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**WHATEVER HAPPENED TO TUATAPERE:  
ARE WE DOING VERY NICELY THANK YOU?**

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy in Social Work

Massey University Palmerston North  
New Zealand

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## **ABSTRACT**

The focus of this study is on a rural South Island community and how it managed the dramatic social changes over the past fifty years. Government policies, changes in international trade and markets, environmental policies, globalisation, change in the structure of local and regional government and legislative changes impacted on all New Zealanders during this period but the rural hinterland of New Zealand was affected in particular ways.

The township which is the focus of this study is Tuatapere on the south west corner of southern New Zealand. The researcher grew up in the district and witnessed the changes from a flourishing timber and farming service centre to a quaint tourist town. The residents and how these changes impacted on their lives are explored in this thesis through the eyes of eight long term residents. This is a qualitative study in which four men and four women were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire exploring their views on social change, the way the community has responded to changes in service provision, how they have managed the move from being a vibrant rural service community to a tourist town.

This thesis celebrates their successes, tells of their hardships, explores their attitudes to change, records their life work choices and decision making. Five themes were identified from the literature and provide a framework for this study: historical influences and cultural expectations, impact of Government decisions on their lives, sense of community, sense of self and access to services.

The population in rural communities has been slowly decreasing over the years as urbanisation has been a reality in New Zealand. Services within the area have diminished and younger families have moved away to seek employment elsewhere. The remaining residents are an ageing population. This brings with it a range of interesting issues for the community. The elderly have to travel for their health and other service needs and the unavailability of regular daily transport services makes it difficult for them to meet appointments. They have to rely on family and friends for transport and many no longer have the family available to support them locally.

This older population also provides the pool of volunteers for recreational and social functions. The elderly feel burdened with this responsibility. The geographical isolation provides a sense of wellbeing and attraction for the residents but it also has its disadvantages. The remoteness is a deterrent for access for tourists that would bring financial advantages to the community. The isolation is also a deterrent for new inhabitants who would provide the much needed contribution to the social functioning of the community. In spite of the aforementioned difficulties with living in a remote rural corner of New Zealand the participants expressed a determination and stoicism that can only be admired. Their life stories are presented in this research.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my parents

Hector and Iris Carr

Merrivale

and my grandparents

Charles and Elizabeth Carr

Pukemaori

True pioneers of the Tuatapere district.

## **Acknowledgments**

I am deeply grateful to Helen, Margaret, Ngarita, June, Donald, Robin, Bill and Hugh. I feel honoured that you allowed me into your homes and your lives and you shared your stories in such a trusting way. These treasured gifts are so precious and I have endeavoured to treat them with the respect each one deserves. Without your participation this research would not have been possible.

I would like to thank my thesis supervisors Rachael Selby and Helen Simmons. Your patience and encouragement as you read draft after draft and your monthly supervisory phone calls were the rocks that kept me secure in the knowledge that I could complete this research.

During the two year period of preparing this research I lost in close succession two uncles, an aunt and a sister-in-law who was also my close friend. I want to acknowledge Wal, Selwyn, Bev and Doreen, as they each resided in the Tuatapere area for some part of their lives.

I acknowledge my sisters and brothers who shared a life with me in the Merrivale valley.

Finally I want to thank my family who has supported me all the way through my academic journey culminating in this final research project. To my husband Jim I thank you for all your support and encouragement.

**“Lang may yer lum reek.”**

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## INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

“Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood,” (Madame Curie cited in ‘Quotes’ 1984). Change occurs within our lives. It is what we do with it that determines whether it is a pleasant or unpleasant experience. Social change occurs within society either by internal or external political decisions or by initiatives driven by society itself. New Zealand has witnessed significant social change over the past fifty years. The effect of these changes on society, particularly on the rural community, is examined within this study.

A significant project undertaken that informed the basis of this research was a case study on Tuatapere undertaken by Taylor, Baines & Associates, (1998). It was one of a series of three case studies of forestry communities in New Zealand funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. The methods used included an analysis of census statistics, a review of published documents and six days of interviews in Tuatapere during October and November 1997. The study found a significantly changed town following the restructuring of the Forestry Service in 1987. The town’s general population had reduced and there was a reduction in younger people resident as they had moved away to find employment elsewhere. This resulted in a depletion of services although new initiatives such as tourism, were being undertaken. This study will build on that material and provide a response from the residents ten years later.

I grew up on my parents’ farm at Merrivale a country district half way between the townships of Tuatapere and Otautau. I am the eldest daughter in a family of eight children. My paternal grandparents who lived on the original home farm around the corner at Pukemaori moved to the area in 1910 and bought their first piece of land in New Zealand. They had both emigrated from rural communities in Angus and Aberdeenshire in Scotland. Their tenacity and strong work ethic were something I understood as I grew up as it was passed on to my generation. These traits were also evident in the other Scottish settlers in Tuatapere and indeed the wider Southland area.

My memories of my grandparents are clear even though they both died before I reached my teenage years. I respected them both and loved to hear their voices, particularly

grandfather in his broad Scottish tongue. My own father used Scottish words and sayings and practices passed down from his parents that became a part of my vocabulary and life. My grandparents retired off the farm and moved to Invercargill at the end of the 1940s. They left their youngest son on the home farm, another son farming a few miles along the road and my father and his brother farming around the corner. Another son was lying in a grave in a cemetery in Suda Bay in Crete having given his life for his country during the Second World War.

My grandparents' tenacity and work ethic were clearly shown to me one day during the 1980s when I was going through a box of papers belonging to my Granny. I found her handwritten two page story titled 'The Day in the Life'. It was a description of her daily toil and hardship when they first bought the farm at Pukemaori, underpinned with the love she felt for her husband and family.

I was deeply moved as I read of the heart pouring realities of their daily life and then saw the love and sacrifice that this couple made as they eked out an existence in this new land in the Southern Ocean. I clearly understood that this is my heritage. Who my grandparents were and who my parents were is who I am. This is a legacy they have left me and I have a desire and a responsibility to respect and appreciate their lives.

Tuatapere was regarded by our family as the social centre of our lives during the 1950s and 1960s. We would travel the eleven miles to play rugby and netball (basketball it was called in those days). It was our goal to be picked for the Waiau representative teams. We visited Tuatapere for interschool functions. The agricultural and pastoral show and the New Years Day sports were major events in our lives. Dances and social gatherings drew us to the Tuatapere township as did the regular visits to the movie theatre. We passed through it on our way to Te Wae Wae or Bluecliffs beaches or to visit or hunt in Fiordland National Park.

The Tuatapere I knew as a child and youth during the 1950s and 60s is greatly changed. During those earlier days the row of shops down the main street housed thriving businesses servicing the local farming and sawmilling community. In the late 1940s to early 1960s there were, "at least three grocers, a bakery, a fish shop, an electric store, a menswear shop, a haberdashery, a shoe shop, a chemist, a restaurant, a cinema, a hotel, three garages,

a bank, three mercantile firms and a small maternity hospital” (Taylor, Baines, & Associates, 1998, p. 2).

As I travel back to the district of my childhood I witness the changes to the people and the environment. I think about the changes over the past fifty years just as my grandparents must have thought watching the changes over the previous fifty. I ask myself how the people have fared and what enables them to endure and accept change.

This research topic was chosen due to my personal involvement and attachment to the rural community and my interest in social change in communities. During the earlier years of my studies in the 1980s, I read a study conducted in the late 1970s titled ‘Why did they leave Eketahuna?’ (Glendining, 1978). This study had an impact on me as it was about change in a small rural township and I could relate to the topic as it was mirroring what was happening to the rural community in Southland. The changes occurring within rural communities over the ensuing years reminded me of this study and therefore kindled my interest in the changes to the townships of my own childhood. When an opportunity came to explore these changes within a research project I willingly took up the challenge.

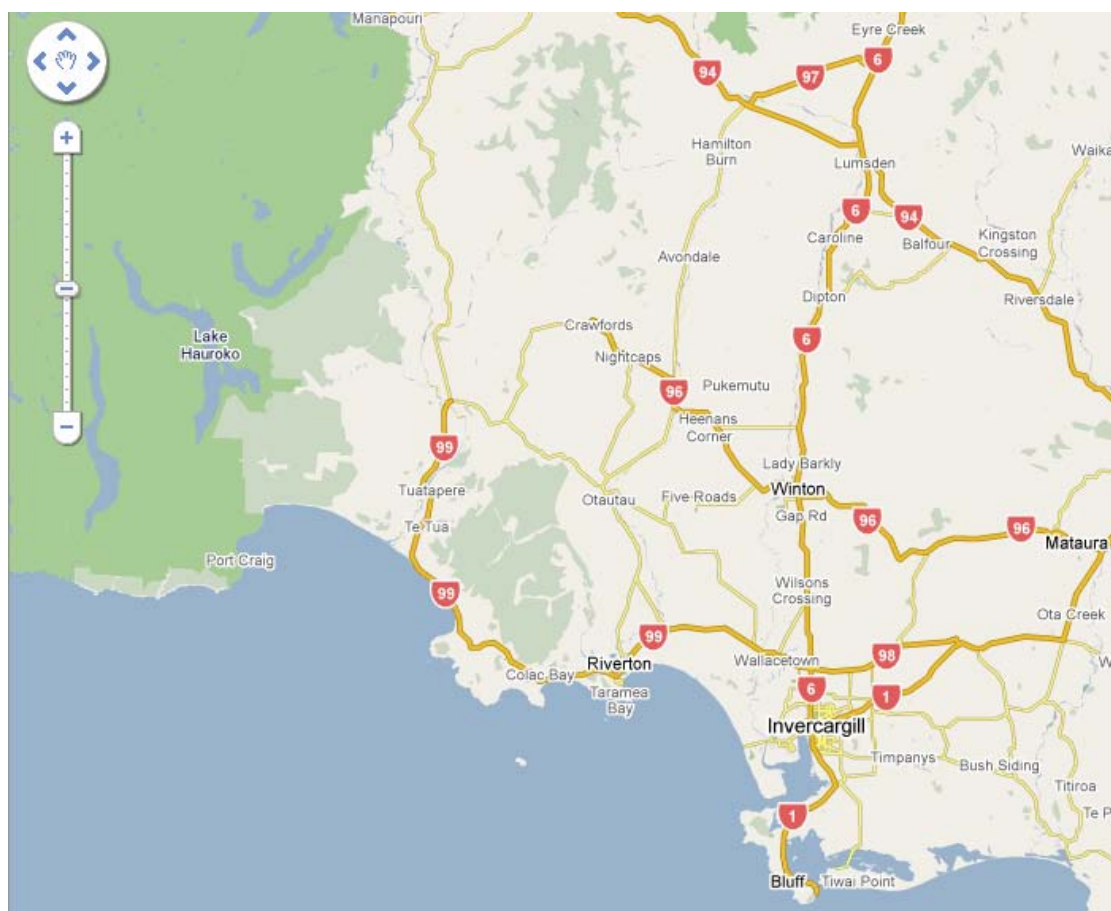
This study is about exploring the social changes on the people within the township and immediate area surrounding Tuatapere. It is about exploring the impact of the changes upon their lives. By listening to their stories we can gain insight into how they dealt with the effect of changes on themselves, their families and the community. It is also about celebrating the lives of those residents who have participated in the study and also to gain an insight into the tenacity of a people in a small rural community.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT**

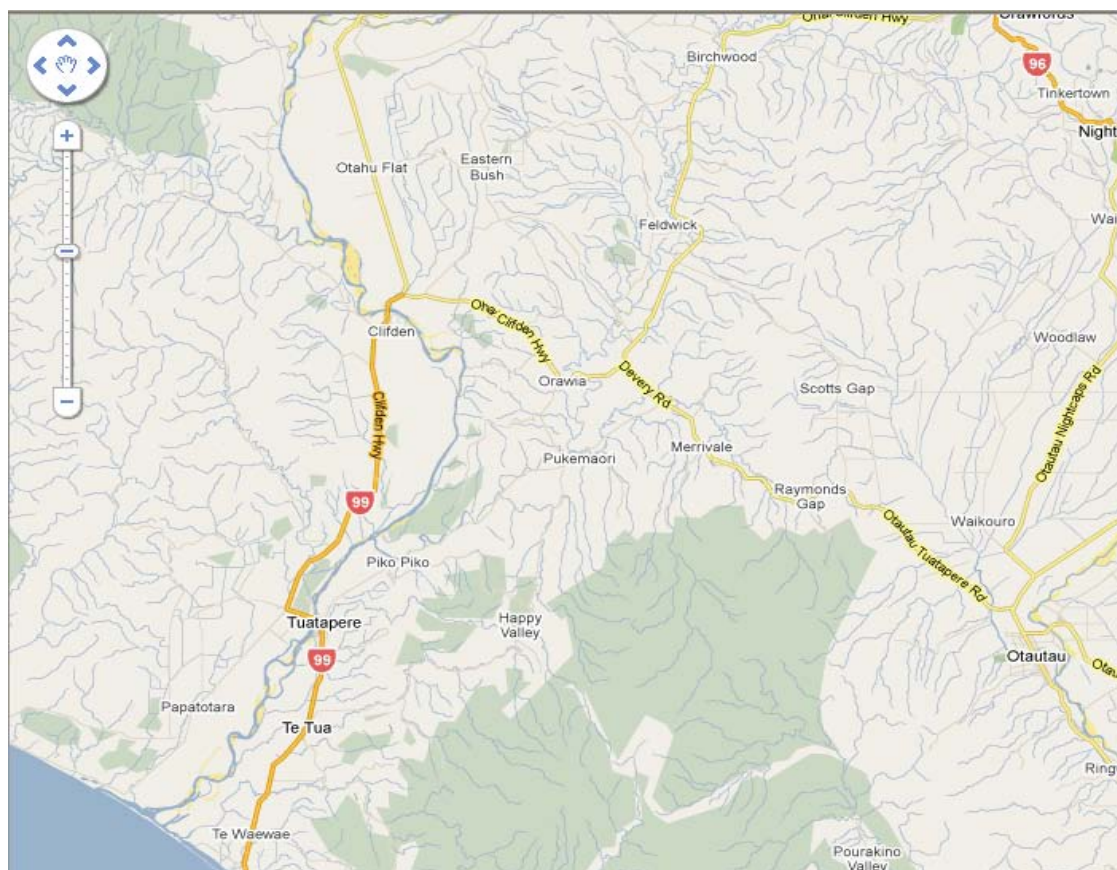
Tuatapere is a small town on the south west corner of the South Island of New Zealand. It is on the Southern Scenic Route, 87 kilometers west of Invercargill on highway 99. It was once described as a ‘hole in the bush’ built on the banks of the once mighty Waiau River that flows down from Lake Manapouri out into Te Wae Wae Bay. Unfortunately the Waiau has only a small portion of its original volume of water due to the damming of Lake Manapouri during the 1960s for hydro electricity. To the north are the Takitimu mountain ranges, to the west the Princess mountains and to the north east are the Longwoods hills

covered in native bush with some exotics planted. The Longwoods form a ridge along the South Coast from Riverton to the Merrivale valley, 15 kilometres north east of Tuatapere.

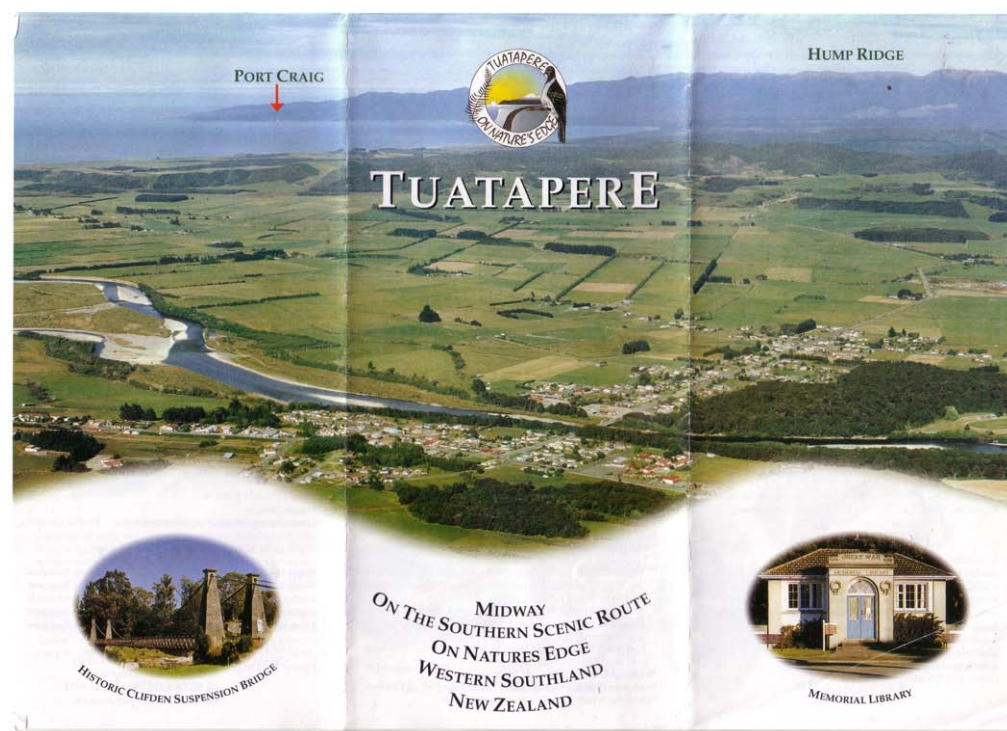
On the following page are maps of Tuatapere. There follows a series of photographs in Tuatapere including the promotional pamphlet on the Hump Track.



Above: Map showing the location of Tuatapere. Below: Tuatapere and Districts







Pamphlet Produced by Tuatapere & District Promotions INC.



Towards Tuatapere and Takitimu Mountains





Sign on Southern Entrance to Tuatapere



Main Street Tuatapere



Café on Main Street Tuatapere



Information Centre and Museum

## **HISTORIC CONTEXT**

The history of Tuatapere and its different cultures goes back to early Maori settlement. “Maori settled in the Tuatapere area following the arrival of the legendary ‘Takitimu’ canoe which entered Te Wae Wae Bay and was swamped by waves near the mouth of the Waiau River. People on board the canoe settled in the area and many of their descendants are still resident in the Tuatapere area” (Southland District Council, 1995).

The meaning of the name Tuatapere is unclear. In the District Council Report (1995) two explanations are given. The first explanation is; Tua - a ceremony before a gathering begins, Tapere – a gathering for singing and amusement. However a second preferred meaning is given. Tua – Beyond the far side, Tapere – District, with the explanation being that it is more probable “due to its relative isolation at the time the name was given” (District Council Plan, 1995, p. 5). This second explanation is the one preferred by Syd Cormack (Orwin, 1997). He was a South Island kaumatua and he states “if the name is a recent one, ‘over the ridge’ would be more appropriate; tua, over or beyond, tapere, a ridge” (Orwin, 1997).

Another explanation for the name was given in a publication written to commemorate seventy five years of education in the area. A resident of the area reported that in 1904 several residents had to decide on a name for the newly built Post Office “when someone wanted Tua-ta-pere, as it was supposed to have a nice meaning” (McLeod, 1984, p. 24). The township growing on the eastern bank of the Waiau was called Papatotara which was the name given to the original settlement on the western side. When the eastern settlement developed into a service town and the Post office was built in 1904 that was when the need for a separate identity was required and the name Tuatapere given.

An account of the early years of Tuatapere is recorded in Miller’s historical book ‘West to the Fiords’ (Miller, 1975). With a nearby settlement at Papatotara on the western side of the Waiau, a punt, then ferry were used to provide transport to the community. Several rural communities and schools were already in existence within this area. After the building of a Post Office a school opened and the railway reached Tuatapere in 1910 (Miller, 1975). A bridge was built over the Waiau in 1915.

Following Maori settlement in the area other cultures arrived. Tuatapere developed initially as “a sawmilling, flaxmilling and bush farming settlement...the mix of cultures included Maori, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Hungarian, Dutch, Polish, Australian and other components” (Southland District Council, 1995, p. 5). Many had come from the goldfields both within the area and from the outer areas. Tuatapere and indeed a great part of Southland’s rural farming community were settled during the 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier part of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries by Scottish farmers and labourers. One of the first Scottish farming families was the Erskine family who leased land in 1884 and later purchased a larger block in 1894. “Their association with the area is suitably marked by the tartan worn by the local, pipe band ...Hugh Erskine was a strong supporter of the need for the rail, later the bridge, that together allowed the development of Tuatapere as a centre” (McLeod, 1984, p. 9).

These early settlers brought a strong Protestant work ethic and a strong sense of justice and fairness. “Traditionally the way to earn respect in Tuatapere was to work hard, play sport and ensure one’s children were clean and had good manners...other values held by residents include a conservative approach to life, a respect for neighbours and friends, and a love of outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing” (Taylor, Baines & Associates, 1998, p.15). These historical influences of culture and tradition brought with them values that were shared among the community. This study explores whether changes within the community impacted upon the values and whether a traditional influence still exists.

## **BACKGROUND TO CHANGES IN TUATAPERE**

Fifty years ago Tuatapere’s main industry was logging of the local indigenous forests. This provided employment in the logging and milling industries. A review of the role of indigenous forestry on Tuatapere (Higham, Menzies, & Bush, 1977) revealed that “51% of all employment in Tuatapere in 1977 and half the population was directly dependent on forestry” (Houghton, King & Piper, 1996, p. 50). Local clubs, societies, and the social services were dependent on the forestry sector.

The 1987 restructuring of the New Zealand Forest Service had significant effects on local communities. The number of residents aged 40 years and over has been steadily increasing, despite the decrease in the total population of Tuatapere (Statistics NZ:2006).



