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# **Endless Connections:**

New Zealand secular intentional rural communities  
founded in the 1970s

A thesis submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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in  
History  
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by

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**We are the music makers,  
And we are the dreamers of dreams,  
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,  
And sitting by desolate streams;  
World-losers and world-forsakers,  
On whom the pale moon gleams:  
Yet we are the movers and shakers  
Of the world for ever, it seems.**

*Arthur O'Shaughnessy, 1874*

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<sup>1</sup> See Sargent 1997 for the published version.

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# Introduction

I wrote a research paper in 2011 called *Shared ownership, decision-making by consensus, and sustainability at Rainbow Valley and Tui Communities*. It was an insider view. I live at Rainbow Valley, and wanted to find out how what I saw as defining and reforming goals of these alternative communities in Golden Bay had stood the test of time. I first read widely about alternative communities in general. Then, by considering Rainbow and Tui in depth and putting my ideas about them into writing, I was able to explore their similarities and differences. Members of both were mainly middle aged, which led to many of the similarities. The differences related more to the ten years that passed between the forming of the two communities.

Tui began at a new age gathering in 1983. By then the counter-culture's outlook had become more spiritual and didactic. Tui's founders, about half of whom were German, pooled their assets and in 1984 acquired a coastal property in Golden Bay which they immediately vested in a trust. From the beginning Tui was a place of dedication and demanding principles. It is still dynamic and culturally diverse, with more than half its current members drawn from overseas. It has a thriving business and still sees its goals as spiritual and educational.

Rainbow is ten years older, and began in 1974, when anti-war protest, energetic rock music, and liberated attitudes to sex and drugs were seen as counter-cultural. At that time, hippies from Europe and America looked on New Zealand as a land of hope and opportunity. Mixing in with New Zealand's own hippies, they started forming rural communes, especially in Northland, Northwest Nelson and the Coromandel Peninsular. These communes tended to be exploratory and anarchistic, and most members were, to a lesser or greater extent, idealistic individualists.

Eleven of the twelve subjects I interviewed for *Shared ownership, decision-making by consensus, and sustainability* were between fifty-two and sixty-six; in each community the age profile was much the same. Most subjects felt that their engagement with community was steadily diminishing. When they were younger they had put more in, but as they aged and as their children moved away, they started losing the idea of an extended family. Some also grew impatient with so many indecisive meetings, and began to live more privately.

Ideas about inheritance have also changed; transfer of houses and management to a succeeding generation has so far not been possible. Few adult children have stayed on, or wanted the responsibilities of membership. While both communities did make an effort to

recruit young members, many of those they did recruit soon left, and some who stayed have found it hard to integrate. Senior members still have management of each community, and have begun to see their children as important stakeholders.

The Rainbow Valley Company owns Rainbow land; all current members are its equal shareholders. Until the 1990s members were committed to a trust, so as to make shared land impossible to privatise. By 2010, when I began my paper on Rainbow and Tui, the idea of a trust had been rejected. Instead it was decided shares could now be sold, linked to existing houses and the land surrounding them. Such sections would be leased to shareholders. At first not every shareholder agreed with this decision, and my discussion of shared ownership, consensus and sustainability was partly written in response to it.

I don't like cities and I do like farms. I was involved with communes in the 1970s. I worked for ten years as a teacher, then in 1989 applied for Rainbow membership. At thirty-eight I was a solo parent, living on a benefit and had no savings, but at Rainbow monetary assets weren't a prerequisite. Soon I was helping run the Rainbow farm, and it supplied me with my milk and meat. There was sufficient land for me to keep a horse, so I was able to get by without a car; I could get in and out of town by horse-and-cart.

I was accepted as a Rainbow member and paid off my membership. The fee I paid was modest, but my shares made me co-owner of all Rainbow property. Consensus, the consent of every member, was the primary condition for new membership, and membership was not seen as investment in financial terms; rather it was a sort of contract, a commitment to the common good and positive relationships.

I bought from the community a one-room 'sleep-out' built with demolition timber in the 1970s. Although in poor condition it did have electric power and a building permit. Another member helped me renovate it and extend it, and within six years I added two more rooms. So I became the owner of a house. Houses at Rainbow and at Tui are regarded as their owner's property. I gained materially by joining Rainbow and by living there.

In 1975 Jones and Baker produced a survey of New Zealand's 1970s intentional communities, *A Hard Won Freedom*, and in chapter five there is a picture of me skinning a possum. That chapter, called 'Beginnings', describes Moonsilver Forest, the back-country survivalist community I then belonged to, and goes on to describe Rainbow Valley.

Almost two decades passed before another book set out to survey our intentional communities. This was by Sargisson and Sargent, she writing from an English university and he from one in the US. They called their survey *Living in Utopia*. But were New Zealand's 1970s rural communities utopian? Young people often hope they can improve the world, and so did we, but we were also pragmatists, and some of us have proved by demonstration what we wanted was achievable. Our 'communes' weren't hare-brained schemes that couldn't happen, they were practical experiments.

Shared ownership and a commitment to consensus have survived at Rainbow over more than thirty years. At Moonsilver one member legally had full control through his majority of shares. The other members left him to it and moved on to Rainbow, where the shares have been divided equally.

Shared ownership and willingness to back the common interests of a large communal group have worked at Rainbow and at other 1970s communities. People with little money have been granted equal shares, have shared the child-care and benefited from the common land. Rainbow has to a large extent fulfilled its goals. So has Karuna Falls, some of whose members have contributed to this research.

The two began in 1974 and 1975 respectively. During the 1980s both adopted clearer rules and structures, and these have kept evolving ever since. The 1970s were years of counter-cultural energy and solidarity. Four US back-to-the-landers helped Rainbow Valley to its feet in 1974. Compared with Tui's goals, the goals of Rainbow were and are more insular. What they envisage is a caring village, living lightly on the land. And that is what most of the 1970s communities aspired to. Through sharing ownership, decision-making by consensus, and self-sufficiency, it was believed these things could be achieved. For nearly forty years they largely have been, in committed and continuing communities.

In 1968 Raphael Samuel presented 'Headington Quarry' at a History Workshop on 'proletarian Oxfordshire'. He later published it as 'Quarry Roughs' one of three essays in *Village Life and Labour*.<sup>2</sup> 'Quarry Roughs' drew on oral histories obtained at the village of Headington, which over centuries had been a source of stone, bricks and laundry services for Oxford University. With 'thick description' Samuel shows in 'Quarry Roughs' that 'common' lives stop being common when we look more carefully.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel, 1975

<sup>3</sup> Blackburn, Robin, 'Raphael Samuel: the politics of thick description', *New Left Review*, 221, (1997), p.137: "Nothing was more characteristic of Samuel's writings than its deployment of a mass of detail, serving to recreate a powerful sense of a

This thesis makes extensive use of thick description drawn from oral history to look at ‘common’ lives. It asks three questions and then tries to answer them:

What kind of people formed intentional rural communities in New Zealand in the 1970s?

What common features helped define them?

Did they have common goals that were achieved?

What do we mean by a community? In *Utopianism, a very short introduction*, Sargent describes a community as “a group of five or more adults and their children, if any, who come from more than one nuclear family and who have chosen to live together to enhance their shared values, or for some other mutually agreed upon purpose.”<sup>4</sup>

What do we mean by an ‘*intentional*’ community? In *Keeping it Together* Jones cites Jonathan Andelson as saying that intentional communities are those in which “members actively strive to forge ... a shared identity” while circumstantial communities are those whose members “may in fact develop little if any sense of shared identity”. These, he goes on to say, are similar to nations, cities, towns or neighbourhoods where individuals live in proximity by chance, and may or may not actively choose to be part of the association imposed upon them.<sup>5</sup>

During the 1970s a surprising number of New Zealand rural and intentional communities got under way. Each one was made up of distinctive individuals. A large part of this thesis is made up of stories about four distinctive individuals, and two communities. These narratives, combined into one larger narrative called ‘Journeys to Community’, are central to the way this thesis works. Before them come reviews of literature and media, and after that an explanation of my methodology. Then ‘Journeys to Community’, mostly derived from sixteen oral histories.

