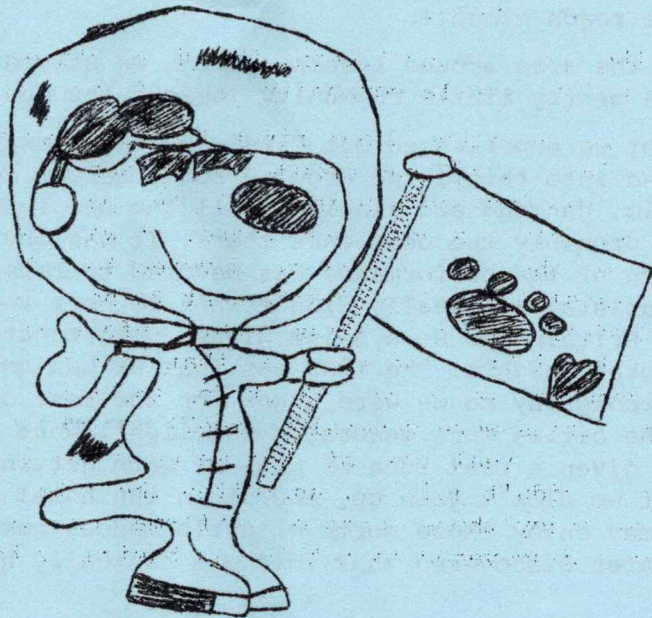


# BEAGLE'S



# WORLD REVISITED 20

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### YOUDEL-DEE-DO

I knew Switzerland was a mountainous country, but I didn't quite expect all the hills and tunnels we encountered. I suppose it's hard to imagine when Australia's so flat in comparison. As in Germany, there were a lot of troops present, quite a number of them American, so we assumed there must have been NATO exercises on. We were told that, although Switzerland was a neutral country, it required every able-bodied man between the ages of 18-50 to do national service. A special tax is paid by any man who is unfit for duty. They are prepared for a nuclear attack by having caverns which are fully stocked with food, and which are re-stocked every two years, and for a "normal" attack by having the roads mined!!

We mainly saw the area around Lucern, though we stayed a few miles away in Kussnacht Am Rigi, a pretty little community located between the lake and a mountain.

Our first night we experienced our first "cultural exchange". It was absolutely awful. We were herded into this large crowded room, served cold fondu and "treated" to authentic Swiss music, dancing and singing. Well the people on the stage may have been Swiss but they were probably the only ones there. It was obviously aimed solely at tourists and too much of the performance was devoted to references about the countries of origin of the tourists!!! I really didn't want to hear the national anthems of Australia, America, Britain etc at a Swiss night! Unfortunately this set the scene for most of these "cultural" nights. The trap was that we had to sign up for all the extra activities by the second day so we were stuck for the rest of the tour. The extra excursions around the cities were generally excellent. What I, and others, objected to was that we weren't given a real idea of what we were getting. (Also we would've been left at the hotel if we didn't join up, and often the hotel wasn't near public transport.) Some people may enjoy those sorts of performances but we should've been given a real choice. We later discovered that this was basically how the company made most of its money.

But on with the more pleasant aspects. We were able to visit the impressive monument to the Swiss guards who were killed during the French Revolution when Louis told them to lay down their arms. It was a dying lion carved into a cliff face. While admiring it I heard the first memorable dumb quote of my tour (after living with tourists for an extended time I discovered why they are often disliked) -

"But why aren't the words written in English?"

My reply was, "What do you expect? Would an American monument be written in German?"

I found Lucern to be a very pretty city - the old bridge was fascinating - and the people were generally friendly. However I was surprized when we asked for directions to discover that the woman we asked was a student from Adelaide, studying music at the University there. Of all people to ask!

While we were there we also went up Mt Titlis (no I didn't make up the name) which is virtually always covered by snow. We had to use a trolley for the first part of the journey, then a series of cable cars to get to the top. Heights don't bother me so I was fascinated with the spectacular views of the green valleys and then up into the snow-covered mountains. The only part I didn't like was the stomach-sickening lurch every time we passed a cable support. Once we were up there there wasn't really much to do, but the views were worth it.

