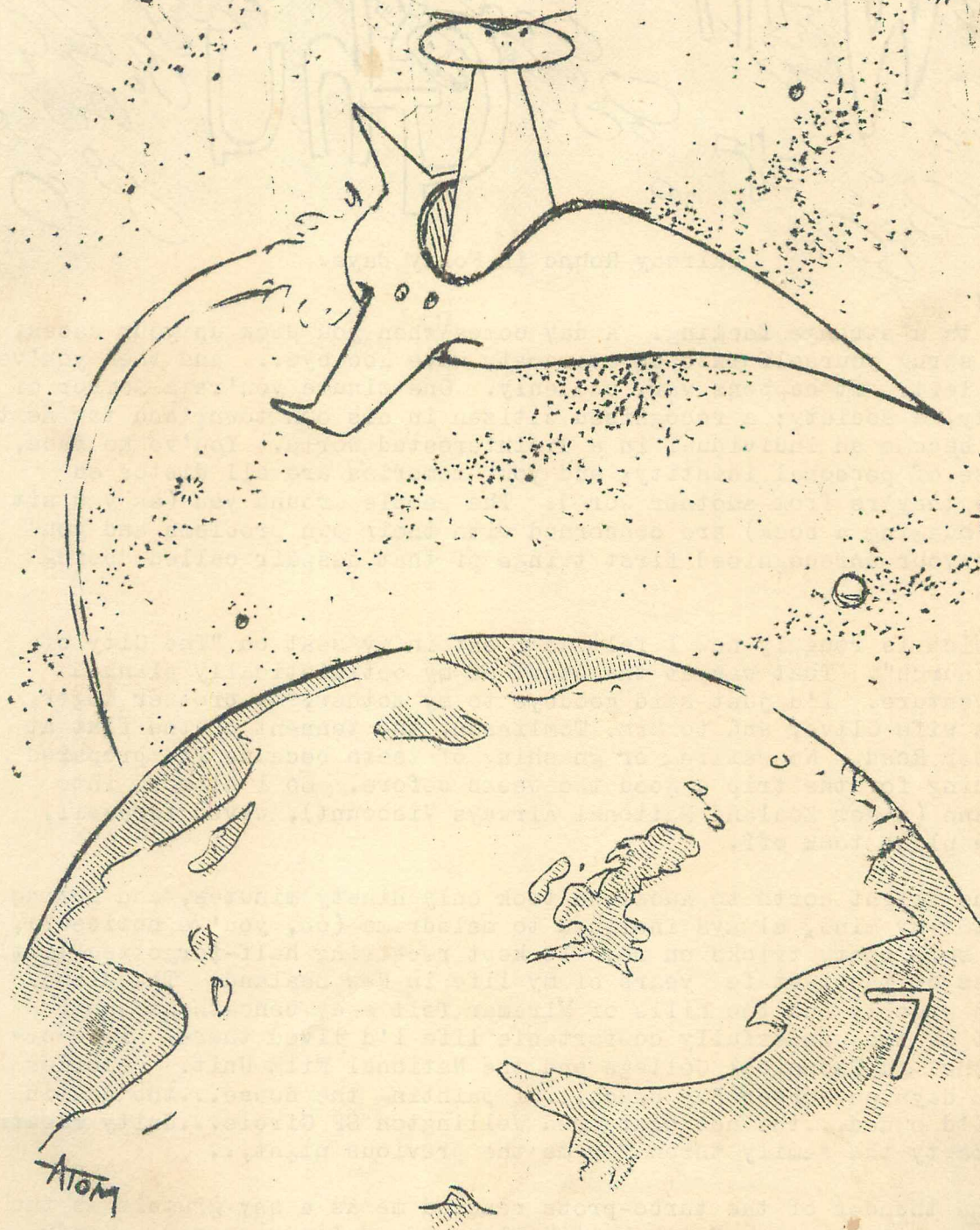
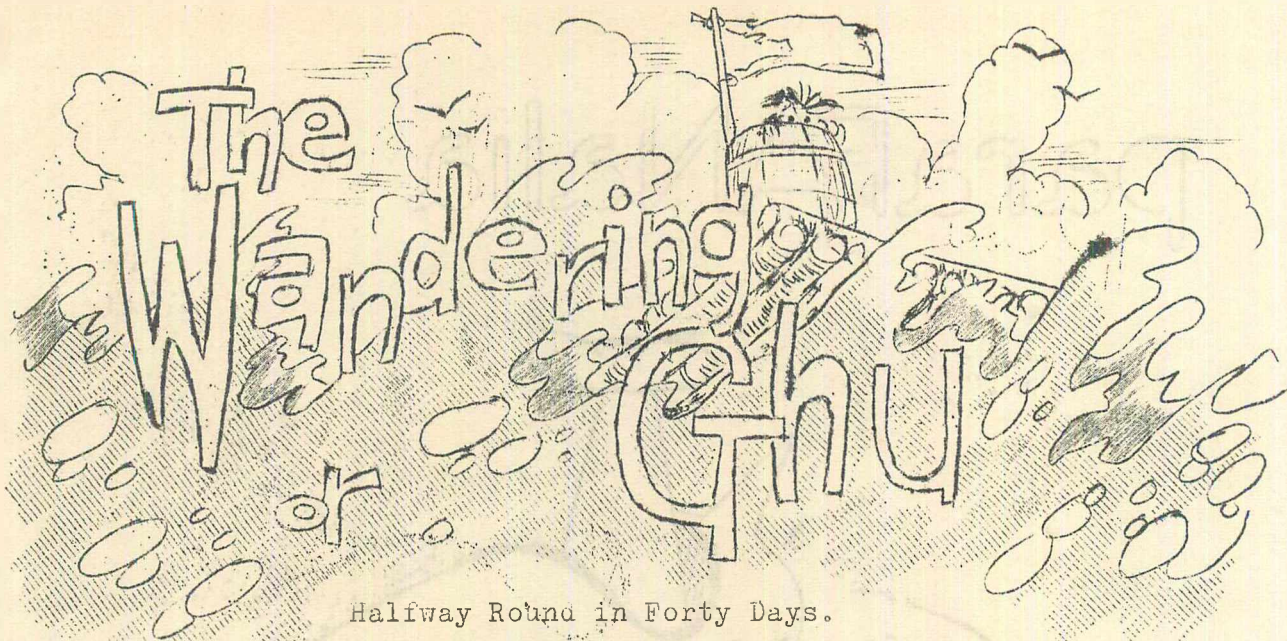


paraFANalia





Halfway Round in Forty Days.