Jan’s interview came first. When asked: “To what extent did Sunday Creek connect with other back-to-the land people and communities?” he answered, ‘Endless – endless connections’. If anything stands out from ‘Journeys to Community’ it is how intimately and extensively hippies and hippie communes were connected in the 1970s. I see this as relating to the

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way of life or thought.” In history and other fields ‘thick description’ puts behaviour in its context as a way of making it more meaningful.

<sup>4</sup> Sargent, 2010, p.34.

<sup>5</sup> Jones 2011, p.12.

recurring and reforming vitalist tradition that Salmond speaks of in ‘A New Enlightenment’. These hippies understood and valued most, “the web rather than the grid”.<sup>6</sup>

The stories gathered here mainly concern young people, but young people as now seen by older selves. There is mature reflection here, but not a ‘scholarly analysis’, which might be out of place. These are ‘negotiated texts’; and subjects had the final say on what went into them.

Thirteen subjects I interviewed now live in Tasman Bay. Six other subjects are at Karuna Falls Community in Coromandel. I’d hoped to tell the story of Karuna Falls as well as those of Marahau and Sunday Creek, but that’s not possible within the space available. However, after ‘Journeys to Community’, in ‘Other Journeys’, there are fifteen further narratives, and six of these concern Karuna Falls.

‘Other communities’ lists all of the New Zealand secular rural intentional communities I have been able to locate. It finds a very large proportion started in the 1970s. Discussing these, it speculates about how many really lasted long enough to be regarded as communities. It then goes on to look more closely at a few of them.

‘Who were these hippies anyway?’ considers demographic attributes of nineteen people interviewed and finds they were idealists and individualists. Not all were wealthy in material terms, but most had large amounts of ‘cultural capital’. This section goes on to explore New Zealand’s counter culture in the 1970s. It uses ‘thick description’, often quoting subjects, and examines travel, the peace movement, the home-birth movement, counter-cultural music and theatre, sexuality, drugs, religion, attitudes to Maori and attitudes to nature.

Next ‘Living in a community’ examines communes and communities. Using the same approach, it views connections, survivalism, cooperation and the need for structures, shared parenting, rural resettlement and self-sufficiency. ‘Conclusions’ summarises what has been discovered in relation to the three research questions, and ultimately argues that the countercultural communal movement of the 1970s spearheaded and invited further change.

History has a range of different lenses; French historians created one called ‘longue durée’ around the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> This thesis, after looking closely at nineteen distinctive people and two singular communities, steps back to use the lens of *longue durée*.

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<sup>6</sup> Salmond, see electronic resources.

<sup>7</sup> The French Annales School used this term to designate an approach that gives long-term historical structures and cycles priority over short-term events and elite biographies.

Seen through this lens, the commune movement of the 1970s is not a singular phenomenon: it is the latest and by far the largest of successive movements that have heralded renewal and reform.

## Literature and Media

The worldwide academic literature relating to alternative communities is vast, and much of it concerns the last half of the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s, when they proliferated rapidly in Europe and in North America.<sup>8</sup> New Zealand has been much less studied in this literature than has America, but there are books concerning three particular New Zealand communities, Riverside, Jerusalem and Centrepoint.

Apart from a 2004 guidebook called *Utopianz*, only two books try to achieve a broader overview of the New Zealand scene, both mentioned in the preface. They have been written from significantly different points of view. The first, *A Hard Won Freedom*, isn't academic, it's subjective and it's personal. Before he wrote it Tim Jones probably read *Getting Back Together*, by US journalist Robert Houriet.<sup>9</sup> Both men embarked on journeys visiting communities, and then wrote books relating their experiences. I'm not the first to note the similarities.<sup>10</sup> *A Hard Won Freedom* was co-authored by photographer Ian Baker, who undertook a second journey in the wake of Jones in order to provide the photographs. In some ways *A Hard Won Freedom* was a 'how-to' manual, which guided and encouraged readers willing to believe a better life in an alternative community was possible: Jones saw the alternative 'movement', as "a totally different way of looking at life, implying the formation of a new society".<sup>11</sup>

But Lucy Sargisson and Lyman Tower Sargent, the academics who together authored *Living in Utopia*, are writers in the field of Utopian Studies, a field I will argue is postmodernist. Postmodernism thinks of everything as relative and progress as illusory. The title *Living in Utopia* itself suggests this view, given that in the preface we are told utopia cannot exist.<sup>12</sup> With such a viewpoint their ideas about alternative communities hardly accord with those of visionaries like Jones. He was an educated man but didn't write *A Hard Won Freedom* for an

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<sup>8</sup> Bill Metcalf thinks that in Australia the movement really started after the Nimbin Festival in 1973: "In the late 1960s a back-to-the-land movement, loosely connected with the anti-Vietnam-War and environmental movements, started in Australia ... The disparate participants first identified themselves as a solid social movement when 10,000 of them came together for the Aquarius Festival at Nimbin in 1973. Since then thousands of attempts have been made at communal living ..." Metcalf, 1995, pp. 38-39

<sup>9</sup> Jones and Baker, 1975

<sup>10</sup> Jones, 2011, p.35

<sup>11</sup> Jones, Tim and Ian Baker, p.147

<sup>12</sup> Sargisson and Sargent, p. xiii: "Utopia is the good place that is no place"

academic audience, he cites no other works at all. By way of contrast *Living in Utopia* has a ‘Works Cited’ list that runs to fifteen pages; in this and other ways there is a stark contrast between the books.

Sargisson and Sargent give a comprehensive overview. As far as they are able to they map New Zealand’s intentional communities between the nineteenth century and the twenty-first. Their research is extensive and informative, although I don’t believe their classifications are useful or accurate. Olive Jones also questions these, and wonders if ‘core values’ can really be summarised.<sup>13</sup> I argue here that the best system of classification for alternative intentional communities is likely to be chronological; each generation seems to bring in quite a different mood.

Tim Jones records his journey with enthusiasm, answers the questions he thinks might be asked by those outside the movement, and after that he leaves the reader to decide. He captures very well: “a moment in time in the development of the alternative community in New Zealand”.<sup>14</sup>

Community insiders wrote three of the five published works on New Zealand Communities. Tim Jones had lived at Beeville for about three years from 1964 till 1967. Lynn Rain, a Rainbow Valley member who joined Riverside during the 1980s, wrote about that community as it prepared to celebrate its fiftieth anniversary.<sup>15</sup> Her book, *Community: The Story of Riverside 1941-1991* is a well-judged account. While very readable it’s also intellectually rigorous. In it she makes good use of oral history, and she supports this well with other research drawing on primary and secondary sources. If evidence is needed that insider history need not distort, this book is it. Riverside was a well-established self-sufficient pacifist community with common ownership, and as such was a magnet for back-to-the landers of the 1970s. Accordingly *Community: The Story of Riverside* is also relevant to this account of them.<sup>16</sup>

In *Inside Centrepont* written in 1986 Oakes also wrote about his own community, partly because he saw the press and other media as guilty of misrepresenting it. He sets out to

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<sup>13</sup> Jenkin, 2011, p.13. “neither Rainbow nor Tui seem to belong where they have been placed: Rainbow and Tui are geared more to social than environmental goals.” Jones 2010, p.29: “The distinctions they draw between cooperative and environmental communities seem fairly arbitrary, and ... self-selected abbreviated core values (such as cooperative, education cooperation, sustainability, holism, mutual support), do not really serve any useful purpose as they are vague and meaningless terms on their own ...”