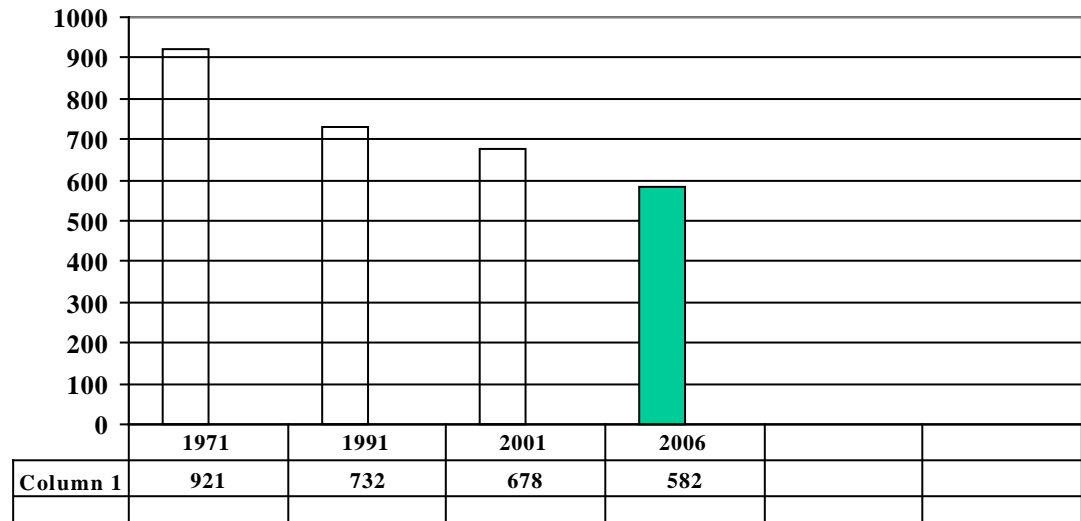


Figure 1. Population of Tuatapere 1971-2006

An insight into the sawmilling industry in Tuatapere and its demise was documented by a local historian, Alan Templeton, who interviewed many involved in the industry. This historical research recorded the existence of many sawmills in the area and people's stories of their involvement in the sawmilling industry. He reported that during the years from 1877 to 1995 there were 120 sawmills in Tuatapere and its peripheries (Templeton, 1995). At the beginning of 2008 there were just two sawmills in Tuatapere, a family owned business and a multi-national firm. However a 2008 report in the Southland Times stated "A long-running Tuatapere sawmill is shutting up shop amid fears in the industry of wider closures". The poignancy of this is captured in the following recorded about this sawmiller in 1998. "Only two sawmills continue to operate in Tuatapere, yet their relationships with the community are entirely different. Johnsons is family owned and operated in the district for many years. In a township where forestry was regarded as *the life and blood of the town*, Johnsons with its long term commitment to indigenous logging has become part of the township's ethos" (Taylor, Baines & Associates, 1998, p14).

In Tuatapere, due to the social changes and the impact on the communities, local services were diminishing and mirroring what was happening within other rural centres. Banks were closing and there was no public access to ATM (automatic transaction machine) other than at the local hotel. There is no Post Office and services are provided by an existing shop that includes postal services within its line of trade. There is one grocery store and several small food outlets and cafes. Stock and station firms have left the township and

more recently the Department of Conservation withdrew its remaining staff and relocated them to Invercargill.

The medical practice and maternity home is managed by a charitable trust. This trust was established by the community in the late 1980s when the then Area Health Board announced it was going to close the local maternity hospital. “It took over the operation of this facility from the Area Health Board and divided up the building with the maternity service in one part and the local medical practice in the other. The trustees appointed a manager, contracted out the catering, and employed local midwives and a doctor to provide services when required” (Taylor, Baines & Associates, 1998, p. 13). The nearest hospital is in Invercargill 87 kms away. A St Johns Ambulance service is based in Tuatapere and has been providing an emergency service to the community for the past thirty five years.

Education services in the rural communities were also greatly affected by education reforms in 1989 and Tuatapere was affected. A clear example of the result of the Education decisions, was a heading in the local Southland newspaper regarding the Tuatapere school. “Ministry withholds funds for boiler. Children shiver while officials debate costs” (‘Ministry withholds funds,’ 2008). The article went on to explain how the school boiler was removed after it stopped working, but the Ministry of Education was refusing to fund a replacement until the college agreed to pay \$80,000 to connect to the town’s new sewerage scheme. Apparently the school had not included that cost in their funding plan. Financial blackmail was carried out by the funders while the children froze at school. The emphasis was on funding and finances rather than on the children’s health and wellbeing. This was a clear example of the market economy philosophy superseding the wellbeing of the school children.

In Tuatapere and its surrounding country districts within a seventeen kilometer radius, there has been a reduction from eleven country schools in the 1950s to two in 2006 (Boyle, 1991; McLeod, 1984; NZ Post Primary Teachers Assn, 1993). With these educational changes came new issues for the community. They include transport of children to the school now at a distance from their homes and the effect on the children of the earlier start to their day and of their later arrival to home at the end of the day (Dunedin Children’s Issues Centre, 2002; Treeby & Burtenshaw, 2003). In 1984 Waiau College in Tuatapere, had a roll of 280 children but 14 years later it had fallen to 150. This affected the courses

that the College could offer to students and so some students were attending boarding schools out of the district (Taylor Baines & Associates, 1998). In 2001 the primary and secondary schools combined to form the Tuatapere Community College.

The railway which connected the township to other parts of Southland closed around 1970 (Taylor, Baines & Associates, 1998). With the rail service to this small rural township being closed timber and goods were transported by road in what was considered a more financially viable and competitive mode of transportation. Tuatapere does have a daily bus service that runs to Invercargill via Otautau and a Spitfire Shuttle that travels through Tuatapere from Te Anau to Invercargill. However this service does not allow people to go to Invercargill for the day to attend specialist's visits and return home at night. A service such as this was provided by two different bus services in the 1950s and 1960s but then ceased in the 1970s. The elderly who require services beyond what the local community can provide have to rely on family or friends to transport them out of the district.

The Tuatapere Resource Centre was established following the reorganisation of the Forest Service. It operated an advisory service for local residents, acted as a base for adult education and a community worker, and had a visitors information centre with an attached crafts shop and museum" (Taylor, Baines & Associates, 1998, p. 13).

Following local government amalgamation in 1989 Tuatapere was administered by a town board while the surrounding rural area was governed by the Wallace County Council. Both the township and rural area are now part of the Southland District and residents elect a Community Board and representatives on the District Council (Taylor Baines & Associates, 1998).

During 1994 the local community board in Tuatapere along with the District Council called a public meeting to consider the type of community the residents would like to see developing in the Tuatapere area in the future (Southland District Council, 1995). As a result amongst other ideas a promotional video was completed and circulated to promote the Tuatapere area. Search and rescue beacons were purchased and made available for trampers and hunters and an overall theme 'On Natures Edge' was created.

Amongst the projects identified was a major undertaking to establish a walking track called 'The Hump Track' that includes the historic Port Craig Viaducts. This has been successfully achieved to the credit of the local people.

Once the Hump Track was established the management and promotional role was contracted out under a corporate model. A board of local people still existed in a governance role but the day to day running of bookings and publicity was administered by a tourist operator. The Visitors Information Centre then stopped being a place that was staffed by volunteers with their local crafts on display and became a business focused on bookings for the Hump Track and for general tourist information. This has since changed and the day to day running of the Track is back to being administered by the Trust. The Hump Track Trust is currently exploring new ideas to fill its quota of daily walkers. "In employment terms, tourism accounts for between 10 to 12 percent of Southland's labour force and this is forecast to increase...remains a growing provider of employment and economic activity in Tuatapere (Venture Southland's Report, 2005, p. 8).

## **CONCLUSION**

Tuatapere has changed from logging and milling of indigenous forest and changes in the methods and ownership of surrounding farms, to a developing tourist centre (Houghton, King & Piper, 1997). Local businesses have changed in their focus from supporting and servicing the large farming and milling community that has now diminished, to this developing tourist trade. Today the Tuatapere township has craft shops, painting studios, cafes, camping ground, backpackers, motels, and farm stays.

The Tuatapere of my childhood has changed over the past fifty years. This study is about the effect of those changes on residents in the Tuatapere township. The following chapters will explain how the study was conducted and the findings from the study.

## **ORIENTATION TO THE CHAPTERS**

### **THE CHAPTERS**

Chapter One introduces the literature review that has provided a basis for the research. This includes the changes in government in New Zealand over the past fifty years and how



legislation and policy changes have impacted on the community. Reference is made to the effect of globalisation on the country and how economic and political changes were made to accommodate a changing world. These changes are explored at a national level then literature examined within the rural communities.

Chapter Two outlines the methodology. Qualitative research with the life story method was chosen for this study. By listening to the stories of the people we can gain meaning of the impact of changes on their lives over the past fifty years. Eight audio taped interviews were recorded then transcribed. The study was conducted within the parameters of Massey University's Code of Ethical Conduct.

Chapter Three presents the interviews with four men and four women. All the participants were over sixty years of age as they had to be able to clearly recall the events over the past fifty years and the impact on their lives. They represented industry and businesses pertinent to the Tuatapere area. Both men and women were chosen due to the changes in both roles over the years. The interviews are presented under the five themes that emerged from the Literature Review.

Chapter Four provides an analysis of the interviews. This analysis considers the stories presented under the five themes alongside the literature presented in Chapter One and the wider policy perspectives.

Chapter Five contains the conclusions. An examination of the findings is made and related back to social change in a rural community over the past fifty years. These findings show the character of the residents of Tuatapere as well as how rural communities have developed a resilience to change.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Economic and political decisions made nationally and internationally have greatly affected the structure of New Zealand society over the past fifty years. Research shows the effect of these decisions on the people both within the urban and rural areas. For the purpose of this study particular reference is made to the rural community.

The themes that emerge are: the level of social change, the sense of past and how historical and cultural expectations influence expectations, the impact of government decisions over fifty years and how these have affected the people, a sense of community and integration into it, a sense of self and identity, empowerment for change and ability to access services.

### **SOCIAL CHANGE**

New Zealand does not stand apart from the rest of the world with the changes made economically, politically, and socially during the past fifty years. These three areas are intertwined and impact on each other therefore having an effect on communities both at a national and international level. Technology, with improved communication systems and modes of transporting goods world wide, has enabled the market place to be seen on a global perspective rather than one defined by a country's borders (Trost, 1998). New Zealand is no exception to this with its strong dependence now on the effects of world economy.

The smaller countries in the western world including New Zealand have become dependant on larger economies such as United Kingdom, Europe, North America and Asia. Foreign capital supports development in these smaller countries and assists with short falls. This same foreign capital can also be withdrawn when the country has internal economic or political difficulties. Trade amongst countries and the shift of monies by multinational firms in and out of countries is done to serve the interests of the company rather than the wellbeing of the country (Trost, 1998). These economic decisions have political consequences for nations and new policies are introduced to counteract the country's financial instability. This results in a social impact on the country's communities by withdrawal of services or funding that otherwise would have been available (Trost, 1998).

Social change studies in New Zealand have varied from ethnographic, quantitative studies incorporating statistical ebbs and flows, to cultural and social, qualitative and narrative studies. The studies have varied from urban perspectives on specific social problems at one end of the continuum to land use in rural communities at the other (Houghton, King & Piper, 1996; Taylor, Baines & Associates, 1998; Trost, 1998). These particular studies show the impact on communities to varying degrees by decisions made by government and policy makers at a local and national level.

### **Post War Years**

Fifty years ago during the post war era, New Zealand was regarded as England's market garden. Produce grown in New Zealand such as meat, and milk products, butter and cheese, was exported to Britain. Along with the major wool export, New Zealand had a guaranteed export market for these primary agricultural products. Likewise forestry was flourishing in New Zealand with an overseas demand for the timber. During the 1950s and 1960s New Zealand enjoyed full employment. Cities flourished with the money invested by the wealthy rural communities (King, 2003).

Rural towns grew with stock and station agents setting up businesses and other merchandise firms also becoming established. Services for the rural people that included education and health grew to meet the requirements of the local communities. "The 1950s was generally a prosperous decade-especially after the Korean War created a sales boom for New Zealand wool...Agriculture remained the country's dominant industry, though the manufacturing and forestry sectors were beginning to expand" (King, 2003, p. 433). "They were years of relatively stable government under Labour, and then National Party rule, of full employment and affluence" (Tennant, Sanders, O'Brien & Castle, 2006, p. 10).

However "From the late 1960s, social change and economic instability became dominant motifs shaping New Zealand life" (Tennant et al, 2006, p, 10). In 1973 Britain joined the European Economic Community and began to withdraw its support of New Zealand's exports. New Zealand had to find new markets abroad and a period of fluctuating prices followed. "When Britain entered the European Community in 1973, Aotearoa /New Zealand lost favoured status for its exports. Oil price increases in the mid-1970s compounded economic difficulties and unemployment, virtually unknown in the 1950s,

started to rise. The viability of the welfare state was questioned on moral, as well as, economic grounds” (Tennant et al. 2006, p 10).

Highs and lows in the farming industry were smoothed out with government farm subsidies and tax incentives. Supplementary Minimum Payments (SMPs) whereby a guaranteed minimum price was paid to farmers for their lambs, were introduced by the National Government during the 1970s -1980s under Prime Minister Robert Muldoon’s leadership (Trost, 1998). The state owned rural bank introduced low interest rates. These measures provided the farmers with a guaranteed income but masked the real market value of their products. During this period of time a huge overseas debt was accumulated in New Zealand to cover deficiencies in budget decisions and to ensure the dollar remained stable in the international economic market (Trost, 1998).

### **1984-1990s**

In 1984 came a change of government and a dramatic change in economic policies with the election of the Fourth Labour Government. The struggling New Zealand export market could no longer be sustained by government subsidies and tax incentives. Roger Douglas, the then Minister of Finance, introduced economic policies that had a dramatic effect on not only the farming community but for the whole of New Zealand (King, 2003). These policies saw deregulation of the economy where interest rates were brought into line with market rates.

The most significant change for farmers was the removal of supplementary minimum payments (SMPs). There was now no guaranteed income for meat and wool as prices were dependant on the fluctuating world market. In Southland “this is reported to have left many farm properties vulnerable” (Houghton, King and Piper, 1996, p. 2). Farmers were forced to manage farms as businesses and change their practices.

This change of policies was not just a solution to deal with New Zealand’s economic situation but it was mirroring what was already happening in other countries in the world. “Restructuring of national economies was occurring across much of the world, promoted by the key international economic institutions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)”

(Kelsey, 1990, p. 35). In New Zealand, the rural community was confronted with the withdrawal of taxpayer support and the need to manage debt.

The new philosophy of a market economy where prices were paid according to what the market dictated, introduced the concept of a level playing field, and created a significant dilemma for the farmers. Many farmers were carrying large debts after years of encouragement by financiers. They had borrowed from the banks and over capitalised in their farms. Interest rates increased and land values plummeted. The government's economic policies of removal of financial risk from the government to the farmers, was keenly felt by many farmers and had a dramatic effect on them (Kelland, 1993). Spending was tightened and the farmers persevered or looked for opportunities of diversification (Christie, 1991; Kelland, 1993).

Diversification helped some of the farmers to sustain an economic unit during these years of financial hardship. However for many they had to sell their farms and move to find other employment (Christie, 1991). In some cases family farms that had been in the family for generations were sold. These farms were often too small within the new economic climate and they were bought by neighbours to enlarge their own farms or sold to large business conglomerates. This hardship had a spin off to the surrounding communities and towns (Wilson, 1992). Families that had been in the district for generations left, reducing school numbers and also reducing the social capital that these families had invested in communities with their local knowledge and commitment to the area (Powell, 2005).

The financial impact on farmers had a flow on effect on local businesses. Businesses that once flourished felt the lack of spending by the farmers and many closed. Stock firms and banks started retrenching and moving their services into nearby cities. This meant that the rural community had to source their services and supplies from a township further away at a greater cost due to travel and transport costs. With the closure of shops and stock and station firms, this created a loss of job opportunities for the community especially school leavers.

The search for employment now became an issue for a population that previously had full employment. (Burborough & Trost, 2000; Fairweather, 1988; Trost, 1998). The Ministry of Social Development Report (2004) showed that the employment rate declined between

the years 1987- 1992. Although this affected all age groups it was most pronounced for young people aged 15-24. The employment rate increased later, steadily from 1992 and then dipped during the economic downturn in 1997 and 1998.

It was not only the farmers that were affected by the economic policies of the Fourth Labour Government. As part of the free market philosophy state owned corporations were privatised. The forestry industry saw a major reshuffling that affected all forestry townships and communities throughout New Zealand. The state was involved in the management of indigenous forests. The Forest Service provided inspection and other services to the owners of this resource. Planting of exotic trees was undertaken and regeneration of indigenous forests trialled. In 1987 the Forest Service was restructured and plantation forests and state-owned mills were sold to multi national companies (Taylor, Baines & Associates, 1998). This impacted on rural communities by families having to move out of the district to seek employment elsewhere. This had a large impact on schools with the rolls dropping and schools either closing down or losing resources made available based on roll numbers.

Other changes were happening in the social world as well. During the 1970s “New Zealand women organised themselves into small leaderless groups for conscious-raising meetings...The ground for such a movement was fertile because of what most women – and many men – could see was the second class status of women in such areas as employment opportunities, rates of pay, excessive domestic responsibilities and education” (King, 2003, p. 462). In the 1980s these efforts resulted in improvements in opportunities and pay for women.

During this time “in the 1970s a new generation of educated young Maori radicals formed such protest groups as Nga Tamatoa...In the 1980s biculturalism became an official part of government policy and an acknowledgement of biculturalism and Treaty principles an expectation of bodies interacting with government” (Tennant, Sanders, O’Brien & Castle, 2006, p. 11). The impact of this was an increased awareness of the partnership principles of the Treaty and the need for this to become integral to the fabric of Aotearoa/New Zealand society.

### 1990s - 2009

Following the 1980s there was a period of transition and then the settling down or ‘post-structuring environment in the 1990s’. “Despite the controversies generated by Labour’s 1984-90 reforms, few of them were reversed by subsequent administrations” (King, 2003, p. 495). When National came into power in 1990 it “responded to the fiscal crisis by making large cuts in welfare expenditure, increasing the degree of targeting education, health care, and income maintenance” (Boston & Dalziel, 1992, p. 7). Jim Bolger the Prime Minister quoted a philosophy based on “fairness, self-reliance, efficiency, and greater personal choice” (Boston & Dalziel, 1992, p.7). This was challenged as “the Government appears to mean not that individuals should be able to care for themselves but that they should become dependant on their immediate families and voluntary agencies rather than the state” (Boston & Dalziel, 1992, p.7). Although this government also targeted health and education with some restructuring policies, its major cut was in social welfare expenditure. Local body services were targeted in the new millennium.

Local and regional government was reorganised by the Local Government Act 2002, “Some 500 local authorities and special purpose boards were reduced to less than 100...the Bill of Rights and Resource Management Act were devised” (King, 2003, p.491).

Economically the free market philosophy continued within all sectors of society throughout this period. New Zealand became very much a competitor in the international world market. Globalisation became a reality within the economic sphere and extended into the social policy arena as well. New Zealand looked to trends overseas when considering welfare, health or education policy decisions and in some cases followed accordingly.

For the rural communities, especially in Southland, large corporations were established for milk production and the planting of exotic trees for milling and processing for the overseas markets. This has brought a wealth into the provinces that has not been seen for a number of years. The effect on the environment has yet to be realised. “The most important social challenges of the new era would be those surrounding the sustainable use of the country’s primary resources, finding sufficient stable markets abroad for its goods and services to sustain the degree of prosperity most New Zealanders had come to expect, constructing a welfare system that helped the genuine needy but did not at the same time drain the

enterprise of the potentially able, and negotiating a new social contract between Maori and Pakeha” (King 2003, p. 506).

The post war years saw a prosperous time in New Zealand with its major agricultural export market thriving as Britain re-established itself. This changed with the United Kingdom’s entry into the European Economic Community in 1973. An increase in oil prices added to New Zealand’s economic instability. Subsidies introduced into the rural farm sector allowed guaranteed prices for produce but this contributed to the huge overseas debt. During the 1980s drastic economic decisions were made that included deregulation of the dollar and the removal of farm subsidies. New Zealand became part of an international market led economy. This impacted on rural New Zealand. Diversification was trialled by some and others simply had to change their occupation and lifestyle.

Social change over the past fifty years has gone down a path starting with strong state control and intervention to a liberal market model. Decisions were made for liberal and economic reasons following global trends that have impacted on services available to the people of Aotearoa/ New Zealand.

## **EFFECT ON SOCIAL SERVICES**

The first Labour Government, 1935-1949 set up the Welfare State which promoted a concept of state provision of services “from the cradle to the grave”(King, 2003, p. 358). Health, Education and Welfare were necessary services provided largely by government for New Zealand citizens and the expectation was that this would continue and be provided through the tax system. The main expectation was that the people of New Zealand had a right to expect an adequate standard of care provided at the State’s expense. This included free education, free medical care and assistance and support from the welfare system when needed.

### **Welfare**

During the 1950s and 1960s, the welfare state in New Zealand flourished (Tennant, Sanders, O’Brien & Castle, 2006). Financial benefits were available for those with an illness or disability, widowed, or unemployed and a family benefit for children. The Domestic Purposes Benefit was introduced in 1973 (Cheyne, O’Brien & Belgrave, 2005). Every New Zealander felt secure in the knowledge that when they retired they were



eligible for an Old Age Pension established first in 1898 for those with genuine need. This then became a government funded superannuation scheme for all persons aged sixty years and over in 1935 and later changed to aged sixty five.

The State had a benevolent role of being the protector of its people. Social control was the focus with the State having a strong interventionist approach. By the late 1970s this was starting to change. “New Zealand was among the eight largest welfare spenders in the early 1960s, by the 1970s it was rated among the welfare state laggards” (Shirley, 1990, p. 140). Welfare spending was not keeping up with the costs of living and a change in policy resulted in increased social needs.

The policy changes made by the fourth Labour government in 1984 and then the National government that came to power in 1990, continued this restructuring theme into the social policy field (Boston & Dalziel, 1992). The philosophical understanding of the benevolent welfare state changed to one of being residual and providing a safety net role only. The new thinking was that the state as an institution only had a limited responsibility towards its people. The community was expected to care for its own families. The concept of user pays, was introduced into not only the economic sector but also into the social service sector.