It's a strange feeling. A day comes when you pick up your cases, shrug yourself into an overcoat, wave goodbye... and then you've left. It happens very suddenly. One minute you're a member of a family, a society; a recognised citizen in his own town; and the next: you've become an individual in a disinterested world. You've no face, no sense of personal identity; and your memories are all distorted because they're from another world. The people around you (as you sit there, hugging a book) are concerned with their own problems and you receive your unrecognised first twinge of that despair called "being alone".

Which is roughly how I felt as I sat in my seat on "The City of Christchurch". That was at the start of my optimistically planned Big Adventure. I'd just said goodbye to my mother, my brother Roger, and his wife Olive, and to Mrs. Tomlinson, the tenant of the flat at 12 Khyber Road. No wailing or gnashing of teeth because I'd prepared everything for the trip a good two weeks before. So I climbed into the plane (a New Zealand National Airways Viscount), waved farewell, and the plane took off.

The flight north to Auckland took only ninety minutes, and during that time my mind, always inclined to melodrama (oh, you've noticed?), played some nasty tricks on me. It kept recalling half-forgotten little episodes of the last few years of my life in New Zealand. The plane climbed steeply and the hills of Miramar fell away beneath us and I thought of the wonderfully comfortable life I'd lived there. I remembered the old Technical College and the National Film Unit. Memories of warm days on Worser Bay beach...of painting the house...the Austin Seven I'd owned...the now scattered Wellington SF Circle...Unity Theatre...the party the family threw for me the previous night...

The thunder of the turbo-props reached me as a sly rumble as the plane flew the length of the Hutt Valley and as I remembered...Mandy... Jack Richardson's place in the Wainouia Valley...the hip gang in

town...my brother Tony's house (there it is - beneath the starboard wing)...
..Akatarawa and Toni and Lynette and Merlene...

And then I reached for my book as the hills of the Rimutakas Range came into view. Wellington fades behind me and I need something to stop the memories. I read.

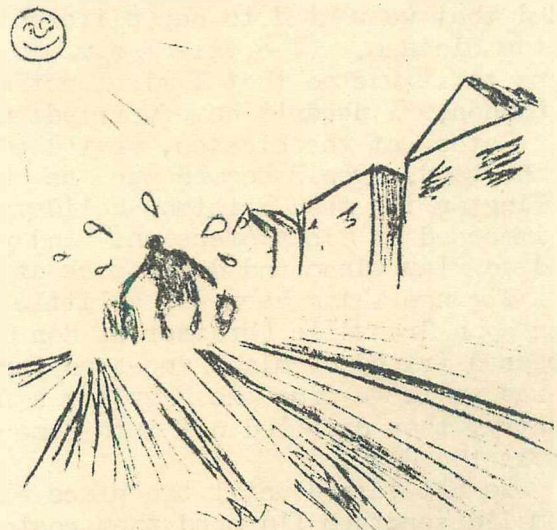
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First day Today, I left Wellington, and two ^{days} later I was walking 18 - 7 - 60. the streets of Auckland, where the Horrocks family had kindly agreed to look after me for this day and the next. I hefted my suitcase in my right hand, my typewriter in my left, wore my overcoat, and staggered halfway along Queen Street, the main street of Auckland. I was heading for Wellesley Street, where I figured I could get a bus out to Mount Albert, the lair of the Horrock Clan.

I reached the corner of Wellesley, put my load onto the pavement for a moment, and was startled to hear my name called. I looked around. No one. I picked my suitcase up, grabbed the typer, and began to look for the bus-stop. Again, someone called me. I looked around. Standing across the road was a Maori boy who looked familiar. He waved his arms around his head, then jumped between two lorries, dodged a bus and some scooters and ran over to me. He said, "I thought it was you!" and I said "Yes". He babbled on about playing piano in a cabaret in town, and finally my brain wirred a little, got into gear, and then I recognised him. He was a hot piano player from Wellington night-land. We went into a pub and he bought me a beer, and we gabbed a while. I asked him what he was doing in the town, and he told me of the musical scene in the Auckland coffee-shops. Then we got to talking about Wellington, and he asked me if there was much 'weed' down there. I said I didn't know, which is about the safest thing to say, and he told me how he was making some side cash being a stool-pidgeon to the police and tipping them off about who was using Marijuana in Auckland. He seemed quite proud of this activity, by wouldn't elaborate any, so I finished his beer and bid him adieu.

I walked on to the bus-stop, then on impulse I collapsed into a telephone booth and telephoned Mrs. Horrocks to say I'd arrived on time, and was it possible to meet Roger in town (maybe he'd help me carry the junk?).... which explains why I walked about a mile uphill to the Auckland University. Ugh. I rested at the top of the hill, looking out over a warm and sunny park near the University buildings, Then, sweating within my thick over-coat, I half ran back down the hill after failing to locate Snorrocks.