<sup>14</sup> Jones, Tim and Ian Baker, back cover.

<sup>15</sup> Rain, 1991

<sup>16</sup> The “era of the flower people” had a profound and lasting impact on Riverside, and their influx into the community completely altered its culture and identity. Jones, 2011, p. 183

provide the necessary balance, and in doing so portrays his Guru, Potter, sympathetically. But Potter was convicted on sex and drug-related charges in 1990, and Centrepont declined and was eventually closed.<sup>17</sup> Most former members grew estranged from Potter and his few remaining loyalists; in the end Oakes appears to have become estranged himself.<sup>18</sup>

John Newton did not live at the Jerusalem community, which he sees as beginning in 1970 and ending in 1975.<sup>19</sup> He is an English lecturer whose book arose from a deep interest in James K. Baxter's poetry. *The Double Rainbow* is an exploration of Jerusalem as a bicultural experiment. Baxter's wife Jacquie Sturm, a Maori poet, opened a way for Baxter to a Maori world. By 1970 this was reflected in his poetry. Newton explains how he had wondered what a Maori reader would have thought. Could poetry like this be seen as Maori poetry? He asked those who had known and read it at the time: "I found that it made little sense to distinguish between the Maori and the Pakeha among them; and it quickly became clear that most wished to talk not about Baxter's poetry, but about Baxter at Hiruharama. In this way I first began to get a sense of how little I knew about the Jerusalem commune."<sup>20</sup> From this it's evident that Newton found his way obliquely into commune research; we're lucky that he did. His book is scholarly and timely, and like Rain's makes good use of oral history.

I have read two unpublished academic studies other than my own that deal with New Zealand's 1970s communities. Larisa Webb, a social anthropologist, wrote one, a 1999 MA thesis called *Living Together? Change and Continuity of a New Zealand Intentional Community*. The other is *Keeping it together: A comparative analysis of four long-established intentional communities in New Zealand*, a 2011 PhD paper by Olive Jones.

In *Living Together?* Webb has made up a fictional community out of "a composite of four of the most established communities in the Coromandel".<sup>21</sup> The question mark after 'together' shows that for her, togetherness might be to some extent in doubt. Partly she wrote about her own community: "I conducted research in four communities in Waimarie (pseudonym) on the Coromandel of New Zealand, some of whose founders were influenced by the Ohu movement. I lived for five years within one of these communities, ... and I have retained my connections in the intervening thirteen years through regular visits. It was my knowledge of these communities that stimulated this research because I was aware of communitarians' concerns about many of the changes that were occurring ..."

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<sup>17</sup> Sargisson and Sargent, (pp. 71-72)

<sup>18</sup> Sargisson and Sargent assert that *Inside Centrepont* was written from a perspective Oakes largely recanted (p.7).

<sup>19</sup> Newton, pp.63, 128

<sup>20</sup> Newton; p.14

<sup>21</sup> Jones, 2011, p.43

Knowing of the debates in anthropology on power relations and assumptions of objectivity, Webb tells us that she found this thesis hard to write. Her goals were positive; she wanted her research to be of use, and didn't want to give offence to anyone, although she knew a controversial thesis had been written on a nearby commune four years earlier.<sup>22</sup> She did her best to keep her research ethical, but conflict was perhaps the single most important issue she chose to address.<sup>23</sup> Changed names could not conceal identities from those who had participated in the conflict she describes, and these made up a fair proportion of her likely readership. This study handles difficult material and I think lessons can be learned from it.

An interesting part of her analysis is the suggestion that 'Arohanui' at the time of her research was caught between the contradictory aspects of communal ideology: "at their most extreme, communards ideologies are capable of endorsing the goal of absolute personal freedom as well as the goal of complete immolation of the self, while denying these aims are in any way contradictory".<sup>24</sup> To Webb, while formal structures were created in the hope that they would "regulate the need for group sanctions and the desire for individual freedom", those structures were "contrary to the communarians' anarchical ideas", so tensions around structures had increased, and conflict was becoming unavoidable.

Anarchal communities can't take on formal structures and remain anarchal. However, people and communities do grow and change. Gardner observes that while 'secular anarchies' dominated the first half of 'the modern communal decade',<sup>25</sup> 'religious communities of discipline' dominated the second half.<sup>26</sup> I think it likely that this change was linked quite closely to maturity, both in the people and in the communities. It's evident that communards could learn from bad experience.

"We are not a commune" Sandy and Jim told Houriet emphatically, "We are a *community*."<sup>27</sup> The two had previously lived at Drop City, an anarchic open-land commune plagued by "visitors, speed freaks and junkies". At Libre they created a less open and more structured group.<sup>28</sup> Starting a new community is an extreme solution that might not be practical. More formal structures like 'Arohanui's' may in fact be best. As a historian I could employ the frame of 'growing pains'. Webb is an anthropologist, and may not think as much as I do about change and growth.

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<sup>22</sup> Webb, 1999, pp. 19-20

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pp. 109-113

<sup>24</sup> Zablocki, 1980, p.247, in Webb, 1999, p.116

<sup>25</sup> Which took place in the US during the mid 1960s and mid 1970s, Gardner, 1978, pp. 239-249

<sup>26</sup> Gardner, 1978, p.249

<sup>27</sup> I can remember the same emphasis when Rainbow Valley people told me much the same thing in the late 1980s.

<sup>28</sup> Houriet, 1971, p.223

More than ten years have passed, and the community that I think Webb most drew on still exists. The tensions she observed seem to be less a problem now. Perhaps the conflict she observed was as much interpersonal as structural. Conflict is challenging but is survivable. She finishes: “these people are still there, and still negotiating how to live ‘community’, a similar conclusion to that of my last paper, *Shared ownership, decision-making by consensus, and sustainability at Rainbow Valley and Tui Communities*.

Jones is a sociologist; in *Keeping it together* she has not changed the names of either subjects or communities, so she has written sociology and history. Detailed and partly chronological accounts of Riverside, Wilderland, Renaissance and Tui make up nearly half of her paper’s 240-pages.<sup>29</sup> But these accounts are not straightforward narratives; they are analyses in which Jones answers research questions about each community in turn.

It is a major work, as long as any of the books reviewed above. Jones shows her scholarship throughout, dealing with many issues that concern this study too. As one example, she quotes Robin Usher in referring to the postmodern assumption that knowledge is relative to discourses, and thus “always partial and perspectival”.<sup>30</sup> Usher goes on to say “we are so used to thinking of research as providing a special kind of methodology validating knowledge about society ... it’s not easy to accept the notion of research as storytelling.”<sup>31</sup> I do accept the notion of research as storytelling, and try to make good use of it in ‘Journeys to Community’.

Jones realises communities are changing entities. Defining them, she differentiates between ‘intentional communities’ where members try to ‘forge a shared identity’ and ‘circumstantial communities’ where residents do not.<sup>32</sup> She has selected four communities whose legal structures are all charitable trusts, and she believes a trust can guarantee longevity: “It stands to reason that if the land a community is built upon (both physically and metaphorically) cannot be sold unless all the trustees agree, and ... any money made from that sale must be donated to charitable purposes in keeping with the trust’s principles, it is unlikely that communal land will be sold, or the trust dissolved.”<sup>33</sup>

Beeville and Centrepont, two high-profile communities already mentioned here, both had trust ownership but were closed down, meaning they don’t comply with this hypothesis.

