

# CANADA BOUND 2018

## Flights, Airports, Wedding Venue and Betrothal

Written by Bill McIndoe

### **The small print says PANIC**

Tuesday 2 October 2018: At home about to leave home for Canada. Due to be picked up by Ian Quarrell at 13:00 and driven to Dunedin Airport.

12:45 Margaret read the small print and discovered that we had to have ESTA (a visa) - to enter Canada and the USA. Panic! Could not possibly be done in time in 15 minutes.

13:00 Picked up by Ian.

13:45 Kathy, Dunedin Airport staff took our problem in hand. After some brilliant finger work on her iPhone she obtained Canadian eTA (Canadian visa) for Margaret and entered it for Bill and said it would come through. Still have to apply for American ESTA (visa) Marvelous work by Kathy.

She then:

Sent all our luggage direct to Auckland where we must take it through customs etc.

Escorted us past the queue to head of line and through security search and checks.

To the door of the plane where cabin staff escorted us to our seats.

Canadian eTA (visa) received for both of us. American eSTCA still to be applied for our flight home through the States. Luggage has been sent right through to

Vancouver where we take it through customs.

17:15 Landed at Auckland, nice flight, beautiful aircraft.

Met by Special Assistance wheelchairs, taken to bus, delivered to International Airport.

Again met by wheelchairs. Taken to Special Assistance lounge. Had bite to eat at the Pita Pit. Just what we needed to take us through to dinner aboard probably at 21:00.

Returned to Special Assistance.

18:50 two female wheelchair pushers arrived and pushed us for a long distance, through many large areas of shops and departure lounges to our departure lounge No 8. After a half hour wait we walked the loading trunk and boarded our aircraft, a Boeing Dreamliner.

### **Premium Economy and the Dreamliner**

On Simon's advice we bought Premium Economy tickets and that was a great piece of wisdom. We are six rows from the front of the aircraft, with commodious seats on the left of the middle isle and two empty seats next to us upon which we can lay out our junk and later stretch out. The equipment provided for entertainment is overwhelming. Each seat has its own television screen that can show any number of programs, navigation data and progress maps. You can plug in and recharge any personal communication devices. I could spend a week mastering all the devices on my seat. The back adjusts with a button, headrest moves up and down and can fold around your ears like a big ear muff (very handy I am sure), foot-rests swing out to support your legs at any angle desired and can then be extended further out. A table swings up out of the armrest and opens over your lap like a butterfly with a double fold, ideal for eating the yummy dinner served at 22:00 at 10,000m flying at 900kph with 9hrs still to go. The table was also good for reading a book or writing on my iPad. The leg room is prodigious. Between my knees and the seat in front is 500mm. My cabin bag disappeared under the seat in front and is hard to retrieve without a boathook.

On first confronting my seat, better called a throne, it was loaded with interesting goodies. A large white pillow, a big blanket, quality earphones, a bottle of mineral water and a small

sealed zip bag which contained a toothbrush and toothpaste, a pair of bright blue socks, a stick of lip salve and a facecloth. Everything one needed to camp out for the night in a Boeing with 5,000 miles and 9 hours still to go to Vancouver, We ordered hapuka (fish) as main the course. It was awhile being cooked (heated in the microwave) so it was just as well that with the nibbles course, which came first, was also the enticing sweet pudding course. I ate the nibbles, then the pudding which was delicious and finally the biscuits and cheese. When the hapuka and rice main course was laid before me the normal order of courses had taken a new twist. I enjoyed the new order except that after the main I did miss having my pud (because I had already had it). The steward could not have been more helpful in every way. She had the knack of becoming a helper and a friend in the time it took to serve the meal.

### **Hurting blindly through the night sky**

One by one the TV screens went silent, faded and went out. In this great aircraft hurtling blindly through the night at 900kph my fellow passengers sought sleep in the dark trackless sky. The pillows and blankets helped in their search for sleep and the constant changes to all the possible adjustments to the seat really helped but little. It gave them something to fiddle with to pass the time.