I caught the trolley-bus and proceeded in a weary manner to the Horrocks residence at Mount Albert. Another walk under the blazing sun, and then I propped myself up against the front door of 18 Hazlemere Road. Somehow, I found the strength to press the bell, and then Mrs. Horrocks came to my aid. She fed me and gradually my fevered brain



regained its normal balance. I rested for a while in their cool lounge, then Snorrocks himself arrived home from his studies.

Roger hadn't changed much since the last time I saw him, back a year or so when I stayed in Auckland for a couple of days. Still a tall and thin Thinker, with a huge grin and a shy but very interesting way of talking. He can drive just as badly as ever, of course, and I was a little nervous of driving into town with him, as we later did. He was pretty involved with University affairs - like Politics, Unions and Re-Organising the World - and most of his free activity had been put aside as a consequence of this. We talked about fandom and about Angry Young Men and about the next issue of KIWI-FAN, and then we decided to go into town.

Snorrocks got the car out and somehow we got it moving (flat battery) and we cruised around the city for a while. I was feeling very aware of the fact that this was to be my last real look at New Zealand for an indefinite length of time, so suggested the two of us should go to hear some music, and visit a coffee shop. So, we went to a place called the Picasso, which looked more like a boat-shed inside, and sat down to sit away an hour or so, the while listening to a typical 'hard sound' Kiwi jazz/swing band. On the way out, I bumped into someone from Wellington. As it turned out, he owned the Picasso, having bought it with the profits from a Wellington coffee shop of the same name. He invited us back the following day to hear whatever music we wanted his band and vocalist to present (stray Wellingtonians get very expansive when they meet). I reflected that New Zealand certainly is a small town. Every time I went to Auckland (400 miles away from Wellington) I met acquaintances from home-town.

Second Day The day passed very quickly as I got up late and then had to do a
19 - 7 - 60. number of routine trips into the city. Roger had to go to the University until mid-afternoon, so we arranged to meet at his home, and then charge into town and look at the ship I was to travel in.

My first concern was to pick up my baggage from the N.Z. Railways depot. So this I did, and then hefted the lot along the wharf. After some trouble as to just where to leave the junk, I piled it in with a mound of other cases and left, with that peculiar feeling that now any problems of the trip were out of my hands. I went to the shipping agents, picked up some more stickers and a couple of Visitors' Passes, then nosed around the shopping area, picking a few presents for Mrs. Snorrocks, Roger, and his young brother, Nigel. Eventually, I sat in at a movie ('Don't Eat the Daisies') then found my way back to Mount Albert. Tucked into another tasty meal, then went into town with Roger again.

Before leaving Wellington, I'd arranged to meet Denis Bridle, an old school pal, in Auckland, and we'd arranged to meet and go to the movies. We met in town, then found that we wanted to see different films, so split up and agreed to meet later on, at the Picasso. (The film I saw was Cinerama Holiday, and the only reason I had for going to it was so that I might not appear so much a kick when I reached the Big Smoke of London. I didn't have worried: no-one here has even asked me about Cinerama!)

Later, at the Picasso, we talked and drank coffee or fruit juices, and listened to the band. Denis seemed much as he had been six months before when he'd returned to Wellington for the Christmas Holidays. Still the keen and engrossed teacher, completely immersed in his profession. And yet he projects a timid desire to play music (he used to play piano and drums back at high school).

Strange thing happened a little later in the evening. We were preparing to go, when John Grenville (brother of Ron Grenville - non-swimmer extraordinary - a recently deceased friend of mine) appeared through the milling crowd of night-people. He said he was on leave from the Navy for a few days, expressed some surprise at my leaving the country, then dribbled off into some detailed talk about being trained as an electrician in the Navy.

We all yarned until the place closed, then I bid farewell to Denis and John, told them I'd send them I'd send them postcards, and Roger and I drove back to Mount Albert for my last night's sleep in New Zealand. (I slept like a log. This was my only

preparation for the rigours of a long sea journey. The idea being that if the ship sank at night, I'd float as I slept.)

Third day. Left N.Z. today. Roger Horrocks and John McLeod, another Auckland fan, 20 - 7 - 60, saw me off from home shores, along with our last minute arrival at the quayside, Denis Bridle. Roger and I went to the shipside about midday, met John and then explored the ship. Down in its depths, we found my cabin, then wandered about the crowded decks.

Within a few minutes of being aboard I recognised three fellow passengers (New Zealand's small-townness spreads across territorial waters, like): Barry Hill of Wellington, who went to Tech a year ahead of me (and would both joined the same amateur dramatics group, later)... Ian McKintosh, who I had previously met while in the Ad-game, at the Charles Haines Advertising and Brainwashing Institution... Carl, whose last name I forget, but who gloried in the reputation of having ring-bolted (stowed-away) halfway round the world... And Peter Coates, late of the Miremar Rangers Rugby team, who remembered my brothers Nigel and Roger (who played in the Rangers) well enough to recognise me as their kin.

This Castel Felice was smaller than I had thought, but my cabin looked okay. Rather cramped, but with room enough for the other five blokes and me. It was a fairly large cabin, but there was a wall down the middle that made it into two separate cabins. Each half contained its own wash-basin, lights (one blue and one white), and in the recess between the two halves, there were some jacket-length closets. There were no drawers or shelves upon which to put shirts or trousers, but plenty of hangers covered the walls, and it's not too tough to live out of a suitcase for a month or so.

It was very comforting somehow, to have someone to wave goodbye to later on when we left. Roger and John were almost lost in the crowd, and so was Denis when he arrived but they were some link in the past, and it was fittingly climatic to be able to say cut of sight and sound of friends, rather than just strangers.