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<sup>29</sup> Renaissance is also known as Graham Downs.

<sup>30</sup> Usher, 1997

<sup>31</sup> Jones, 2011, p.66

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, pp.11-14

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.234

Trust-deeds have differing implications, which depend on stated purposes. Centrepoin't's trust deed's purpose was receiving the teachings of Potter.<sup>34</sup> This was a very different goal from that of Renaissance, which wanted to secure the land as "public land" where all the people of New Zealand would be "free" to "visit, live and commune".<sup>35</sup> The authors of that deed presumably did not foresee that it would undermine intentional community, but judging by Jones' narrative that's what took place.

No one seems happy with the outcome, and one former member, interviewed about it, says: "The whole thing does make me feel a tiny bit melancholic when I go over there. There's heaps of food. A lot of it just falls off the trees and disappears back into the ground."<sup>36</sup> When Jones was interviewed she saw the trust deed as a bit ambiguous: "We talked about what 'free' meant; a lot of people's idea was 'free' as in 'free to take what you like'. And 'free' is about 'free to give what you can'. ... I think most people left disillusioned, and a number of people who lived there for a very long time left very embittered and disillusioned."<sup>37</sup>

Unlike communities that have remained intentional, Renaissance proved unable to transform itself from an anarchic phase to a more structured one; ongoing conflicts round the need for structure centred on the wording of the deed, and no consensus about what this meant was ever reached. Jones makes it clear there were sustained attempts to introduce new structures that would give a measure of control over new residents. As these all failed the divisions grew, and in the end most founding members moved away.<sup>38</sup>

The legal entity of Rainbow Valley is a limited liability company. That of Karuna Falls is a cooperative society, and that of Rainbow's neighbour Happisam is an incorporated society. All these were founded earlier than Renaissance, and all still are intentional communities. They never subdivided land, have stayed cohesive, and still celebrate and manage their affairs collectively. I doubt that any single legal structure does ensure longevity and I have come to think legalities aren't all that relevant. Renaissance stopped being intentional when most of its more capable and dedicated members moved away. Some moved to other less anarchical communities. Would this have happened if divisions hadn't become so entrenched? I think intentional community requires willingness to compromise.

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<sup>34</sup> Sargisson and Sargent, p. 71

<sup>35</sup> Jones, 2011, p.253

<sup>36</sup> John Glasgow, quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>37</sup> Olive Jones, quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>38</sup> Jones, 2011, p.92

One of Jones's research questions asks: "To what extent have the communities sustained, adapted, or abandoned their original ideals and aspirations?"<sup>39</sup> Her four communities began at different times, so their ideals and aspirations were, historically different. Riverside dates from 1941, and I believe that Wilderland began as a community in the mid-1970s. Dan Hansen had ideals and aspirations dating back to Beeville, a 1930s commune where he previously lived and worked. Renaissance, as a 1970s community, may best be understood alongside other 1970s communities. Tui is more new age, more spiritual and educational.

Jones writes: "of all the four communities in this study, Tui most effectively demonstrates an ability to adapt the community's original ideals and aspirations to remain dynamic and to accommodate the changing needs of its members."<sup>40</sup> In my comparison of Tui and Rainbow it emerged that while aspirations were in some ways different, both did adapt to changing needs. Rainbow retains more founding members; has been more cohesive and is certainly less confrontational. Tui is more dynamic, structured and engages more with the external world, although it sometimes is less welcoming of visitors. Jones quotes two Rainbow members who saw Tui as 'full on' and 'too intimidating', which she thinks could relate to different cultures and ethnicities. My paper also saw that as a possibility.<sup>41</sup> In any case, the two are different.

Eight years ago half of New Zealand's current secular communities were seen as having started in the 1970s.<sup>42</sup> In *Keeping it Together* Jones considers Renaissance, which she believes is only circumstantial now, and Wilderland, which is to some extent a new community.<sup>43</sup> I would have liked her study to include a more cohesive 1970s community, though I have yet to find one that has used a trust. However, the communities she studied are worth studying, and in the case of Riverside she has been able to update the work of Rain. This is a solid study of diverse communities.

Webb makes it clear her situation became difficult because she was researching a community she'd lived in as a child, although she felt this gave her some advantages. Her knowledge of "communitarians" concerns about the changes they were going through was an important factor in her undertaking such research. She was an outsider as well, since she had lived away

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p.4

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 231

<sup>41</sup> Jenkin, 2011, pp. 52-53

<sup>42</sup> Sargisson and Sargent: Of twenty-one 'environmentalist' communities listed in *Living in Utopia* as still extant, eleven started in the 1970s. (pp. 118-122). Six of fourteen they classify as 'cooperative lifestyle' communities did too (pp. 83-101). So of the thirty-five secular communities listed by Sargisson and Sargent seventeen were founded in the 1970s, and by 2004 these had all lasted longer than twenty-five years.

<sup>43</sup> Jones, 2011, p.142

from the community for thirteen years.<sup>44</sup> Jones, as a former member of Renaissance, was in a similar position.<sup>45</sup> My own is different: I'm still a full-time community insider, and hope to go on being one. Like Webb, I was originally brought to this research by a desire to understand what works and what does not.

Insiders wrote three of the five books I've reviewed. Insiders wrote the academic papers I've reflected on. New Zealand research on communities seems to be mostly by insiders. Another such work is *Bullshit and Jellybeans*, Tim Shadbolt's 1971 memoir-manifesto, and while it doesn't even try to be objective, it gives a vivid picture of New Zealand's counter-culture at the opening of the 1970s. The author was then twenty-four and had been jailed for using the word 'bullshit' in a public place. As student activist and anti-war campaigner he played a leading role in 'freeing' Auckland's People's Park in 1969,<sup>46</sup> and during 1971, he and wife Miriam toured many early hippie communes.<sup>47</sup> They then joined Huia, a commune close to Auckland which Tim Jones and Ian Baker would later visit.<sup>48</sup> Shadbolt had clear ideas of what a commune ought to be, and thought Jerusalem was not one, "just a rural crash-pad."<sup>49</sup>

*Bullshit and Jellybeans* appealed more to would-be hippies than their parents. It's a rebellious and at times derisive book. Some sections seem to be apocryphal rather than factual, especially aspects of Shadbolt's childhood, his bikie phase and his relationship with older prison escapee George Wilder. Like Barry Crump, he's a compulsive story-teller.<sup>50</sup>

Another text that has contributed extensively to this research is Big Picture's 2010 documentary *Dirty Bloody Hippies*. Archival footage is combined with recent interviews to bring to life and celebrate New Zealand hippie communes of the 1970s. Scriptwriter Salmon crams a lot of themes into a fifty-minute film, and this research has benefited very much from his research.

His frame, however, is a different one: less than two minutes in he sees the hippie movement as 'a dream that died': "1979: Nambassa Festival; a three-day celebration of peace, love and rock-n-roll. But it's the last gasp of the hippie dream. A dream that began a decade earlier..."

<sup>51</sup> Kathi, a subject I interviewed, helped organise Nambassa and does not agree: "for a lot of people it was the push they needed to get them onto the land. Mahana Community was a

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<sup>44</sup> Webb, 1999, pp.18-20

<sup>45</sup> Jones, 2011, pp. 76-77.

<sup>46</sup> Shadbolt, quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010. See Film and Television.

<sup>47</sup> Newton, p.155

<sup>48</sup> Jones, 1975, p. 37

<sup>49</sup> Newton, p.67

<sup>50</sup> e.g. Shadbolt, p.25: "I was the toughest kid around and the leader of the Valley gang."