Liechtenstein was the one country we visited where we saw most of the country. I mean it's so small that it doesn't take much to see it all. We had a ball. There

was a market day on so I got to eat my first freshly roasted chestnuts since Tschaicon and saw my first organ grinder with a monkey. Actually the funniest thing about the visit was learning about the country. During the period of the Austrian Empire, Liechtenstein was ordered to increase its army of about a dozen to eighty. Not only did all of the contingent return but one Austrian deserted and joined them! Also, did you know that her chief export is false teeth (over 50,000 a year)?

Our first main stop in Austria was Innsbruck but we had to cross the Arlberg Mountains first. We stopped at the foot of the mountains for lunch and I spent most of the time at the back of the hotel, sitting on my own, cut off from the road, facing the mountains. Living in the pockets of over forty people was getting to me. I was just beginning to make friends, but had no close ones at that stage so I preferred my own company.

While in Innsbruck I heard another quotable quote. During the visit to the Bergisel Olympic Ski Jump a woman asked the guide "Are they the Swiss Hills?" We all wanted to push her off the jump!

A brief visit to Salzburg (Mozart's birthplace) was quite pleasant. We walked around the old city, saw his birthplace, the old cathedra and many beautiful buildings. I couldn't resist sending Marc a postcard with Mozart's picture on it, and pointing out that we also saw the area where the story of "Sound of Music" took place. (I've got to try to introduce him to some "culture"!)

*((I'm still not sure about that Mozart geezer. Looks like one of your 1970s psychedelic types, but Cath assures me that he played keyboards, so I guess he must have been Austria's answer to Tangerine Dream. He doesn't get a listing in the Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock, so I guess he's not that well known outside of Austria.))*

The trip on the Danube was interesting. Certainly there were quite a lot of tourists, but most were Austrians or Germans so we got to see a number of people in their traditional dress as well as listen to some singers and a band who were travelling to a festival. English-speaking people were in the minority and I thought that was great! The highlight of our stay in Wien was when we spent an afternoon away from the group. Three Americans with whom I was becoming very friendly: a Latin born couple, Roland and Grace; and a young Californian, Rian; and I met up with my Australian cousin Delores who had been in Austria for about two months. We were going to meet up again later to visit Italy, especially the villages of our families. Delores acted like a guide and took us through the maze of streets around St Stephens. It was fascinating. The only "bad" bit was when we entered the street where the main synagogue was. There had been a bomb blast and threats there so we were suddenly confronted by four police armed with machine guns. I'll admit I was very nervous walking past them. However there were many beautiful and fascinating buildings to see, especially places where Mozart had lived, written music, or had been thrown out of. *(So. They had sensible music critics in Wien too huh?)* We learnt that a glass of water was often given with a cup of coffee. If the owners liked you they kept filling it up so you would stay! After all our walking we partook of the special chocolate cake called "Sackertortler"; very rich but L-O-V-E-L-Y.

One evening we went to the Kursalon which was dedicated to Strauss. I really enjoyed listening to the live music but I was very annoyed by some people, not in our group, who talked constantly. Even the conductor had to "shush" them a few times - such bad manners. However the worst was yet to come. During the final waltz people started to clap time! I was amazed the orchestra didn't just stop there and walk out. We then visited the Prater of "The Third Man" fame. It wasn't much but we were in a silly mood and enjoyed the ride.

Then we were off to Venezia - my first visit to Italy.

Despite the border area being under repair - a new road was being built - I was very excited to finally set foot on Italian soil for the first time. I noticed a curious thing when I went to get my passport stamped. The guard turned to page 13, as

had a number of others. That page filled up before any others. As well as the excitement I was also a bit depressed as I knew nonno always wanted me to go to Italy but I didn't make it before he died.

I was a bit nervous about speaking Italian because I knew mine was a mixture of a Southern dialect that was nearly fifty years old and which had been "infiltrated" by Australian words. I was soon forced to draw on the formal Italian I'd learnt. My room only contained one towel, and so did many others, so I was chosen to go down and ask for more.