I seldom sleep well at home and certainly not on an aircraft. I did manage an hour or two and dropped off into slumber at about 03:15. As was everybody else I was also still working on New Zealand time. At 05:15 by my watch the guy by the window, three seats to my left, decided that the sun had been up for hours and he should let it into the cabin. Outside it was about noon, inside was dark, there was not a movement among the 300 throng because passengers brains were set at 05:15 and it had been a long rough night. The cloddish Aussie let the blind up which let a stream of strong light into my closed and sleep deprived eyes. Then he pulled the blind down so 1/4 of it was still open allowing a strong shaft of light straight into my face. And it was only 05:15 in the morning. (But really about 12:00 outside). After putting up with the only blind that was up in the whole plane I did speak to the guy and gave him the message in no uncertain terms. With objections and denials he did pull it right down. A feeling of animosity persisted until at 08:00 when it was civilized to lift the blinds and I "apologised" for being abrupt. Incident closed.

### **Late arrival at Vancouver**

Our beautiful Boeing arrived at Vancouver Airport half an hour late. This became a mad scramble for us to get to Air Canada domestic kiosk to be issued with the boarding pass and seat numbers which had not been issued earlier. The helpful Canadian staff found that we were too late. The luggage acceptance time for our aircraft had closed. We would be flying the 3340km five hour trip to Toronto on another day. Horror of horrors Alastair and Simon were to meet us and I doubted we could warn them that we might not be there. The elderly staff member pulled all his strings, connecting with his many buddies throughout Air Canada. His luggage conveyor system which was to deliver our luggage to the plane wouldn't start but like magic he produced a luggage buggy and driver. Off we went heading for the Toronto plane's departure lounge. Hundreds of meters later his good friend on the departure lounge counter waved us through, grabbed our bags and sent it down her luggage shoot and we were all back in business on our way to Toronto. The unthinkable hadn't happen. All was well.

### **Wonderful help for the elderly**

The mobility assistance people gathered us to their bosom; into their wheelchairs then their six seater golf-cart type electric buggy and whisked us, clutching our small cabin bags, along more miles of walkways leading to the passenger loading ramp. We would never have found our way, nor walked the distance by ourselves.

This plane was only 6 seats across, two seats narrower than our beautiful Air New Zealand Boeing Dreamliner, which had 10. It was an older model Boeing built for domestic flights.

### **Many Asian passengers**

It was interesting to note the large number of asian passengers aboard, probably Chinese. I was sitting next to a 40 year old Chinese woman. Several times I tried to communicate with her but on each occasion she put both hands up to her face and silently sobbed her incomprehension. She had no English at all; not one word could she understand or speak. Although it was a domestic flight it took over 5 hours to fly the 3300km from Vancouver to Toronto. We had been through customs in Vancouver so once our luggage was collected from the Toronto luggage conveyer we were joyfully greeted by son Alastair and grandson David outside in the public forecourt.

Canada has been great fun attending a very large family wedding. All welcoming and lovely people. Although family and guests came from far afield in Canada, including one from British Columbia, we came the farthest from NZ. 14 of Sharon's family drove 1500km (or 1100km if by air across Lake Superior) from Thunder Bay for the wedding at which there were 160 guests.

### **At AirBnB for my second 90th birthday party**

Margaret and I were severely sleep deprived on the 29 hour flight from NZ which was closely followed by family time with our sons + wives, Simon and Krista from Sydney and Alastair and Sharon from Toronto. To ease bed pressure on Alastair's house Simon, Krista, Margaret and I moved into an AirBnB town house which was magnificent. We had our own joyful family reunion dinner and to again celebrate my 90th birthday in the northern hemisphere. With nine of us sitting down to bought-in Indian food, suitably decorated with reminders of my 90th birthday, were eldest son Alastair and Sharon, their two sons David (and his bride Lyndsey) and son Andrew all from Toronto. Also there was our number two son Simon and Krista from Sydney and of course Margaret and myself. A delightfull event and family re-union. That night after the long flight and jet lag we both found it difficult to sleep, or perhaps it was the curry.