<sup>51</sup> Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010.

direct product of Nambassa. There was already Moehau, well established, Karuna well established, and Wilderland had been there for years. But some of the others were after Mahana. No, it wasn't a last gasp."

Some forty minutes later, Salmon rounds off his discussion in this way: "Eventually the arguments, isolation and hard work, drove many of the original hippies away from pioneer life." But I was keen to know how many *weren't* driven away. From my research the answer is that more than half the people *Dirty Bloody Hippies* interviewed still live in an intentional community.

I shouldn't be too fervent in asserting this, lest that suggest some lack of objectivity. Webb has a quote from Wagner that concerns the 'failure frame' and I think Wagner questions it himself, judging by where he puts quotation marks: "The one thing most educated Americans "know" about communal utopias is that they invariably "failed" and this fate was to be expected in view of their failure to recognise the "facts" of human nature and the inevitability of institutions – such as private property and conventional marriage ...". Webb doesn't show she questions such a failure frame herself, and only writes, "This is, of course, a view communitarians fervently oppose." <sup>52</sup>

In *Dirty Bloody Hippies* Salmon never challenges the comfortable conforming view of Wagner's 'educated Americans'. Yet in this country quite a high proportion of the 1970s communities have lasted nearly forty years. <sup>53</sup> In *Living in Utopia* Sargisson and Sargent insist that hippies were utopians. But this research does not confirm they were. <sup>54</sup> One dictionary definition of 'utopia' is "an ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral aspects". <sup>55</sup> David: "Were we utopian? I think the motivation that was more apparent was a sense of waiting for the world as we knew it to end and what the hell would we do to get by." They simply weren't prepared to wait around in cities until Armageddon happened, or be conscripted into any further Vietnams. Sometimes the way to win an argument is walk away from it.

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<sup>52</sup> Webb, p.115

<sup>53</sup> See 'Other Communities' for actual figures.

<sup>54</sup> See Jenkin, 2011, p.24, for a fuller discussion. In the concluding chapter of *Living in Utopia* Sargisson and Sargent supply another definition of utopianism: "social dreaming", which they say means dreaming of or desiring a better life. And they go on: "In most cases utopias do not suggest that every problem will be solved." (Sargisson and Sargent p. 159). While I think 'social dreamers', applies very well to hippies, I don't think 'social dreamers' are utopians: If utopians simply wanted a better way of life, wouldn't that mean that anyone with any hope or confidence was a utopian?

<sup>55</sup> *Utopia* An ideally perfect place, especially in its social, political, and moral aspects." retrieved 9 February 2011 from [www.thefreedictionary.com/utopia](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/utopia)

Writing about communities in 1972, Kanter considered them utopian experiments whose members had adopted ideals of ‘human perfectibility’ and tried to live out those ideals day-to-day. In her view such a project was impossible.<sup>56</sup> While the utopian frame might have been largely true of certain earlier groups, or those like Centrepont with charismatic or religious leadership,<sup>57</sup> it wasn’t largely true of hippies of the 1970s. Miller has shown that most of these emphasised personal freedom, meaning ‘doing your own thing’, not quite the same as having a prescriptive concept of ‘utopia’.<sup>58</sup> As Jones has said, Abrams and McCulloch question Kanter’s frame, which makes it difficult to “conceive of communes as level headed, quietly enjoyable practical projects”<sup>59</sup> Often they were and are such projects, though at other times they do get more demanding than such words imply. But they are not, as Kanter’s frame suggests, essentially impossible. Sargisson and Sargent have pointed out that Kanter has equated the success of a community with its longevity, and they do not agree with her.<sup>60</sup> This research also sees a definition of that kind as one-dimensional.

Jones notes that Gardner found a reverse correlation between “communal sharing” and longevity, thus calling into question Kanter’s primary assumptions in *Commitment and Community*.<sup>61</sup> In many ways Gardner’s *Children of Prosperity* challenges Kanter’s frame. Although at first he praises her and thanks her for ‘conceptual tools’,<sup>62</sup> once Gardner tests these out in real life<sup>63</sup> he finds her suppositions to be incorrect: “The only one of Kanter’s six variables which had a clear and unambiguous relation to communal survival through 1973 was her concept of renunciation. ... If there was any single key to success over the modern communal decade, it might be summarised as the capacity to say no.”<sup>64</sup>

I think two things stand out as a result of Gardner’s work. First, in both *Commitment and Community* and her later *Communes: creating and managing the collective life*<sup>65</sup> Kanter compares 1970s ‘hippy communes’ with a wide range of other intentional communities, many of them religious, including 19<sup>th</sup> century idealist communities, Kibbutzes, and sectarian groups like those of US Hutterites. Gardner does not confirm that there were similarities. The second is that anarchy was always unsuccessful as a long-term goal.

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<sup>56</sup> Kanter, Rosabeth Moss, *Commitment and Community; communes and utopias in sociological perspective*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1972.

<sup>57</sup> Claeys Gregory and Lyman Tower Sargent (eds.), *The utopia reader*, New York: New York University Press, 1999.

<sup>58</sup> Miller, Timothy, *The 60s communes: hippies and beyond*, Syracuse, NY : Syracuse University Press, 1999, pp.192-224.

<sup>59</sup> Jones, 2011, p.18; Abrams and McCulloch, p.3

<sup>60</sup> Sargisson & Sargent, p. xiii

<sup>61</sup> Gardner, pp. 244-245; Jones, pp. 26-27

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. v

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 29: Kanter’s work ... formed the basis of the data protocol used in my own ... organised in terms of the six categories of commitment mechanisms – sacrifice, investment, renunciation, communion, mortification and transcendence

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, pp. 244-245

<sup>65</sup> Kanter, 1973

# Methodology

“Who owns history?” asked Natalie Zemon Davis; do professional historians own it, or do its subjects own it themselves? <sup>66</sup> History Workshop, a movement founded by Raphael Samuel, empowers ordinary people. While ‘the academy’ and academic discourse are important, they are not in themselves the whole of History. Some of this thesis will consist of narratives I call negotiated texts. I think, as Samuel does, that ordinary people can be of considerable help in writing history.

The history that Samuel wanted was cooperative, not competitive, and brought people closer together. I too have worked alongside others, and the outcomes are ‘negotiated texts’. Subjects have some control of what goes into these.

I noted earlier that Webb made use of challenging material. Since anthropology and sociology are social sciences, I think they’ve leaned towards attempting objectivity. I’m a historian; I’m writing other people’s history and understand it to be theirs. My methodology is an attempt at shared responsibility.

Twenty-six oral history interviews took place, approved by Massey University in accordance with its Code of Ethical Conduct. Consent-forms asked each subject for permission to use first names before quotes. Each subject was entitled to receive an audio-file of their interview. An information sheet set out further conditions under which they gave consent and one of these was that they could withdraw at any time.

And I decided this should be the case until the final thesis draft was ready for my supervisor to assess. I told participants: “I will prepare an abstract of each interview and provide each interviewee with a copy to allow them to correct any mistakes or withdraw any comment that on reflection they would not wish to be published. Each interviewee will also have the chance to check the final draft and each community will receive a printed copy of the completed thesis.”

This promise limits my control of this material. Since subjects have participated up until the final draft, they have the option to withdraw at any stage, at which point anything involving them might have to be removed. One did withdraw; that person wasn’t critical of me but said

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<sup>66</sup> Davis, in *Perspectives*, 1996. See Electronic Resources.

they'd had a change of heart. My sample was to have been twenty but it's now nineteen. Clearly if many subjects opted to withdraw this wouldn't work for me.

