserved to be smitten on the Field of Battle, or \*something.\*

This information turned Greg and Dean into instant Miami partisans, and as we whiled away the afternoon in happy conversation, we occasionally glanced at the set and cheered when the Miami Infidels defeated the Washington team, whom perhaps God let be defeated because of their Pharisee like behaviour.

So then I went back to L.A. and got on a plane, and flew off to New Zealand, stopping at Honolulu and Tahiti for refuelling. We landed at Tahiti at about 2 am local time, and most of the passengers went into the terminal to walk about a bit after the confinement of the plane. The duty free shop was shut up tight, which surprised me, because no matter what ghastly hour one lands at Nandi in Fiji or Pago Pago in Samoa (U.S. Colony Samoa, not to be confused with Free, Independent Western Samo) the Duty Free Shop is open to sell cheap booze and other stuff to the passengers. I remarked on this to a girl who got on board at Tahiti and sat beside me. "Probably because it is Sunday which is a day for Rest and not Commercialism" (or words to that effect) was her prim and slightly reproving reply. I pointed out that we were about three hours into secular Monday, which ruled out that explanation.

The weather was fine when I landed in Auckland, at about 8 am local time, and having had very little sleep. Instead of sensibly going to bed for at least a few hours, I visited some people, feeling quite muzzy although not sleepy. I had thought the next day I might rent a car and drive North of Auckland, for I had never visited that part of the country. However, the next day it was drizzling quite heavily, and one couldn't see across the harbor for mist, so it was not a day to drive into unknown territory for sightseeing. So I decided I would go on to Dunedin in the South Island that day. There were no seats on the flights I wanted, the airline said, but they would wait-list me on the 12.15 flight. So a little before flight time I arrived at the airport, and went up to the waitlist counter. (I guess "standby" is the N.A. term.) "It's closed." I was told. "But - but - I'm on the waitlist, and I was told to come here." "But you can't be. You can only get on the list by coming here." "But I was told by the downtown terminal....." "O.K. just wait over there." A few minutes later somebody came along, and gave me a boarding pass. I felt a trifle guilty as I boarded the plane, wondering whether a local on the list had lost out to The American Tourist.

After spending a few days in the Dunedin area, I decided to visit another portion of the South Island West Coast which I hadn't seen before, taking Philip along with me. So we set off for Lake Wanaka, by way of Central Otago. This is a stone fruit growing area, and I had always had the impression that it would be bountiful plains all full of fruit trees, and so the first time I saw it I was quite surprised. It is actually quite a rugged area, cut through by the mighty Clutha River in a deep gorge, with the fruit ~~grows~~ growing confined to the alluvial plain area along the banks of the river. Central Otago was the site of a gold rush in the 19th Century, and there are still piles of tailings to be seen from the sluicing operations. In fact, some of the tailings are now being reworked to extract the gold left in them. In the Gold Rush days the area was really quite Wild West-ish, with outlaw gangs robbing stage coaches and all like that.

Our first stop was to be Wanaka, on Lake Wanaka, somewhat north of Queenstown on Lake Wakatipu, of which I have written previously. One passes through the town of Alexandria, and then a few miles on the road forks, one turns left for Queenstown, and right for Wanaka. So we turned right, and went on and on through some pretty dull and desolate country and finally reached Wanaka, a very popular holiday resort. It's a pleasant enough place, but to my taste not a patch on Queenstown for scenic beauty. We checked into our hotel, showered, and then smelling slightly of rancid mutton fat, went off to visit the family of an old school friend who were staying at Wanaka in their summer residence. The rancid mutton fat smell came from the soap provided by the hotel. I had often noticed this from N.Z. soap, but any mention of it to the locals evinced only surprise, so I guess they are used to it. Unfortunately the old school friend himself wouldn't arrive for several days, his family having preceded him, and I was sorry to have missed him, as I thought at the time, not having seen him for many years.

