



NEWSLETTER 9 CABIN FEVER



Bryan Poole

In this, our final offering of Cabin Fever, we thought we could include another local lad who like so many of our fine exports of Southland youngsters went on to make good both in New Zealand and overseas – namely Bryan Poole whose father Harold Poole was a Flying Officer on Hudsons escorting convoys as they approached North Africa. Harold was awarded the DFC for taking two U boats in one operation, two days before the allied landing, in the course of the same patrol. Brian's aunt was our first woman mayor Eve Poole. The young Bryan had a school holiday job with Reg Cruickshank at Rosedale and painted this historic twine mill of Reg's grandfather William built approx. 1873 (along with the sawmill, the woollen mill and the houses, stables and other buildings which were all part of the history of Rosedale which enjoyed electrical power before the rest of Invercargill). So here is Bryan's painting of that building before the ICC served a demolition order on it when it blocked the view of someone who built a house on Moana Street behind it and thought it spoiled his view. The oil painting came to light unexpectedly after the twine mill was demo'd. Some years later, David Fallow was pulling down another house in Invercargill and found a rolled up canvas of an old shed which had Rosedale scrawled on the back of the canvas. Fortunately he phoned Peter and asked if him if he would like it. Peter nipped around there with alacrity and was delighted to find such an interesting record of the past. He asked what he wanted for it and the response was "Oh a dozen of beer and a few lotto tickets". Bryan Poole did another lovely oil painting of this old historic building showing lofty stairs disappearing into the dark which his cousin Michele now has.



Bryan travelled abroad and moved on from oil paintings to working in the most delicate and botanically correct water colours of our New Zealand flora for the Royal Horticultural Society in Kew Gardens, London. He must have felt close to Sir Joseph Banks who as we all know, came out with Captain Cook as Botanist on *The Endeavour* and worked prodigiously to collect and record all our flora in a very short time, and how he managed to press and dry all his specimens of our extensive flora in a tiny cabin going home through the tropics where they could all have got mouldy and been useless, is something I have pondered on with incredulity. I spent 18 months as technician for botanist Dr Lucy Moore at Botany Division of DSIR at Lincoln, and know how tricky it is to collect and then display all the parts of the plant such as the flowers, leaves, roots, and seeds where possible – all distinctive features which make them unique and then to ascribe latin generic and specific names to describe them, as well as what we call a common name for them. Finally to mount each specimen on a standard size of parchment paper firm enough so that the dried specimen would not break up and be damaged – was quite remarkable. Bryan carried on the grand tradition of painting some of our magnificent flora continuing the path laid by Sir Josef Banks showing specimens in careful observation to ensure they were botanically correct. Quite a step up from our old oil painting of his work which showed his appreciation of a fine old historic building in his home suburb of Rosedale as a lad. You can read more of Bryan's very successful career by googling him to keep up to date with how his art has progressed.

Liz Cruickshank



Pseudopanax crassifolius - Horoeka - Lancewood

Lynley's beautiful and sad poem struck a chord with me for two reasons. Peter was still the local TV reporter on the 28th November 1979 when the Air NZ flight down to Scott Base and back, was overdue. He and his cameraman Noel Lee waited at Infill airport after Air NZ lost contact with the plane which was overdue to land at Christchurch and because it was likely to be low on fuel it might make an emergency landing at Infill airport - until the shocking news came through about the crash. (You might remember that there was a local raffle early that year and the prize was two tickets to Erebus on that fateful sightseeing flight. We bought two raffle tickets and gave them to a cousin – so we were very thankful that they didn't win the raffle. I believe it was someone from Otautau who did, sadly with such fateful consequences.)

The second reason Lynley's poem about Erebus interested me was because it was a Lincoln Uni tramping club member to which I belonged - Keith Woodford - who was one of the two mountaineers who were first on the crash site Mt Erebus and they toiled to retrieve the bodies of the 257 kiwis who so devastatingly lost their lives there. Back in 1968 Keith and a group from Lincoln College Tramping Club including me, had done a week's tramp on the Routeburn Track then we carried on down the Greenstone Valley for a few more days and eventually were picked up by the Earnslaw on the wharf at Elfin Bay. I remember watching a very small boy from the Sutherland family who farmed there at that time had gone down to the jetty and competently caught the hawser from the ship and wrapped it around the bollard so we could embark and stores could be unloaded for the sheep station. It was a dramatic way to finish our tramp and we were very glad to be picked up as we had run out of kai despite a large herd of fallow deer which we observed in the Greenstone valley when we tramped through...

So I could visualise the dreadful grizzly job Keith had to endure being first on the Erebus site after the plane crash disaster. Our paths crossed some years later when he was guest speaker at a monthly dinner of a farming group at Winton. It was very interesting to catch up again and he did refer to Erebus in passing. He had cool nerves and was a very reliable person to cope with such a tragedy with sensitivity. He became a Professor at Lincoln and our paths crossed again when I was President of the LU Alumni Assoc. It's a wee small world.

Liz Cruickshank

EREBUS, the ICE DRAGON

South to Scott, blinding blizzard, ice clench where
snow can reveal then conceal
what it did,
what it hid.

South was their wonder, converging direction,
longitudinal longing of so many lives.
South was their fate in the callous deception
of snow that was sky
and sky that was snow;
where white blinded sight,
where above was below.

We wanted them back, scanned the sky
on that night for the sight
of a plane overdue - blazed runway car lights
in the desperate vain hope of guiding them home.