It has worked, and has been rewarding, though extremely strenuous. First I typed twenty-six transcripts at an average length of about 6,000 words. Anything I might later wish to quote had to be in the transcript word for word. These then went out to subjects to be edited. Without the benefit of email I think that process would have been impractical; fortunately only two of twenty-six were not online.<sup>67</sup> Remaining transcripts were either mailed or hand delivered. Some subjects answered to approve the transcripts as they were, but more than half did edit, some extensively. This often meant more useful information came to light. With some subjects I have been having intermittent email correspondence for over a year.

I asked four people if they were prepared to be the major subjects in 'Journeys to Community'. Once they agreed I wrote each narrative and either emailed it to them or mailed a hard copy. Editing either involved emails, face-to-face discussions or phone calls. Sometimes it involved all three. When the four 'journeys' were complete I wrote of the communities, and this involved cross-checking narratives with all the relevant participants. The process was a long but satisfying one. Through it I learned a lot I would not otherwise have known. Cooperation and cross-checking of material helped build the narratives in 'Journeys to Community'. Some subjects have expressed their gratitude for these, which they now want to share with families and friends.

It isn't possible to write in any way you wish about a subject who has ownership of the material. But my experience has been that after subjects gave consent, and knowing that they ultimately had control, they were accepting of my limitations as a narrator so long as what I wrote was accurate. One subject commented on how I shaped the narrative of Marahau around the drugs: "The text quite heavily leans towards the 'drug' side of the story, ... I'm not suggesting any changes to your transcript 'but', if I was to write the 'magazine article', I'd focus more on the women as the mainstays of the community. Their vision of community as family – not as playground." Responses such as this were very valuable.

Jones writes of how rich data can emerge in oral histories conducted by community insiders. She also notes there can be problems, owing to the sensitive nature of some material.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Which seems to show that aging hippies aren't Luddites anymore. However, subjects at Karuna Falls are on solar, wind and water power. I think that email and the internet are fast becoming more sustainable as the technology supporting them gets lighter and more durable and more affordable.

<sup>68</sup> Jones, Olive, 2006, pp 18 – 23.

I haven't found that this has often been the case. A rule of thumb I did employ was not to write about a subject's conflicts or relationships if I had only heard of them through someone else. But where a subject has been frank and I believe the information is significant I have included it.

Fontana and Frey say any interview is a "negotiated accomplishment", and always involves a social encounter between respondent and interviewer. The interviewer influences the interview, because it is "socially situated". Given that this is so, isn't it wise for subjects to retain control of such material?

The core of this research paper is 'Journeys to Community'. Expanded by discussion afterwards, it answers the research questions. I understand a 'Literature Review' is an expected part of academic packaging. My 'Literature Review' may well have been more adversarial than was really necessary. Some academics say "I argue ...." it is often true of me. I doubt the adversarial approach is really necessary. I think historians have everything to gain from reciprocity and history can only benefit from more accountability.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Salmond advocates both in 'A New Enlightenment'; see electronic resources.

# Journeys to community

## Jane N.



Her parents were English and were both involved with Shakespearian theatre. Her mother was an actress, her father a director. During the war they toured Europe, giving performances to servicemen. Jane N. was born in London in 1951 and her younger brother three years later. The family then immigrated to Christchurch where her father joined the Canterbury Repertory Society as New Zealand's first professional producer.

As a teenager Jane N. became a hippie. "The signals were the clothes, the taste of music, the belief. I used to wear a long flowing skirt, all the time." Music, especially the anti-war music of singers like Bob Dylan and the Beatles, was the essence of it: by being stoned, listening to music, and having an open loving way of connecting with like-minded people, she believed hippies could create "a whole new way of living on the earth"; that people could make love instead of war. From sixteen onwards she was "uplifted and transformed" by countercultural music, and believed that all injustice could be rectified.

The war in Vietnam focussed a growing call for social change. While Jane's parents agreed with her on Vietnam, few of their generation in New Zealand did. Mainstream New Zealanders tended to trust in US leadership of the 'free world', and were uncritical of what they saw as military, scientific and industrial advances. But Vietnam was evidence to many young people that the establishment was in the wrong. Jane N. saw the hippie revolution as "against the power of the system to create these situations". Feeling outside the system was not new to her. Since her arrival in New Zealand, her arty English family had been outsiders, in a lot of ways. "At times I desperately wanted to be part of it, but I never was. I was brought up in that atmosphere of classical music, reading of poetry, a lot of creativity. I was always different." During the seventies a lot of young New Zealanders were hippies, for a time at least. Few have retained those values as consistently as Jane.

Farm life was an important early influence: "My parents had friends who were farmers. When I was a teenager we were living in the city, which I hated, but I got to stay on a farm in the

holidays and I absolutely loved it.” But as a young adult she first lived in Hamilton and Auckland, where for her the hippie revolution and the sexual revolution intertwined. “I went to art school and that really encouraged my promiscuity; I threw myself into it wholeheartedly.” While Jane N. remembers her first adult years as wonderful, she doesn’t now equate promiscuity with love: “When I started to experience a deeper feeling of love, my wanting to be with one person increased. And once I started having children I was not interested in other partners at all.”

Son Michael’s father was a drummer in a band; finding herself a single mum, Jane N. now started out to live the country life she’d always been attracted to. She took her baby to a little house between Hamilton and Huntley, and she began developing subsistence living skills: “I wasn’t on the DPB because I didn’t want to sign the paper against Michael’s father. I was living on virtually nothing, as you could in those days”. Three food sources that weren’t costly made this possible: first was the garden she’d put in for vegetables; second were hens for eggs; third was a goat for milk. So she had her own greens, eggs and milk; “My \$12 a month of Family Allowance also used to buy a sack of rice and cheese and dates. We lived really well”. For her it was a time of sanctuary and of abundance. Her love of goats, beginning then, has lasted all her life.

Next she teamed up with Paul; officially he lived in Auckland, but “he came and went”. Romantic, musical, he still personifies for her the hippie era of the time. Since both believed in voluntary simplicity, the news of Hokianga’s Long Louis Community inspired them: “Some friends of mine said ‘Yeah, it’s open to anybody, you can come up with us’, and Paul said ‘Right, let’s do it. Let’s go up there’, so we did.” As in America, the hippie journey led ‘back-to-the-land’. “Michael was two and a half. We didn’t know what we were going to find. The next day we walked up a bush track to Sam’s house, just a narrow little platform built on poles. On the way we passed Pipi and Mani’s, a two-storey house with living area below and bedrooms above. There was a rough tractor track up to their place, but that was the only vehicle access. We built our little whare on the other side of the valley with poles out of the bush. It had a dirt floor and thatched roof. Paul ‘poozled’ a railway tarpaulin, and a beautiful stained glass window, which we set low down. There was an ‘A’ shaped sloping roof, a chimney and an open fire to cook on at one end. Our double bed was bracken and we must have carried in some bedding to go over that. It was a lovely springy mattress, which we could keep replacing because we were on a bracken slope.”

They gradually cleared the bracken to make gardens where they could grow food. Living near rural Maori was, for Jane N, a wonderful experience: “The Maori people in the Hokianga are connected to the land. I used to see that in them, something I wanted to experience myself.” The people at Long Louis, she believed, had values that involved sharing, aroha, and respect for the environment. But living there was primitive and often damp: “Part of our experience up there was impetigo, which we all got frequently. Even just the slightest little blackberry scratch would turn into a sore. With Paul, I didn’t even have running water. I used to go down to the stream and bring up buckets. These days we wouldn’t have been allowed to do it; I would have had my kids taken off me I’m sure.” Yet Jane’s love for her first home in the bush was unshakeable: “My sense of romance,” she observes, “has been with the land.”