On board the ship, everything was chaos, of course. Baggage was piled in a great heap on one side of the deck. I gathered what I could of my own junk and took it to my cabin. I was lucky, I got the top bunk beside the door. That was just in case of bad ventilation, but as it transpired, the ventilation system of the Felice was almost too efficient and everybody caught a cold in the tropics, as you shall see later. The other occupants of the cabin began to wander in, and I was surprised to find that only five of them were New Zealanders. These were Dave and Russ McIvor, Bob Burns (!), Barry Hill, and Trevor Something. The first three only were in my part of the cabin, which explains why I've forgotten Trevor's other name. John Humphery and Tony Burke, of London and Liverpool filled the two remaining beds in my part of the cabin, while Jim Hillhouse (a Scot, damn his eyes!), Barry and Trevor, a nonentity called Ron, and an hilarious German called Mr. Munch filled the other half -- well, almost filled it, they had one spare bunk.

Pretty soon after we set sail, it was time for dinner. I'd already arranged to go to the first sittings for meals, so about 6.30 I found myself chomping upon a meal of braised slices of beef and boiled spuds and a dollop of what passes as a sort of boiled cabbage on the Felice. Fairly filling, but not the sort of food I'm used to, and it took my stomach some days to get accustomed to it. Lots of people have brought hail down upon the heads of the Felice personnel for the lousy food and conditions of the trip. Most of those passengers were people who paid something like £170 to £250, and I suppose they're justified in complaining because certainly that was too much to pay for a trip on such a ship. The food and living conditions more that fitten the phenomenally low fare I had paid, though (£89!), so I have little to complain about... There was no wine on the tables, as I had previously hoped, though you could call the wine stewared to your table easily enough, and there was little to choose from on the menu. But they didn't force us to eat spaghetti all the time: mostly we got chicken, and fish every Friday, with alternatives like omelettes or braised meats and what-all.

The dining room took up all the space on one deck. It was split into three main sections, each with its different colour scheme, but all with the same tables, service, and menus. I had meals at other tables than the one allotted me, and I think that at my own table, we got better service than at the others further away from the kitchen, amid slightly more flowery surroundings. The kitchens were just a few yards from my table, which seated ten people. Other tables took four or six people, and I could have joined several of those had I wished, but my food reached me warm, and 'Johnny' the waiter began to know what I liked so soon that I couldn't see any point in moving from my seat. (And the others at the table obviously felt the same. When we were asked if we would mind moving to other tables in order to leave our table vacant for some Arabs who were expected aboard at Aden - our table having to spare seats by then - we all said no, and told the Chief Steward to seat the newcomers with us if they wanted to sit at the table. As it happened, only one person joined the table - a charmingly petite Anglo-Indi woman.)

For the first couple of nights, we all wore suits or jackets, and the ladies dressed up, but from the third day or so, things became very informal (when it was really hot, I often jumped into a pair of shorts in the morning and didn't change until I dressed myself in a sheet and blanket sometime early the following morning.) Although we never reached the stage of attending a dance in swimming outfits, there was a very sensible attitude to wearing casual clothes while in the tropics. In fact it was quite a shock to see a middle-aged Italian couple, who embarked at Port Said for Naples, attend dinner in full rig-out.

But anyway, on the first night at sea, I ate my food like the good lad I am, and wandered around the decks until the dance started. The official Welcome Aboard dance was scheduled for the second night; such a plan allowing for seasickness during the first night. And of course, it was the second night before I felt so lousy that I had to make myself sick to get it all over and done with. Mind you, I had reason to be sick after the second day, for it was then we met some miserable weather and pitched and tossed for two or three days following. Compared to the rest of the passengers, I was very hale and hearty, and through the rest of the trip the only digestive trouble I had was with something like an Italian version of Spanish Stomach. Like I was saying back there somewhere, I went up to the dance and bought a can of beer (Aussie currency was used on board and beer was 1/6 a pint can or bottle). I wandered around the Verandah Bar talking to whoever I thought looked interesting, and finally settle at a table with the two McIvor brothers.

About nine o'clock, the second sitting of dinner finished, and the Bar/Dancing Hall began to get crowded. Eventually I decided Burn should show these colonials how to dance, and so I took a partner and cut the floor. The boat began to pitch sometime during this first evening, and dancing became a little tricky, so I switched to jiving.

I'm rather Spencerian-like happy about what I accomplished that first evening. First, I began the jiving (everybody else previously had mercilessly plodded on with the usual sedate foxtrots and waltzes, looking like a herd of rhinos doing a mirthless soft-shoe shuffle), and second, I sparked off a most interesting little social clique on the ship. You all know how a ship's passengers gradually or quickly become little groups that continually change and reform? Well, on this trip of the Castel Felice, the most interesting crowd was one that began with Daphne (yes, that was her name - the lass who jived) and me. She has a quick wit and a wacky sense of humour; I have a... I can laugh at jokes; some of the rest of the younger set matched our stride and that particular crowd became its own little in-group. I'll describe these groups and social set-ups later on in the piece.

This first dance on the first night set the pattern of all later dances, with the Italian band gaining approval as a pretty versatile team, because people assured me that they were playing jazz at least once a night. They were? But, man, like it don't even swing! I rather doubt that the Italians, so used to their liquid rhythms,

can swing a tune or give a proper stacatto beat. ...But it didn't worry me; I didn't even bother to listen - just danced. And I can foxtrot to a cha-cha with the best of 'em.

First Fortnight
21/7 -- 2/8/60.

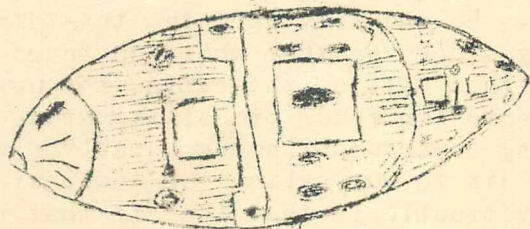
The ship weaved its merry and slightly irregular (Phoenician blood or not, the Ities don't know how to sail a ship) course, and her passengers made their own lives aboard her as merry and irregular as they could. On a sea trip, it appears that nobody has any urgent need of sleep, so we all kept late hours, and usually got up in time for lunch. That was held at 11.30 every morning without fail throughout the trip. I had breakfast about six times during the trip and got along fine without it the rest of the time. Breakfast, you see, finished at nine-o'clock, which is no time for an able-bodied man to be out of bed. The other lads in the cabin agreed with me here, so almost perfect peace reigned in cabin 441 until I leaped out of bed each morning at 11.00a.m.