The next day we left Wanaka and set off for the Franz Joseph Glacier by way of the Haast Pass. We backtracked a few miles from Wanaka, and then swung north, and shortly we were at Lake Hawea, like Wanaka another scenic lake ringed by mountains. Shortly after leaving Lake Hawea the road swung back alongside Lake Wanaka, and also immediately after leaving Lake Hawea the road became utterly dreadful. Not only was it very narrow and unpaved (lots of fun when a truck came thundering along the other way) but it was - bumpy is not quite the word - bone shaking would describe portions of it better. The road wound on and on through bush-clad hills (young mountains actually) with streams and waterfalls all over the place. While I had to pay careful attention to the driving, I had good opportunities to look at all the scenery, because I had to drive so slowly. I had had the impression that the Haast Pass itself was the rough road, but once we reached the Pass, the road became much better. It is about a hundred miles from Wanaka to Franz Joseph, and it took eight hours to cover the distance. Some of this was taken up in stopping beside the road to look at waterfalls, and wandering a short trail through the jungle to look at a waterfall falling from a great height, and taking photographs of waterfalls, and listening to bellbirds make bell-like noises, and watching fantails fantailing, and eating a picnic lunch, and stuff like that, the greater portion of the time was taken in pootling along in the Morris 1100 going clunk kerrash over big bumps and being glad it was a rented car I was driving.

Franz Joseph is a teensy hamlet at the foot of the Franz Joseph Glacier. Running for quite a way down a chunk of the South Island are the Southern Alps, a chain of MOUNTAINS (BIG ones) and in these mountains are glaciers - BIG ones, and the Franz Joseph is one of them. We checked into the Franz Joseph Hotel - one of a chain of government tourist hotels (very good) and looked to see what was available in the way of glacier-tourist tupe things to do. I decided against a flight over the glacier, and put our names on the list for the glacier climb the next morning. The next morning was all misty and damp, and I was glad I hadn't opted for the plane trip. At the hotel we were issued heavy socks, studded boots, ponchos, and alpenstocks, and the assorted throng piled into buses and were trundled off. We swung off the main road, and up a narrow trail through the dripping jungle for a few miles, and then the road ran out beside a white river rushing out from under hills of gravel. The apparent hills of gravel were ice, covered by a thin layer of gravel. The river was melting water from the glacier, and was milk white because the water was full of stone flour, stones ground to fine powder by the glacial movement. The Franz Joseph moves pretty fast, as glaciers go, travelling about three feet a day. We set off over the gravel covered ice mounds, with the guides chopping footholds here and there. Way, way up there in this distance we could see what looked like a towering pile of ice cubes. On and on we went, up and up, over the gravel covered ice, then over ice, and the ice cube pile got closer, and larger, and then we were upon it, or rather in it, for up close it wasn't ice cubes, but great tortuous convolutions of ice. At this point, the glacier, after flowing placidly (more or less) for miles and miles, came to a narrow passage through the mountain, and the pressure of the passage caused the ice to swist and buckle and heave around into all this tortured, convoluted etc. etc. The ice on close inspection was more blue than white, due to the pressure. So we climbed on through this winter wonderland stuff, properly fantisted, our guides leading the way, and making sure nobody fell into any crevasses.

We got up to the top off all this stuff, and then it was time to start back. Easier going down, and I was leaping blithely down a passage when, whap, my feet went from under me, and I came down with a crash on my back. I lay sort of stunned for a moment, but the only thing broken was the light meter on my camera. A real drag, but a classy way to break it. "How did your light meter get broken?" "Oh, I fell while climbing a glacier." We got down past the bare ice, and were back to all the hillocks of gravel covered ice. Much easier going. We reached a fairly level spot. "Go through there" said one of the guides. I was in the forefront. There was a soft spot. My feet slipped again. Whap. Whap. Whap. Whap. went the people behind me. Dumb guide.

We checked out of the hotel, and after lunching on cold yugly take-out meat pies from the local restaurant, set out northwards again. The intermittant drizzle ceased, and the sun came out. "There are supposed to be more varieties of ferns here than anywhere else in New Zealand." said Philip. I could believe it. Little ferns, big ferns, great towering tree ferns. Ah, the wonder of it all.