### **To the wedding at Newmarket**

But there was no rest for the two ancient mariners. Two days later on the 5/19/18, Alastair drove us for an hour out to the Best Western Hotel at Newmarket where we would stay the night. The wedding and reception would be held at the Glasshouse Wedding and Reception Co, ten minutes away from our hotel. It was made from two huge glasshouses, as indeed they used to be, with thick curved plastic roofs strong enough to hold the weight of feet of snow. One was the wedding hall which had seating for possibly 200. The adjoining hall was set up with 22 six or eight person tables scattered over this big open space plus an ample dance floor. Music was provided by DJ.

### **Glasshouse wedding**

Winter is not far way and snow is due to start falling in Ontario anytime soon which made me think about how the building was constructed to take the weight. It was the same as a number of other adjoining structures that were still used by the company for growing plants for sale. There was a grand display of pot plants, hanging baskets, vines, shrubs and trees growing and flowering in profusion, threaded through with strings of coloured lights for decoration and illumination. Fresh flowers, green decorations and table numbers on all the tables had been arranged by Lyndsey Flude (the bride, who is a floral artist by trade) with lots of help from Sharon and other family members. They made a stunning job of the decorations.

### **The Ceremony**

Fast lunch of sandwiches at 13:15 held the door closed against starvation seeking to stalk the wedding location.

When all the guests and the celebrant had assembled in the Wedding Hall the groom (David 1.9m and 28yo), the best man and the four groomsmen, including brother Andrew, looking splendid in black suits and ties with button hole of flowers (boutonniere) that

matched the bridesmaids' dresses came solemnly in to line-up. The five bridesmaids, dressed in floor length burgundy gowns (except one whose dress was inexplicably above the knees), one by one floated in to line up on the other side, and the show was really on the road.

The bride's father (still known as Mouse because when young he was, but now he is 58, he isn't) led in Lyndsey, the bride (1.5m and 28yo) looking radiant in a form fitting white dress. The Wedding Celebrant read a detailed account of how they met which was desirable for the families' history, and then worked his way through to the wedding ceremony and declared them married. T'was done, and nicely done too.

#### **Credit were credit is due**

The organisation for the wedding and the breakfast function was all done by Lyndsey. Our family accommodation, cars and transportation and functions were organised by Sharon, helped by Alastair and others. There were up to 14 family members staying in the house on three nights. Sleeping on mattresses, couches, and the lucky, or quick ones on beds. The planning and execution of the whole series of events was superb. It all ran like clockwork which everybody, including the principle organisers, enjoyed.

#### **Our Canadian Cousins**

As always it is a joy to associate with our "Canadian cousins" who are fun, well read, thoughtful and talkative. Their attitudes and views are very similar to our own. Their belief in constitutional monarchy as a form of government is unwavering. They have sorted out their constitutional arrangements with the province of Quebec and internally now seem at peace as a nation.

#### **"Get me to the church on time"**

In Chapter One I have got you to the wedding on time, haven't I?

Please let me know if there are any details that needed explanation or expansion.

I will continue writing Bill's "Long Canadian Read" tomorrow. Boating in Alastair and Sharon's "Aotea" (36ft Catalina class, 6 tonne, wing keel yacht) on Georgian Bay, Lake Huron (one of the Great Lakes) will be later in the week.

## **Canada Bound 2018 - Chapter Two**

# **Toronto Social Sparrows**

*Wedding breakfast Thanksgiving Sailing Great Lakes*

*Wye Marina "Aotea"*

Written by Bill McIndoe

#### **Sign the Register and the procession**

The newly married couple, along with the appropriate witnesses all signed the register. David and Lyndsey led the official group, with the groomsmen pairing off with the bridesmaids followed by parents and trailed by the grandparents, that's us, plus Barry Flude (Lyndsey's grandfather), ceremoniously parading down the isle while 160 guests all clapped enthusiastically. Very traditional and delightful; exactly as planned.