Almost perfect peace. Y'see, soon after we left Auckland, Trevor (who was in the other half of the cabin anyway) revealed that he was on his way to a Missionary School in Wales. Hummmph. Each morning at about seven he would quietly get washed and dressed and go to breakfast. Barry Hill told me that our noble savior even got up earlier to say some prayers. This was convincingly proven to me one morning after a particularly late party on deck. I was just about to open the cabin door and climb into bed, when the door opened before me and Trevor walked out, fully dressed and just freshly shaven!

Mr. Munch was another odd one. He slept in each morning, though he rarely stayed out late. He was rather un-approachable, but maybe that was because he didn't really have a terribly good grasp of English, and - as far as I could gather - was on his way home after some years abroad. A rather sad figure. Think, heavy German features, small greying moustache, thinning hair, shy guarded eyes. He didn't give the impression of being a particularly happy little man.

Trevor was thin and aesthetically tall and soft-fleshed. He was never actually seen to shave, but he must have done so twice a day because he never showed a shadow on his chin. (Not that his chin would cast much of a shadow.) Very clean, quiet; he used to kneel on the floor beside his bunk and pray with his eyes closed and his bible open before him each afternoon. Someone told me that he'd been some sort of a mathematical bright-boy in NZ, but that his character never developed and he retreated into religion, looking, I should imagine, for a ready-made backbone. Sometimes the language in the cabin became a little coarse, but Trevor never objected or tried to teach us better, for which he stands a little higher in my estimation than do most religious dogmanians.

Jim Hillhouse, the Scotsman (Damn his eyes!), had lived in New Zealand for a few years. He'd emigrated there, and was now on his way home. He was quite a character. Quite set in his ways and absolutely middle-class in his out-looks, he was looking for a shipboard romance and became disappointed to the point of bitterness that he never found it. As you might guess, he was returning to Scotland to marry and settle into a job and make himself a niche in a land he was proud and yet apprehensive of. He and I had



BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF FELICE

many arguments, though we never came to blows, because I naturally objected to his insistence that the British Way of Life was the Only Way of Life.

Barry Hill was going to England to make good. More particularly, he wanted success in the theatre. Apparently, he'd found himself in the middle of a lot of back-biting in the NZ theatrical world, and had decided to get out and show 'em. Or something. I've seen him work in numerous plays, and I'm sure he is a good actor. But like a good actor, he's got a big ego, and likes to have his own world to play with, so it might be some time before he gets his break in London. He'll have to eat humble pie and take small parts, and that's the sort of thing that could demoralise him completely. But he's a good bloke with quite a sense of humour and a sure idea of how the world spins.

The fifth occupant of the other half of the cabin was Ron Thingumyjag. A rather washed-out and effeminate character, he kept very nearly the same hours as Trevor and may perhaps have been Trevor's only convert on the voyage. He seemed to hold pretty straightforward Unionism views on politics and towards the end of the trip he joined quite vociferously in with the frequent arguments Jim and John Humphery had.

John Humphery slept on the bunk that abutted the foot of my bed. He was an Englishman, and his story went thus: Some while back, he'd got married and then, finding his wife not quite the girl he had married, he joined the Merchant Navy and travelled the world, eventually losing half of a finger in a winch, and being invalided out of the Merchant Navy in NZ. There he'd settled into a job as an Insurance Advisor or something. He stayed in Christchurch at that job for some time, and then decided to return home. Which is what he was doing on the Felice. He had a Londoner's ready wit, and an Englishman's love of formality. Drinks before dinner and a bow tie every night and so on.

Sleeping on the bunk below mine was Tony Burke. A very quiet and shy Liverpudlian, he once showed me a piece of poetry he'd written while on National Service in Korea. He asked me if I'd like to re-work some of the stanzas, so I did and finished with quite a good piece of work about the muddle of warfare. Tony also played the mouthorgan pretty well, and was quite handy with a brush and paints. Later in the trip, he held a minor exhibition in our cabin, which put him on a pedestal of fame in our eyes.

Sleeping toe-to-toe with Tony was Dave McIvor. He and his brother Russ were on the first leg of a hworking holiday in England. A great couple of blokes, they both came from Invercargill and spoke with that soft burr of a Scotsman that you hear in the South Island. They both enjoyed a good joke, and certainly had their heads screwed on right. I got to know both of them pretty well since they were the easiest-going blokes in the cabin, and we mucked in together a good deal.

Bob Burns was another easygoing character. A New Zealander, from Uner Hutt (about twenty miles from Wellington), he played deck sports most of the time, and his sunburned schnoz got so bright that we high-living types often didn't need to switch on the light when we came in late. He and Tony were the tea-totallers in our half of the cabin, and as a rule they stuck together while on board ship.

I think I was lucky in getting into that half of the cabin, because we were all out to enjoy ourselves and not interested in feuds or holding grudges. The only time we ever did come close to having an argument among ourselves was about the air-conditioning unit that fed fresh air to our cabin. On the Castel Felice, every cabin is air-conditioned. The only trouble is that the air that reaches the cabins is far colder than the air outside on deck, and also a good deal dryer. So the ventilator is the perfect place to hang washing, which would then dangle down into the centre of the floor-space between the beds. Now, pretty soon everybody on board had colds, and Jim immediately blamed this on the wet washing hanging in the cabins. It looked to me as if we might have to come to some sort of agreement

about hanging washing until I pointed out that it was the dryness of the air and not its moisture content which was causing the sore-throats and colds were caught because of the change in temperature from on deck to inside the ship.