I had been talked into going on a gondola ride (I was determined to overcome my fear of water) and so found myself in a small craft just above the waterline. I was with my friends and they managed to take my mind off everything. The trip wasn't much because the gondolier couldn't speak English. One of the other ladies put me on the spot by "demanding" I ask some questions. Well talk about nervous. I explained my background and he was very patient and informative. I had to rely on my knowledge of "correct" Italian as I couldn't speak Venetian. We ended up by having the only really interesting ride. The others found it boring just floating around on the canals. I actually started to enjoy myself - was I finally over my fear of water?

Our visit to San Marco Piazza was quite an adventure. We got shunted from one "port" to another, trying to catch the ferry. Our tickets were booked but the infamous Italian "stuff-up" was in operation. We eventually got over there and I enjoyed seeing the historical sites. At one point I decided to be a real tourist and feed the pigeons. Actually it was quite fun although I was a bit worried when the bird seed seller started to pour more seeds over me to attract more birds.

After our visit to Venezia we travelled to Greece, via Yugoslavia. The group became very quiet when the border guard came onto the bus to cancel our visas. People appeared very nervous. It was strange because we had been "boarded" a few times before. Some of the anti-communist attitudes started to emerge. At a coffee break a woman was informed that the yogurt she was buying contained bacteria. Her violent reaction led us to say that all yogurt contained bacteria. She then replied, "Well I'm not eating their bacteria!!"

We only visited Zagreb (overnight) and Beograd so we didn't really see much at all. I was disappointed that we weren't allowed to roam around and see things away from the cities. I was fascinated by the peasants because they reminded me of what I'd heard about my parents' villages. The one tour we had, where the wonderful advantages of living in Yugoslavia were rammed down our throats, was a disaster. It began on a negative note when the hotel refused to give us our passports back. Many were not happy to be walking around a non-English speaking country without official identification - especially a communist country. I became annoyed when we were moved away from a group of ladies selling their hand-made crafts; the guide just wouldn't let us stop even though many were interested. He seemed to be determined to only let us shop in the city area. The hotel also mainly contained men, who tended to mentally strip us whenever we walked past. I came very close to hitting some of them. They were just so blatant about it.

I want to go back some day and see the more positive aspects of the country. It was unfortunate that things just seemed to go wrong while we were there. The hysterics over the hole-in-the-ground toilets were a comic relief to an otherwise tense visit. It really was a case of people with pre-conceived ideas influencing those around them because we were forced to be always together. In the other countries we could escape the group at some time, but not there. I particularly enjoyed our stops because we were in the country-side. As I said before, it reminded me of Italy - seeing people riding donkeys; bullocks pulling carts; and peppers drying from roofs <sup>were</sup> a wonderful experience for me. Sounds strange, but I liked it.

As I never bothered to have a set lunch, I used the little time I had at meal stops to look at the people in the villages. It was better than whinging about the lousy service at the lunch stops. Many people, I think, were looking for negative things. The negativity got to everybody during the long drive to Thessaloniki and most cheered as we crossed the border into Greece.

(Trivial note: The sinks in the hotels didn't have plugs.)

I'll leave it here, as Greece was one of our major stops.

MAILING COMMENTS

Antipodean Chimes 1 Hi again. I have fond memories of the time I spent with you in the States. You certainly don't need to tell me about your interest in fanzines - I remember how many boxes of them I helped you move. I'm glad you enjoyed your time with Justin. I still think I'd rather face a Minnesota winter than the mosquitoes. Are they out yet?

Jeanzine 22 Personally I prefer the mailings to be stapled. Any chance of that happening again?

Marc gave me the choice of keeping my name but I really didn't want to. It's hard to give exact reasons except that I'm probably more traditional in "family" areas than in others. I know a number of women who have kept their maiden names, and admire them, but it was never really an issue for me. I suppose this sounds a bit lame but although I don't believe in set roles (I mean I've only cooked two meals so far, and very rarely do the washing up - Marc's quite happy to do that. We share the house duties as we both work and I'm not very fond of cooking.) I do accept many of the traditional aspects of marriage, otherwise I wouldn't have bothered to get married. Also not taking Marc's name would've really hurt and bewildered my family. I stood up for "my rights" in things that were important to me, but kept to our tradition in this respect. I also feel that it can be a bit confusing for children and, as we hope to have some in a few years, this did come into consideration. However, the basic reason is I wanted to take Marc's name. I hope this makes sense to you.