The Nanny State or Mother State were terms used for the period when the government took a strong intervention approach for the welfare of its people. Over the ensuing fifty years this approach changed with the introduction of the business model into the Welfare sector. The current National Government continues with its policy of restructuring and downsizing the social service areas. Private enterprise or community initiatives are expected to meet the social needs of the people.

## **Health**

In the Health sector 1950-1967 was regarded as the Welfare State period, the period of insulation. Free health care was determined on need rather than on who could afford to pay (Easton, 1980). The government subsidy at the time covered the doctor's fee but eventually the general practitioner's costs outgrew the level of the subsidy (Cheyne, O'Brien & Belgrave, 2005).

1967-1984 was termed the vulnerable economy and the reluctant Welfare State (Shirley, 1994). The philosophy of the user pays in the economic reforms was extended into the health arena. It became a user-pays rather than needs-based provision of services. Major reforms occurred between 1974 and 2000 with the establishing of Health Boards, disestablishing of them and then establishing again. The health emphasis was placed on preventative care. Services were purchased from providers which could be private enterprise, community trusts and non - profit organisations. User part charges were made for medical visits and prescription charges introduced. Means testing on family unit income was introduced with a Community Services Card being issued for those on lower incomes to enable a reduced fee for doctors and pharmaceutical requirements (Boston & Dalziel, 1992).

Fifty years of changes in the health sector has resulted in a system based on the 'user pay' concept. The government has changed the emphasis of its role from provider to educator and contracted out the provision of health services to the community. For communities this has provided opportunities for local initiatives to be implemented.

### **Education**

The education reforms of 1989 followed the same open market philosophy as that imposed in the health and economic sector. In 1988 a policy document entitled 'Tomorrows Schools' proposed the abolition of Education Boards. Boards of Trustees were to be established including the development of charters for each school. The financial management of each school was to be devolved to the Board of Trustees. It was also proposed that an Education Review Office and New Zealand Qualifications Authority be established. These initiatives came within the Education Amendment Act 1989 (Butterworth, 1998). Communities now had greater control to make decisions about their local education services.

The election of the National government in 1990 resulted in further changes. These included small country schools being amalgamated and the sale of their assets assisted funding for maintenance and other spending. With the Boards of Trustees managing all funding decisions, this helped to "push budget oversight in education back into the community" (Fulcher & Ainsworth, 1994, p. 6). Communities now had control of employment of staff, setting budgets, maintenance and the purchasing of teaching

resources. Education decision making has been devolved from Central Government down to the School Boards of Trustees. The business model has created an opportunity for schools to take responsibility for their own schools but this has led to inequities in education provision across the country. In smaller rural communities opportunities for greater decision making are available but financial need can often negate these positives.

## **IMPACT ON RURAL COMMUNITIES**

The economic and social policies that changed with the successive governments and the decisions that were made, impacted on the community depending on their value systems, expectations of government and how they construed and made sense of the world around them. The availability and accessibility of social services such as health services, welfare and medical assistance, transport, educational and employment opportunities varied from community to community.

Today a different socio-economic climate exists and rural communities are no longer seen as the thriving agricultural hubs of past years. Other or fewer industries exist, that have either changed the focus of the towns or reduced the population. The focus of towns supported by the large farming and sawmilling communities in the past, has changed. With the restructuring of the Forestry Service in 1987 and the changes in farming in the 1980s, many rural towns have reduced. These small towns have only core services to provide for the immediate needs of its inhabitants. With improvement in the roads and transport technology, the population has become more mobile. The larger cities provide the needs that are no longer available in the smaller towns.

### **Depopulation**

One of the major impacts on the rural communities from these changes has been the reduction in population. Today in 2009, the New Zealand population is highly urbanised. “At the 2001 Census, 86 percent of the population was living in an urban area” (Ministry of Social Development Report 2004, p. 15). In 2006 83% were living in an urban area (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). The reasons for this change were given as a natural increase of births exceeding deaths and an increase in migration. It also indicates a shift in employment opportunities in the rural community to the urban environment otherwise known as urbanisation. This drift to the towns occurs due to the changes in the rural communities and has been a feature of New Zealand society since the post war period.

A study carried out in 1978 on Eketahuna a small North Island community showed that a decrease in the rural population was happening at that time. It was acknowledged that Eketahuna's population was decreasing at a greater rate than other rural towns. The main reasons for those leaving were for better employment opportunities and for the children's education (Glendining, 1978). The years following 1978 saw other country districts following the same pattern of urban drift. In recent years some of these smaller towns near larger cities have become popular again as people move out to gain the benefits from living in a smaller community. Many still commute into work to the larger city.

Changes in economic and political decisions over the past years have seen services diminish or disappear in the rural sector. This resulted in depopulation in some rural areas and quickened the already existing urbanisation drift. The impact on the community made it more difficult for those left to maintain the necessary services such as health and education facilities. The opportunities for diversification and the exploration of local initiatives have seen industries such as tourism emerge and develop.

## **HISTORICAL INFLUENCES AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS**

As a result of the changes in the rural communities and as the people disperse, the values and beliefs of the people shift. In the past the traditions and beliefs from the first settlers of the rural communities continued down through the generations. They were upheld and kept by the generations following on.

The predominant culture of the early European settlers to the Tuatapere area was Scottish. Culture has been described as being very complex in meaning and understanding (Connolly, Crighton- Hill & Ward, 2006). For the purpose of this study culture is identified as a way of life possibly influenced by a person's country of origin. This involves shared practices, including beliefs, values and norms. For the residents of Tuatapere the shared practices of their parents and grandparents are not the only attributes that determine one's culture for these descendants of the Scottish settlers. A shared belief and value system is also evident from their culture.

Howden (2001) in her study on rural communities perceptions and experiences of 'community' conducted in southern Southland, found that rural New Zealanders are parochial and retain traditional values and roles. The family farm helped to maintain the

historic structures and beliefs. Change occurred more rapidly in the technological field with modernisation of farm equipment than it did in people's values and relationships. "As each farm passed from generation to generation links between families in the country were maintained" (Pitt, 1998, p. 47).

With the economic changes in the 1980s many of these generational family farms were sold and communities dispersed and the old connections were broken. New ways of operating came into being and introduced new thoughts into the established belief systems of the people. The impact of economic and social changes is evident in listening to the stories and reflections on the changing times, on those who remain as rural dwellers.

### **SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND RURAL EXPECTATIONS**

The historical influences on the cultures of the inhabitants of the rural communities were passed down to create a shared understanding. The definition of a community is complex and varied. One definition is "a space filled with people acting out their lives" (Joseph & Chalmers, 1995). The 'space' can be defined as the physical location and 'acting out their lives' as activities

A sense of community can vary from community to community. Howden's (2001) study on the sense of community within rural context, saw community once viewed as fixed, now viewed as fluid and dependent on the different people at the different times. Howden found that the meanings of community varied, depending on whether one was locally born and bred or a newcomer. The locals saw community as something that bound them together whereas the newcomer related it more to connection to social groups. The practice of involvement in social groups such as sports or interest groups however often meant a gender split and this was "reproducing the ways it has always been" (Howden, 2001, p. 142). Stephenson (1982) suggested that a community could be viewed as the physical, geographical location that bound people together or the emotional attachment of being involved in a social activity together.

People's sense of community and their thoughts and feelings on what was happening to them, their own families and community changed as they were threatened and challenged. The closure of schools or community halls, the spaces or structures for the community to gather, reduced the opportunity for practices to continue. "The closing of the district

schools and halls took away a good deal of the friendship and social life” (Glendining, 1978, p. 44). This was an example of government policies such as education decisions, affecting the locals’ opportunity to affirm their sense of community. “They saw themselves affected, not insulated, by economic and political process nationally and globally (Howden, 2001, p. 106).

The change from sheep farming to dairying, the influx of North Island farmers and the focus on the international markets, all affected how the social and community life within the area was changing. The increasing dominance of multinational companies which is characterised by capital investment beyond a nation’s border brought new families who have converted farms to dairy units, and have brought a new mindset which is to work hard and make a profit (Howden, 2001). “People don’t realise how hard a few people work to make the community hang together” (Howden 2001, p. 12). “I’ve been here 30 years and still find it difficult. Another woman had shifted in from an adjacent district and said she felt like a newcomer” (McMath & Smith, 1988, pp. 54-55). Residents who already had their family and an established circle of friends were sometimes reluctant to get to know new people.

Social differences related to occupation. The farm service sector had a lower status than farmers. Likewise within the sawmilling industry there was a status established. Those who were mill managers had a higher status than others in the town and even amongst the different mills there was a certain prestige enjoyed for those employed by certain companies (Taylor, Baines, & Associates, 1998). It was noted that nationally the benefit cuts of 1991 and changes in state housing policy put pressure on low-income families. Many young solo mothers and benefit recipients moved to rural areas such as Tuatapere to take advantage of low cost housing and this “created barriers between them and long term residents” (Taylor Baines & Associates, 1998, p. 15). Factionalism was also based on organised group membership such as sports or church membership. The church once a focal point in the community, but due to the diminishing population, soon became a thing of the past in some places.

The once stable rural environment with its shared values and traditions and strong sense of community has been unsettled by the changing environment. The different occupations and lifestyles entering and leaving the rural areas have impacted upon it. The sense of

belonging by those who have recently moved into a new community is weaker than those who have been established for a longer period of time. This is demonstrated through how the individual integrates into the community, how they view themselves, how they view others and ultimately on how the community views itself as a whole.

### **SENSE OF SELF AND OWN IDENTITY**

A sense of one's past and how this influences who one is today determines one's integration into the community and one's sense of self. Feminist writers believe that the differences in society are created by the division of power held by the males in a patriarchal social structure (Millett, 1970). This division of power was evident when economic policies favoured men and created women's economic dependence upon men (Briar, 1992). The belief that all men individually or as a group have this power of oppression over women or whether it is the political, economic and cultural structures determined by patriarchy, is challenged by Pitt (1998). She maintains that the structures need to be explored rather than the individuals. Pitt's (1998) research on the social realities of rural women showed diversity amongst the women interviewed. Each person's reality showed a uniqueness for themselves alongside a shared reality with other women. By speaking with the residents of a community one can learn how they view their lives and make sense of their environment.

### **Women's Role**

During the nineteenth century, the pioneer stage of early New Zealand settlement, the struggle with the land was the main focus and the men and women depended on each other within that struggle. Their energy went into ensuring a self-sufficient colonial household and the balance of power shared to a degree between the men and women (Dalziel, 1986). This changed once the land was secured and other forms of labour off the land were sought. The shared role of men and women working together for self sufficiency became divided by the man focusing on wage earning often outside the home and the woman taking responsibility for the home maintenance and care giving role (James & Saville-Smith, 1989).

The women's role within the rural community was clearly defined fifty years ago. The woman was viewed as a 'helpmeet' for their husband. Very rarely were they included in the ownership of the farm or business and there existed a clear expectation of her being the

carer and support person. The strong male focused environment sustained the norms within society of the hardworking husband and the supportive stay at home wife in the caregiving role. There was a clear demarcation of roles within the households. The male was defined as the 'breadwinner' and his wife and children as 'dependants' (Briar, 1992, James & Saville-Smith, 1989). This 'gendered culture' was not just the natural chosen division in roles but one that society affirmed and applauded and maintained the division. A gendered culture "in which the intimate and structural expressions of social life are divided according to gender" (James & Saville-Smith, 1989, p. 11).

The community's shared view sometimes had an impact on how the individual viewed themselves. Allan, (2006) explored farm women's integration into farm life and farming communities in the South Island. She found that "farming culture in New Zealand has a strong history of the hardworking, domesticated and resourceful woman 'standing by her man' and supporting him in his work" (Allan, 2006, p.1). This historical rural cultural expectation then became a conflict for the post modern women as they struggled to establish their own identity. Farmer's wives were often led by emotional choice being marriage to a farmer rather than their husband's choice of farming as a career. The women had limited opportunities of employment due to isolation and lack of access to viable alternatives. They were living within a "historically conservative culture with its defined gender roles and expectations" (Allan, 2006, p. 4).

These roles changed as the need to work outside the home became evident. Research nationally on farming women showed that many of them looked to the nearest city to gain employment if not for a financial need then for a personal desire to pursue a career. This was a huge culture shock to the dominant rural male who was used to being the main breadwinner and having his wife available to assist with farm work (Allan, 2006; Maguire, 1999; Phillips, 1996). For the women themselves they had a shift in their involvement in the community and now had to reduce the amount of voluntary work that they had been able to do in the past, due to time constraints. (Bedford, 2001; Little, 1997; McMath & Smith, 1988; Rivers, 1997; W.D.F.F, 1990).

The availability of women to participate in the voluntary roles in the community continued to diminish with the economic downturn. Working off the farm was not now a choice but a necessity and many had to seek employment out of the home and district. Rural women



tended to view themselves “as central to maintenance of ideal rural community” (Pitt, 1998:74). The Women’s Division of Federated Farmers suffered loss of members due to the changing focus of the women’s role in the community. (WDFF, 1990). The groups or systems within the environment that were strong in the past were now weakening. These strong women’s groups often used the power of their large membership to affect government policy decisions in the past. The pressure on women’s availability of their time now meant they had to forgo voluntary participation and therefore resulted in a diminishing membership in such groups.

McMath and Smith (1988) found that the women who lived on farms had different expectations and self views depending on their age. Those over 60 described few aspirations for themselves other than supporting their husbands on the farms. Those over 40 saw fitting in anything for themselves as an unexpected extra. However women under 40 expected to retain and develop their own identity. They expected a vocation for themselves beyond being someone’s wife and mother. This showed that the women’s view of themselves changed in relation to their own and others expectations. Younger women felt able to challenge the existing norms in rural women’s role. The reality of their changing role sometimes allowed for a move in views once held rigid to now be fluid. Past beliefs structures and systems that once held fast were no longer relevant in today’s society.

### **Families**

As with the changing woman’s role families also had a change in their role. For those male farmers who had to leave their farms due to the economic downturn, some had their struggles. Christie’s (1991) study into farmers in Southland who left the land gave an insight into the lives of a few but acknowledged that “finding people who have not made a successful readjustment ...is outside the scope of this study” (Christie, 1991, p.viii). This was an ethical decision made by Christie due to the sensitivity of the topic and distress it would cause the participants to discuss and reflect on the loss of their farms.

To move off the farm for some families was difficult because of the strong family attachment. “People stay on family farms even when they have other, better options. Land is a massive issue because of the feeling it gives you” (Pitt, 1998, p. 48). There are also benefits like the access to services, clubs or groups because of “family connections” (Pitt,

1998, p. 100). Land succession was viewed as an important process in farming families. This could be not just father to son but also daughter if no boys in the family (Pitt, 1998, p. 100). The couples who owned the generational family farm and had to sell were often shunned by other family members. They had to carry the guilt of not only losing an asset for their own immediate family but losing a part of the past for their extended family (Christie, 1991).

Sense of self relates to what one can do in the community. Christie found that those who moved off the farms struggled to come to terms with who they were as their self worth was related to the land. The men particularly found that their position in the community changed because as a non - farmer his place and position changed (Christie, 1991). The women who married a farmer found that they became absorbed into the role of 'housewife' and carer and did not have 'a life of their own.' When they moved off the farms they then had a struggle to find employment as they lacked confidence in their ability to work.

The change of roles and employment was a huge shock to some rural men. They had never had to consider another form of employment as it was a given expectation for them that they would always be farmers. The dominant discourse held within the rural community was that family farms would always remain. To suddenly be faced with finding other employment the ex farmers felt inadequate within the job market and within themselves. However once employment was found, "in all cases the speed of integration at a community or workplace level has been rapid and successful" (Christie, 1991, p. 76).

The people within the rural townships who closed their business due to declining trade had to rethink their role within the community as they established new forms of employment. Those who left the district to find employment had to establish their identity within a new community (Christie, 1991).

The structures and belief systems within our previous generation's society is not necessarily valid today. Our postmodern society exists within a time of changing thoughts, beliefs and systems. How we make sense of this is by the discourses or stories and conversations we have to justify or understand our positions. Changes have occurred that make today's reality very different from previous generations. The impact of the changes in their environment sometimes forced rural men and women to change their long held

views on how they saw themselves and others. This enforced change of thinking was embraced willingly by some but a huge wrench for others.

## **ACCESS TO SERVICES**

The changes that occurred over the past fifty years made it necessary for communities to consider how they would access necessary services. Free education, health and welfare systems of fifty years ago were no longer a given.

### **Health**

The difficulties for the rural communities with the closing of many services were a direct result of government policies. The 1990 Health reforms saw change in the provision of health services to rural communities. This affected many country areas with the closure of local maternity centres and struggling general practitioners surgeries. McMath and Smith (1988) in their study of Eastern Southland rural women found that a number of the rural social services in 1988 were diminishing or no longer existed. “The numbers of commercial enterprises in all three communities studied had declined...barely adequate numbers of medical practitioners...access to services mainly relied on private transport” (McMath & Smith, 1988, pp. 21, 22).

In some areas the local community formed their own trust in an effort to keep the service open and to attract medical practitioners to their area (English, 1998; Panelli & Gallagher, 2004). One study of a country area in the North Island found that “44% of respondents lived more than half an hour away from at least one primary health care service, although 83% lived within 30 minutes of a general practitioner and pharmacy” (Panelli and Gallagher, 2004, p. 5). In the Eketahuna study Glendining recommended, “When numbers do not justify the provision of an adequate service within a district the patient must be assisted with the cost of reaching the place where an adequate service is located” (Glendining, 1978, p. 34).

## **Education**

Critics of the Education reforms, *Tomorrows Schools*, complained that the changes introduced a climate of harmful competition between schools, especially through the emphasis on parental choice. These have exacerbated inequality between communities and promoted disparities between schools in resources for special needs and teacher support (Butterworth, 1998; Fulcher & Ainsworth, 1994). Others have found the opportunity to be the decision makers in their children's education as empowering.

## **Public Transport**

Changes in government policies resulted in the restructuring of government departments to state owned enterprises and many were sold off. This included railways and telecommunications. Public transport, like education and health services, reduced within the smaller rural communities.

Studies of rural communities in New Zealand have shown that the lack of public transport created a burden for the elderly. Those elderly residents who were transport dependent became lonely or depended on family or friends (Joseph & Chalmers, 1995). This created a tension between an increasing concern with the viability of their day to day lives and whether they had the services to support them and a strong attachment to the place (Joseph & Chalmers, 1995). They had to consider the implications of the possibility of moving away to larger cities or staying amongst their families and friends

## **Government and Local Body Support**

Due to the changes in the rural communities the residents looked to local council and government for some form of support or direction. The people believed that "government had a responsibility to assist such centres" (Boswell, Brown, & Maniapoto, 1994, p. 12). If services previously available were no longer available to the detriment of the people, then extra assistance or resources was expected from local government authorities.

"Up until the early 1980s there was a strong commitment by the government to maintain and improve service provision in rural communities...The government was also the largest employer in rural communities" (Trost, 1998). Since 1984 the government had been reducing its services in the rural communities.

In 1992 the Local Government Association established an Employment Working Party. Its aims were “to network information, examine why current policies are not working in terms of job creation, and to identify concepts and issues which need addressing and to promote those within government...For there to be changes towards greater sustainability of rural communities, so there must be partnerships” (Kelland, 1993, p. 4). It was intended that the partnership be between the community and the government and local body.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Technical Paper titled ‘Southland District’s Economic Development 1991-2000’ had a purpose to “provide a description of the initiatives taken by community groups, the local authority and central government to stimulate economic activity in the Southland district and to maintain the area’s population base at or above 1991 levels.” The role of local government identified the Southland District Council and its twelve Community Boards as the key feature in strong and consistent leadership. The role of the community identified individual people with strong community commitment to the point of being the ‘local champion.’ “Southlanders are parochial. They care about what happens to their province and this community spirit can be harnessed for economic development” (Burborough & Trost, 2000, p. 3). The role of central government was seen as minimal.

The recommendation at the end of the paper was that individuals and groups believed that central government “could play a partnership role with community groups in facilitating new initiatives. It was stressed however that the initiatives must come from local communities rather than from central government” (Burborough & Trost, 2000, p.10). The strongest financial providers into community initiatives in Southland are the Community Trust and the Invercargill Licensing Trust. However the Invercargill Licensing Trust does not extend beyond Invercargill’s borders.

Community initiatives saw the development of tourism in the region. This was mirroring what was happening nationally.

### **Tourism**

Since the early 1990s New Zealand has been promoted as a tourist destination with overseas and local tourist numbers growing significantly. Along with this has been a significant increase in tourist opportunities from elite resort developments to backpacker

accommodation and attractions throughout the country. Statistics New Zealand report that in 1992 New Zealand received 1 million visitors – 4 years later this exceeded 1.5 million. Today in Southland tourism has been one initiative that has been explored and promoted in areas that are accessible to the general public (Houghton, King & Piper, 1996; Joseph & Chalmers, 1995; Southland District Council, 1997; Taylor, Baines and Associates, 1998; Trost, 1998).

## **CONCLUSION**

New Zealand today is greatly changed from the New Zealand of fifty years ago. New Zealand has been caught in the tentacles of globalisation. Political, economic, and social ideologies from the Western world have been embraced by ensuing governments and policy makers. Decision making and control has fluctuated between centralisation being state control and decision making to private enterprise within a market economy.

Social change in New Zealand and its effect on rural New Zealand is recorded in various studies. From these areas of research on changes to rural communities, people's responses to the changes were varied. The themes that emerged were;

- Historical Influences and Cultural Expectations
- Impact of Government Decisions on the Community
- Sense of Community
- Sense of Self
- Access to Services

The historical decisions and influences impacted on how the individuals in the community viewed themselves and others. The strength of their own identity, how much control they had over their own lives and decision making, affected the choices they made. The extent of their integration into the community affected how they utilised existing services. Their ability to make change or adapt to the situation depended on the support available to them. The impact of these changes on the residents of Tuatapere is the purpose of this study. The method used is explained in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Story telling, being a common every day event, tells of experiences and events that have occurred in our lives (Atkinson, 1998). It is recalling memories of our past. What we are telling is important to us because our past thoughts and experiences shape who we are today and have meaning and significance for us.