I don't know that I'd care to travel around the world on an unventilated craft. On the other hand, the sort of air-circulation system they had on the Castel Felice was little more than a nuisance. It kept the interior of the ship cool alright, but to come out of the tropical climate of the After deck in to the Antarctic coldness of the Lido Bar required a certain amount of toughness of spirit. Nearly everybody suffered from a cold while on board; I had a sore throat until Singapore, from then on my nose would occasionally block, and at the Suez canal I had some sinus trouble and had to have some nose drops to stop the aching. All this for the so-called comfort of sleeping in a cool cabin. (Actually, most nights I made pretty sure to add my dressing gown to the blanket and sheet the steward supplied. It was that cold in the mornings.) It was possible to change the force but not the temperature of these ventilators but we never bothered to do so - preferring to stick with the Frosty Jack we knew than try the Roscoe we didn't. ...During the first week I went to the ship's Hospital and asked for something to ease the soreness in my throat. After a lot of puzzling gesticulating the Doctor presented me with the same thing everybody was given if they went near the hospital: an enema!

Incidentally, I was lucky with my cabin for another reason too. The Castel Felice would make a grand ship for a Mediterranean cruise or for a short jaunt across the Tasman, but she nitches and tosses on the best of seas, and that gets a little miserable after five or so weeks. But our cabin was close inboard (there'll be a sketch of the ship in here somewhere) and pretty near the centre of the ship, so we didn't get thrown around very much. Also our bunks were fore-and-aft, so there wasn't really much danger of falling out in the usual motion of the ship. Of course, none of this stopped us from feeling the terrific shudder that went through the ship whenever she hit a whopper head on and crashed down into the following trough.

On the way to Singapore we went within about thirty miles of the coast of Australia. All the Aussies on board lined the port-side railings, sadly looking back upon their dusty looking land. This close inshore work was necessitated by the shallow water around the Great Barrier Reef. There was a good deal of coral in the area, mostly looking like bars of sand half covered by blue sea. For about three or four days we jaunted around amongst many islands, and approached pretty near to some of them. These are the islands people dream of for castaways. I liked the way the ship would alter course just to give us a closer view of the beaches of these wonderful islands. And the way the ship listed as people lined the rails!

It's a strange experience to re-join the world when you've been away from it for a week or two. At least, it is when you're travelling: perhaps because you re-join it at a new place. I remember as we passed Java at night, there was a strange hush out on the foreward hatch where we'd all been singing. There were people on the island of course, and lights from their fires pierced the thick warmth of the tropic night and twinkled at us over the calmly rippling sea. There was a moon that night, and the brooding sea made it a reflective eye, set in darkness, and surrounded by splashed slivers of itself. There was no horizon. The splinters of the moon in the sea were just an extension of a skyful of bright stars, and we knew where the island was only by looking to where the hard light of a never-ending and in-exhaustable universe changed to the flickering, warm, and faintly coloured welcome of a man-made fire.

But the ship slipped along through the night, and we all went back to the bar.

As we neared the mainland of Malaya, so we saw other ships as they crossed our path; and one morning a notice was posted saying we should expect to arrive in Singapore at mid-day on the Second of August.

The right day came, and straight after breakfast I went to the deck and leaned on the rail with Russ and Dave. Pretty soon, land with buildings on it began to grow up from the blue sea and a few small boats dipped and bowed close inshore. Some large sails could be seen almost on the horizon. Junks. Gradually, a city appeared upon the hills and shore, and we passed a chunky peninsula and entered the harbour of Singapore -- City of the Tiger!

And there we stayed for about six hours. This was to the general dismay of all the passengers, as we sat out a mile from the wharves, sizzling in the sticky heat. But we made as well as we could by observing everything from the barge and eventually the ship began to edge towards a berth.

For a while, I watched as land came closer to us, then the dinner gong sounded and after a quick calculation, I shot down to dinner. Which was chicken -- much as I'd begun to expect on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I hurried the meal; fingers in my soup and eyes on the nearby porthole; then rushed downstairs to the lobby before the Purser's Office, from which the gangway extended down to the wharf.

A large mob of sweating people filled the lobby. I recognised a few friends among it (funny how many people there are you never get to know), but they soon were squeezed through the door that lead outside. I put my wallet into my shirt pocket, squirmed into a pullover that happened to be floating in the air nearby, and became part of the tail-piece of the mob as it wiggled through the door. I walked down the gangway, stumbled down half-a-dozen steps, and planted my feet onto the tarmac of the East.

Singapore 2 - 8 - 60. There were no signs or indications of where to go, but I could see the end of a column of people racing away between a couple of buildings at the end of the wharf. I chased them, mosed past their patient ranks, and found myself standing next to a soldier who demanded to see my passport. I flashed it and sauntered through the gates. People were milling about, no-one too sure of just what to do. Taxi drivers kept grabbing my arms and yelling in my ears, so I made a dive back through the gate to sort myself out and make up my mind as to what I wanted to do.

Suddenly, I spotted Russ and Dave in the mob somewhere, so hailed them. They joined me and once again I fought my way through the gates. The three of us were immediately the target for twenty taxi-drivers, each one of which made us an offer of transport -- of either the city or delight. We eventually accepted an offer to take us to Change Alley for the equivalent of about three shillings and climbed into a shiny black car. There came a roar from out front, we jerked, and then shot away into a bewildering stream of traffic. A distinct whine came from the differential and each time the gears were changed the car bucked. And that wasn't surprising, I soon realised. The way to drive in Singapore is to go as fast as you can and use the hooter every chance you get. Our driver was an expert at both, and pretty soon we were driving over fifty miles-per-hour along the main street through town.