Our plan was to go from the west coast to Christchurch (near the East coast) by way of the Otira Gorge, which cut, (more or less) through another bunch of mountains. We knew we wouldn't make it through the Gorge in daylight, and I didn't want to drive it at night - miss all that spectacular scenery and fall off a precipice maybe? - but would the town and the entrance to the gorge - pass- whatever - have any accomodation? We came to the fork where the road for Otira branched off. But there was a sign saying come visit the gold-mining ghost town. "Hey, I was told I should see that." said Philip. Fine, so we drive on North, swung off the main road, wandered through hills, and came to the "ghost town" or whatever it was called. Ektuelleh, it wasn't a genuine old town, but a mixture of reconstructed buildings, and a genuine old church which had been transported from somewhere else, and stuff like that. So one had the various village shops and buildings, full of genuine old artifcasts - sort of Disneyland Main Street but an even earlier period, with some authenticity. Quite interesting. It actually was on the site of an old gold mine, and a short walk away was the old goldmining area, with the big water gun still in place, and remains of the water races. One could pay a dollar and pan for gold, and a lot of people were doing it, and getting a little fleck or two of gold from each panning. The flecks would be put in a bottle of water, for one to cart off as a souvenir. Probably at today's price for gold, the flecks one got would be worth more than the dollar fee.

By now of course it was too late to think of going to Otira that evening, so we went on a few miles north to Greynouth, hunted for accomodation, and wound up at a guest house. New Zealand guest houses are great. Comfortable accomodations, low prices, and in the morning they give you a fine breakfast which is included in the price.

Next morning we set off eastward, and stopped for gas in Otira before plunging into the wilds of the Otira Gorge. The pump attendant was a very effeminate teenage Maori boy. I have never seen the oil in a car checked with such grace and delicacy. "That fellow had rather a high voice." Philip remarked as we drove away.

"Plunged" is hardly the mot juste. The gorge ran straight through the mountains, with a river dashing along it, but the road climbed, and climbed, twisting and writhing and cavorting and steepening and plunging and shooting up again, with the poor little Morris 1100 going wheeze, strain....in places I had to put it in first gear for it to be able to proceed at all, and even then fairly painfully. Trailers are banned from the road. Yes. From the peak of whatever it was we reached the road led quite gently into the Canterbury Plains, and we bowled along merrily the Christchurch, The Garden City, in brilliant sunshine. Christchurch is a very pretty city, with the Avon River winding through parks and some very nice botanical gardens, with people paddling canoes along the placid river, and all that Olde Englishe stuff (except to be really Olde Englishe I guess they should be punts rather than canoes.) The only trouble with Christchurch is that it is flat. Dead flat. Great for cyclists, but a little boring to one from a hilly city.

We had planned to go on back to Dunedin the next morning, but on an impulse I phoned Wanaka and found that my old school friend was going to be there the next day. What the hell. We'd go to Wanaka. So we set off fairly early, bowling down the main road south, then picking what we hoped was the best and shortest route, headed southwest into the interior, towards the east side of the Southern Alps. The scenery was pretty nice, with the snow capped alps in the distance, but after a while, we got into higher ground, the McKenzie Country, named after one McKenzie who in the past ran a huge sheep station (ranch) in the area. Even now the phrase leaps to mind, "There's snow in the McKenzie Country." bringing visions of a rugged Scotsman tromping through the snow with a lamb cradled in his arms, and sheep dogs driving the huddled bleating flocks through the deep drifts. The McKenzie Country struck me as pretty desolate and bleak. One would have to be a rugged Scotsman to live there. We started to get into hilly terrain again. ~~A car, containing two girls had come up~~ behind me. They passed, and then slowed down. I passed them. They speeded up, passed, and slowed down. One finds a lot of drivers doing that. I passed again, and this time they were left behind. But after a while here they came again. They passed. I could see just ahead the paved road was giving way to gravel. I passed them, and then we were into winding hilly roads. They couldn't pass, and they were eating my dust instead of me theirs. How ungallant. But smart. Eventually we got into flatter country, and they roared past me with an indignant whoosh, but by that time we were on to paved roads again.