In The Kingdom Of The Bland Eeeek an alien!

Ground Zero News Informative as usual. I enjoyed your piece Leigh.

Slaydomania 20 Great fun to read as usual. Thanks again for bringing your family down to us and for writing your reports. You should escape from the Northern summers and come down during the Christmas holidays. If you do I'll take you to Phillip Island - there are many more penguins then.

One Size Fits All Welcome Gordon and thanks for your best wishes.

Sweetness And Light Another alien! Very interesting reading as usual.

Module 51 I'm not good at trivia quizzes but I would have rather hunted up the information about the film than watch "Rock Around The World".

Beagle's World Revisited 19 I forgot to explain that the heading to the story about my injury was inspired by the "charming" get-well card Marc sent me. It wasn't a proper get-well card but he thought it was appropriate because there were kids playing ring-a-ring-a-rosie on the front. Nice isn't he?

Necessity Seven Thanks for coming down for our wedding - we really appreciated having you and Cath there. I'm beginning to experience the frustrations of house hunting - boy is it a pain. Luckily there's no rush. So far I've seen one house that was suitable but the location was bad and another that was in quite a nice area and had many attractive features, but was too small.

Shaggy Dog Stories Two What happened to most of the contribution?

Middle Class Mundanews 1 Welcome Glen and Debbie

Foolsgold What happened to the Vogon Poetry Contest winners?

TO THE REST: Enjoyable reading, but can't think of anything specific to say.

---oOo---

AND I FELL DOWN....AGAIN!

I never realized I had "Knock me over" written all over me. That's the only explanation I have for my experiences in hockey this year. My injured knee was starting to feel better, and I didn't experience any real pain when I went to training, so the coach put me into the bottom grade, where she felt I'd have easier games. I must admit I felt quite nervous before the first game. I did, though, have two very competent backs, who kept the ball away from me. In fact I didn't touch the ball once during the game. The second match was very different. The opposition was much stronger and my backs were different. I had to work very hard for the whole game to keep the other team's goals down to a reasonable number. During the last few minutes of the game the ball appeared to be running over the back line. My team didn't bother watching, and moved away. I realized it could be stopped because two of their forwards were determined to get it. I yelled at my team and then ran to kick the ball out. I reached the ball at the same time as the other players. One of them collided with me and we both fell over. As I was the only defence, the other player took the ball and scored another goal. I was not impressed with the slack play by my team. However my immediate concern was my leg. I knew I hadn't torn any more ligaments but it was quite sore. "Why me?" I thought. The girl who knocked me over felt bad when I explained I'd just started playing again after being injured. I assured her it wasn't her fault and that I'd be all right. The next day the coach had planned a special daylight training session. It was a beautiful morning but only eight players, out of three teams, turned up. I was the only goalie so I had quite a busy time. The knee ached a bit but my movements seemed to be okay.

The following Tuesday I had my final check-up at the clinic. The doctor wasn't impressed with the pain I was now experiencing. I hadn't actually damaged the knee but I'd aggravated the ligaments. He banned me from future games and referred me to a Sports' Medicine Clinic. Now the fun really started. My treatment began with a Cybex test, which involved my leg being strapped to a machine which exerts pressure against any movement - up or down. The test required me to push against the machine at different speeds and then the performance of both legs was compared. The difference between them was so much that he began my programme by getting me to continue work with the machine.

All of my exercises involved doing four lots of fifteen lifts: on the Cybex machine; on my side, back and stomach with 3.5 kilogrammes strapped to my leg; lifting weights; and finally balancing on a board with springs. I've had to do this twice a week for the last three weeks. At home I lift 2.5 kilogrammes one hundred times a day. I also attend training once a week and just run around the field a few times. I'm not allowed to turn suddenly so I can't even help with umpiring.

Last night I went for a re-test to check up on my progress. I had good news and bad news - my bad leg had improved quite a bit BUT my good leg had also improved thus leaving the difference too great for me to risk playing again. AUGH! I just can't win! So the torture sessions continue. If I thought I could do it properly, I'd almost be tempted to try doing laps of the hockey field on one leg!! However I doubt I'd get very far without falling over. SIGH.