By then it was night-time, and little could be seen. I had some postcards to mail and asked the driver to take us to a post-office that was open. He said 'Yes sir, yes' and kept on driving.

We began to pass some pretty noble buildings. There's the KLM buildings, the GPO ('Can I buy stamps there?' 'No, sir, too late; I fix your stamps'), and then

over a humped bridge and through the governmental centre. Soon the driver stopped the taxi outside some old buildings and said the post office was there. I hopped out of the taxi and had a quick look around, failed to see a post office, but spotted a policeman. I asked him where to go for stamps and he said the GPO might be open, but that there was nothing doing in this part of town, apart from the knocking-shop the taxi was parked by. As we parted, I asked him how much would be a fair charge for the taxi ride. Which accounted for my leer as our perplexed driver ('But there clean, sir') asked for three dollars, after he'd returned us to the GPO. I gave him two dollars and told him to beat it. He did.

Russ and Dave wanted to go straight to Change Alley, which is just around the corner from the GPO, and as that building looked dark and closed-up, I went with them.

At the entrance to the alley, I thought it was going to be just an oriental version of Petticoat Lane, but before I'd looked into more than a couple of shops I realised that Change Alley is surely one of the most incredible shopping areas extant. They say that the alley carries stocks of anything from ear-rings to elephants, and maybe that's so. I saw bath-salts and bedsteads, topez and topatz, carvings and cameras, shirts and thousands of sunglasses. So I bought a pair. Of sungalsses.

First I paid about twelve shillings (Australian) for a pair of glass sunglasses that came (so the label said) from France. Then, at another stall I saw a pair of those mirror-like glasses, so I made a swap with the owner of that store, a gentleman named Koh Ah Heng. My sunglasses plus two bob Australian for a pair of Anti-Glare glasses plus a case to keep them in. Not a bad deal, since that means I bought the glasses for around nine shillings sterling.

Meanwhile, Russ and Dave were arguing high finance with a dealer in radios and cameras. They both wanted a Yashica camera, and also a transistor-radion each, and they were determined to pay as little as possible, so the haggling got pretty good. I was quite happy to sit back and watch all the fun, but Dave kept calling me in as an 'electronics expert', and one of the salesmen and I got to talking about cameras. He just couldn't understand why I didn't want to buy a camera and wouldn't believe that I didn't want a new watch. 'But you must at least have a watchstrap - gold - silver? Eh, sir?' Dave bought his Yashica-A for nine pounds ten shillings sterling, and they both bought a radiomeach for about the same price. They picked up their parcels and we moved out into the alley again.

Boys with bundles of nylon shirts, and men with sunglasses immediately set upon us. One persistent bloke yelled at me: 'Hey mister, youwannabuysomethingfor yourwife?' so I replied 'No wife'. 'Well, wataboutyougirlfriend?' No girl friends. 'Yourself?' 'I don't like me.' 'Your mother?' 'No mother.' He looked at me. 'No father.' I said, and escaped.

We found shelter in a haberdashery, where the McIvor Monsters spent still more money on some silks to send home. While they were haggling over the gaudy materials, I wandered out into the alley again and chatted with a few of the shopkeepers there. Then a bloke with a badly pockmarked face approached me and tried to sell me some postcards. I bargained with him and said I'd buy some postcards only if he could tell me where to go to get some stamps. He said, sure, he would get me some stamps, and off we trooped to the GPO, just across Raffles Square. I told him that it was shut, but he just shook his head and lead me round to the back of the building. He pointed to a wide flight of stairs, and I jogged up them and to my own surprise discovered an all-night letter-office away at the top of the GPO. I stuck some pretty stamps on various cards, letters too, and got the job of mailing them all over and done with. Then I bought a dozen or so cards from the eager hawker/guide, (five bob Aussie), which I planned to mail from

Colombo, our next port of call.

With these cards in my pocket, and feeling the proud satisfaction of having driven a pretty happy bargain, I returned to Change Alley, joined Dave and Russ, and then went with them to the New World, which is an overgrown fun-parlour out in the suburbs of Singapore. The way there leads through a bewildering maze of back-streets through the China-town area, and the best way to travel these areas seemed to be by trishaw. That's a tricycle built for three - the peddler and two passengers. With three passengers aboard the sidecar things were a little tricky, which accounts for the name I gave the contraption. Whenever we had to go slightly uphill, one of us sturdy tourists would have to climb out of the sidecar and give the machine a push. But there is an amazing effect of being in touch with your surroundings as you silently roll along. We travelled slowly, and passed fantastic numbers of people; walking around, sitting, singing and dancing, sleeping on the pavement; hundreds of cyclists, and all the time we were swamped in the brilliant colours and the din of weird music that together (plus a slight odour) add us to China-town.

After all this, it was a shock to be impressed by the entrance to the New World. This gateway is built a little off the road, and its whitemasonry is covered with huge coloured paintings and lots of bright lights. ...Back some years, someone decided that it would be a good idea to build a fun-fair or three in Singapore. So they built the New World, the Great World, and the Happy World. I saw only the New World, which is closest to the city centre, and this place was really interesting. It contains not only all the usual dodgems and side-shows that abound in any fair-ground, but also featured a cinema, a hall in which a Malayan play was being enacted, a dance hall, a variety show, Malayan dancing, and - incredibly enough - a game of Chinese Chess (Chequers). This last item was to be found in a large hall in the middle of the fun-fair. What attracted me to it was the sight of a number of people peeping through some holes that had been driven into the back wall of the large hall. Naturally; I peeped too, and for a short while watched as two men battled over a chess board. A fairly large audience had paid to watch the game, and they all sat in the hall watching the game as it was shown on a large board mounted behind the contestants.