When her relationship with Paul ended, Jane N. had another child with Snail, an artist and woodcarver who also lived at Long Louis.<sup>70</sup> Soon after this she first went south to Marahau. A friend called Anna had been living there with Stephen, and now invited Jane N. to visit that community. Stephen believes that Anna wanted them to meet, and when they did, for him, “that was it, pretty much”. For Jane N. the choice to move to Marahau was difficult: “I didn’t want to leave Long Louis, I was so in love with it. But I had two children and they were growing up. They needed to be close to a school, and they needed an easier more ordinary way of life.” At Marahau, in 1977 when she first arrived, Jane N. found some of the things she felt she needed, for her children and herself. The core group then were young, shared childcare, and there were other aspects of extended family: “We used to have weekly meals together. Carol made beautiful American apple pies. We’d all be together, kids too, and that was when the Fleetwood Mac records came out. I remember dancing around in a circle, and we were just so high and connected.” Though monthly meetings had been held in early years, by the time Jane N. arrived these weren’t so regular. Shared meals also dwindled after Carol and Dave G. and Raylene left the community. Though others took their place, it was a different group than the initial core, and never quite regained the old cohesiveness.

When she first got together with Stephen, his sleeping quarters were even more basic than hers had been at Long Louis. “We used to sleep outside. He had a flysheet and a big mattress of hay, under a tree.” Her kids, however, had their beds inside his small octagonal house. After each of her first two stays at Marahau she chose to go back to Long Louis. Looking back, she considers that “in my heart I was still living in the Hokianga.” Young people like herself, who at nineteen moved back and forth between far-flung communities, helped these

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<sup>70</sup> According to Mark Scott’s article *Hippies to the rescue*, Snail was an Australian Vietnam War draft dodger.

to stay connected in the 1970s. But Jane N. eventually chose to live with Stephen, and at Marahau. Her first visit there was in the winter of 1977, and her next in the winter of 1978. “It was always winter when I came down,” she reflects. But when she next met Stephen it was summer, January of 1979, at Golden Valley, near Waihi: it was Nambassa, and it sparked a new direction for them both.

The turnout for that festival was even greater, on a per-capita basis, than that at Woodstock in the US, ten years earlier.<sup>71</sup> For Jane N. it was a powerful experience: “New Zealand music at its absolute amazing best. And there was Stephen Gaskin, talking about connecting with native people, coming together, and building a family. He inspired us, it was a deciding point.”<sup>72</sup> Gaskin, who Jane N. saw as a spearhead of the community movement, had “really done it” in America. He spoke of home births, parenting and family, and of the magic, energy and life of a community. As partners, Jane N. and Stephen now decided they could work together to achieve those things at Marahau. While he went south to put together the materials for a new house, she said goodbye to Long Louis: she’d made her choice. Over the next two years she worked with Stephen on their family house. Because they had no mains power they used hand tools. For her it was a wonderful experience, although it was “incredibly hard work”. Together they had four more children, all home births, the first in 1980 and the last in 1986. They were together as a couple for about ten years.

Earning an income was a challenge; few had mainstream jobs. Stephen sold honey, and set up a wind chime business that provided some employment for his family. Orchards and gardens were established on the farm, but the best paying crop was dope, which some members were growing in the nearby bush. Before too long, police began to raid at harvest time, and locals spoke of ‘Marijuana-hau’. While Jane N. was not averse to occasionally getting stoned herself, through her practice of yoga she lost any further interest in an induced altered state and she worried for her children, growing up in that environment: “With dope and the consumption of alcohol, they started to get interested, as teenagers do, and I felt the responsibility as a parent to demonstrate a different way.” Drug dealing ultimately led to tragedy with Malcolm’s death in 1991. It was a dark time for the whole community and Jane N. is proud that Marahau is clear of all those issues now. When she and Stephen separated, she retained the family home while Stephen built another one nearby. Like Stephen, she has had more partners since.

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<sup>71</sup> *Nambassa*, see electronic resources.

<sup>72</sup> Stephen Gaskin and partner Ina May are icons of the US counterculture who both attended the Nambassa Festivals. They co-founded The Farm in Tennessee, and Ina May helped champion the home birth movement in the 1960s.

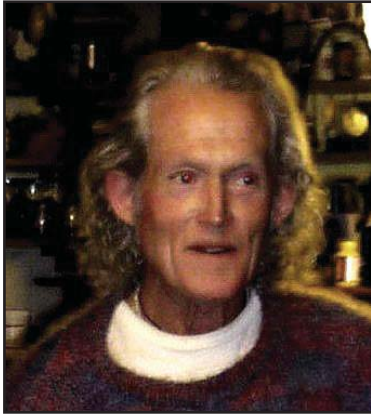
As in some other seventies communities, not every house at Marahau was permitted. In 2006, after a neighbour formally complained to Tasman District Council (TDC) of substandard housing on the property, officials began a series of inspections, and these ultimately led to court battle with TDC. Jane N: “We’ve gone through this immense process, which everyone here has contributed to financially. We’ve got more structure now than we have ever had.”

In recent years she’s welcomed tangata whenua, those Maori who have family connections with the land at Marahau, to reconnect with it. “This land is Maori leasehold land,” she says. I personally embrace this relationship wholeheartedly. I don’t believe in owning land, and very much doubt this land would have the quality it does if it were freehold. We are its kaitiaki, its guardians.”

For all the years she’s lived at Marahau she has had milking goats. Sometimes there’s been a milking cow as well, and cheeses have combined the milk from both. Goat breeding, and her goat’s milk cheeses, are still major interests. She tends her garden, milks her goats, and does her mahi harakeke on her big back porch. She welcomes guests and sees the history of Marahau and other seventies communities as worth recording and remembering.

“Communities have their own life” she says, “and are continually evolving and changing. There’s something one could almost say is magical about the life of this community. Sometimes the changes can seem difficult, especially as I get older. But it’s good to be challenged, actually. It’s good not to always be in one’s own little comfort zone. I’ve got this tendency to just sink back and want everything to be quiet and peaceful. But there are other influences that come and go here, all the time. And I see that as being really healthy.”

## Stephen



Stephen was born in England in 1948, and some of his happiest childhood memories are of the Cheshire countryside where his family once lived, although the village house they lived in then had “not a blade of grass on the property”. His dad was a banker, and after Stephen turned eleven in 1959 the family moved to Canada. The move meant more career advancement, making it possible for Stephens’s dad to leave behind the Midlands poverty that he was born into. He worked as a banker for some years in various places in Alberta, moved up to managing a manufacturing business, and finally became a stockbroker in British Columbia.

Moving so often can’t have been easy for Stephen in his early teens. However, by the summer of 1965, when he finished high school, his parents seemed settled at last. Their new home was the city of Victoria, on the southern tip of Vancouver Island. Although to Stephen’s dad it may have seemed “more English than England”, physically and culturally it was also close to the U.S. west coast, where one year earlier Ken Kesey had set off to cross the continent with fellow Merry Pranksters in a brightly painted bus loaded with psychedelic drugs. They called it ‘Further’, since they saw themselves as journeying beyond the limitations of the straight establishment. Also in 1964, between the acid parties on his famed Millbrook estate, Timothy Leary found the time to co-author *The Psychedelic Experience*.<sup>73</sup> The influence of both men on the emerging U.S. counterculture was profound.