This study is qualitative research using the life story method in narrative form to gather reflections about social change over the past fifty years. Research that involves conversations with participants is referred to as narrative research. “The focus of narrative research is on the individual, and the fact that life might be understood through a recounting and reconstruction of the life story” (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 19).

The value of qualitative research is that it produces a wealth of information from a relatively small number of participants (Patton, 1999). For this study eight long-term residents were interviewed over a two month period using semi-structured interviews. A questionnaire guide was compiled that was used by the interviewer as prompts to enable the residents to recall their experiences and thoughts of the past fifty years. The participants recounted their stories guided by the questionnaire but with the freedom to tell their stories as they wished. The audio-taped interviews were transcribed and the data analysed alongside existing literature and research pertaining to social change in rural areas.

### **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

The purpose of this study was to gather “information rich” (Patton, 1999, p. 169) material to consider social change in a rural community. Qualitative research was chosen as it enables one to concentrate on a smaller number of participants and gather in depth information about the topic. This is referred to as depth versus breadth. Qualitative research enables the researcher to choose the participants who are able to offer the quality of information that is required for the research subject. The focus is on “in depth and relatively small samples selected purposefully...the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for study in depth” (Patton, 1999, p. 169).

In qualitative research it is not about testing a theory or hypothesis to prove its validity as in quantitative research. It is not about the number of times a particular point is proven or tested. Qualitative research is about the quality of the material that allows the researcher to interpret and explain the behaviour. Qualitative research is inductive it “generates theory from observations as opposed to quantitative being deductive, testing theories by hypothesis” (Tolich & Davidson, 2003, p. 127). There is no set hypothesis or large sample as in quantitative research rather a choice can be made to select a small set of participants. “Qualitative research approaches in general are based on a principle of emergent design. It is not possible to anticipate how the research will unfold...it is more like the flight of a butterfly than a bee: its path is meandering and indeterminate” (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 64).

In quantitative research the researcher is detached and objective. In qualitative research the researcher is involved by their connection with the participant to enquire and gain meaning from what they are telling. Qualitative research with the life story approach is the method chosen due to my being a woman and feeling comfortable with this subjective style of research (Gluck & Patai, 1991). Interviewing is more than gathering facts but also explores feelings, attitudes and values. One is able to detect the hidden meanings through voice tone or body language and able to explore further. This provides the opportunity for further interpretation and added depth to the interviewee's story.

### **LIFE STORY APPROACH**

The life story approach was chosen as a method for this research as it allows people to tell about their life experiences. “Biographical research has the important merit of aiding the task of understanding major social shifts, by including how new experiences are interpreted by individuals within families, small groups and institutions” (Roberts, 2002, p. 5). Telling one's story was chosen as it centres the individual in their social world. These information rich stories of changes over the years and the availability of services will provide an understanding of the impact of social policies on rural communities. These are meaningful stories from the interviewees relating their perspectives of the world.

The research method of listening to the stories of people aligns with my profession and practice as a reflective social worker. This approach is used when working with social work clients utilising skills of reflective listening, using open ended questions,



paraphrasing, an awareness of transference and counter transference and other communication skills (Fook, 1996). These communication skills are transferable into research interviewing. Fook argues a reflective approach “affirms the importance of experiential and interconnected ways of knowing the world, and favours more emancipatory and participatory research practices” (Fook, 1996, p. 5). Fook considers that this is a more holistic approach in taking account of the whole situation of the way people experience their worlds.

Biographical research is referred to as life histories, life stories, biographies, and narratives. These descriptions vary between authors and are often intertwined. ‘Life histories’ are usually unstructured interviews that allow the participants to tell their stories at their own pace. There is no predetermined set of questions set by the interviewer prior to the interview. In ‘life histories’ the analysis of the information is often more difficult as each participant has given a variety of experiences that covers many topics. Bell (2005) refers to unstructured interviews as being conversational interviews that are often good for preliminary interviews to gather information about a topic but when it comes to the main data gathering interview, some form of structure is necessary to ensure the topic is covered.

Cole & Knowles (2001) differentiate the life history, unstructured, and the life story, semi-structured, from a narrative when it comes to the purpose and analysis. They define the narrative as an individual’s experience as told by them and the focus on the individual whereas a life history “draws on the individuals’ experiences to make broader contextual meaning” (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p20). The ‘life story’ method was chosen for this research with semi-structured interview questions to ensure the topic of social change was covered and that the interviewer retained a measure of control over the focus of the interview.

## **SELECTING PARTICIPANTS**

Tolich and Davidson (1999) suggest that access to people of another gender, culture or class may be difficult however not impossible. As an ‘outsider’ engagement may be difficult. Trust is very important when allowing someone into your home or agreeing to meet and talk about a life story. To enable people to agree to be interviewed they need to feel that they can trust the interviewer. To be able to speak freely about one’s life also

needs a degree of trust that the words will be honoured by the interviewer and not misrepresented in some way.

When an outsider is approaching participants in a study the use of a 'gatekeeper' is suggested. This is a person who can introduce the 'outsider' to the group to be studied (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 94). This of course can be overcome if the researcher themselves is an 'insider' being a member of the group being studied. On one level I am an 'insider' being a third generation family member of the district central to the study. Although I have not resided in the Tuatapere area for the past forty years, two of my brothers reside in the area. I visit Tuatapere for funerals, reunions and other occasions and pass through on my way to Fiordland. The interviewees know my family and some know me personally. However I am not an 'insider,' currently living within the township. I am also not an 'insider' in my role as a student undertaking research rather than as a friend renewing acquaintances.

The advantages of being an 'insider' are easier access to the participants and a congenial relationship with the participant during the interview. The disadvantages are that familiarity may inhibit the discussion of some events for the participants or that the interviewer with their local knowledge may make assumptions, or pre-empt the explanations and therefore misinterpret the intentions of the participant.

The questions designed for the research enabled criteria to be established to assist with identifying participants for the study. As social change over the past fifty years was being explored, the participants needed to have been living in the district during that time. Men and women were selected as the experiences of men and women are different and their roles in communities have changed in half a century. The number selected needed to include persons over the age of sixty in order to have memories of the 1950s era. They needed to have been involved in community organisations and have good memories and able to articulate those. They were required to be representatives of industry, farming, business, education and the social service sector and able to make links to social change and what is happening within their community. Eight participants were chosen that met the criteria.

Participants were selected using my own knowledge of the people and from others within the community. The interviewees themselves made suggestions as to who should be approached. This type of selection process is called snowball sampling. “This is an approach for locating information-rich informants...Who knows a lot about...? Who should I talk to?” (Patton, 1999, p. 176). The list of names increases and it is noticeable that the same names are recommended often. A choice is made based on the set criteria. In the case of this study it included having lived in the area for fifty years, able to relate their experiences and relate to change and a representative of age, gender, industries and businesses. The final selection included four men and four women; four in their sixties, two in their seventies and two in their eighties. These participants represented farming, education, business, sawmilling industry and the social service sectors.

Pitt’s qualitative study of a Taranaki community’s stories shared by five women, included herself as a participant. She was allowing her own story to be considered alongside the other participants. This experience of “locating their own position in relation to their work... and including their own personal experiences” (Pitt, 1998, p. 16) appealed to me. The idea of including myself as a participant in this research is indicative of my attachment to the area. The family farm on which I grew up is farmed by my family and the area is often visited. However the reality is that I have not depended upon the social influences and services for my livelihood since I married and moved away forty years ago. Although an emotional and spiritual connection to the area exists I have been physically located elsewhere for a greater part of my life and therefore did not fit the criteria for selection.

## **THE INTERVIEW PROCESS**

‘Life stories’ with semi-structured interviews enable the participants to relate their experiences from their perspectives but within a set of guided questions. These are “a set of open ended questions that help frame an issue or event or circumstance, allow wide latitude in response, yield rich insights” (Cole & Knowles, 2001, p. 73). This approach is referred to as the “guided or focused interview” (Bell, 2005, p.161) and as the “interview guide” (Patton, 1990, p. 283). It is an established set of questions that cover the themes of the study. The questions are used as a structure for the interview and to ensure that the information obtained from the participants will relate to the subject. This approach is also referred to as a semi-structured interview. The interviewer utilises the set of questions as a guide and can be led by the interviewee to open up an area for further discussion and

elaboration by utilising open-ended questioning (Patton, 1990). The participants have the freedom to explore their memories and develop their ideas in order for the interview to progress. Using 'life stories' research the interviewer is "the instrument, the prime viewing lens" (Coles & Knowles, 2001, p. 64).

Recording of the interview in life stories is usually done electronically either by tape or compact disc. This method of recording has the advantage over taking notes in that it allows the interview to flow. Note taking can restrict the conversation flow due to the interviewer focusing on the writing rather than engaging fully with the participant (Bell, 2005). However brief notes on recording main facts and body language is recommended (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). Electronic recording also enables accuracy in recording what was said. For one to embark on this process they need to have a thorough knowledge of the mechanics of the instrument they are using.

To use only written notes when recording life stories or histories limits the flow of words from the participant and can stifle their ideas. However tape recorders can be intrusive to participants as well and their very presence can be off putting to the participant. It is suggested that they are put to the side of the participant rather than directly in their range of vision (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). Tape recorders can also malfunction or be used incorrectly as was experienced during this research and will be referred to later in the chapter. The value of tapes and compact discs is that they can be archived.

In order to cover all probabilities it is suggested that hand written notes of the main points are taken during a recorded interview. Therefore if a malfunction or mistake occurs during recording the researcher is able to gather the story from the interview guide of questions and the handwritten notes (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). Note taking also enables non-verbal communication to be recorded.

## **CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEWS**

Tuatapere where the interviewees live is 87kms from Invercargill. To make use of the time and distance travelled it was planned initially to complete as many interviews as possible within a days travel. Each interview was held in the interviewee's home or in Helen's case at her cafe. The taped interview took from one to two hours. In order to

gather the range and depth of information available, a set of questions was designed that covered the specific topics addressing social change within the rural community.

The level of the interviewees trust in me was tested as I approached them. Would they view me as an 'insider' or 'outsider'? My kith and kin or family background was known by the interviewees and the 'insider' trust was shown by them on that basis. My access to the interviewees therefore was made easier due to their knowledge of me and mine of them. The introductions followed smoothly with the boundaries of the 'insider' trust established. This was established by the participants acknowledging who I was, whose daughter I was and asking after family members. The engagement in the interview process was able to be carried out in a friendly relaxed manner and continued in this way throughout the interview.

The majority of the participants appeared to me to be initially aware of the tape recorder and their ideas and confidence a little stilted but as they progressed through the interview their stories flowed more and they relaxed. The women related more to thoughts and feelings than activities and facts and required less prompting than the men. The fact that I was a woman sharing their experiences made it an easy and enjoyable experience for me (Finch, 1984).

The first interview on the first day was scheduled in the early afternoon. One hour into the interview it was apparent that more time should have been allowed. The interviewee was a wonderful narrator and had an interesting family story to tell. I was distracted by the desire to allow her to narrate the life story and the need to keep focusing on the interview questions to ensure the topics were covered within the time available. The next interview was planned immediately after the first. It soon became evident that a break of time should have been planned to relax and re-gather thoughts. It was necessary and more realistic thereafter to hold one interview in the morning and one in the afternoon with a lunch break. This enabled time to reflect and relax in between interviews to close off one interview and prepare for the next.

On the second day the plan was to hold an interview in the morning and one in the afternoon. This went more smoothly. The lunch break in between enabled a gathering of thoughts and reflections on the content and process. Before the third day of interviewing I

was distracted by some personal issues within my family. I believed that I was able to detach and not allow the feelings of anxiety to reflect on the interview process and inhibit the interviews in any way.

After arriving home that evening and checking the tapes it was found that the play button on the tape recorder had been used instead of the record button and the result was blank tapes. This was very upsetting. It was a realisation of how much I had been affected by what was happening in my own personal life. Although social work skills had been developed over the years in the social work role to separate work from personal life and take control of thoughts and feelings, personal anxieties can still impact on one's work and reduce one's attention to detail.

Fook refers to this connection as the emotional and the intellectual. She refers to her own research and the experience of her grandmother passing away the previous evening to her supervision and how she never disclosed this to her supervisor. She reflects on her research "although I allude in the beginning to the emotional trauma I experienced, the account is almost solely about intellectual struggle" (Fook, 1996, p. 135). The emotional state of the interviewer when completing the interview process can have an effect on the result irrespective of the intentions of the interviewer. This was experienced with the unintentional pushing of the wrong buttons on the tape recorder.

For these interviews both interviewees had written out notes themselves to the prepared interview questions that had been given to them prior to the session. When advised of the recording mistake they agreed that their written notes be used in place of a tape recording and transcript. Added to this were the notes taken during the taped interview which showed a need for this back up process (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). The final two interviews were conducted successfully.

My connections to the area enabled my role as interviewer to be a pleasant albeit an emotional experience. "With a life story form of inquiry, it can be difficult, if not impossible, to leave out or ignore one's own subjective experience or feeling in regard to the data that is being collected" (Atkinson, 1998, p. 65). The interviewees would sometimes refer to a member of my family or when discussing an incident from the past, ask if I remembered or what I thought of it and I would therefore become engaged in

conversation in a different way. This initially concerned me as I struggled with the formal and informal part of the researcher role. My previous experience with research had been with quantitative research. The interviewer was expected to be objective and remain detached from the interviewing process. The researcher was expected to be value free. Qualitative research recognises the integral role of the interviewer and that when interviewing women particularly there is an expectation of reciprocal connection and interaction (Fook, 1996; Gluck & Patai, 1991 ).

Ann Oakley the British sociologist referred to this phenomenon in her study of childbirth (Oakley, 1981). The women interviewed expected her to interact with them and asked her questions about childbirth during the interview process. She initially struggled with her role of being detached from the process and then saw how her need to become involved and support the women could be achieved without compromising the research process. She believed that recognition of the women's style of communicating did not necessarily fit within the structured, quantitative, detached research process of that time. Research methods have developed over the ensuing years and there is now recognition of how women 'tell their stories' through interactive relationships that still meet the ethical considerations of not harming the participants or tainting the material gathered (Finch, 1984).

My experience as a social worker enabled me to utilise the interviewing skills developed over the past twenty three years. I was able to explore further with the interviewees some of their responses without deviating greatly from the questions that were identified on the interview schedule. I was able to be engaged and listening but at the same time scan quickly the interview schedule and bring the interview back to the topic before us. Although I was interviewing to record the events and experiences of the participants that were affected by social change over the years, these being "concrete descriptions of experiences" I was also aware of the need to explore the feelings and meanings of the participants (Gluck & Patai, 1991, p. 13).

The fact that I was a woman assisted my interviewing the female participants. Where I felt a particular connection with what the women were saying my own body language and interest signaled that she expand further on the topic. When Margaret was talking about the impact of the Playcentre Movement on her life I immediately related that to my own

circumstances and therefore was eager to hear from her perspective. This was coming from an experiential level. When talking with one of the men about the sheep on his farm I know that I asked further questions because of my own sheep farming knowledge and interest. This was however coming more from an interest than an experiential level.

I was also very aware that the rural physical surroundings of my childhood were evident throughout the interview and I had an inbuilt reluctance to approach feelings especially to the male participants. As I was brought up in a male dominated household and rural male community, feelings and emotions were rarely if ever discussed and when they were, there was awkwardness present. This was a similar experience to Anderson's study in rural America (Gluck & Patai, 1991, p. 14). She likewise felt a deep reluctance to discuss anything at an emotional level due to her physical surroundings reminding her of her childhood and the pragmatic culture of the time.

The interview process gathered valuable information from the life stories of the eight participants. During the process a reconnection to the area and an interaction with the participants was an enjoyable albeit an emotional time for myself as researcher.

### **TRANSCRIBING THE TAPES**

The tapes were transcribed by myself onto my home computer over a six week period. This method was chosen to ensure the tapes were transcribed accurately and to ensure that the interviews were treated with due respect. Each tape was played through the earphones and played back to ensure I had recorded the transcriptions accurately.

The transcriptions of the tapes were then given to the participants to check and alter if necessary. In some of the cases corrections were made regarding spelling of names or other incidental information. The consent forms for the release of the transcriptions were signed. Copies of the final transcriptions were available to the participants if they so indicated on the consent form.

### **ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS**

Themes were identified from the research of literature pertaining to social change in rural communities. From these themes the questions for the semi-structured interview guide were created. While transcribing the tapes and later when reading through them, the



different themes were highlighted with different colours. For example when considering historical influences impacting on the participants lives it was high lighted pink, the sense of community, green and so on. Other themes that emerged were also noted.

“Thematic analysis differs from a content analysis because it looks for ideas in the data being examined...it takes its categories from the data and is more subjective and interpretive” (Fook, 1996, p. 28). This enabled a collation of the information under headings for the format of writing the interviews down and later for the interview analysis.

The participants’ stories were arranged under the themes. A small amount of editing was undertaken to remedy grammatical errors. The themes were considered alongside the literature on the different topics. From this the stories were also analysed using critical, poststructuralism and ecological theories. This was to contextualise the stories and to consider the impact on the residents of the social changes in their community over the past fifty years.

## **ETHICAL ISSUES**

Research is not value free but “everyone starts from some value-laden position” (Tolich and Davidson, 1999, p. 65). Researchers come with their own values and life views. Being aware of one’s position and showing empathy, trust and understanding to the participants are part of the ethics of research ( Cole & Knowles, 2001; Finch, 1984; Patton, 1990). Ensuring that consultation is held regularly with supervisors and using them effectively helps to reflect on the interviewer’s role within the research process. Ethical standards are followed to ensure that no harm comes to either interviewer or interviewee.

### **The Principles of Massey University’s Code of Ethical Conduct.**

#### **Respect for Persons**

The main issue when conducting research with people is that one ensures that no harm comes to the participants. This includes emotional as well as physical harm. As social change over the past fifty years was being researched the participants were aged sixty years and over. Respect for the elderly, use of honorifics when addressing them, consideration of the time of day that may suit them better for being interviewed and a basic consideration for their wellbeing was shown during the approach to the participants and throughout the interviews.

### **Minimisation of harm to participants, researchers, institutions and groups.**

Reflecting on one's past can sometimes bring forth memories that can be disturbing or emotional for the participants. Half of the interviewees had other people present throughout the interview. The men were all married and three of the four had their wives or a friend present throughout the interview. The older men had the support of their wives within the consent process. The women interviewed were aware that they could have support people present if they so wished. Only one woman had another person present and that related more to the venue where the interview was held rather than a desire for another person to be present.

As a social worker and a counsellor I believe I am skilled to deal with any issues that may have arisen and would have referred these on to the appropriate person/agency with the person's permission. I was aware however that I was not in this role but a student undertaking research. This was clearly explained in the information sheet and parameters set at the beginning of the interview process.

As a researcher I did not anticipate any risk of harm to myself. Hearing stories from the past and reflecting on those times created an unexpected emotional response that greatly surprised me as interviewer. Reflecting on this impact I realised that it contained a sadness for a time past, with all that it held, including loved ones no longer with us. It was a bygone era, with a perceived idyllic lifestyle of days filled with sunshine and when the future was a challenge to be seized with all the hope of a child of the fifties and sixties. That future was now the present, with fulfilled and unfilled dreams and realities.

The significance of scheduling a period of time between each interview to unwind and relax and prepare before going into the next interview soon became evident to me. The use of my supervisors to debrief was important. On reflection the decision to continue with the interviews on the day that I received some personal family news that later impacted on the recording of the interviews, was based on the fact that I had travelled some distance to conduct the interviews. The interviewees had made their time available to me and to cancel the interviews that day would have greatly inconvenienced them. The resulting lack of recording of their stories on the tapes was dealt with honestly with the interviewees and a solution discussed with them by using the written notes.

### **Informed and Voluntary Consent**

The role of an interviewer with an 'insider' status can have its own ethical problems. A conflict of interest can arise. This is addressed in feminist research when transparency, honesty and systems are put in place to reduce the sense of obligation (Finch, 1984; Gluck and Patai, 1991). The participants were known to my family and me, therefore that relationship could not be ignored. Participants may have felt obliged to participate in the research and may have felt that they were not able to decline to be interviewed due to their connection with the researcher. The process of informed consent was carried out. The participants were given an information sheet with questions and a consent form enclosed. This was to ensure that they were clearly informed about the research so that there would be no surprises for them. They were given time to consider the request and decline if they so wished. It was made clear in the information sheet that involvement was voluntary. It also outlined the research and its purpose.

Those that were returned within the identified timeframe with the signed consents were considered as participants. Therefore those who did not wish to be considered did not have to advise the interviewer which may have been difficult for them. I then phoned those whose consents were received to arrange a time to interview if they were willing to participate. I believe all the participants had an opportunity to decline without feeling obligated to be part of the process.

One male participant who was approached had recently had an interview conducted and was unsure about going through the process again. The information sheet, questions and consent form were left with him and it was suggested that if he was interested he would phone to arrange a time for an interview. A time frame was not given to avoid any thought of him being pressured in any way. After a period of four weeks with not having heard from him it was concluded that he did not wish to be a participant. He was not included in the study.

### **Respect for privacy and confidentiality**

The type of study that it was, being life stories from a small rural area, made it difficult, if not impossible, to guarantee confidentiality. This was clearly explained to the participants prior to the interviews. All agreed to the use of their names.

Respect for the material and to ensure it was used solely as was guaranteed to the participants, the taped interviews and the consents were kept in a locked cabinet in my home. I did the transcribing myself and this data was kept on my computer to be deleted once the project is examined. A copy of each transcript was shown to each participant and a release signed to enable the information to be used. This was to ensure that they were clearly aware and involved in the process at all times. The participants indicated on the original consent form if they wished for a summary of the findings and the original tape to be given to them when the research is completed. For those participants who have agreed it has also been arranged with the Heritage Section of the Invercargill Library for the consent forms and copies of the tapes to be kept by them.