We arrived at Wanaka in midafternoon, had a very pleasant time with old school friend and family, and after dinner decided to go on to Dunedin rather than spend the night at Wanaka. On the way to Alexandria I noticed that we were very low on gas. I should have thought to fill up at Wanaka. No worry, I'd get some gas at Alexandria, thought North American me. Ha. We arrived at Alexandria at close to 9 pm. No gas stations open, and the gas gauge needle was hard against the empty mark. O.K., so we'd stay the night. All accommodations were full. Prior to the start of our trip Philip had opined that we might find ourselves in the wilds far from a gas station, so we had put in the trunk a can containing one gallon of gas. "There's a coin gas pump at Milton." Philip said. Milton was a horrendous number of miles distant on the way to Dunedin. So we put the gallon of gas in the tank and set off

into the night, hoping that maybe we'd find something along the way. Ha. The towns we passed through not only had nothing open, there was hardly a glimmer of light showing in them. The Morris 1100 had been yielding a startling 40 miles to the Imperial gallon, but Milton was more than 40 miles distant, and there were lots of gas consuming hills on the way. I drove as modestly as possible, trying to conserve every drop of gas, and we finally crept into Milton with gas to spare, about 1 am. The coin pump took only 50¢ pieces, but fortunately we had a couple. If we had had only other change, we would have been out of luck, for there was as usual nothing open where we could have got change.

From Dunedin I flew to the North Island to visit an aunt and uncle and young cousin, Stephen, in the town of Tokoroa. Tokoroa is a forestry industry town surrounded by exotic (in the dictionary sense of the word) pine forests, so the scenery is hardly remarkable. I decided that I would like to visit again the thermal area at Wairakei, just North of Lake Taupo, and about 30 miles south of Tokoroa. Maybe a couple of readers with good memories will recall my description of the Wairakei thermal area, with boiling springs and pools of bubbling boiling mud and clouds of steam over all and areas becoming suddenly dangerous and being closed off. So I arrived with Stephen to find that the entire thermal valley had been closed. Damn. On the way back to Tokoroa Stephen noticed a sign by a side road, pointing to the Orakei Korako thermal area. I had never heard of it, but we thought it might be worth a try. We drive about 15 miles along a slightly treacherous gravel road, banked by hills which looked somewhat unreal, like something out of a fairy tale illustration rather than plain old hills, and just as the road seemed to be giving out, we were at Orakei Korako. Herewith the blurb from an illustrated folder I picked up:

Orakei Korako, an enchanting thermal valley....is famed for its unrivalled terraces, geysers, and fabulous Aladdin's Cave. Located on the picturesque shores of Lake Ohakuri, a 24 mile stretch of sheltered water, with excellent trout fishing and jet boat cruising..... The thermal valley is reached after an exhilarating ride across the lake in a jet turbocraft. Here unfolds a fascinating world of thermal activity: numerous bubbling geysers showering water down pink silica; the formidable might of Hochstetter Cauldron, a pulsating spring disgorging a million gallons of boiling water each day; immense silica terraces, formed over two million years - some beautifully colored with diffuse minerals and algae, others fresh and white; fifteen acres of sinter flats daubed by nature's paint brush in hues of subtle colour interspersed by hundreds of boiling springs; and beautiful Aladdin's Cave, an ancient, cathedral-like cavern revealing colourful rock strata as it arches down to a jade green tepid pool, at night a fairyland of twinkling lights from a million glow-worms. This is Orakei Korako Geysersland, a memorable valley of thermal beauty for all who make a journey to "the place of adorning."

The prose may seem a little purple, but even so it understates the impact of Orakei Korako.

It was most impressive to ride across the lake in the jet boat towards all that bubbling, boiling geysering, steaming terrain, and even more impressive to walk through the quite extensive area, amongst all the manyhued hissing and and blurping and glopping and clouds of aromatic steam (clears the sinuses fast). Some of the color comes from algae which live quite happily in the boiling water. Aladdin's Cave is more a steeply floored very deep grotto than a cave, but apart from that the description does not convey the immense variety of colors in the rocks, contrasted by the pool which really is a deep emerald green, and in temperature more than just tepid. The place is supposed to be haunted and/or holy, and one plunges one's arm deep into the pool and make a wish. Maybe the water does have Strange Powers - my arm was tingling strangely for quite a little while after I left the cave.

From Tokora on to Auckland by bus (bump, bump) and in Auckland I decided that to visit the Bay of Islands in the far North it would be cheaper and more efficient in Seeing Sights quickly to take a two day bus tour. The bus was a small 16 seater, which meant that not only was it more comfortable than a full size bus, but the number of people in the tour was not too great.

