

# WELLINGTON ROUNDAABOUT

By "Thid"

TO go for a walk in Wellington is easy. But to go for a good walk you need a map, a compass, and Greenwich mean time; a knowledge of astronomy, or a sense of direction at least equal in infallibility to the homing instinct of an Atlantic eel.

Wellington goes about the business of being a city in a very devious way. On the flat it is perfectly ordinary; dusty, that is; shut in, a sounding bell for all the hideous noises of traffic, a trap for claustrophobes. On the hills it is a compound of Lewis Carroll, Walt Disney, Heath Robinson, and the marvellous machinations of the City Engineer.

It is Wonderland, and I am not sure that it is not also the Never-

Never. It would be no more surprising to hear the "Heigh-Ho!" of the Seven Dwarfs among its crannies than to find someone offing someone's head, behind a tree, along some steps, round a path, and four and a-half paces past the third corner on the left.

On second thoughts, I should add Swift and More to the list. Brobdingnag fashions itself out of the shadows. Lilliput stands in the valleys looking enviously up at the lights of houses sitting snobbishly on precarious hilltops. Utopia seems to grow among curiously quiet places, where tram lines are distant and peace seems close at hand.

Street lights, shrubs, angles of railing and stair, bulbous front windows, porches in perspective

and chimneys out of it—surrealism imposed upon Victorian interiors.

## Behind the Blinds

Perhaps not so Victorian. There may well be also some Doréan conception behind these geometric facades. It is too quiet, too solitary, too isolated, too orderly in its disarray to be completely goody-good. There are lights shining, chimneys smoking, branches moving in the wind, clouds passing; but no signs of human life. There may well be dark doings on the other side of the blinds; wine-bibbing, licence and crime. Or maybe they've merely all gone off to the pictures.

## Lost At Night

I lost myself last night. At one part of my walk I recognised a statue, and would have known where I was if I could have remembered the name of the cemetery. But the Harry Holland Memorial was a lesser landmark than the Southern Cross, and a quick bearing brought me out of a bad mix somewhere south-west of the Town Clock, took me safely through a *cul-de-sac* which turned out to be the back entrance of a boarding-house, out of the front entrance (trying to look like a boarder in a hurry), down a blind street, through Kelburn Gardens (no admittance after sunset!) and out to Tinakori Road.

Through a roadside garden, up a slippery bank, round a horseshoe bend, and across the street brought me to the foot of the most magnificent ladder of steps I have come across in Wellington. They are narrow, weedy, slippery. The hand-rail sags, rotten. The ladder climbs straight and steep and giddy from

the valley—into someone's back yard.

It is such a backyard as I should like to own myself. Everything grows wild, the terrace paths are weed-covered, pavings have collapsed, scent is in the air, and it's all sliding off a Wellington hill-side.

## Safe At Last

But it was a poor refuge for an innocent intruder who was not at all anxious to explain his presence to the owner. It needed a delicate hand to traverse along a wet and slimy bank, a nice balance round the overhang of a decaying wooden buttress, and a swift tippety-toe past the dog kennel and across a limitless space of asphalt yard before I breathed again, safe in a street.

Finally, fantasia collapsed into anti-climax when the troops kicked me off T... Hill.

I had the last word. "Bacon and eggs!" I shouted, when distance made it safe to be cheeky.

Which gave me childish pleasure and annoyed them greatly.



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If you are trying to find a missing person or a missing motor car, you can make an appeal free of charge over the air from the National Stations. Requests for such appeals can only be granted, however, if they reach the station manager through the correct channels, and if the circumstances are considered to warrant broadcasting action.

In the case of missing persons the request should be made to the Police Department, hospital authority or medical practitioner, who, if satisfied with the urgency of the request, will ask the Station manager to make the appeal. Appeals are made in the following two cases where:

1. The whereabouts of the person sought are unknown, and the circumstances warrant the broadcast.
2. The whereabouts are known but no other means of immediate communication such as telephone or telegraph are available.

Appeals for information regarding missing motor cars are made only at the request of the Police Authorities or the Automobile Association, and persons desiring broadcast announcements should deal with one of these two authorities.