### **The Avoidance of Conflict of Interest**

The information given to the participants at the beginning of the research process described that the research was being done for a university paper. Even though I was known on another level to the participants I endeavoured to keep the purpose of my interview to the fore and remain in my interviewer role. In my profession as a social worker I am well aware of boundaries and roles and I believe that I kept within the purpose of my role. No attempt was made to get participants to re-record the interviews that were blank or raise this as a possibility. Making such a request may have breached ethical considerations through utilising the 'insider' status of the interviewer. The participants may have felt sorry for the researcher since knowing me on a personal basis and therefore become involved in a further interview out of sympathy or obligation. Permission was sought however to use their written notes in place of the blank audio tape.

Drafts of the ethics application were completed and analysed by my supervisors over a four month period. An analysis of the ethical issues was undertaken. Approval for the study was given and a low risk notification made to the university. My own professional ethics as a registered social worker and a member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers also guided my actions.

## CONCLUSION

The decision to choose the qualitative research method was based on the desire to conduct life story, oral historical research amongst long term residents in Tuatapere. Selecting the participants was based on the criteria of ensuring I had a true representative of the community and was able to gather information rich material. The interview process was an enjoyable experience with the participants relating their thoughts and experiences on the changes to Tuatapere over the past fifty years. Balancing the informal role of friend and one of us and the formal interviewer role was managed through utilising the discipline of the semi-structured interviewing process. An awareness of the insider and outsider status was present throughout the process.

The use of one's supervisors to reflect on the process and especially to ensure that all ethical issues were covered was not only necessary but valuable. This enabled a venue for exploring the emotional impact on the interviewer, to offer suggestions and to validate the work being done.

The material gathered was able to be transcribed alongside the identified themes that had emerged from the readings in the literature review. These readings contain historical information, previous research and theories used to critique social change. The following chapter presents the stories of the participants in thematic form.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **TELLING THE STORIES**

This chapter records the life stories of eight Tuatapere residents over the past fifty years. These eight residents relate their life stories to social changes in the rural community. All the participants are second or third generation Tuatapere residents and representatives of farming, sawmilling, business, education and social service sectors. The stories are arranged thematically in the following way: historical influences and cultural expectations, the impact of Government decisions on the community, sense of community, sense of self, access to services. The chapter begins by introducing the participants.

#### **THE INTERVIEWEES**

##### **Margaret**

Margaret is in her early sixties and lives in her own home. She has a family of three adult children and works in the secondary section of the local Community College. Margaret's father came to Tuatapere along with his mother and father from Hungary in 1912.

##### **Helen**

Helen is in her late sixties and came to Tuatapere as a teenager in the fifties to teach Highland Dancing. She married a local farmer and had a family of five. She owns a café on the main street of Tuatapere and now lives in the township. She married into a family, who like Helen, identify strongly with their Scottish roots.

##### **Hugh**

Hugh is in his early eighties and is a retired farmer. He lives with his wife in the Tuatapere township. Hugh is the grandson of one of the first European settlers to Tuatapere. Hugh's son farms the family farm.

##### **Robin**

Robin is an electrician in his early seventies. He is a widower and has a grown up family.

**Bill**

Bill is a retired farmer in his seventies who lives with his wife. They have a grown up family and the son farms the family farm on the outskirts of Tuatapere.

**Ngarita**

Ngarita, a widow, is eighty years old and lives on her own. Ngarita's husband owned a family sawmilling business. She has two grown daughters, one who lives in a country district nearby and the other in Auckland. Ngarita has been involved in local body activities for a greater part of her life.

**Donald**

Donald is sixty and owns a farm on the outskirts of Tuatapere. He is married with a grown up family. A daughter is married and lives nearby.

**June**

June lives with her husband and is in her early sixties. They both work in businesses in and near Tuatapere. They have a married daughter living nearby. June's husband is a member of the local district council.

All the participants gave permission for their own names to be used in the study.

## **SENSE OF PAST HISTORICAL INFLUENCES AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS**

**Acknowledgement of their Roots**

European settlers arrived in Tuatapere during the late 1800s and early 1900s immigrating mainly from Scotland and Ireland (Taylor, Baines & Associates, 1998). The majority worked initially in the sawmilling industry and then bought land to farm. The participants of the study identified the values and beliefs passed down by their parents as influencing them through out their lives. Seven of the participants identified either one or both parents as originating from Scotland or Ireland. They referred to their cultures and the traditions and beliefs that have been passed on to them and that have been shared by the local community.

In 1883 he settled in the Tuatapere Bush. He came from Northern Ireland...my grandfather came from a growing family and some had to move out.

Hugh

My mother came to New Zealand as a six year old from Northern Ireland. My father's people came from Scotland so we were half Irish but the Irish connection was from Northern Ireland and they came from Scotland.

Helen

There were five McLeods. Three went to Australia and two to New Zealand. The father had lived in Scotland and I would say it was the late 1800s when they came out here.

Ngarita

My father came from Kapuka South. They lived around that area and his family came from England and Ireland originally.

Donald

One of the participants had a father who came from Hungary. Margaret spoke at length about her father's Hungarian heritage but also acknowledged her mother's Scottish heritage and the mix of the two.

He came with his mother and father from Hungary in 1912...and they came here and there was already one Hungarian family here. Here in Tuatapere is the first recorded place where Hungarians came in New Zealand. Mum came from over the hill at Otautau. Her heritage has a little bit of Scottish in it. It was a wonderful combination, Hungarian and Scottish...the feisty Europeans and the fighting Scots.

Margaret

The cultural traditions impacted on the participants. The pipe band wore the Erskine tartan from one of the original Scottish farmers. 'first footing', a tradition that welcomes in the New Year, was practised in the community. Highland Balls were held that were attended by many throughout the district.

The pipe band would come and play on New Year's Eve and trek through the house and they would give them cake and wine... and they went first footing and everybody followed them. They picked up one from this house and everybody followed, then they'd move round and they'd do the whole village... It was the Scottish tradition handed down.

Ngarita

The continuing influence of the Scottish heritage over the past fifty years is credited to the ongoing commitment by a couple who teach both Highland Dancing and Piping. One of the interviewees was the dancing teacher and reference was made to the couple by several of the interviewees.

I was in Tuatapere in 1955, I came here teaching Highland Dancing. The country children were without culture, that's what Mrs.G of the Women's Division rang my mother up and said, that the country children had no culture and little ways of getting it and would your daughter come and teach? Without asking me she said yes I would.

Helen



The Pipe Band and Highland Dancing remain very strong today. V.M. has a Pipe Band of young ones including his own two grandsons.

June

The Scottish culture and traditions were identified by the participants as being very much part of their lives. They spoke nostalgically of how these traditions were carried out in the past. They spoke of how they absorbed these practices into their own lifestyles as they were growing up.

### **Influence of their Parents**

Apart from the cultural influences other influences were passed down to the participants from their parents. Margaret spoke about the influences from her parents and watching them as she was growing up. Margaret saw her father as having a strong personality and a large influence on her life. Ngarita spoke also of the authority of the father and Donald related the commitment from his parents to volunteering within the community. These traits were evident throughout the other interviews.

I watched Dad persevere and never give up and try, try again. If he couldn't do something he got somebody around him who could...I think about this as the years go by. If you had any pocket money it was earned and it was accounted for. His money values were... you couldn't waste anything. Nothing could be wasted about your time either. Time was valuable...He was very tough. We all had to be accountable to him. I remember I was engaged to be married and I still had to tell him where I was every five minutes of the day.

Margaret

(My father), when I was nineteen we wanted to get engaged and get married and he said, no, wait until you are twenty one and we did. Even though it meant that Bill was thirty one when we got married. You know they were strict. Yet they were very hospitable.

Ngarita

Both my father and my mother were very active in the community...To be able to do things without having to be paid for it. If you don't get the volunteers in the small rural areas you won't exist. We survive on our own... still rely on outside help. We can't do it all on our own. But we all pitch in where we can.

Donald

The family unit was identified as being stronger without external pressures that are evident today.

I feel that we were luckier when our children were young than they (children) are now. No cell phone, no video games and not a lot of television. They could go to Scouts or Guides and used more imagination from books. People had more time to have holidays. Today most men spend more time at work up to eleven hours a day and have half day work on Saturdays. This means there is not much time for the children.

Bill

Another expectation that was handed down to farming families was the expectation that the family farm would be handed down. For the immigrants who came out to New Zealand, the opportunity to own their own land and pass on to their families was very important (Pitt, 1998). For those interviewees who were brought up on farms on the outskirts of Tuatapere the family farm was considered as very important to them.

I went straight on to the farm when I left school and I stayed there sixty years.

Hugh

He put in a ballot for one of the five sections...the first task was to build a two roomed hut and start clearing the first 10 acres of the 130 acres... I farmed and my son is on the farm now.

Bill

We moved from there in 1954 and came back to the mother's original home in Papatotara Road...We married in 1973 and returned to the home farm and been there ever since.

Donald

The influences of the parents were very strong when the participants were growing up. The authority of the parents was acknowledged and the expectation that as a child you obeyed your parents. Farm ownership and management was established within a system that followed down through the families.

### **The Existence of a Culture Today**

The sense of unity within a community can be linked to shared expectations and aspirations. The cultural influences from their parents were spoken about by the participants but when asked if a culture existed in Tuatapere today the following were the replies;

Well I don't think it is the same now. People have moved in and things have changed. People do not give up their time as willingly and as freely as they did in those days. Tuatapere was built on volunteerism. If there is such a word as volunteerism...There is a young wild teenager culture existing in Tuatapere at the moment.

Ngarita

It is Kiwi and it is horrible... The piping has just come back. I've always been teaching (dancing). The piping thing has mushroomed this last year. I think the pendulum has swung with the parents. Suddenly discovering that their kids can't all be All Blacks or Silver Ferns and they have got to have something of their own for their self esteem.

Helen

In the early days it was a close-knit community with sheep, cattle & dairy farmers and saw millers. There were 16 saw mills, now there is only one mill continuing to mill timber. Now a wider variety of people from other countries as tourists and farm workers are bringing a different culture to the town.

Bill

It appears the existence of a Scottish culture that was present fifty years ago is having a resurgence. One participant referred to the lack of evidence of the Maori culture.

We've had Maori living here but they didn't do their own culture. In fact that building over there was a lodge and it was built for a marae and they have all gone to Australia and the Orange Lodge ended up as a Kohanga Reo and its fizzled out as hardly any Maori kids and no-one to run it.

Helen

The traditions and cultural influences were brought with the European settlers to Tuatapere and passed on to their families. Today, two and three generations later, some of these traditions still hold strong and others have weakened or disappeared altogether. These shared values and beliefs have provided a common ground to enable the residents to face and consider the challenges facing the community. None of the interviewees identified as Maori. There was little reference to an influence of Maori culture within the Tuatapere community.

## **IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT DECISIONS ON THE COMMUNITY**

Throughout the past fifty years changes in government social and economic policies have greatly affected the rural areas of New Zealand. All the participants spoke of the Tuatapere they knew fifty years ago and how it was a bustling thriving township. This was their reality and their expectation of how life should continue for them. Changes occurred within the community that impacted upon them. All the participants spoke of these changes and the impact upon their lives.

### **Restructuring of the Forest Service in 1987**

Tuatapere was a forestry town leading up to the 1950s. Forestry provided the main source of employment and services in the township relied on the income from this industry. The Government decision to restructure the Forest Service in 1987 had a significant impact on the town (Houghton, King and Piper, 1996). This was reported by all of the participants.

The talk then was on government figures Tuatapere was going to grow because of the forestry...Then in 1987 at the same time as the government crash, the government drew a line through native logging and that was the demise of Tuatapere... It ruined the town

and then all our young people up and left and either went further afield in New Zealand or most of them went to Australia and they haven't come back

Helen

I understand the government was cutting down a lot of the native trees and everything was getting knocked over. They wanted to save native vegetation. At the stage it shut down they had planted a lot of the indigenous and exotic pines and that was all sold to Rayniers as an off shore interest and that's when these forestry places ceased... I think that is why the government sold up all the state forests to stop the cutting of the natives. All the mills that were here started to close down because there weren't enough of the native trees for them to go into the blocks.

Donald

An erosion of services resulted in hardship for those left in the rural communities. The interviewees talked about the effect of this on their lives.

The biggest influence has been the closing down of the forestry. That impacted on Tuatapere. And it is still impacting. We haven't grown through it yet. It took a whole strata of society out. The Mums and Dads and the kids at school. They had to leave to get work. It was a government decision. They decided that they would put all the forestry that was left, into the Department of Conservation.

Ngarita

30 years ago Tuatapere found that the town was struggling as the Forest Service was disbanding and professional staff and their families moved away and some of the sawmills closed down. This showed up in the Waiau College rolls over 250 down to 180. The new primary school eventually closed down and the Waiau College turned into an Area School, Tuatapere Community College. The National Bank closed down, the Post Office closed down, so it meant that the service station and the stores had to provide money.

Bill

Tuatapere was a flourishing town and in 1980s they closed the Forest Service down. There was a lot of empty shops. A lot of food and drink outlets that closed down.

Robin

The worst thing that happened to Tuatapere was that the then Housing Department bought up the housing for people who wanted to exit. People who worked for the Forestry weren't so bad as they didn't own their houses so they had nothing to lose they could just go. Anybody who owned their own house was trapped here or they sold it for a pittance.

Helen

The restructuring of the Forest Service was viewed by the participants as being detrimental to the economic and social wellbeing of Tuatapere. People moved away and took many skills away from the town and businesses closed. Those people who came and occupied some of the vacant houses did not always fit within the expected social structure of the township.

### **Damming of the Waiau**

Not just the economic and social wellbeing of Tuatapere was affected by the Government decisions but also the spiritual and emotional wellbeing. The Waiau river that flowed through the centre of the town was part of the community's identity. When the Government decided to dam the river it impacted on the township.

In the 1970s Lake Manapouri was raised to provide a power station for the new Comalco aluminium site in Invercargill. The Waiau river that was the main outlet from Lake Manapouri was dammed therefore reducing its flow considerably. The Waiau runs through farmland and comes out into the sea at Tuatapere. The Waiau was often referred to as the 'mighty Waiau' due to its volume of water and a lot of people had an emotional attachment to it. After the water was taken it was only a fraction of its original size. The effect on the township was reported by some of the interviewees.

We had a fantastic beach but that has changed. Meridian won't accept that has come about by the lowering of the water in the Waiau...Everybody knows the effect of lowering the Waiau except Meridian.

Ngarita

In the 1970s they took the water out for Deep Cove...Yes we get the dirty water now.

Robin

The damming of the Waiau affected our infrastructure. The quality of the water and changes in the beaches affected jet boating activities, fishing.

June

The Waiau river also had a spiritual connection for the Kai Tahu iwi.

When you look at the Waiau it was the road way for the Maori to come up and down in their canoes and when Cs' plowed up their paddock just below where the old mill was they found these adzes and other things and brown pits where they had their fires.

Ngarita

Meridian paid compensation to Kai Tahu and the Waiau community for the taking of the water out of the Waiau River.

We have eight hundred thousand as part of compensation for Meridian going for their water consent...The trust is for any non profit organisation in Tuatapere, Football Club, Playcentre etc.

Ngarita

Although financial compensation was made by Meridian Energy the residents lament the demise of their beach, the effect on the quality of the water and on the inability to carry out once enjoyed water sport activities.

### **Change in Farm Ownership**

The 1970s and 1980s continued to be the time of great change in Tuatapere. With the restructuring of logging and milling around Tuatapere, the change in the volume and flow of the Waiau river and then came the reduction and change in farming and farm ownership.

Following the 1987 economic downturn that affected the farming community, farms were sold and this impacted on the rural communities (Christie, 1991). Sheep farming suffered over the ensuing years but dairying increased with new markets being secured abroad for the dairy products. These changes in the ownership of the family farms was stated by one of the farming participants as having an impact on the community

The changes in the dairy conversions have changed the life style for a lot of people. New people from Holland, Philippines are coming in to do the farm work. Corporate groups and amalgamations of farms in the dairy sector have made family farms almost extinct.  
Bill

Family owned sheep farms that had been passed on from generation to generation were sold. These farms were bought by dairying companies and their different production methods gave little time for the workers to participate within the community.

### **Depopulation**

Depopulation occurred in country areas after the economic downturn in the late eighties and the government's policy decisions around the same time period. This made it harder for the remaining residents to service the required infrastructures.

It is all to do with population. In 1980s the country areas became depopulated. We have a new sewerage scheme. It seems very unfair that the area so far from Invercargill has to pay for a sewerage scheme at big town rates.  
Robin

Depopulation occurred not only in the country townships but also in the surrounding rural areas. Schools that were the focal point of small rural communities closed due to Government economic and political decisions. Schools were often the point of social contact for rural people and with them gone, the heart was said to have gone out of many country districts (Glendining, 1978, Howden, 2001). The children were bused to a newly bolstered community school within the nearest township. This is what happened in Tuatapere. Local halls often become redundant due to the reduction in population and loss of interest to keep social functions alive. Dances that had once been the local people's

form of social interaction and relaxation ceased. This had also been the venue for young people to meet and form relationships.

I met him at the local dance. He came home from the war and there was ten years between us... We went to Papatotara, we went to Clifden, we went to Tuatapere and occasionally we went to Pukemaori. We didn't go anywhere else. We didn't have the means of transport.

Ngarita

There were dances in every hall around. It has been ages since there was a dance here... Dancing and going to the pictures was the social thing to do.

Hugh

Social Activities were dances, Highland Balls. Dances around the area, Papatotara, Pukemaori, Orawia, Clifden. ( Memorial Halls) The one in Tuatapere was a Memorial Hall built 1952, 1953. Very little use now.

Robin

With the depopulation in the rural areas with the schools and halls closed, social functions ceased. The aforementioned rural areas are just names now with no demarcation between the areas that would have existed before the 1980s. Local schools and halls used to be signposted that marked boundaries but today a drive through these areas reveals no identification of these hubs of social activities of the past. All the interviewees agreed that government decisions have impacted on their lives economically and socially and had a huge effect on the future of Tuatapere.

## **SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

The decisions made by government and local bodies over the past fifty years tested the community as to how they would respond. Their survival was at stake in a community that had developed its sense of belonging and functioning since its establishment in the early 1900s. This sense of community therefore was rooted in its history. All the interviewees identified a strong community spirit.

## **Volunteers**

This community spirit was interwoven with the expectation and responsibility of being volunteers.

There is perseverance and I think he (father) instilled in me from a very early age his love of the community and people. Realising that other people could offer something and being able to draw on that...It was about being part of a team, taking people along with you. Not always having to do all of the work. Recognising that other people had something to offer.

Margaret

All the interviewees referred to the need in the community for volunteers and how the community depended on it. The role of the volunteer was critical to the survival of the people of Tuatapere during the 1984 flood. On 26<sup>th</sup> January 1984 Southland was inundated with a downfall of rain. A stationary front held over Southland for a period of twenty four hours (Lind, 1984). The result was a deluge of water in the catchment area that could not be held and siphoned out to sea through the normal causeways. Rivers overflowed and Invercargill and several outlying townships were flooded. Tuatapere was one of the worst hit. All the interviewees referred to the flood as a major drama for the township during the past fifty years.

As far as community goes I've been a community person most of my life. I sort of liked to help out in the community as much as I could. I started off being a scout leader when I was eighteen having been through scouts myself so I started there and later as the children arrived I coached school rugby and my wife did the basketball with the girls. Both been involved in the community from an early age and joined up with things in the community as we get older. Help out where we can...The flood in 1984 was quite a changing effect to Tuatapere. Never thought it would happen. When I actually got down to Tuatapere I couldn't believe what I saw. The Half Mile was under water...The farms were inundated as well, not just the town... It was quite devastating... The community just boxed together and went from farm to farm helping the farmers out as they didn't have any fences left. The community effort that went into that was amazing. That's when you find in rural areas that in a crisis they come out of the woodwork.  
Donald

I went down the Half Mile assisting old women and their cats out of their houses. By the time I got back the water was up to my waist. No-one was hurt. They all got out.  
June

At a time of crisis when lives and property are at risk then people's responses are tested. The Tuatapere community pulled together to help each other recover from the disaster.

### **Sharing of Interests, Involvement in Social Functions within the Township**

Communities have a geographical setting that gives people their sense of sharing and living together. Historical events are held where the whole district turns out. The family participating in social activities together was a common theme from all the participants. The attendance at local functions and social activities was always a whole family affair. The outlying rural districts had memorial halls built following both the World Wars and they would often hold dances during the weekend.

When I was a small child you went to the Tuatapere Sports. The whole family went... Now days its not the same as a sit down family thing. Things are a lot faster.  
Donald



We still have the A&P show, we've still got the Sports. Not as big as they were. They have held up pretty well.

Hugh

Every Friday night and every Saturday night there was a welcome to the district party, a farewell from the district, somebody's twenty first birthday party or on a Saturday somebody got married and had a wedding dance. It was a very busy place and a very social place.

Helen

The sharing of an interest, sport, hobby or church attendance gives the rural people a sense of belonging.

Community is Mums and Dads and clubs. The clubs that they belong to form the difference. The schools are important too.

Ngarita

Forty three years ago (1966) a group of men decided to form a Lions Club. One of the first projects was providing an ambulance which was a small Comer van and Dr Elder trained a number of men on First Aid.

Bill

Two churches are still going. There was a Methodist church, Presbyterian, Catholic and Anglican. There are breakaway groups from the Presbyterian...about three groups. The Anglican church has services.

Hugh

Smaller rural towns are known for their greater sense of community. Good support is available and a fierce attachment to their community .

I have been in the Lions club thirteen or fourteen years. I was the treasurer... Joyce (Hugh's wife) said, "I belong to Women's Institute and we applied to have the half yearly meeting out here and they came from West Otago and South Otago and we had it at the club for about fifty people. We had to get the speakers to speak about Tuatapere. Those people sitting in that meeting were quite astounded about what we did out here. Hugh said, "We've got different people involved in different things."

Hugh

The participants acknowledged the values and skills of their parents as being important to them. Their memories of earlier years in Tuatapere included activities in which the whole family participated. It is not necessarily like this today.

