

'Aphrodisiac' from antlers big business

Hunting for deer high above Methven

Around the World in 380 Days

Fifth in a series

By STEPHEN FROST Herald Staff Writer After leaving New Zealand's Mount Cook, I hitchhiked to Timaru on the east coast of the South Island, passing through beautiful foothills and rolling countryside, some of the best on the island.

Two months previous, I had been hitchhiking a ride to my job in Hakataramea and met a fellow from Timaru who invited me to drop in if I happened to be passing through again. Wayne Thomas was his name, and he is a good example of how friendly people in New Zealand can be.

Timaru itself is a smallish coastal town with a lot of character, and a lot of characters in it. One evening, Wayne and I and Craig, a friend of his, went on a tour of Timaru's pubs and surprisingly, they were much like those in Georgetown. I got up feeling rather poorly and blamed it on the poor quality of New Zealand beer.

After spending a few days in Timaru I left for my favorite city, Christchurch, to recuperate and get a new job from Vic. The job was on a farm in Methven, about an hour and a half from Christchurch, and it was the only farm John and I worked together. The boss

Morris Molloy, was a wheat farmer and one of the most pleasant farmers I worked for while travelling. John and I helped him harvest his barley, wheat and peas.

FARM MEALS I hadn't seen John for quite a while and when he showed up on the farm the first night, all he could do was laugh at me. I had ballooned from my fighting weight of 130 pounds to about 146. Unfortunately, it was almost all on my stomach and was the direct result of eating farm meals, which tend to be very rich and plentiful.

It was in Methven that I met some deer hunters who asked me if I wanted to go hunting with them, and as I had never been in my life, I accepted.

For the description of the day's hunt I'll quote directly from my journal:

"Got up this morning at 4:30 and drove the '53 Bedford truck into town to meet Donald. From there, we proceeded to his friend's place up in the mountains and then drove and walked for an hour back into the hills to a small valley, where we waited for the sun to come up.

"We spent the rest of the day going up and down bloody mountains, through bush that has undergrowth so thick, and has so much brambles, ferns, gorse and fallen wood, that walking in it is difficult, if not damn near impossible.

"Did I get anything, you ask, other than a lot of strenuous exercise? Only if you count the deer dung we kept finding, which probably reflected their thoughts on our hunting abilities.

"They were ahead or close to us all day, but kept just out of sight. Seven hours of tramping

through this near impassable bush and I was ready to shoot the fellow I went with, I'm beat."

However my next outing was more successful. A week later we went hunting some dinner on Mount Hutt, a ski resort not far from the farm.

It was at the bottom of a gorge, high on the mountain that Donald spotted a hind through his binoculars. We went down a tree-covered slope on the opposite side of the gorge from the deer. The slope was incredibly steep and dropped about 800 feet vertically.

RED DEER A thousand yards up the other side, we came out of the bush into some high scrub, directly across from where the hind was sitting, her head and neck showing.

It was a Red deer and an easy shot, only 35 yards, and it took us a little over half an hour to butcher and skin it. We took the whole haunch, the front legs and shoulders plus assorted odds and ends up with us.

It took us two and a half hours to carry the meat up a slope of about 40 to 45 degrees with about 1,200 feet of "vertical" in it. I don't remember ever being so tired in all my life, but the venison was well worth it. It was also a nice change from lamb and the odd sheep's tongue.

Morris, the farmer, was into deer in a different way. He farmed deer on the Banks Peninsula just east of Christchurch.

Now you ask: how can you farm deer? Well, it isn't for their meat but their horns. A stag develops a new set of horns every year and it is in the beginning stages of this development that the farmer is interested.

The soft stage is called velvet and is used by the South Koreans as an aphrodisiac after it is processed. The process includes cooking the velvet, after it is cut from the stags, for 48 hours at 140 degrees centigrade. It loses 70 per cent of its weight and sells at \$140 an ounce.

A good five-year old stag is worth \$2,500 and will yield up to 14 pounds of unprocessed velvet a year, worth \$100 a pound to the Korean buyers.

A vet has to be there when



David, the son of the farmer John and I worked for in Methven, often took us for tours back up into New Zealand's

mountains. This area is about an hour's drive from Methven around the back of Mount Hutt and up the Hakia Gorge. (Photo by John Pladdy)

you cut the velvet off and you must be sure not to damage it. If the velvet gets a small hole in it, it devalues to about \$18 a pound.