#### **The Wedding Breakfast**

The three course wedding breakfast was served, the wine was poured and talking began. The relatives down from Thunder Bay are great talkers and the Torontonians manfully held their own. The noise level developed so, with my hearing aids and possible damage to my left ear caused during the flights, I could hardly follow the conversation. It didn't really

matter because everybody had a good time. The DJ spun the records and many got up to dance until the floor was hopping. A pair of three year olds, properly kitted out in ballet gear were all over the floor dancing exuberantly with their dad.

### **Only balance**

Margaret and I danced together, holding onto the back of the same chair to maintain balance and dignity. We did OK somewhat surprising witnesses that we lasted upright for so long. Balance is no longer a common commodity for Margaret and me, but as long as there was something to hang onto i.e. the same chair, we did just fine (and we do not drink, and remember our ages - 90 and 88yo). It is the same in the boat, we're fine with all the handholds but not in open space. We then wandered all about chatting, asking questions and had a lovely time. To close the wedding breakfast David and Lyndsey did a solo whirl on the dance floor culminating in a great big hug. Finite. Back at the Best Western hotel the party carried on in various rooms but Margaret and I, understanding our limits, quietly slid off to bed ready to do battle on another day.

### **Back home to Toronto**

Out of the rooms by 11:00 the next day was the order so all our party had loaded the cars ready to depart and at some secret signal all vehicles headed out onto the motorway, some south for Toronto and others to drive for two days north west for Thunder Bay, on Lake Superior (the biggest of the Great Lakes). Farewell new relatives and friends, see you next time.

### **Canadian Thanksgiving**

Thanksgiving in Canada is to commemorate the first harvests of the early settlers and is held on the second Monday of October. This year it was on 6th October. This was Canadian Thanksgiving long weekend and the road north out of town was choka with vehicles heading away to the bush for the long weekend holiday or to their cottages (cribs) on the lakes. Four traffic lanes in a continuous 80kph nose to tail, avalanche of cars heading north. I have never seen so many cars, all with lights on. However our four lanes going south back to Toronto were sedate, with cars well spaced out giving stress free driving. Few go to Toronto for the long weekend.

Back at Alastair and Sharon's house in Etobicoke (part of Toronto) the relatives and some friends re-assembled and carried on the low key family gathering and party. Two nice big dogs continuously checked out the people with a quick lick of the hand and a sniff to see who were new comers and who were old members of the pack. They were also always on the lookout for a bite to eat.

I had long talks with Joe Drcar and Tom Armstrong, Sharon's 60 year old brothers-in-law about their political views and their lives in Canada. One a long distance truck driver and the other an Education Department building maintenance manager. They were well read and thoughtful men, had strong family affiliations and were accustomed to discussing national and international events of the day with knowledge and passion.

### **Boating Day on the Great Lakes**

Tuesday 9 October 2018. Our boating day on the Great Lakes had arrived. Packing the SUV with food for two days, our boating clothes, iPhones and iPads, Alastair, Sharon, Margaret and I set off for the Wye Heritage Marina in the town of Midland where "Aotea" is berthed. While we were heading out of town for the lake the avalanche of six abreast cars with lights on were heading back to town on the mighty 401 Highway from their Thanksgiving long weekend at their cottages on islands in the lakes, camping in various Provincial Parks (such as Awenda) or visiting relatives up north. On our side of the 1500mm high concrete median strip the traffic going in our direction was light and we bowled along at 110kph in comfort with no stress - everybody of course driving on the right hand (wrong) side of the road. In the past I have rented cars in Canada, USA and Germany but now I would never drive in a country where they drive on the right. Let somebody else do the driving - take a bus, train or fly.