### **Local Initiatives**

Following the economic downturn in the late 1980s and the restructuring of the Forestry Service Tuatapere had to look to other forms of industry. In 1994 the local Community Board and District Council held a public meeting to consider their options. Several options within the tourism industry were considered. As a result the Tuatapere Resource Centre

was established and the idea of the Hump Track pursued. A Promotions group was formed.

### **The Promotions Group**

The Promotions Group started from a group who were talking about it in the hotel... And that's how we got the Southern Scenic Route. All these ideas came from this Promotions Group. The Southern Scenic Route, the saving of the viaducts and the Hump Track.  
Ngarita

With the changing of Tuatapere a Promotion Group started up, put their heads together to save Tuatapere from turning into a ghost town. Quite a number of things came out of it... That was all done at the same time as the idea of the Hump Track. The idea went from there... A public meeting was called... From there that Trust took over the organising of the new track... The Trust has actually taken it over and formed a charitable company to run it.  
Donald

That's why the Hump track came about because we had to develop something. So we called a meeting... I have never known so many people to volunteer. They all wanted to be part of restoring the viaducts. We got the Southland District Council to help us, and people were standing up from the main body of the floor saying I want to be part of this. It was the most thrilling meeting I have ever been to because the atmosphere was electric.  
Ngarita

The people of Tuatapere showed that together they were prepared to consider all their options to save their community from 'dying.' As a result several viable ventures are running successfully to put their community on the map as a wilderness adventure playground.

### **Diversification**

As well as exploring tourism options the local community also looked at diversification. Horticulture was one of the options considered and acted upon.

Flower exporting has been tried. The place growing hydrangeas has been abandoned but the gentians continue and seem to be going okay... a couple of guys have bought the old primary school and are growing native tussocks and grasses... Tuatapere seems to have the right climate for growing plants.  
June

The locals' efforts at diversification continue. The energy continues to be expounded to bring the tourist dollar into their part of Southland.

### **Geographical Situation**

There are different thoughts as to the extent which the Hump Track and other tourism activities and diversification efforts will assist Tuatapere's economy. Some believe that they are too geographically isolated for the tourist to travel to their area. The geographical isolation that is an attraction for some can work against the community when it comes to bringing revenue into the area.

Really we have been hard done by but if you look at the map where Tuatapere is we haven't got any through traffic coming from the South Pole...What is stopping people from living here is the lack of jobs. Our two kids are in Australia. Two sons are in Australia they won't come back. The opportunities are there whereas they are not here. They would be back tomorrow if there was a job because they know this is the place to live.

Helen

Remember that is our geographical position. We have the Longwoods here and the Takis there and we've got the sea here so we didn't have anyone else to help us. We were on our own.

Ngarita

I think it is because we live on this side of the Longwoods and because we have a hill to climb we just stay here.

(Joyce, Hugh's wife)

The participants had an awareness of their geographical isolation and the impact of that on their livelihood. They saw it as positive and one of the main reasons that they live where they do but they also acknowledged its drawbacks when considering access to the tourist dollar.

### **Existence of a Community Spirit**

The geographical setting and the shared interests assisted the community to have a common bond. A community spirit is the shared unseen motivation that drives people to work together for the good of their community. When asked if the community spirit is still in existence today the following were the replies.

Yes I think it is harder to keep. Much harder to keep and it changes because for a long time our population has stayed the same and the people in the community who cared about the community would get together to get things done. Now our people in the community are different. They are more mobile.

Margaret

The volunteers have dried up. The same ones all the time. Before all this happened we had one hundred and forty four clubs... now we wouldn't even have forty four

Helen

(The volunteers) were the pen pushers. They were used to writing things down. When we lost the forestry we lost this big work force and I don't know how long ago. We still haven't made up that gap in the town.

Ngarita

The interpretation of a community spirit was considered differently by the participants. A community spirit was referred to by some as sharing within the same geographical location. Others referred to a shared belief and value system. Most believed that a sense of goodwill and ability to interact on a voluntary basis was what it meant to them. Some believed it was still in existence but others felt it was harder to keep alive. The local initiatives that came into being following the 1980s economic downturn showed a strong community bond to consider alternatives.

### **SENSE OF SELF**

A sense of one's self is dependant on how one is integrated into the community. The community's shared views and expectations can sometimes be in conflict with the individual's wants and needs. The participants were all asked what it was like being a man/woman living in Tuatapere. Only two of the men were able to answer the question and they related to the physical location and leisure activities.

#### **Men's sense of self**

As a man living in Tuatapere if you're outdoorsy, its ideal. You've got everything at your back doorstep; fishing, hunting, tramping, boating, you name it, its basically all there. If your family is living at Tuatapere all those things are combined together if you wanted to...It's a man's world as far as out doorsy stuff goes. There is so much to do out here... You can go hunting, fishing, walking, as all there right at your back doorstep.

Donald

Tuatapere is a relaxed life style where you can have bush walks, fishing, white baiting, floundering, swim in the surf, know your neighbours, and an hour away from the lakes.

Bill

#### **Women's sense of self**

The women replied on a more emotional and personal level and some expanded in great depth in their replies. The historical expectations of the role of the 'farmer's wife' was firmly set by the 1950s. This was as a helper and supporter to the farmer who was the legal owner of the farm. During that time it was very rare for farm ownership to be in a woman's name. The division of labour was clearly defined by the male of the household being the physical worker and financial decision maker. The woman was the housekeeper and the caregiver of the children (Phillips, 1996, Allan, 2006). Very rarely did the

boundaries cross and the male take any childcare or nurturing role. The women's defined realm was within the farmyard gate.

While Dad was away at this gravel crushing site Mum was at home managing the farm and having babies. And she kind of did the farming. There were four children in three years. When we were kids Mum was always on the farm helping and he was at the site.  
Margaret

Margaret's parents' situation was unusual from the fact that her father clearly identified the gravel crushing business as being his primary area of responsibility so therefore had an expectation that his wife would extend her role to include the farm. Margaret was identifying the strong personality of her father but equally she was acknowledging the strength of her mother.

My mother she went to Women's Division on the second Tuesday of each month at 2pm. She went with Mrs H as my mother didn't drive. I could almost guarantee that Dad would say, "but you can't go to your meeting today as I want to get the lambs in, I need you there in the yards," (he would be all over the countryside to meetings) but she would never give in. She would have her meeting and she and Mrs.H would talk in the car out the front for hours on end and it would drive my father berserk. They would just talk and talk. Mum she stuck at it she could have easily given in. I think still a lot of people of my generation and more perhaps older than me it was hard for them, it is easier now...Mum was always involved in one thing, Women's Division. In her latter life she was very active in her own right. Up until then she was a shadow of Dad's.  
Margaret

The male and female roles were set in place and rarely altered. Personalities came into play and therefore skills were developed often by the female to accommodate the male dominated lifestyle. When Margaret became a 'farmer's wife' like her mother she had a different perspective on her situation. Being of the next generation she expected to retain and develop her own identity.

So for me living in a small town growing up in a small town, a fiercely National town politically, I believe a lot of the women were subservient. They were very pleased to stay at home on the farm and the only thing they had to worry about was making scones when the stock agent came. Whereas I grew up when that wasn't enough for me and I think that was one of the reasons my marriage didn't survive only I left my run a bit late. I was in my forties. I then had to get a job to survive. I think it was difficult for us to forge a life that could be for me. How many wives of farming or business men (today), how many are waiting at home answering the phone or baking the scones waiting for the stock agent to phone? None. Not in your sweet Nelly!!!  
Margaret

Margaret credits her self awareness and personal development to Playcentre and New Zealand Education Institute (NZEI).

Well I got involved in Playcentre, then at school when the kids were there as parent help...I had more than twenty years being highly involved in the union movement work at a local and national level...NZEI is a member driven organisation which is a huge team of people. Never did I work with such a strong group of people  
Margaret

### **The difference in gender roles**

Tuatapere was always a man's town. A frontier town. A wild west town. There were very few jobs for women. Very few jobs for school leavers if you were a girl. The very few jobs that there were, were held by married woman. It was always a sore point for young people. But there has been a turn around lately in the last ten years. Any new businesses that have started up have been by women.  
Helen

The men related their thoughts of living in Tuatapere as an enjoyable experience and what the physical environment could offer. Their reflections were based on concrete experiences. The women were able to reflect in more depth about their own development to adulthood in particular their relationships to others around them. Their reflections were on feelings and meaning. They considered the difference in gender roles and how that has changed over the years.

## **ACCESS TO SERVICES**

### **Government and Local Body Assistance**

The government was expected to assist those towns that were badly affected by the decisions made over the years. The interviewees were asked if the government or local council has a responsibility to do more for Tuatapere?

I believe we can help ourselves if they let us. We are so bound by this Resource Management Act...Southland District Council all live in the Invercargill council area and that has an impact on them as our rates don't affect them. If they were actually being affected by the policies that were being set down... then it would be different.  
Ngarita

I don't think we should rely on the government all the time. We stand on our own two feet. The sewerage is being put on and those without capital will struggle. It will go on to their rates and will have a drip feed system. It is inevitable.  
Hugh

Yes and they have just forced a sewerage scheme on us that none of us can pay for and it has taken all the available money out of the town... the rates are going to go up by three hundred a year as well every year. So that was pretty criminal. Not only here. There is Ohai and Nightcaps as well.  
Helen

Opinions vary as to whether the government or local body should do more to assist Tuatapere. There seems to be an ambivalence to being owed something for the demise of

the Forestry and the detrimental effect on the town and a proudness in the fact that they ‘do for themselves.’

### **Public Transport**

The effect of the dwindling infrastructures within a small township with limited resources is shown in the quality of social services. The lack of public transport affected the young and in some cases the elderly.

There isn’t any public transport here. There is a shuttle from Te Anau and back. Catch it here at 9 o'clock but it leaves Invercargill an hour after it arrives...In my job I require kids to go to SIT for the day and they can’t drive and their parents can’t take them... In days gone by, people caught the H&H bus or the News bus for the day. The elderly people have their own little bus to run into Invercargill.

Margaret

The desire to create opportunities for the young people to improve their future employment options is stymied by the lack of transport to further their education.

### **Health and Medical Services**

In Tuatapere the local community formed their own Trust in an effort to keep the health services open to attract medical practitioners to the area.

I was on the Area Health Board at the time. I could see that I wasn’t going to win the vote to keep the Maternity Home so I told the chemist and doctor. They said go ahead we will take it over as a private trust. We got the whole building for a dollar...So that was the Hospital Trust... Then we started the medical trust. We bought the medical practice.. Then we had two trusts, the medical trust and the hospital.

Ngarita

A community worker was established in Tuatapere during the 1980s.

It came about when the forestry left and all these people have these problems and you don’t know how to solve them and you don’t have a car to go to Invercargill. So this girl helps people. You go to her and if she hasn’t got the knowledge she will pass you on. She is not a consultant and she is not allowed to give out advice. But she knows exactly where to go to put you. She refers. Yes. She is an advocate.

Ngarita

The efforts of the local people have resulted in medical and health services being available for all. A community worker continues on in the town to advocate and assist the residents to be directed to services available for them.

### **Services for the Elderly and the Positives About Living in Tuatapere**

Tuatapere has an ageing population (Houghton, King & Piper, 1996). The participants were asked what it is like for the elderly living in Tuatapere. They were also asked what they liked about living in Tuatapere.

There is the little pensioner flats along there. We do have a Daycare Centre that operates twice a week ... I often ask myself why am I living here? Am I running away, am I hiding? Then I go to Christchurch and then I know why I live here. When I come back I know why I live here. Last week there was a couple from Devon our age and the lady she said to me that she had been in New Zealand two weeks and already she doesn't want to go home. She said to me "I don't want to go back." She didn't want to go back to the masses.

Helen

We have a very good ambulance supported by the Lions Club... As far as I am concerned living in this area is wonderful. We have had a pretty rough two years. The local people are just amazing. People coming in and out the door all the time. People support you well. We were away five weeks and we drove round the corner and I enjoyed the trip and I thought aren't I lucky that I'm not in those countries where people are tripping over each other. We care for each other.

Hugh and Joyce

At one stage there were close to 40- 50 widows and widowers around the area, transport being a problem for some of the older people... There is a good Medical Centre, an Elderly Care Centre two days a week and a mini-van to transport them... The people you know. Some nice homes are being built. The sewerage is now completed but it has been a lot of money for the residents but it will be good in the long run. People from Auckland are coming here because of the price difference on their homes and the natural beautiful landscape... Today Tuatapere is thriving.

Bill

I found my friends have either died or moved away. I had to put my husband in to an old peoples home... I don't want to go into an old peoples home.

Ngarita

Being with family and friends... We intend to live here in retirement whenever that is. Don't necessarily have to retire at 65. It depends on your health. Everything we want is here... We had a couple from Brisbane who recently bought a house and have done it up inside and busy doing up the outside. They came for a quieter lifestyle and they say they love the place.

June

I think it was a good place to bring up a family. Relaxed lifestyle. Close to lots of facilities. The beach and the bush.

Robin

If you are brought up in an area your roots are here. I like the area as everything I'm interested in is here. If I had to uproot and go somewhere else I'd have to find those interests as it is just part of your life.

Donald



I like to go to Invercargill for the pictures or a show and do all those things but I find it just as pleasant to walk along the beach or walk along the track...or wander around the cemetery because it is the last place to be.

Margaret

The local initiatives have assisted the elderly to stay in their community and continue to have a quality of life that they are used to. The familiarity of their own homes and the people to whom they are attached has taken precedence over moving away to be nearer to health services available in the larger cities. The establishment of the medical centre and senior citizens club has enabled them to have the social contact to support their desire to stay put in their home town.

## **CONCLUSION**

The life stories of the Tuatapere residents relate to the changes over the past fifty years and how these have impacted on them and their families both socially and economically.

These stories were grouped using the main themes of the study being; historical influences and cultural expectations, the impact of Government decisions on the community, sense of community, sense of self and access to services.

The views of the residents depended on the values and influences instilled in them by their parents and grandparents and on their ages and gender. The strong Scottish influence that has always had a presence has waxed and waned over the years but is having a resurgence. The residents' inherent views stayed with them but they lament a change in the way society is viewed by the younger generation. They referred to past structures that were once set, like the composition and values within families, and how they have changed. As people disperse and newcomers come into the area, integration within the community and the once held expectation of voluntary involvement are changing.

The residents all had strong views on how the government decisions in the past impacted on them individually and as a community. The demise of the Forestry Service and the lowering of the Waiau impacted economically and socially upon the town. They showed that there is a strong resilience to changes and they are able to use their initiative and energy to explore options. The Hump Track and other tourist promotions are evident of this.

The changing roles of men and women over the past fifty years was referred to and what it means for them today. Access to services showed how residents have been able to address the need for services in a positive way. The medical and maternity trust and day centre for the elderly are examples. The geographical isolation is seen as both a positive and a negative. The love of the physical environment is what keeps them there along with people whom they have known all their lives but that same environment makes it harder for them to access the tourist dollar. The residents considered their futures living on in Tuatapere in their old age and what it means to them with the services and assistance available. All the participants showed an attachment to the area and a hardiness and resilience to the events that have occurred over the past fifty years. In order to understand the effect of these social changes on the residents lives the stories are analysed and critiqued in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS**

The Tuatapere residents' ages span from sixty to eighty years. Their life experiences occurred within fifty years of significant social, economic and political change in New Zealand. The impact of these changes has affected each individual differently depending on their age and social circumstances at the time. Their stories are recorded under the five different themes. These stories are examined alongside literature on social change impacts in rural areas.

### **HISTORICAL INFLUENCES AND CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS**

“In 1970 Maori only represented 4 percent of the population in Tuatapere” (Taylor Baines & Associates, 1998, p. 17). These families were longstanding families whose ancestors had settled in the area. The local Kai Tahu iwi was dispersed amongst the greater Southland area and did not have a strong presence in the district. In Tuatapere the well known local Maori families include some from the Kati Mamoe and Waitaha iwi (Orwin, 1997). When the residents were asked about Maori living in Tuatapere Ngarita said, “No settlements. A and B (two families) lived down the Papatotara. H that lived at the mill were North Island Maori.”

Local Maori moved into the area from their settlement areas further along the southern coast. Tuatapere was a resting spot for the early Maori as they travelled along the Southern coastline and up the Waiau river. During the 1950s and 1960s the Maori families were part of the community along with the families of other cultural descent. The emphasis was more on whether you were a local or not rather than the culture. Often the only way that some families were identified as local Kai Tahu was when they travelled in the muttonbird season to the Titi islands. Collecting of toheroa and shellfish was carried out by all the community often in large social groups.

In 1996 Maori comprised about 17 percent of the residents. These figures showed an increase due to families from other iwi moving into the area from other parts of New Zealand for cheaper housing and a quieter lifestyle (Taylor, Baines & Associates, 1998). In 2006 Maori composition in Tuatapere remained at 17 percent of the residents (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). Included in this statistic are the shearers, who are transient and move in and out of areas depending on the shearing season. Today there is little evidence of

Maori presence within the township. The older personalities have died and many of the younger family members have moved out of the district. Some efforts have been made over the past twenty years to establish a Kohanga Reo and Marae within the town but these are no longer apparent. The participants reported that these efforts were mainly from North Island Maori being recent inhabitants to the town, not local Kai Tahu, Ngati Mamoe and Waitaha iwi. None of the participants identified as belonging to these hapu or iwi.

Tuatapere was settled by Europeans at the end of the 1800s and beginning of the 1900s by labourers from various cultures but the predominant culture was Scottish. A good number of these settlers came to Tuatapere to work in the sawmills and the bush but they later bought land and became farmers. The strong Scottish culture of the early Tuatapere settlers exists in the community today and some of their practices continue. Seven of the eight residents interviewed identified connections to Scottish or Northern Ireland parents or grandparents. A great deal of credit for this continued interest goes to Helen, a participant in the study and her husband for their commitment over the past fifty years. By teaching the dances and the tunes with the children of the district they are maintaining an interest in the practices and traditions of their Scottish heritage.

A commitment to the community especially in the ability to give voluntarily of their time was identified as being an expectation passed down from the parents. This volunteer expectation continues in the lives of participants interviewed. These shared values determine the culture of rural Tuatapere residents. "Culture is learned and transferred from generation to generation" (Connolly, Crighton-Hill & Ward, 2006, p. 20). The participants clearly showed an expectation that their children and grandchildren would carry on their values, beliefs and practices. To an extent this is evident by the Scottish dancing and piping still being taught within the township.

In some rural parts of New Zealand some of the practices and beliefs from previous generations have survived and continue to be practiced. One shared rural historical expectation was that the family land would be passed on down through the generations. This has been experienced in Tuatapere. Five of the participants had family members farming family land. They regarded land succession as the norm. Donald stated, "We married in 1973 and returned to the home farm and been there ever since." Margaret said, "We still had the farm at the Rowallan and I recently sold it to my son. It's a homecoming

really and he wanted to get there and raise his kids there.” Pitt in her study stated, “land is a massive issue because of the feeling it gives you” (Pitt, 1998, p. 48). Land is an important symbol for the people. These were Scottish labourers who came to New Zealand to have the opportunity to own their own land and pass it on to their descendants. This has been achieved. They were passing on the practices of the land owners back in Scotland that regarded land succession as being very important. This was part of their culture.

The culture of the participants’ parents and grandparents’ place of birth was not the only influence on the residents during the past fifty years. A strong male dominated society existed especially within the rural areas that focused on working the land and other manual work. This was seen as the socially constructed environment of the time rather than the inherited culture (James & Saville-Smith, 1989). The influences of the parents particularly the father was observed and discussed by Margaret and Ngarita. Both saw strengths in their parents that they admired. Margaret however saw her mother emerging in her own right in later life on her own. “Mum was always involved in one thing, Women’s Division. In her latter life she was very active in her own right. Up until then she was a shadow of Dad’s.” Both fathers showed the authority of the male of the household as was the norm during those earlier times.

The gendered culture was seen as a result of a pioneer society developing into a modern agricultural and industrial society. The division of roles became evident due to changes in the composition and definition of labour. This division continued within the wider culture of New Zealand. This changed within the 1970s with the women’s movement and changes within social policy and legislation that affected the balance of power between genders. In the following years women achieved the right to equal employment opportunities, wage parity and the introduction of the Domestic Purposes Benefit (King, 2003). Changes with the women’s role and how women were viewed occurred.

Gendered culture is still seen within the social and sporting realms of New Zealand society today extending out to the rural communities. There continues to be evidence of a typical New Zealand man in the beer drinking rugby mad image. In Helen’s story she touches on this briefly in this statement.

Suddenly discovering that their kids can’t all be All Blacks or Silver Ferns and they have got to have something of their own for their self esteem... Like that guy said. That

guy 'Children of Our Time.' You know he made the comment that New Zealanders were too much into rugby and I couldn't agree more. It has become a cult here and even not a nice one. It is not even sport.

The residents felt that the definition of culture was changing. Although the Scottish practices may still be in place it is a changed society and new values are emerging. The old value systems and structures such as the nuclear family unit and the practices and beliefs of the young people, have changed. Ngarita said, "There is a young wild teenage culture existing in Tuatapere at the moment." Helen lamented, "I just hope that people started to search themselves and get back into it (their Scottish culture). So we are cultureless. In a vacuum." Helen views the need to identify and hold onto the culture of their ancestors as being very important.

From the discourses and shared stories and views, new courses of action and beliefs are emerging. "But to those who hold onto their cultural heritage perhaps it is unsurprising that the unfamiliar terrain of the emerging culture is perceived as the enemy and resistance is a natural response to the threat of change" (Howden, 2001, p. 14). Some of the cultural beliefs and historical influences passed down from the earlier generations to the present day residents have survived and some have disappeared. New social practices are appearing especially with the youth. From a post structural perspective not all these practices are seen in a positive light by the older residents. They still hold fast to their own belief systems and trust that they will be absorbed by the young as they grow and become part of the Tuatapere community.