The stags are kept in large fields enclosed entirely by seven foot fencing and seem to be quite at home in them.

ENCLOSED HERDS When the stags are harvested in December and January, they are herded into the yards which, are all enclosed and fairly dark. The stags are more docile in the darkness and easier to handle.

The vet injects the stag with a tranquillizer and the stag is led into a small shed and belted to the wall. Here a

local injection just above the eyes anaesthetizes the crown, which is just below the velvet. The velvet is then cut off above the crown, with great care being taken to avoid cutting the crown, since if it is damaged in any way the velvet will not grow again. Venison is not as dear (pardon the pun) as velvet.

Afterwards, an elastic band is put around the crown to stop the bleeding and can be cut 30 minutes later.

The velvet itself is put into plastic bags and put into a freezer until the agent or buyer comes around.

The harvested stag must be kept separate from those in

22 hinds and 12 stags which he bred every year. The advantage to breeding your own animals is that they become more manageable when they are raised from birth and see humans every day.

The last job I took was on a dairy farm, way down south in Maitava, which lasted three weeks. From there I went to Invercargill for a few days before meeting up with John and some friends in Queenstown and departing on a two week tour of the South Island with them.

Next week, I'll be writing about these experiences as they happened in the last few weeks of our stay in New Zealand.



This vista is typical of the scenery in and around the Canterbury Plains of the South Island. The further west you go the larger the mountains get and the wilder the area becomes. Much of the deer population has been hunted out of here after years of unabated growth due to the fact they are an introduced animal with no natural predators.

(Photo by John Pladdy)

Engineer Bob Austin paving road to future

By TIM TOLTON Herald Special Municipal government and civil servants in general tend to be viewed by the public as inefficient and overly expensive, and the view gained some credibility with the Canadian auditor-general's recent declaration that the civil service does produce significantly less on the average than the private sector.

One man's view from the inside, however, seems to reaffirm the value of civil servants and indicates that the situation is changing for the better.

Bob Austin has served as head of the town's engineering department since 1975 and while he admits there are many frustrations involved in working for local government, he is quick to point out that things are improving.

To gain an understanding of the town engineer's widely-varying responsibilities, one must consider the maintenance of town roads, parks and cemeteries and the collection of solid waste; heading this already hefty list of duties, however, is the job Mr. Austin considers his chief responsibility, one which makes the title of "town engineer" somewhat misleading.

There's little actual engineering involved, he explained to The Herald recently. Instead, his main concern is administration.

LIAISON OFFICER In today's complex municipal government, the engineer has become a liaison officer representing Halton Hills' interests concerning local development projects, consultant's studies like that of the Highway 7 corridor through Georgetown and the many committees set up by municipal and other government levels.

The budgeting of town funds for the reconstruction of roads has emerged as an all-important facet of the engineer's job, according to Mr. Austin.

"In the past, there have been political decisions made that weren't sound from an engineering standpoint," he replied when asked about the policy employed in prioritizing road projects. "We just had to live with those. Our relations with council have improved vastly and certain policy changes have made things much easier. This is the first year I feel we have a comfortable program based on real drainage problems."

Mr. Austin acknowledged that little long-term thought was apparently given to Georgetown's existing storm drainage system. He sees the major drainage study recently completed by the town as a big step forward.

Mr. Austin describes the current stage in Halton Hills' development as one filled with growing pains. It's all worth the effort, though, he says, because some real progress has been made.

The engineer retains some important concerns about the public's image of town staff members.

TOO MUCH "People expect too much from the town," he said. "When it snows, we're supposed to have it cleared away immediately. A lot is expected from us, but we may not always have the facilities to do the job. For the size of the staff we have, we do a good job. Even though some people may not like what we do, we accomplish a lot for the money (available)."

Asked about the town's stance regarding new development, Mr. Austin is again cognizant of past mistakes. "We have been seen as being negative toward development, whereas it's just preventive maintenance," he said. "We

have seen the problems of the past and are attempting to avoid them in the future."

Mr. Austin commented that his job in these times of fiscal restraint is often one of making the most of what's available. For example, he said, the provincial ministry of transportation and communications subsidizes road reconstruction costs in Halton Hills by up to 50 per cent, but this year cut back on its funding and thus forced the town to trim its own capital budget.