## **Wye Heritage Marina**

There are big strong automatic sliding security gates at the Wye Heritage Marina. Press the right button from inside the car and, like the pearly gates, the doors clank open allowing only boaties into their chosen heaven. Because there are no tides in the fresh water Great Lakes all the boats are berthed at their own marina wharves, there is no need for floating pontoons. The lake level does go up and down over time depending on rainfall, wind direction and strength, ice and snow freeze and melt, and evaporation. To maintain water depth for the bigger ships that ply these waters, flow is also restricted or increased by weirs or dams at flow bottlenecks, approaches to canal and lock systems. At times of flooding further down the St Lawrence River the level is controlled and kept low to allow flood run off from the big rivers to escape to the sea from say heavy rainfall in Quebec. Notwithstanding their great size there are only a few inches of *tidal* changes in the Great Lakes. Also the St Clair River has been dredged and is controlled, which also has an effect on lake levels. All these natural and man-made factors effect the water levels at different seasons of the year and effect the height of water levels at the marina wharves where "Aotea" is berthed.

### **'Pulling' the Boats in Winter**

Alastair parked the SUV right alongside his dock. No boat shed but he had a big padlocked dock locker containing his larger tools, hoses, oars and sundry other equipment. There seemed no appropriate place for the inflatable dinghy so the poor thing lay in the water tied broadside on to the stern, open to the sun, rain and wind. Because of the damaging 600mm of ice that forms on the Lake and in the marina during the winter all the boats in the marina are "pulled" (lifted by travel lift) and put into their own cradles on the hard. An aluminium frame-work supports a canvas cover over the boat to keep snow off the deck and from building up in the cockpit. Every 6 weeks Alastair and Sharon drive the 110km up to the marina at Midland to remove the snow from the awning and reduce the weight of snow on the boat. The dinghy is partly deflated and is tied upside down on the cradle under Aotea's bow.

In winter, although the snow clearing machinery is constantly clearing the roads, the drive from Toronto to Midland would be much slower and more demanding than we experienced this day. In icy conditions, I would tremble to think of driving at night, nose to tail with all those other cars on the mighty 401 Highway, with four to six lanes going each way.

## **Canada Bound 2018 - Chapter Three**

# ***Great Lakes Sailors***

***Sailing Great Lakes Wye Marina "Aotea" Cottage Country  
Toronto University The ROM***

Witten by Bill McIndoe

### **Readying "Aotea" to Sail**

Aotea is a fine looking 36ft yacht with a wing keel, similar to America's cup boats a few campaign's ago, and displacing 6 tonnes. There was an hours work to get the yacht ready to sail. Protective canvas covers were removed, the six cockpit squabs taken on deck from the aft cabin, domed into position in the cockpit, and the clothing and food bought over from the car. Water tanks topped up with a hose, a can of fuel emptied into the tank, and

appropriate electrics and electronics turned on and tested. A lot to do to get the boat ready to sail.

The motor was started, the mooring lines cast off and with skipper Alastair at the helm we did a smart sternboard to clear the dock, a turn to port to head towards the marina entrance where Aotea swept out into Georgian Bay. There was only a gentle breeze and when the genoa was unrolled and drawing nicely and with the engine rumbling away at 1300revs it gave us a comfortable 5.5kts. Sailing in the Great Lake's fresh water was a new experience. It felt thinner than salt water. The boat moves differently. Each wave has less impact on the hull so the ride is smoother or it might have been the fine lines of "Aotea" that gave us such a good ride. The low islands all around us, at distances of 3 miles, gave good protection from sea generated by the breeze blowing across Georgian Bay. The sun was shining, only a few clouds up above and the air was warm. It was a fine day to go sailing and a day worth living. Lake-effect snow (Google it) is forecast for the weekend and that will be the start of winter weather. With two other yachts we spent the night anchored in well sheltered Methodist Bay. Clouds occasionally obscuring the stars and with not a movement of the boat all our crew slept well.