## **IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT DECISIONS**

The participants' beliefs, influenced by their cultural and historical pasts, are affected by an environment influenced by socio-political decisions made at local and national government levels. All the participants agreed that for the first half of the past fifty year period Tuatapere was a thriving bustling township. It was a sawmilling, sheep farming community until the economic downturn in the 1980s and the restructuring of the Forest Service in 1987 (Houghton, King & Piper, 1996). This was identified by the participants as disastrous for the township and community. "Those residents in rural places 65 and over have a lived experience based on economic dominance of rural productivity in all but the last decade of their lives" ( Joseph & Chalmers, 1995). As this comment was made over ten years ago that could now read 'the last two decades of their lives'.

The depopulation that followed those economic and political decisions had a detrimental effect on the remaining residents of the township and their livelihood. Shops, banks and the post office were closed, clear signs of the reluctant welfare state (Shirley, 1994) and a threat was made to close the maternity hospital and general medical service. All the participants referred to these outcomes and commented on the despair felt by the residents about the changes to their township.

The participants all showed their dismay and disappointment at the decisions that were made by government that threatened their livelihood and the progress of their town. Helen said, "It ruined the town and then all our young people up and left and either went further afield in New Zealand or most of them went to Australia and they haven't come back" Ngarita stated, "The biggest influence has been the closing down of the forestry. That impacted on Tuatapere. And its still impacting. We haven't grown through it yet. It took a whole strata of society out. The Mums and Dads and the kids at school. They had to leave to get work." Such depopulation replicated the trends in the Glendining (1978) study. Bill declared, "The new primary school eventually closed down and the Waiau College turned into an Area School, Tuatapere Community College. The National Bank closed down , the Post Office closed down so it meant that the Service Station and the Stores had to provide money." Due to government decisions made, the moving away of a section of the community gave those who were left behind a sense that they were being depleted of valuable resources that had once assisted the functioning of the town.

These decisions made by those in positions of power, the policy makers and politicians, gave the residents the perception of being unfairly treated. This does not necessarily mean that the powerless see themselves as victims. Often the very opposite occurs as they can be empowered by their own energy to challenge the decisions and actions that are being thrust upon them. In the Tuatapere residents' case they took the challenge head on and met the changes imposed upon them. They formed groups and held meetings to discuss options available to them as a response to the now residual role of the welfare state (Boston & Dalziel, 1992).

The community rallied together and formed a Promotions Group and initiated a series of meetings to explore options for the township and surrounding areas. Tourism was the

main topic for consideration. Several initiatives were the result and the most important being the establishment of the Hump Track. “All these ideas came from this Promotions Group; The Southern Scenic Route, the saving of the viaducts and the Hump Track. Now the Promotions Group is working on a cycle trail on the west side of the Waiau between here and Te Anau” stated Ngarita.

Horticulture was also explored. A Resource Centre was established that housed a community worker, information centre, craft shop and a museum of sawmilling regalia. Helen reported, “After the 1987 crash and the demise of the forestry we had what we called the Tuatapere Resource Centre. It had a permanent worker for finding jobs and looking at industry and looking at things we could do.” Today this is the Information Centre and office for the Hump Track.

The health services were also threatened by the restructuring of the health system in the 1980s (Boston & Dalziel, 1992). With the threat made by the Health Board to close the local maternity hospital and change the way of funding the local doctor, the Tuatapere community formed two trusts for the establishment of a medical centre and the continuation of the maternity hospital. “We got the whole building for a dollar...We bought the medical practice. It was here for a wee while then we thought this is silly we will use half of the hospital. Then we had two trusts. The medical trust and the hospital,” reported Ngatita. These are both operating successfully today under the umbrella of one single entity. An activity centre for the elderly residents is also held at the building housing the medical centre and maternity hospital.

It is interesting to note the amount of energy and doggedness that was expounded by the residents in their efforts and in some case battles with the local authorities to achieve their goals. This again is an example of power being administered by the policy and decision makers and in some cases one could ask, “For what purpose?” Ngarita spoke about this after the community purchased the local maternity hospital. “The moment we came out from under the umbrella of the Area Health Board we came under local restrictions and we had to pay forty five thousand (dollars) to put in a sprinkling system that the hospital board didn’t have to.” So while the state may be seen to have a residual role through funding they continued to exert considerable control through regulations.



This was further illustrated when Ngarita also spoke about the community wishing to operate a respite care home for the elderly of the district. The Trust was exploring the viability of utilising the extra space in the maternity hospital. “Whether you can have babies and elderly in the same home is the question. There is the danger of cross contamination. This is a problem under the Act. The hospital has to operate under the Act and maternity hospitals have a different Act.” Donald spoke about the rules and regulations that were demanded by the Department of Conservation during the forming of the Hump Track. He acknowledges that some were in place for public safety but in other cases the demands made were ridiculous.

The original paper they put through for the concession, after A Consultants looked at it they said it is not workable, it’s impossible. They made it that hard for private enterprise. We were the first private enterprise to build a project on Department of Conservation Land. The restrictions they put on it were that hard we couldn’t do it... There were a lot of changes made to make it work.

Ngarita in her role as a community member on different boards stated, “You have to be able to work the system. If you can’t do that then you’re lost. Oh yes I don’t let them intimidate me. This is where a lot of people make mistakes when they go into the likes of local bodies. They forget that they are administrative staff and there to help you but you’re the one that makes a decision not them.”

A local sawmill owner likewise expressed frustration at dealing with policy makers when he finally closed his family owned sawmill. This report in the Southland Times (2008) stated that this was the last remaining family owned sawmill in the district and was competing with a much larger commercial operation. “I’ve spent my working life time fighting bureaucracy and I can bloody well tell you I’m sick and tired of fighting bureaucrats.” The actual or perceived power of the policy makers creates a response in the residents that either mobilises or eventually immobilises them. The residents of Tuatapere showed that they are willing and able to meet any challenge that is put before them.

Another central government decision that impacted on the town was the lowering of the Waiau river that flows through the centre of the town. Meridian Energy paid compensation to the residents but at a cost to the environment. This decision to lower the Waiau was described by the participants as having a detrimental effect on the coastal beaches, the quality of the water and the water sports activities previously enjoyed by the inhabitants.

In April 2009 an article appeared in the Southland Times proclaiming that Meridian Energy was planning to further reduce the water flow in the Waiau to increase the volume for electricity manufacturing at Manapouri. The District Council was opposed to the idea due to the “future of Tuatapere’s reticulated water supply, erosion into the Tuatapere domain and the effect on tourism in the area.” In this instance the local people have the support of the local council in their efforts to counteract national governments decisions that will have a detrimental impact on their environment and therefore their livelihood.

The participants in the study identified a disastrous period for their township following the government decisions and the economic downturn of the 1980s. This led to closure of businesses and depopulation. What followed was a township determined to retain their identity and livelihood. They formed groups and pursued other ventures for their township. They acknowledged a frustration at the bureaucratic decisions made that in most cases they believed were unreasonable and delayed or halted their progress. The efforts that were expounded showed that the inherent values, the shared community ethos and the determinedness not to be ‘done to’ resulted in a community that remains proud of their new image.

### **SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

A sense of community differs depending on the experiences, thoughts and feelings of the inhabitants. Some saw community as their physical location while others viewed it by how they saw themselves interacting with others within their locality. The social structures within the community such as educational and sporting facilities enabled the people to have contact with others and thereby maintain a sense of community.

The physical sense of community is seen by the participants as their geographical surroundings. Ngarita stated;

Remember that is our geographical position. We have the Longwoods here and the Takis there and we’ve got the sea here so we didn’t have anyone else to help us. We were on our own... Yes we had to become resilient because Riverton couldn’t help us and Otautau was over the hill, we always thought of Otautau over the hill, so they couldn’t help us, they were always looking towards Invercargill not back to us. We had to help ourselves.

Hugh’s wife Joyce put it as, “I think it is because we live on this side of the Longwoods and because we have a hill to climb we just stay here.” This sense of isolation from other

communities creates a dependence on the social interaction and companionship of those around them in their own community.

Participants also portray their sense of community through the shared activities they engaged in. These activities can be in a sports club, attending church or participating in a voluntary capacity. Ngarita defined community as “Mums and Dads and clubs...and the schools are important too.” Hugh described the organised social activities within the community. “We still have the A&P show, we’ve still got the Sports. Not as big as they were. They have held up pretty well.” Hugh and Bill spoke about belonging to Lions. Bill said, “Forty three years ago a group of men decided to form a Lions Club.” Hugh said, “I have been in the Lions club thirteen or fourteen years. I was the treasurer. We support local initiatives like The Hump Track etc.” Joyce (his wife) said, “I belong to Womens Institute.” Belonging to clubs gives the residents a sense of belonging that forms their closeness and sense of community.

Howden (2001) found that a sense of community depended on whether one was a newcomer to the district or a local born and bred. From her study she found that the locals saw community as something that brought them together whereas the newcomers to the district saw it mainly as a connection to social groups. In the Tuatapere study the locals saw the physical location as well as the social groups they participated in as the two factors that brought them together to experience a sense of community.

The community halls provided a venue or point of contact for the community to gather for social functions. Helen stated, “Every Friday and every Saturday night there was a welcome to the district party, a farewell from the district, somebody’s twenty first birthday party or on a Saturday somebody got married and had a wedding dance.” The halls were regarded as a vital building for the community for their social contact. The majority of the halls have now disappeared due to population decrease. This was also evidenced within the Glendining (1978) study. “The closing of the district schools and halls took away a good deal of the friendship and social life (Glendining, 1978, p.44).

### **Commitment to volunteering**

The sense of community is experienced not only through the geographical location and the sharing of interests but also through voluntary work. This is looking beyond their own

needs to the greater good of the community. The Tuatapere participants have a strong community spirit amongst the residents. Donald and Robin recalled years involved with the voluntary ambulance service. Ngarita spent a good part of her life in community work and Helen gave of her time to the Resource Centre for twenty years.

In 1984 there was a flood that inundated the township and surrounding farmland. The community came together to assist wherever they could. Donald said, “The community just boxed together and went from farm to farm helping the farmers out as they didn’t have any fences left. The community effort that went into that was amazing. That’s when you find in rural areas that in a crisis they come out of the woodwork.” This coming together at a time of crisis contributes to the sense of community of working together for the greater good.

Donald spoke about this volunteer attribute being passed on to him by his parents. “Both my father and my mother were very active in the community...To be able to do things without having to be paid for it. If you don’t get the volunteers in the small rural areas you won’t exist. We survive on our own... still rely on outside help. We can’t do it all on our own. But we all pitch in where we can.” This working together was evident when the community came together to look at other areas of revenue following the Forestry Service restructuring and the aforementioned flood of 1984. These two events impacted on the community and affected their livelihood, a clear indication of how socio-political eco-systems impact on communities.

Howden (2001) discusses how globalisation works against the idealised community. The fact that New Zealand’s produce is sold within the international market, the focus is on high production and targets and timeframes that do not necessarily consider family and community lifestyles. The emphasis on the producer therefore is focused on time on the job for economic benefits and they have to balance that against their families and the community’s needs. This is evident in the dairying industry that has grown at an increasing rate throughout Southland over the past ten years.

The participants made reference to the new inhabitants in Tuatapere being the dairy workers who support the high technological mode of production that is required for the production of milk for the global market. The old ways of thinking are being challenged

by the new realities that don't allow them to be involved in the community. Howden's (2001) study refers to the dairy farmers as "these new families...have also brought a mindset which is to work hard make a profit, to make something for themselves and not so much for the social interaction." (Howden, 2001, p. 13).

How the new inhabitants are viewed by the settled inhabitants of the existing community depends on how they integrate themselves into the community. Reference is made to them as 'newcomers,' 'townies,' 'transients,' whereas the terminology for the existing residents, those of us who were 'born' and 'bred' here. This perhaps illustrates the 'them' and 'us' way of thinking that can exist (Howden, 2001). McMath and Smith (1988) found that the newcomers likewise experienced a difference. "Newcomers felt alone...especially as not related to anyone. Locals saw that if something was different it must be wrong" (McMath & Smith, 1988, p. 57).

Helen stated, "It seems that the dairy workers have such committed hours that they don't actually contribute too much around the town. There is not a lot of interaction and their farm workers are the same." Margaret said, "the dairying boom should be really good for us, those people aren't really tied to the community, some are good but others have absolutely no intention of becoming involved in the community. They are itinerant so they are only here for a short term and they move on."

Other more recent inhabitants to the township are people from overseas. Some from Britain and Australia, have chosen to come to New Zealand and Tuatapere in particular for the physical beauty of the landscape, the lifestyle and the affordable housing. June said, "We had a couple from Brisbane who recently bought a house and have done it up inside and busy doing up the outside. They came for a quieter lifestyle and they say they love the place." The community is not adverse to welcoming others into their fold but there is an expectation of 'doing their bit' and contributing on a voluntary basis to the social and survival functioning of the township. This can be difficult for those whose occupation requires them to spend a majority of their time at their place of occupation and source of income for their family.

The ongoing existence of a community spirit is acknowledged by June. "A good community spirit exists. There are always enough people to do the work that needs to be

done. If not then others rise to the occasion. Still like that. It's a quiet rural community. It is a safe place to live". Others found it more difficult to maintain. Margaret spoke of her time assisting with the organising of the school's centennial celebrations. "There is a core group of people who think we should have a school jubilee. They are not the ones who have the kids at the school now. It is the older ones and it is quite hard for a community to survive." The participants spoke about the expectations within the community to 'lend a hand' in time of need or help out on some committee. They all acknowledged it is becoming harder to find the people to assist. It usually ends up being the responsibility of the older generation.

This voluntary contribution to the community however enables the community to keep functioning with an identity of its own. This determination from the committed few has shown that the policy influences that could be an obstruction have been overcome by the shared discourses of commitment. However, Helen lamented, "We have worn ourselves out. We are actually at the point of exhaustion and our people with time to give. The volunteers have dried up. The same ones all the time." There are limits to the community's ability to provide for its own when social policies have served to remove a whole strata of society from a community.

The community spirit was shown by the Tuatapere residents 'coming together' following the changes to their town in the 1980s. During this time there was also a flood that threatened not only their livelihood but also their lives. From their shared place of location, their shared value systems and their ability to assist they became involved to initiate new ideas or 'help out.' The survival of the community is seen as the peoples' ability to give of their time on a voluntary basis. Although the participants acknowledge this was a value passed down to them by their parents they state that there appears to be a diminishing commitment by the younger generation and newer residents to the area, to contribute to the functioning of the community in this way.

## **SENSE OF SELF**

A sense of self relates to the person's self worth and how they are integrated into the community. Christie noted in his study that for those farming a sense of self related to what one can do in the community (Christie, 1991). This ability to give of one's time and

effort was dependant upon their inner motivation and the pressures on their time. This was discussed in the previous theme from the dairy farmer's situation.

The struggle to gain an identity was referred to by Margaret, one of the participants of the study. Location and belonging contributed to her sense of self. When Margaret was a teenager and went off to board in the city to attend school she felt isolated from her peers in her home community.

I always played sports at school. Basketball etc but when I went off to high school and boarded during the week you weren't part of the high school teams as you were only there during the week and you weren't part of the teams here... Certainly when we came home at the weekend we were treated a little like lepers.

Robin commented on this also when he went to Invercargill for his electrical apprenticeship. "Myself I didn't belong in Invercargill and I didn't belong here." During this period of their lives they felt that they didn't fit into their home town as they spent a good part of each week living away in Invercargill.

Later when Margaret married a farmer she reflected on her parents' roles and those of other farming couples within the rural community.

So for me living in a small town growing up in a small town, a fiercely National town politically, I believe a lot of the women were subservient. They were very pleased to stay at home on the farm and the only thing they had to worry about was making scones when the stock agent came. Whereas I grew up when that wasn't enough for me and I think that was one of the reasons my marriage didn't survive only I left my run a bit late. I was in my forties. I then had to get a job to survive.

Allan in her study on farming women noted "the need to forge a self identity that resides within the complex issues of work, family and self" (Allan, 2006, p. 11). Pitt saw this as, "the tension between our perception of ourselves as unique and separate individuals and our need to be social and interdependent" (Pitt, 1998, p. 83). This need to meet one's own individual desires and the expectations of others on their role, is a conflict that has to be resolved. Some found a way of accommodating both and others took the only way out that they knew and left the situation.

This sense of self identity is how the influences from our past and how views on our current situation are constructed and provide meaning. This meaning could be viewed as in conflict with beliefs and structures from previous generations.

Margaret's consciousness was developing through the Women's Movement during the 1970s and her own development within the Playcentre Movement and later with New Zealand Education Institute NZEI. Margaret identified her need for independence but that she was also in an economically dependent situation (Briar, 1992). Later when she was working in the school, teaching pottery to the children, she realised that she was in fact in an unpaid position as a woman with all her skills and that she was worth something. "One day I was there as a volunteer as a parent help taking pottery and I realised that I had thirty five kids and not a teacher in sight. I felt that my time was worth something and so I negotiated to be paid and it kind of just grew from there really."

This line of thinking is aligned to the idea that women's voluntary work and the concept that work within the home and in the community should go unpaid, is challenged (McKinlay, 1992). She stated that in fact women's labour is hidden, yet policies are made that rely on the community to care for its own. "Failing to take account of unpaid work has implication for the way we measure our economy" (McKinlay, 1992, p. 74). The hidden unpaid work of those within the home and community is not identified within the country's economic planning. This caring and teaching role is not identified in monetary terms in the social services budget.

Historically it has been shown that at times of need, women have gone back into the workforce to fill the positions vacated by men such as during the Second World War. In the rural community during the economic downturn in the 1980s women were pulled into the farm to do extra work due to the inability to pay for labour or they worked off farm to financially support the farm and family (Allan, 2006; Christie, 1991; James & Saville-Smith, 1989; Pitt, 1998). This has been referred to as a 'reserve army of labour'. Margaret referred to how her father would expect her mother to help out on the farm and tried unsuccessfully to sabotage her Women's Division Meeting day. Margaret referred to her own frustrations of being at everyone's demands and not being able to meet her own needs.

I grew up in an era where it was harder to do things as a women like for instance when we were nursing, you couldn't be married and continue to train. Let alone have babies or anything... The pottery club was just for me. I didn't care about anybody else. It wasn't taking Guides or going to rugby or netball or carting horses around the country or whatever or what B wanted me to do. If I could make money out of pottery that is what I would still be doing. I think it was hard for women.

These women used their own strengths and resources to meet their own individual needs. Ngarita's strong sense of self is related to her childhood. She related how as an only child



she was taught self determination. “I felt that I don’t treat men and women differently. I look at them both. They have different minds. They get to the same results through different pathways. But I don’t treat them any differently for I was not brought up to separate the difference in the sexes like that.” Ngarita showed her strong sense of independence and leadership skills in her many roles on local body groups within the community and her ability to confront and debate social and political issues. “I chair the library, I chair the Amenities Trust, I chair the Doctor Anniversary Trust and I am deputy chair of the Tuatapere Community Workers Board and the Waiau Health Trust.”

The strength and independence shown by these women continues into the present day. Helen notes how there has been a turn around in the township in later years with women starting up and running businesses.

They have taken the lead. The men seemed to have got lost somehow along the way. They have got discouraged or disillusioned, they are not into new things. The women have taken up the cudgels. If you look there are women in the Hungry Hippo, J in the old Langmuir’s stores, lady at the Western Foodmarket, me, ladies next door here, for a time there were two women butchers who took the butchers shop on, the hairdresser.

This changing role of women in business in Tuatapere reflects the changes in wider society. Women have increasingly taken leading roles in the business and professional realms in New Zealand over the past twenty years. In the McMath and Smith (1988) study they found that the woman’s role that satisfied the older rural woman did not necessarily satisfy the younger woman. The woman’s role was changing and now twenty years later we see evidence of that change. Whether the woman’s work out of the home and in some cases out of the local district, was by choice or necessity, it occurred and with that came the increasing skills and knowledge that can be transferred into the business arena. Pitt (1998) refers to the multifaceted working role of women. Her study highlights the unpaid work within the home and family and the paid work in the public sphere. It also highlights the “variety of work carried out by rural women and the multiple expectations that they faced” (Pitt 1998, p.80).

For the male participants their sense of self related to their physical environment. It also related to their ages being sixty and over, and having been brought up in an era of being the head of the house, the breadwinner, the land owner and the decision maker. They said that Tuatapere was a ‘man’s world’ and they were relating to the outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing and other sporting activities.

Participants sense of self show how the effect of the physical environment and community expectations impacted on their lives. Two of the participants discussed how when they were living between two towns in their younger years, they struggled to maintain friendships and be a part of sports groups. The community norms and expectations and the changing role of women became a conflict for some. The many roles that women undertook both in the private and public sphere, saw their emerging strength in leadership within business and service groups in the community. The men showed an attachment to the area for what it could offer for their physical enjoyment. The participants emerged with a strong sense of self and a commitment to their own lives and the lives of the people in their community.

### **ACCESS TO SERVICES**

The participants' strong sense of self and community spirit were shown by the initiatives that they implemented to maintain a livelihood during the government restructuring of the 1980s. The community's desire to continue to live in the environment that they have a strong affiliation, enabled them to collectively pursue all possibilities. The residents' individual needs were balanced against the services and supports available to them within their community and the decisions made at a regional and national level that continued to impact on them.

Ngarita reflected this by her statement, "It's a funny thing. When there is a Labour government in, I turn capitalist. The moment the National government comes in I get a social conscience. I have a great difficulty in getting the balance." The other participants expressed their alignment with this view through their expressions of individualism when they came up with solutions to their difficulties being impeded by bureaucratic decision making and yet their expectation that government should supply the community with basic services. They therefore showed a centrist view of not necessarily supporting far right politics but a good mix of state provision and individual responsibility.

This belief that there was an entitlement to services from government extended into the interview when the participants considered whether the government or local bodies decisions have assisted them to continue living in their township. They talked about the most recent decision impacting on their livelihood being a sewerage system for the township. There were mixed feelings on whether it was necessary and whether it was fair

to have such a financial burden placed on them. Hugh said, “the sewerage is being put on and those without capital will struggle. It will go on to their rates and will have a drip feed system. It is inevitable. At the moment it does go into the creeks and we have white baiting , fishing etc.” Helen spoke about the unfairness especially to the elderly who would have to break into their ‘nest egg’ that had been accumulated for their retirement years. “Yes and they have just forced a sewerage scheme on us that none of us can pay for and it has taken all the available money out of the town...The little old people who have five thousand dollars to bury themselves are having to put it into the scheme.” This is an example of the individual’s needs at odds with the environment. Some of the participants acknowledged that the new scheme was inevitable. They also discussed the fact that the contractors who are involved with the laying of the sewerage system are from out of town and the opportunity was not given to local contractors to be involved and thereby bring finance back into the town.