While Mr. Austin said he doesn't consider the ministry's cutbacks entirely fair, he pointed out that Halton Hills has benefited from seven connecting link improvements in the past couple of years toward which the ministry contributes 90 per cent of the overall cost.

"Sometimes you just have to rob Peter to pay Paul," he said.

Mr. Austin graduated from the University of Guelph with a degree in Civil Engineering in 1970 and spent four years with the ministry before signing on as Halton Hills' second town engineer in 1974, succeeding former engineer and ex-councillor Peter Morris. He is married with one child and lives in Acton.

Halton Hills' director of engineering Bob Austin peruses one of the recent reports prepared by consultants for the town. In this initial installment of a new Herald series examining municipal staff officials, writer Tim Tolton finds the chief engineer cognizant of past and present problems but optimistic about the future.

(Photo by Tim Tolton)



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(Photo by Tim Tolton)

Ends 34 years on works force

Friends on hand as Red calls it a day

By STEPHEN FROST Herald Staff Writer Red (Herb) Roshier retired last week and I don't suppose anyone will miss him more than the rural

people whose roars he's graded for many years.

There was a retirement party for Red at Alcott arena Friday and the attendance by more than 70 of his fellow workers and companions was an indication of just how much respect this man has garnered over the 34 years he has worked for the municipality.

Red started with the Township of Esquimes as a grader operator in April of 1946, and on occasion acted as road superintendent and was the assistant road superintendent up until the formation of regional government in 1974.

Red's wife of 35 years, Jean, was present at the retirement party which saw the works department, the

engineering department, town council and a representative of the Champion Graders company honor him for his outstanding work record and reliability.

Patty Woods, a co-worker, presented Red with a gold pocket watch, while works superintendent Frank Morette gave Red a radio alarm clock from the town.

Town engineer Bob Austin gave Red a cheque, recalling that the engineering department used to give Canada Savings Bonds, "but they're not worth anything any more."

Mayor Pete Pomeroy made a presentation on behalf of town council and told Red he was sorry the community is going to lose him.

"I'll probably make your wife happier now that she's going to see more of you, Red," Mayor Pomeroy said. "but that may not be true. At any rate I hope if I live long enough, as many people turn out to honor me as have turned out to honor you today."

On behalf of Champion Graders, Wayne Mason presented Red with a gold tie clip on which a miniature grader is engraved.

The end of the presentations saw host Ron McKnight give Red a toy wooden grader saying, "I'm sorry Red; that was the best we could do."

Red plans to do a lot of hunting and fishing in his retirement; he belongs to the Monarch Hunt Club.



Red Roshier's retirement party was a huge success, with many people from the town honoring him. He's seen here with his wife of 35 years, Jean, and a toy grader the works department presented to him.

(Photo by Maggie Hannah)

Seniors Week

Halton regional council has approved a recommendation declaring the week June 15 to 21 "Senior Citizens' Week". The request was made by Keith Norton, minister of community and social services so that local activities for senior citizens will be encouraged.

Newcomers Club final

The Georgetown Newcomers Club held its end-of-season luncheon June 3 at the North Halton Golf and Country Club. The luncheon was attended by 25 ladies and brought to a conclusion a successful season of varied activities. The club will be starting up again in September, and all newcomers are welcome to join the club then. Information on the starting date will be available in the Y fall program and in local media.

Caledon bridge club

Results of Caledon Bridge Club, May 21: N.S. 1. Duke Wilson and Ron Glide, 2. Ken Pearce and Charles Gabel, 3. Lois and Clayton Barbour. E.W. 1. Helen Fleming and Tanya Blatnick, 2. Bob Dickson and Bob Cureton, 3. Jack Barton and Jim Oliver. Results of May 22: N.S. 1. Diane and Stan Everingham, 2. Tanya Blatnick and Charles Gabel, 3. Shirley and Bob Austin. E.W. 1. Naureen and Des Devereaux, 2. Bert Barrett and Malcolm Hart, Fran Curry and Muriel Merlina, tied.



Town works employee Dave McDonald caught Red Roshier on his last day of work as he headed out of the works yard one last time. Red has driven graders for the town for the last 34 years, going from the old Adams graders to the Champion type he is seen in here.

(Photo by Dave McDonald)