Near this hall was a cinema, into which we tried to go, but were told the show was just ending, and so had to regretfully leave behind. Next door to this picture-house, however, was the Ghost Train. This I just had to go on. ...And like all ghost train rides, it proved a little disappointing. Although there was one very well presented flying dragon which suddenly appeared above the head of each customer, the rest of the show was far too Westernised -- though maybe that's what is frightening to the natives!

After that we needed a drink, so settled for a bottle of beer (4/-!) in one of the numerous little refreshment bars around the fun-fair. Just across the concourse from where we sat, a little Malayan or Chinese girl was singing her heart out to an enthusiastic audience of the variety show. It was strange to hear a band playing in usual swing style, while the vocalist warbled about with the controlled catterwauling sounds of an Asiatic music-score.

We three, feeling much refreshed, headed for some action. One of the biggest and most noisy attractions in the New World was the dodgems arena, and it was there that we decided to get rid of any feelings we had of being spectators. In other words, we decided to muck it in with the natives on a dirt-track. Now, the dodgems were rather different to the machines we see at home, since these had petrol engines, and you could change your speed by pressing a foot-pedal. It was required that you drive in a clockwise direction, and there

were several different courses you could follow, all round a central trio of islands. But Dave, Russ and I found things much more interesting when we went the other way. There was only one casualty during the whole joust: Dave, taking a corner just a shade too tightly, rolled his machine onto its side, causing chaos among the following drivers who all yelled their heads off in indignation. Pretty soon after that, the mechanics in charge of the rink decided to throw the three of us off, so we left with the feeling that - in some small measure - we had lightly contacted the people who live in Singapore.

We left the amusement place and caught another trickshaw into the city. This peddler wasn't the cheerful fellow who'd taken us out there, and required quite a lot of gentle goading to get over the humped bridge that leads back to Raffles Place and the GPO, where small groups of tourists still milled around, looking for the noticeably lacking night-life of the town. But we three were tired of bargaining, so we retreated to a sleazy cafe down the road a ways. There we bought some lousy Anchor Beer which cost us about 5/6 in New Zealand currency for a 26 ounce bottle. Some very attractive Malayan girls tried to interest us in staying longer, but we just showed them our empty pockets and they wandered off to better prospects.

Eventually, we got fed up with just sitting around (and Dave said he had a feeling we'd get rolled if we sat much longer), and so we headed back to the Alley. We kept on meeting people from the ship who were asking the same question that teased us: where was the nightlife of this fabulous city? No-one found it, and apparently it just doesn't exist after midnight. This appears to be the same in other British colonies around the globe: though you can find wild scenes in them if you spend enough time and/or money.

'Hi, no man!' a voice yelled, and I grinned. But I was beginning to feel that the scene would soon end. Dave and Russ and I wore our shoes out for a while, walking up and down the half-asleep Alley, just wandering around looking at all the people who were still trying to sell to the now exhausted tourists, and then - defeated - we climbed into a taxi and headed for the ship, where we sat around looking at all the oddments other passengers had bought. Tony had bought a beautiful black-laquered and hand-painted musical trinklet box for about fifteen bob sterling -- and Bob had landed a fantastic buy with a bronze cigarette-lighter-cum-box-cum-ashtray-cum-table-top-model which was all built in one piece in the form of a pagoda, a river and bridge, and a large mountain on the other side of the river. Fantastic, a little overdone, well worth the 25/- he paid for it, it well represented the city it came from.

I retired, confident that my sunglasses and postcards were worth what I'd paid....

end of part one of

"...from the East, like the sun he rows...."

para. Well, it looks as if the Wandering Ghu has taken over the whole of paraFANalia. Actually, what's happened is that I'm trying to bash this issue of the zine out as quickly as I can so it'll be included in the April mailing (uh, March that is) of OMPA. I'm sorry for the lousy typing in this issue, and I'm just as apologetic that this isn't a normal issue of -FAN-, but ...Well, I've been in a strange country for nearly six months and I don't really feel like pubbing a proper fanzine yet. More likely a letter-substitute.

The cover of this issue is by Atom, and I'd like to put my thanks into print (he won't believe me otherwise) for his doing a rush job so uncomplainingly. Also with the ~~xxxxxx~~ heading -- even if he did shatter my nerves by dispersing my editorial vagueness with his insistent question "What do you want for a heading?"

The typewriters used on this zine belong to Joe Patrizio, ~~and~~ the first three pages, Ethel Lindsey, the following three, and the rest of the zine was cut with my new typewriter. A Lettera 22 made by Olivetti in Scotland. It seems to cut nicely enough - a little light on the a and the p, by the looks of things. I've got some fancy keys on the key-board too: § is for paragraphs, * is for something I forget, ! is like wow, p is what you're holding now, + is an old sf mag, # is for noughts and crosses, \$ is for happy smiles, and ° is for farenheit 451°. There's also a %, which is to remind me of the extra profit Olivetti will make out of the ~~high~~ hire-purchase agreement.

JOE'S THREE-SIXTEENTHS: Joseph Patrizio. A name to watch. Just look at it now as it waits impatiently upon the OMPA waiting list. See how it obscures the vision? It shines out at you, hiding the other names in its own brilliance. And Joseph is like this himself. He smiles, and the room is full of dazzling pearls. He reads, and a room echos to the sound of his thoughts plodding after his eye-tracks. He writes, and even Ella Parker pays him tribute. What a man there must be behind all this splendor ... What sparkle, what personality, what wit... what a typewriter. I have had the honour of speaking a few words with this man among nits. And even when he laughed at me I struggled on, ever trying for his approval, as I said the words: "Here's tae us, Wha's like us..."

That pays that debt off for the loan of his typer; now I have to pay my own typer off...

Let's hope the price is lower.

Next issue of -FAN- will contain further adventures of THE WANDERING GHU, a whole pile of letters of general interest, lots of fanzine reviews and name-droppings (?), and more than likely, some OMPA Mailing comments.

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