But by then, all together, by then, quite alone
they were waiting for us
to gaze down where they were,
find their 'plane,
see that stain.



Erebus, Ice Dragon, volcanic heat
hidden crouched in the ice,
in their path, in their flight,
thought to snatch them and keep them.

But each one came home
to the hearts and the minds
of the Family of Love.

Erebus, warm in a lost world of snow.
Memory, warm as the empty years flow.
Lynley Dear

Bluff's All Weather Meatloaders

I am sure in the 60's, 70's or 80's when heading to Bluff you would have noticed the meatloaders on the island harbour standing out like giant creatures feeding meat carcasses into ship's holds for export mainly in these days to the United Kingdom.

You may be interested in the history of these iconic beasts and how successful they were over the years. Covered cargo loaders had been tried in various ports around the world for unloading bananas and loading butter but Bluff was the first port to operate meat loaders.

Way back in 1952 the Harbour Board was investigating how to speed up loading and in 1953 a Donald portable loader was purchased from Auckland Harbour Board. With the assistance of the then meat board this was adapted for loading carcass and package meat. It was first used on a vessel in April 1954 and was in use for over 2 years despite problems with setting it up and keeping meat up to the loader. It was never completely weather proof but despite this it managed a record of 11,231 carcasses in one day's work. It therefore proved that a system born from this would double loading rates and would have the cooperation of watersides.

It was decided that an all weather mechanical loading system of covered in conveyors working from a transfer shed would be the best system.

Board staff produced the basic design and this was turned into a detailed design with some changes by William Cable Ltd. This was what was built with shed, discharge tables, conveyors, hatch covering and waterproofing systems on the vessels. Five loaders were built and the first one came into operation on 4th February 1963 on board the vessel Hauraki.



The meat loaders weighed 150 tonne and had about 250 pockets for transfer of meat from shed to ship's hold. In the hold each carcass automatically fell from pocket to a chute and at the end of the chute were watersides to manually stack each carcass in the hold. At full speed 2100 units could be transferred each hour.

The meat was supplied from rail wagons or directly from the Harbour Board cold store. Rakes of trucks were shunted in and out the shed during smoko or lunch breaks to avoid delays.

Communication between the ship's hold and the operator of the loader was essential to stop/start or speed/slow the loading operation. There was also emergency stop button at both ends.

By 1981 with more modern reefer vessels using the facility with only four ship's holds one loader was made redundant and dismantled. Part of this loader was used to build a mobile grain loader at another berth.

Container operations meant less and smaller reefer vessels came to Bluff and in late 80's and early 90's firstly loaders were reduced to 2 and then they were fully removed. Another covered loading operation was tried but meat became a permanent container operation and only the shed was left. This was updated to be used for other dry storage thus retaining a full time use. So the Bluff meat loaders were the first to be operated in the world. The Port of Timaru copied Bluff and ended up with four of their own.

Ironically I spent some time under the Bluff loaders in the late 60's as a ship's officer on board British Vessels known as "Home Boats" or "Pommy Meat Boats" and then was part of the management team that ended their life.

John Henderson

The Oldest tree in history

Ginkgo Biloba, The Maidenhair Tree. It is a deciduous gymnosperm that has existed for 280 million years.

Eaten by gymnosperm eating dinosaurs. Plants have evolved to foil plant eaters by growing thorns, prickles, spines, unchewable tissue, poisonous alkaloids. The lovely fan shaped leaves are golden in Autumn.

It is also known as the Memory Tree as used in Ginkgo Biloba tablets for helping the blood flow to the brain. I am not an expert on this so cannot say it is a remedy, for me anyway.

The love of gardening is a seed once sown never dies: Gertrude Jekyll
Nola Cavanagh



The Chinese Garden

In the middle of winter, 2 years ago, a large hole appeared in Queens Park. It was close to the Aviary and the Indoor Garden. At that time of year it quickly filled with water and that was the only action, aside from the odd duck, to be seen for some time. Two years on, following a pause for a change of CEO and a recount of the loose change, the Chinese Garden is all but completed.

Congratulations to all involved, it is a worthy addition to our cities greatest asset – Queens Park.

As a regular “Johnny Walker” of the tracks throughout I find it a place of peace. A place where I can contemplate trees that have lived for the lifetime of our city. Where clocks run more slowly and viruses soar above the tall trees borne on the sou’wester that keeps them there. I watch those in haste, phones to their ears, unable, or unwilling, to enjoy what is around them. How lucky am I to have the time to do so.

Ducks, as social animals like us, reflect our behaviours in so many ways. Their group behaviour, in particular, is remarkably similar. You have the noisy ones, making themselves heard above the rest, but with nothing to say. The quiet ones who keep their thoughts to themselves. The conveners of meetings on another patch of grass. The leaders heading a line of followers in an unhurried way to who knows where. Then the odd lone duck, or pair, away from the group enjoying their own thoughts or each other’s company. Who is chasing their own tails - them or us? Breadcrumbs anyone?



Do ducks in China behave any differently, I wonder, or do they observe the behaviour of hurrying humans and have similar thoughts to those in Queens Park? We will never know. Enjoy our Chinese Garden.

In another corner of our park we have yet to bring life back to artifacts entombed in the Pyramid.

That will, of course, involve more than loose change but will be worth it when it happens.

We have enjoyed bringing you “Cabin Fever” in the sense that we hope it has lessened it for you.

Thanks for these parting shots from Mary Webb via Nola. Also old salt John from Scotland.

Covid doesn’t stand a chance with history like this!

Stay safe

Daniel Phillips