### **Threading the Small Craft Route channel**

Intending to initially following the Main Channel in among the islands to Little Bass Bay, Alastair picked up the offshore green marker indicating the approach to the narrow Small Craft Route channel which threading the intricate group of rocks and islands ahead of this vast area of channels and rocks of the Canadian Shield (Google again). On the chart it looked impossible to find our way through the labyrinth but one by one the markers came in sight and were ticked off. They were small and only 1m tall, easy to miss and trying to identify at a distance. Under Alastair's expert navigational direction I steered the boat, following the North American convention of leaving green to port and red to starboard (opposite to our British/European system), skirting the rocky corners until we found our way to enclosed Frying Pan Bay.

### **Cottage Country**

As long as the rock islands were big enough a small house was built upon them. All transportation in the summer by water and in the winter over the ice would be by skidoo but I don't think they come up much when there is ice about. This was Cottage Country where Canadians loved to spend their holidays. The newly weds, David and Lyndsey, were spending their honeymoon at her father David (remember Mouse?) Flude's cottage in Little Bass Bay. Because the secluded bay was too shallow for Aotea to enter, they came out to meet us in their motor boat (tinny), We anchored and they came aboard to join us for a happy lunch. On inquiring I discovered that in Canada to drive any boat that has power available (a yacht with a motor say) the operator must have a Pleasure Craft Operator Certificate (look up Ontario Provincial Government's PCOC requirement regulations). Petite Lyndsey had qualified for her PCOC so she was doing all the driving the boat and David at 6ft was standing doing lookout duty.

Age restrictions of PCOC

Up to 12 years old may drive up to 10hp.

Aged 12 to 15years old up to 40hp.

The weather remained fine for our voyage through open water back to Wye Marina at Midland. When tied up at our berth and had stowed away all the gear Alastair padlocked the hatch and we were away. At the marina restaurant we had an excellent meal of fish, caught commercially in the fresh water of Lake Huron, and we were soon heading back home to Toronto in the RUV after an excellent two days boating.

### **Cycle Tracks in Downtown Toronto**

Tuesday 16 October. The half hour drive along busy, narrow Bloor St from Etobicoke to downtown Toronto consisted of 2km of interesting small shops and businesses. There were many cyclists riding on their own cycle path. The arrangement of lanes from one side

of the street to the other was interesting. First there was the footpath, then the gutter, then there was the 2m wide one-way cycle path going north, then parks for cars pointing north (remember the Canadians drive on the right). Outside the parked cars was the busy single north bound traffic lane. After the mid-line was the south bound traffic lane and another park for south pointing cars. Then came the 2m wide one way south bound cycle path, the gutter and the footpath. If you can visualise that layout you will see that on both sides, the parked cars were outside the cycle path separating and protecting the cyclists from the moving traffic.

### **University of Toronto**

Downtown are the extensive buildings of the University of Toronto. Toronto City with a population of 4 million has a total university student population 100,000 - one student per 40 residence. In comparison Dunedin City with a total population of 120,000 has a university student population of 21,000 - one student per 6 residence. (These are very, very rough statistics).

### **Royal Ontario Museum**

Next door to the University is the Royal Ontario Museum which is affectionately known locally as the ROM. It had been beckoning us from across the Pacific for several months and today was the day for our visit. Alastair cleverly found a car park only 500m away and walking to the ROM it was interesting to observe the many asians and other ethnic groups from Africa among the students on their way to lectures.

The buildings of the museum were grand examples of their period. A new glass facade had been grafted onto the front which bought the older sections into the 21st century and would be effective in keeping out the wind and the snow in winter and the heat and humidity in summer to keep the visitors and the exhibits comfortable.

We did enjoy wondering around the many departments all so professionally laid out and arranged. It must be one of the great museums of the world and I felt privileged to visit and sad to have so short a time there. However we head for New Zealand tomorrow 20/10/18 and have run out of time to do anything except to pack, say farewell to our hospitable children and grandchildren and go home.

We have had a lovely time. Farewell Canada, till next time!

Our very best regards  
From beautiful Canada,

Bill and Margaret  
McIndoe

Written by M M (Bill) McIndoe  
at  
37 Meadowcrest Road  
Etobicoke M8Z 2Y8  
Toronto, Canada  
19 October 2018