Oh hell, you can probably tell by the way my never-any-hell writing style is growing more and more ragged that I'm beginning to get bored with all this travel writing, and so we'll just skip the descriptions of the trek through the forest to see the Giant Kauri, and zooming in a launch around the Bay of Islands from island to island and the Waitangi Pa where the Treaty of Waitangi was signed, and the visit to Historic Russell which was once a Hell Hole of the Pacific, but is now just a pretty little town full of Historic things.

Maybe next time we'll have: Philip Visits Canada.

I will have to save comments for another time, except for

TED WHITE: I had been familiar with the name of Dan Hicks (and his Hot Licks) but hadn't heard anything by the group, and had the vague impression (from the name, I suppose) that it was a sort of modern Hillbilly outfit. Thus I was quite surprised when I finally saw them on TV, and enjoyed the group very much. Contrary to you, I prefer the version of Shorty Falls in Love on Where's The Money to the one on Dan Hicks, Original Recordings. By the way, although even some time ago you found it extremely difficult to get this latter LP, I can get hold of a mint copy for anybody who cares to send me \$10.00.

When I am asked "What are your interests" or "What are your hobbies" I am rather at a loss, for while I am interested in all sorts of things, I no longer have Consuming Interests - I am not a nut about anything, which Interests and Hobbies sometimes seems to imply. I guess I have Mild Interests. One of my Mild Interests is Gastronomy, but more from an academic viewpoint - such as reading Gourmet magazine, and Gael Greene in New York magazine. I had never tried my hand at cooking anything much beyond bacon and eggs, and didn't know even elementary procedures which any person with even minor competence in cooking knows almost instinctively. So, when at last I took the plunge and decided to Cook Something, did I choose something simple? No, I picked on a dish with a

Tricky Sauce. And it came out a Culinary Triumph. Curiously, Accomplished Cooks to whom I have given the recipe haven't been able to get the sauce to come out right. Maybe some time I'll run that recipe through here.

But right now I present a Glorious Dish which is simple to do, which Gina Clarke gave me.

#### LOBSTER THERMIDOR

- 1 lb cooked lobster. (I use lobster tails - it's easiest and cheapest. (boil the lobster tails in boiling water until the tails are just done - don't overcook, and don't forget to take off the shells afterwards - if they come with shells on.)
- 2 oz butter and another 2 oz butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$  lb chopped mushrooms (I prefer to use caps only)
- 3 tbs chopped shallots (shallots, not scallions aka spring or green onions which are often passed off as shallots)
- 4 tbs Parmesan cheese (grated)
- 2 tbs flour
- 1 pint rich milk (I use half or maybe a bit more 10% cream and the balance 2% milk)
- 3 egg yolks
- 2 tbs chopped parsely
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp dry mustard
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp dry tarragon or a sprig or two of minced fresh tarragon
- 1 stalk celery minced.

The quantities given for mushrooms and shallots are upper limits. Watch it on the vegetables. Less is better than more. Use a small to medium stalk of celery, rather than large.

Cube lobster. Melt 2 oz. butter. Add mushrooms and shallots and salt and pepper to taste. Saute 5 minutes. Add cubed lobster. Stir. Cover. Keep warm over low heat.

Melt in a pot the second 2 oz of butter. Sift flour, salt to taste and mustard and gradually add to butter, stirring until smooth. Add the milk a little at a time, stirring constantly. The bit is, you add a little milk, and then stir and stir and stir until you feel the mixture thickening under the spoon, and then add some more milk and repeat until all the milk is added. Meanwhile you have beaten the egg yolks in a bowl until they are foamy. Add a little of the milk sauce to the beaten yolks and stir briskly, then pour the result back into the rest of the milk sauce and mix well. Pour half the resulting sauce onto the lobster etc. mxture. Blend. Add parsely, tarragon and celery. mix. Put the mixture in a casserole, cover with the remainder of the sauce. Sprinkle the Parmesan cheese all over. Dot lightly with butter. Put 3 inches below grill for 5 minutes or until golden brown. This recipe works well with shrimp, too.