Ngarita spoke about this decision making being at a regional and national level and not considering the social and financial impact on the town. She said that when they had planned the local dump for the town’s rubbish they had an area on the outskirts of the town identified for the dump. They had planned for the gravel from the hole to be sold to pay the wages of a person to maintain the dump. However national government in Wellington decided that they needed all the local townships waste to form the ‘critical mass’ to justify a regional dump.

We can help ourselves if they let us...We had a refuse site that would have suited Tuatapere for its life. We sold the gravel (from the site) that paid for the man that manned the pit and looked after it...it was a workable proposition and we had to close it down... this big thing in Wellington said that we had to have a regional dump over in the lime pit at Winton so our little bit became part of a critical mass to get enough to go in there so they shut us down.

Helen also mentioned the local services being contracted out of the area and then the services are not maintained to the community’s satisfaction. She believed that local people would provide a better quality of service.

We are supposed to have our streets swept once a week, and the gutters, but they don’t get done... The footpaths are a disgrace. We are third world compared to what I saw in Russia, Moscow. We are just forgotten about conveniently. We did make a lot of noises but we are just paid lip service. That’s all.

Helen like Ngarita felt that the peoples' views were not listened to at the regional and national level. Decisions were made on economic grounds without consideration given to the social impact on the people of the community.

The township has an ageing population. "The number of residents aged 40 years and over has been increasing, despite the decrease in the total population of Tuatapere" (Houghton, King & Piper, 1996, p. 52). The 2006 Census states "that 18.1 percent of people in Tuatapere are aged 65 years and over, compared with the 13.9 percent of the total Southland region population" (Statistics New Zealand, 2006). These residents therefore are the rate payers who have to pay for the services required by the town. This desire to stay in their own homes is a challenge to them when they are faced with extra expenses for new amenities. "The current cohort of rural elderly has witnessed the gradual erosion of rural services" (Joseph & Chalmers, 1995, p. 80). This becomes a tension for them as the viability of their daily existence is in conflict with their desire to stay in the area to which they have become attached.

A daily bus service was available to the residents in the 1950s and 1960s that enabled them to travel to Invercargill for the day shopping and to attend appointments. It is no longer operating. Public transport in Tuatapere is limited to a bus service that can take the residents into Invercargill, but they are not able to complete day trips to attend appointments. They have to rely on family or friends. Bill said, "At one stage there were close to 40 - 50 widows and widowers around the area, transport being a problem for some of the older people. Quite often people have to leave here early in the mornings for appointments at Kew Hospital."

This is also a problem for the local secondary school for as Margaret noted, "There isn't any public transport here. There is a shuttle from Te Anau and back. Catch it here at 9 o'clock but it leaves Invercargill an hour after it arrives. No public transport to go to Invercargill for the day and I find it extremely difficult for my job. I require kids to go to SIT (Southern Institute of Technology) and they can't drive and their parents can't take them." The lack of public transport in rural communities was noted in the studies of McMath and Smith (1988) and Joseph and Chalmers (1995). The elderly residents who were transport dependent became lonely or dependent on family and friends.

Other services however for the elderly appear to meet their needs very well. A great deal of effort appears to have gone into supporting the aged within the community. The participants spoke of a senior citizens centre and a day centre where they are transported by a van owned by the medical trust. They enjoy social activities and often have outings to other outlying districts. A meals on wheels service is also available and a block of pensioners flats if there is a need to down size accommodation. The medical centre is well serviced. These services have been supplied by the community's own initiatives.

In their study of 'Growing Old in Rural New Zealand' Joseph and Chalmers state, "The philosophy of welfare care of the aged does not sit well with the profit driven ideology of the private sector" (Joseph & Chalmers, 1995, p. 88). This is an ideal of a generation that experienced free welfare service earlier in their lives in the form of government funded medical services and they are now experiencing the user pays philosophy of the market driven socio-political environment. In Tuatapere the community has shown how they value their elderly by the efforts that have been made to provide services to support them in their latter years.

The changes that have impacted on the residents of Tuatapere have been met as a challenge by the community. Services that once were available to them have been withdrawn but they have gathered their resources to establish sufficient services to meet their needs. The final word on the Tuatapere township community is related by Ngarita. "The town celebrated its one hundred years about three years ago. We had the minister from Te Anau and he brought five stones out of the river. He said this is the town's generations and he spoke and it was a most interesting address that. The five stones. It was a very apt way of putting it."

## **CONCLUSION**

The residents of Tuatapere have told their stories about social change in their community over the past fifty years. These stories have been examined alongside other research in rural communities and analysed against the policy changes outlined in the literature review.

The five themes that emerged commenced with the cultural and historical influences and the attributes passed down from parents and grandparents. These influences sustained the

residents to meet the challenges of this post modern society and to make sense of it. The residents have gained unity and strength from their shared values and determined characters. The impact of the changes on their lives, as a result of government decision making in the 1980s were met with new initiatives coming from the community.

Their sense of themselves within their isolated physical environment and with the experiences they have shared, has provided them with a sense of community. Community spirit has allowed them to explore new initiatives when changes occurred and to deal with crises within their daily lives. The ability to give voluntarily of their time to assist the township as a whole has strengthened identity. Reflecting on their living within this community, with the rural and cultural expectations and the influences and expectations of New Zealand society, has led to a strong sense of self. Changes that occurred especially in the role of women and how that impacted on how they viewed themselves was discussed. Access to services today, was identified through discussions about the changes in health, education and social services.

The Tuatapere that residents knew fifty years ago has changed from a farming, sawmilling town with government supplied services to a township with a farming community on its outskirts and a developing tourist industry. Private enterprise was required to economically provide for the town. From the residents stories they told of meeting these challenges and how they continue to enjoy living in the community in this remote rural corner of Western Southland in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION**

The focus of this study has been to analyse the impacts of social change and provision of services in a small rural community, to explore the basis for the participants' values and beliefs and how their actions were underpinned by these beliefs. The result has been a treasure of discourses outlining the events and how participants responded to them with resilience and stoicism. This chapter provides a summary of research findings, strengths and limitations and recommendations.

### **SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **Changing Belief Systems**

The systems, structures and beliefs that existed in New Zealand fifty years ago have changed. In today's society different values exist that influence the way of viewing the world. In the present day, values, beliefs and structures are more fluid and change with the differing environment. Those who have lived throughout the past fifty years acknowledge the security of traditional values and belief systems. These historic and cultural influences based on religion or family values supported the older residents' way of life, and are drawn upon to meet the new challenges of meeting changes in their community. The government's socio-economic decisions affected their daily existence and they had to call on their resources of personal resilience along with the strong community support.

Although this present society exists with changing values and beliefs, the values and belief systems inherited from the early European settlers of Tuatapere remain strong in those family members interviewed. Strength of character and stoicism assisted them individually and collectively when faced with changes and events throughout their lives. The strength of this study has been the opportunity to record first hand experiences from eight long term residents. Their interpretations of the values and beliefs of the younger generations have been from the older residents' perspective only. The younger generation was not interviewed to hear their views on this topic as it was not within the scope of this study.

#### **Voluntary Work and Other Commitments**

The values and belief systems of the past fifty years included a strong community spirit and awareness of each other's wellbeing. Neighbours supported and looked out for each other. Obstacles exist in today's society that prevent voluntary participation in community

life. The financial need for both adults within a household to be in paid employment has seen a decrease in the philanthropic work once carried out in country areas. The Guides, Scouts, St John Ambulance, Playcentre, sports groups, service clubs, all report a decline in their membership (Howden, 2001).

The changing role of women, especially within the farming fraternity, affected the availability of a reserve army of labour. In the past women moved freely in and out of their carer, house focused role, their farm helper role and their participation in voluntary community group role. In the present day, women's time and availability is limited due to their paid work commitments. Men likewise have longer workdays and work commitments. The ability for both men and women to give of their time to unpaid voluntary work is thus limited. As a result the Playcentre, the sports teams, the Brownies , and other voluntary organisations, are all struggling for support in the community.

The demand on people's time is not the only obstacle for the supply of volunteers within a community. Social changes over the past fifty years have seen depopulation within the country areas. This reduced population in rural areas means that a smaller pool of people is expected or obligated to keep the volunteer role functioning. Urbanisation is not new and has been occurring since the 1950s, but in localities like Tuatapere depopulation has occurred due to the closing down of primary industries such as logging, milling and farm production changes. Jobs are lost which results in those workers moving away often to bigger townships to find employment. It also means that the factories that were connected to the timber industry lost their contracts. These businesses were often one of the major sources of employment for school leavers within a township. The young therefore moved out of the district to seek employment elsewhere leaving family and friends.

In Tuatapere, the district was left with a population of elderly retired people and younger families often connected with the dairying industry. The elderly have assisted with exploring new initiatives to enable them to have the services they require in their old age. The choice of moving to larger cities that have the necessary services was weighed up against leaving their friends and homes. These older residents have chosen to stay in the area of their birth rather than move away. They all reported being contented with their lifestyle in Tuatapere. New arrivals to the community especially those within the dairy industry have different work commitments and family priorities and struggle to become



integrated into the community. Their ability to give of their time voluntarily within the community is viewed by the longer term residents as a barrier to them becoming accepted into the community. The pool of volunteers therefore contains young couples with young families and the elderly retired residents. The limitation of this research is that it focused on the views of elderly residents and their perspectives and does not include a wide cross section of the community. There is scope for further ongoing research focusing on the impact of social change.

The shrinking volunteer pool is a worry for communities. Other services like St John Ambulance, volunteer fire brigade, civil defence volunteers struggle to maintain a sufficient core group to meet these most needed services. This was reported as a worry to them by the older residents.

The efforts made by the residents of Tuatapere showed that a community spirit still exists but is harder to maintain. The volunteer ethos that was evident within the rural community could be described as the glue that held the community together. It was seen as the underpinning philosophy that supported the actions that saw initiatives being explored. If the basis of people's integration into a community is based on their ability or lack of ability to volunteer one wonders how the 'community spirit' is maintained.

### **Devolution**

Not only are rural communities expected to meet the social and recreational needs of its people but the expectation is that it meets the basic needs of its people as well. Today we live in a country with a 'safety net' of welfare, education and health systems. The government's decision to devolve social responsibilities back to communities is made on the assumption that people are available to give of their time to perform these tasks. As we have seen the rural communities have limited people available due to changes including depopulation and the need for people to be in paid employment.

In the education sector Boards of Trustees who make major decisions on the functioning of their schools do so on a voluntary basis. In the health sector families are expected to provide transport to members who live in areas with limited services so that they can access these services in larger cities. There is also an expectation of families taking care giving roles for those invalided or elderly. In the welfare sector the communities are being

encouraged to support friends and families. Fifty years ago these expectations were part of the strong community ethos supported by the traditional values and beliefs of the citizens. In today's society, even if the caring ethos is present, the practicality of these expectations is logistically demanding on the community.

The devolution of government services out to the community adds to the need for the rural community to reassess their positions and find their own solutions. A conflict exists between central government's expectation of local decision making and responsibility at the coal-face and the availability of people to give of their time in a voluntary basis. This empowerment whether voluntary or enforced, creates a type of self sufficiency.

The residents of this study lived through an era of strong state intervention and support. Their expectations were that this would continue throughout their lives. This was not the case. The challenge for them is to find solutions to provide necessary services. If the gaps in community services are being filled by private enterprise that possibly absolves the community from volunteering, (if they are able to in the first place). Volunteering contributes to the existence of a community spirit and if this is weakened then the glue that holds it together starts to dissipate.

The challenge is to find a balance of private sector input but also have a large enough pool of volunteers with time and a willingness to maintain the community spirit. The solutions to any future gaps in services need to be considered carefully in consultation with the community.

### **Importance of Physical Location**

The individual within the environment strives to adapt to their changing world. The changes in their social and economic world are balanced by the reality of their physical surroundings. The geographical positioning of the Tuatapere community with the mountain ranges on one side and the sea on the other hindered support and interaction from neighbours. The physical isolation of their rural country township made it difficult for them to have access with the outside world and the tourist dollar. They acknowledged that the changes had to come from within the community as they were the people that had the strongest investment in their futures. The resilience and determination of the participants showed that although their situations were weakened by the closing down of necessary

services they were not going to become victims. They were energised by each other and used their power to maintain their community. The number of volunteer hours expended by the residents was admirable.

From the Tuatapere study the geographical isolation was reported as being a major attraction for some. It was reported that those people from densely populated areas, England, Brisbane, Auckland, found the isolation attractive and some came to settle in the area.

This geographical attraction may well be the solution to the dwindling pool of volunteers and possible diminishing of the community spirit. It will of course depend on integration of newcomers into the community both in terms of how they contribute and how they are received by established residents. There may well be a new wave of settlement for the areas like Tuatapere. This therefore affirms that society is changing. New sets of values and beliefs can be introduced into a community. Future efforts to attract newcomers to the area need to examine the process of recruitment and the establishing of support within the settling process

## **STRENGTHS**

This study builds on another significant research project undertaken in Tuatapere in 1998 and on a study of Eketahuna in 1978. It provides another piece in the picture of a small rural New Zealand community.

This study records the voices of elderly residents who have a long term view of the history of a community. Their life histories will be deposited for future researchers to access. They are an important record of the lives of twentieth century residents of Tuatapere and of New Zealand. They will add to the oral history archive of the Southland area. This research forms a part of the story of twentieth century change in New Zealand. Other researchers exploring similar topics will find this study useful.

## **LIMITATIONS**

This research was designed to record the views of elderly twentieth century New Zealanders. There is scope for further research on small rural communities: on the impact

of dairy farming in Southland, on a whole range of topics of interest to social historians, policy analysts and oral history researchers.

While this study was limited to exploring a defined topic, it exposes the range of potential research available for researchers interested in recording change in communities. It also signals there is a wide range of expertise and knowledge available in communities which can be recorded and made available for future researchers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- That rural communities continue to value social and historical research by conducting community research recording the changes in New Zealand life.
- That further research be conducted on the impact of social change, specifically on one's sense of community in relation to the ability to volunteer.
- That funding organisations widely publicise funding available for community research.
- That oral history archives and repositories be developed and financially supported by local bodies and community libraries.
- That a budget be available from regional and local councils to record the lives of men and women who have contributed to community organisations.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study found that changing belief systems developed over the past fifty years. What has been retained is a strong community spirit particularly evident in the commitment to voluntary work. This has however been made more difficult by social changes that impacted on the community's ability to give of their time. The government's policies toward devolution have created a lack in services that has to be filled by local initiatives. The lack of people available to give of their time creates a problem for the areas that cannot be filled by local private providers. The importance of the community's physical location is acknowledged by the residents and seen as a benefit to them but having a negative impact toward encouraging new residents and the tourist dollar. Finally limitations, strengths and recommendations were discussed.

At the introduction of this study the following was a quote by Madame Curie. "Nothing in life is to be feared. It is only to be understood." The words we use and the stories we tell help to make sense of the world around us. We base this on our values and beliefs. The

participants in this study have told their stories and shown their efforts to make sense of the changes to their community over the past fifty years and to take the power and decision making back into their lives. They have told of how satisfied they are living in Tuatapere. This study was titled; Whatever happened to Tuatapere: Are we, doing very nicely thank you? Margaret expressed the general feelings of all the participants in the study;

You have to like here...I like the community. I love the little town... It's the environment and it's the people that you know. One day you wake up and you know that you are some of the older people in the town...I think it is important for people to have roots.

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## Appendix One

**Whatever happened to Tuatapere: Are we doing very nicely thank you?**

### INFORMATION SHEET

My name is Pamela Anne Smith, 152 Oteramika Road No 1 R.D. Invercargill. Phone 03 2169390. I am a student completing a Masters Degree in Social Work at Massey University.

My Supervisors are; Rachael Selby and Helen Simmons School of Health and Social Services Massey University Private Bag 11 222 Palmerston North 4442. Phone 06 356 9099 E Mail; [r.a.selby@massey.ac.nz](mailto:r.a.selby@massey.ac.nz) [h.simmons@massey.ac.nz](mailto:h.simmons@massey.ac.nz)

I am inviting you to participate in research that will explore the social changes which have occurred over the past fifty years in Tuatapere. These changes will be examined within the wider national context of New Zealand. The project has been chosen because of a personal interest in social change in communities and the impact of this on social raised in the district. I will use semi structured audio taped interviews.

I will approach eight participants within the community. I will be using local networks to suggest community identities. The participants will be: long term residents who have lived in Tuatapere for the past fifty years; have been involved in community organisations; have good memories and are able to articulate those; represent industry, farming, business, education and the social services; able to make links about what is happening within their community, and still living in the Tuatapere community. The participants will be required to give about three hours of their time.

The audio taped interview will take about two hours. The tapes will then be transcribed by myself and the transcripts given back to you for checking. An Authority for the Release of Tape Transcripts is attached to be completed after checking the transcripts. The tapes and transcripts will be held in locked cupboards at my home. Copies of your tapes and transcripts are available to you at the end of the project. A copy of the final report will also be given to you. A copy of the tape recording and your consent form will be deposited in the Heritage Section of the Invercargill library.



The eight participants will be given a letter with this Information Sheet and Consent Form enclosed. You will be given time to consider the request and decline if you so wish. If you agree to be involved please return the signed consent within the identified time frame. Once consents are received I will then phone to arrange a time to interview you. The interviews will be held in your home or a place which suits you such as the local school or library.

*You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:*

- *decline to answer any particular question;*
- *withdraw from the study at any time until you have approved the transcripts of your interview;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher.*
- *ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*
- *ask for the audio tape to be turned off at any time during the interview.*

You can ask to have a support person join you at any stage or throughout the whole of the interview. You are invited to contact me the researcher (Pam Smith) or the supervisors at any stage throughout the project.

#### **Committee Approval Statement**

“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees. The researcher(s) named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Ethics & Equity), telephone 06 350 5249, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)”.

Yours sincerely

Pamela (Pam) Smith

## **Appendix Two**

### **Application To Human Ethics Committee**

#### **Summary of Project**

This research will explore the social changes which have occurred over the past fifty years in Tuatapere, a small rural Southland community. These changes will be examined within the wider national context of New Zealand. The project has been chosen because of a personal interest in social change in communities and the impact of this on social service delivery. The research will be qualitative using semi-structured interviews.

#### **Aims**

To examine social changes In New Zealand over the past fifty years.

To explore the impact of these changes on the residents of Tuatapere a small rural community.

To examine the impact of these changes on social service delivery within Tuatapere.

#### **Procedures for Recruiting Participants and Obtaining Informed Consent**

I will approach eight residents who have lived in the district over the past fifty years. The participants will be given a letter with an Information Sheet and Consent Form enclosed. The participants will be given time to consider the request and decline if they so wish. If they agree to be a participant they will return the signed consent within the identified time frame. Once consents are received I will then phone to arrange a time to interview. The transcriptions of the tapes will be given to the participants to check and alter if necessary. Copies of the transcriptions and tapes are available to the participants if they have indicated on the consent form.

#### **Description of Intended Participants**

The participants will be: long term residents who have lived in Tuatapere for the past fifty years; have been involved in community organisations; have good memories and are able to articulate those; represent industry, farming, business, education and the social services; able to make links to social change and what is happening within their community.

#### **Procedure in which Research Participants will be Involved**

The participants will be required to give about three hours of their time.

The interviews will be held in the participant's home or a place which suits the participant such as the local school or library. It is expected that the interview will take approximately two hours.

### **Peer Review Process used in Assessing the Ethical Issues Present in the Project**

Supervisors reviewed drafts and discussed ethical issues.

### **Possible Benefits to Individuals and Community**

The opportunity to talk and reflect on their lives and the social changes which have occurred in their lifetime. To identify gaps in the community services that may be able to be addressed at a later date. To feel affirmed for their past and present efforts. Eight interviews will be recorded

### **Potential Harm to Participants**

As this project involves people reflecting on their past there may well be painful experiences brought to mind. I will have explained at the beginning of the interview that if they wish to stop or if they feel uncomfortable they can bring in support people or can be referred to family members or someone else identified within the community if the need arises. Semi structured interviews enable the participants to respond as they may so wish. As a social worker and a counsellor I believe I am skilled to deal with any issues that may arise and will refer on to the appropriate person/agency with the person's permission. However I realise that I am not in a social work/counsellor role but am a student undertaking research. This will be clearly explained and parameters set as explained above, at the beginning of the interview

### **Potential harm to Researcher**

No risk of harm. I believe this exercise will be a rewarding experience to me as I admire and respect those within this community.

### **Access to Participants**

I intend to make initial contact by sending an information sheet with consent forms enclosed. Those that are returned within the identified timeframe with the signed consents will be considered as participants. It is made clear in the information sheet that involvement is voluntary.

### **Storage of Data**

The data will be stored in a locked cabinet in my home where only I will have access to the key.

The consent forms will be locked in another cabinet in my home.

I have arranged with the Heritage Section of the Invercargill Library for the consent forms and tapes to be kept by them. Data will be stored by me for 5 years in my home.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The information given to the participants at the beginning of the research process will describe clearly that the research is being done for a university paper. The participants are known to me and my family and therefore that relationship cannot be ignored. However I will endeavour to keep the purpose of my interview to the fore and remain in my interviewer role. In my profession as a social worker I am well aware of boundaries and roles and I believe that I can keep within the purpose of my role.

### **Cultural Issues**

It is highly likely that some of the participants may be Ngai Tahu and this will be discussed during their interviews. This will come up in their discussion about their roots to the area. I do not see that I will require consultation but if so I have my own Maori supports and networks within the community.

### **Sharing Research Findings**

A copy of the thesis will be available in the local library. A copy of the audiotape and transcript will be returned to the participant. A summary of the report will be provided.