SOME FUN AND GAMES AT SCHOOL

In a school of nine hundred one expects to get some really rotten kids. Well we're no exception. A couple of them decided to go beyond just annoying teachers. It started last term when the school was dismissed early because of a bomb scare. Another hoax bomb threat was perpetrated during last period one Friday. The following Monday afternoon we got another one. Milton, the deputy principal, had had enough. We knew that school students were phoning in the bomb threats and he was determined to put an end to the matter. The school was evacuated, as usual, and the kids were kept out on the cold, muddy oval for twenty minutes. By the time they were allowed back in they were very

restless and expecting an early dismissal. You can well imagine the cries of dismay and anger when Milton said that, since a student had decided to waste the school's time, he would now waste the students' time - they would now start Period Six. I was lucky I only had a Year 7 class as I was able to "bully" them into stopping complaining and getting on with their work. We ended up discussing some very funny ambiguous sentences which took their minds off the situation. Other teachers weren't so fortunate. I could hear near-riots occurring all over the school. Teachers who didn't have classes were patrolling the corridors to reinforce the directive we were all trying to carry out. At the time, most of the teachers were as annoyed by the situation as were the students. However we had to admit that the ploy worked. Before the kids were finally dismissed Milton made it clear that this would happen every time there was a hoax and, if the students didn't like it, it was up to them to do something. Well, we soon had a list of names, all volunteered, who were possible suspects. The next day we had to offer "protection" to a few of the very likely culprits - the kids were not amused. The kid responsible, a Year 8 girl, was interviewed by recess, but wouldn't admit to the deed until much later. She now spends nearly the whole of every school day outside the principal's office. Needless to say we haven't had any hoaxes since.

---oOo---

The following appeared one day on our notice board. It was placed among other notices and typed on Departmental paper.

\* ALL STAFF \*

SUBJECT: EARLY RETIREMENT PROGRAMME

1. Due to the economic situation, the Education Department has been directed to reduce the strength of the current work force and has devised a Reduction of Members Programme.
2. Under this plan older members will be placed in early retirement, permitting the retention of members who represent the future of the teaching service.
3. A programme to phase out older personnel (aged 45 plus) by the end of this current financial year will be put into effect immediately. The programme will be known as RAPE (Retirement Aged Personnel Early). Members who are RAPED will be given the opportunity to seek other jobs within the service, provided that while they are being RAPED they request a review of their employment status before actual retirement takes place.
4. This phase of the programme will be known as SCREW (Survey of Capabilities of RETired Workers). All members who have been RAPED and SCREWED may apply for a final review. This phase will be known as STUFFED (Study of Termination of Use For Further Education and Development).
5. Programme policy dictates that members may be RAPED once, SCREWED twice, but can be STUFFED as many times as the Service sees fit.
6. Should the RAPE programme fail to achieve the required reductions, members who have been STUFFED will be subject to further review under the ARSE (Assessment and Review of Surplus Employees) programme. Members may be given the ARSE several times during the period of employment.
7. Members who have been RAPED, SCREWED, STUFFED or given the ARSE will be retired under the Review of Overall Objectives of Terminations (ROOT) programme. All members (aged 45 or less) not subject to the

above programme will be deemed ROOTED automatically until they reach their 45th birthday.

R.U. Threw

R.D.E. Knox Region.

It was amazing the number of people who took the piece seriously. You see there are some idiots - the type who write departmental notices - who are quite capable of producing such ridiculous statements. Many of those taken in by the notice were in the over 45 age group. They liked the idea of the programme but were shocked by the poor choice of words. It was one of the few times I've appreciated sitting near the notice board. The comments kept me amused for quite a while.

I'll have to finish off here as I haven't got the time to do much more. If I start a new section I'll never get the contribution finished before the deadline.

As the Olympic games have now started I'll end on a sporting note:-

go hockey team - our chance for gold.  
(Despite the high standing of our team the Olympic promotions committee here has seen fit to ignore hockey in its souvenirs and yet expected our associations to sell them!!)

Anyway end of soapbox time -

Take care,

Love and Peace.

lath.