At sixteen Stephen started university. His mum had wanted him to be a missionary; his dad encouraged him to be a doctor. The missionary idea did not appeal, so Stephen opted for a course in medicine. In his first year he took things quietly, “a late-blooming naïve kind of guy.” But by this time exciting change was in the air on west coast campuses; you heard it in the words of rock and roll; you smelt it in the fragrant whiff of dope. “We knew stuff was happening, through the music scene; we knew things were changing. I was at university one day and one of my friends said: ‘Hey, you need to try this!’ It was a matchbox crammed with Mexican weed, and when he tried it he experienced a game-changing epiphany. “Hang on, there’s more to life!” he told himself, and very soon he’d started taking LSD. “You would

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<sup>73</sup> In which Leary and co-author Metzner wrote: “A psychedelic experience is a journey to new realms of consciousness. The scope and content of the experience is limitless, but its characteristic features are the transcendence of verbal concepts, of space-time dimensions, and of the ego or identity.”

meet former friends who hadn't run into gunja, marijuana, acid, and they would look at you and say, 'What's going on? What happened?' One day they knew you as this ordinary kid, and the next day you were obviously part of some inner group."

For Stephen, Victoria in the late sixties was a very good place to be, "probably one of the best on the planet." Like many others, he was tuning in and turning on: "It was obvious who was on acid. There was this huge wave of culture and creativity, completely out of synch with the mainstream; the colourful creative clothes, the long hair, and so much new music!" At campuses in Victoria, Vancouver, San Francisco and Seattle, the intellectual and sexual horizons of students were expanding fast, and nothing seemed impossible. The summer of 1967 was 'the summer of love'. "In those days there was that really high optimism that love would change the world. I was at Victoria's first love-ins, and thousands and thousands of people would turn up."

Though he took part, free love was never his priority; his primary focus was "the internals of consciousness" and not "the externals of sexuality". The drugs made new adventures possible in many areas, and there were lots of drugs: "We used to get really good mescaline in those days, and I once took some peyote. But it was always acid and marijuana and hashish. I was just fascinated with the inner worlds I was exploring." His parents weren't happy with these changes though, and they reacted badly. "It was one of those clash of the cultures times; my parents' way of thinking was appropriate for them and totally inappropriate for me." Stephen left university and travelled for a year, staying in England and Morocco before heading home. Back on Vancouver Island, he decided he would finish his degree. This time his papers were in sociology and psychology, because he wanted to learn more about the human brain. In his last year at university he lived at Malahat, beside a lovely fjord, about forty kilometres northwest of Victoria: "To get to my cabin you either had to take a boat ride for an hour, or walk down a secret trail through a forest for fifteen or twenty minutes. I love nature, and I had Orcas swimming by, I had otters living in my woodshed, I had eagles coming down. I had gunja plants growing in the back yard, and I would go out and pick the bottom leaves off, steam them up, and have them with my mashed potatoes and fish. Then I'd go for a walk on the property, which was a paradise, completely high and connected with nature. People would come and visit, or I could walk up the trail and hitch into Victoria in a little over an hour. But for anyone to find me, unless they knew the way, was impossible. I enjoyed my own company, and was enthralled to be exploring consciousness." It was a time when individualised learning was acceptable. For Stephen his research into new realms of

consciousness was satisfying and worthwhile. Lecturers too accepted it as higher education, which it surely was, and by the end of 1971 he had completed his degree.

Although he lived alone in Malahat, at this time he met Dave, the new partner of an old acquaintance, Jennifer. Dave had a daughter with a former partner, Carol, also living in the area. A lot of counter-cultural young people lived nearby, mostly in rented rural houses; few had steady jobs, as unemployment in British Columbia stood at eighteen percent. To some, New Zealand, with its warmer climate and its zero unemployment, seemed a better place to go. Stephen loved Malahat, but saw his landlord as ‘a goof’ and didn’t want to go on renting land. He wanted some to call his own, and after graduating he began to generate the money he would need to purchase it. In 1971, with two more friends, he planned, designed, set up and ran a vegetarian health food restaurant. In 1972 they sold it as a going concern for a good profit and went their separate ways. Which way for Stephen? Canada, he now decided, was too cold. He’d heard enough from draft-dodgers now hiding out in Canada to make him very wary about even going into the United States. The escalating war in Vietnam, and growing fears of an eventual nuclear war, helped him decide that he should settle in the southern hemisphere. New Zealand was a stable English speaking country, and would be as safe as anywhere in the event of nuclear war. Dave and Jennifer had moved there, found a pleasant spot, and were expecting a new baby. Carol and daughter were now living there as well. He took the boat.

At twenty-three he had clear goals, and they included a monogamous relationship. He’d been with different women, and experienced “collateral damage” when such partnerships broke up. “I ran a pattern of being left by women, and occasionally the reverse.” Although he didn’t want the co-dependence of his parents’ marriage, he did appreciate their stable lasting partnership. First he imagined he would find his perfect piece of land. Then he’d be ready for a partner and a family. And he’d need money too. He didn’t want to have to go away to work while he had young children. He wanted to look after them as well.

He had a sense that technological society might soon collapse, which made him eager to acquire necessary skills. “I’ve had this intuition all my adult life that society is corrupt and built on quicksand. In those days I made everything. I made my own back-pack, I made my sleeping-bag, I made my bell-bottom overalls. I even made a pair of shoes on board the boat. When I arrived in New Zealand, all my survival gear, my clothes, shoes, backpack, everything was stuff I’d made myself. If and when things collapsed, I wanted to be totally self-reliant.”

Just three days after he arrived in Auckland in December 1971 he'd made his way to Marahau to stay with Dave and Jennifer. There he met Carol, who had just delivered their new baby son. And there he saw the lease they had their eye on, an idyllic piece of land.

Although it clearly had potential, almost all of it was overgrown: "You could only just drive a Volkswagen Beetle up the driveway, between the gorse and the blackberry." On his first visit Stephen took a machete, went for a walk, and found a beech tree on the very site where he would later build his house. He stayed at Marahau for several months and felt then that it could be right for him, but to make sure he toured New Zealand for the rest of 1972, visiting places like Coromandel and the Hokianga. Then he went back to Canada, to tie up some loose ends. While there he had the intuition that it would be Marahau. When he got back towards the end of 1973 he found that Dave and Jennifer were splitting up. She offered half of her half of the property to Stephen and the other half to an American called Claudia. They would have quarter shares, at \$4,500 each, which meant that half the lease would now change hands for the same price that she and Dave had paid for all of it not long before. Stephen had just \$5000 of his savings left. He bush-bashed through the gorse and blackberry and found the beech tree he had found before. Was this the place for him to settle down? "The instant I sat down a Tui flew over my shoulder. Six inches of clearance, about sixty miles an hour, and I just went Yep! That's it. I have confirmation." He bought his quarter share, and has it still.

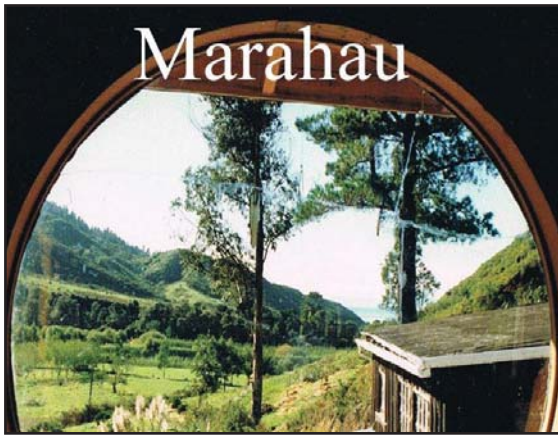
In his first winter other people lived together in the house, but Stephen wasn't into the communal thing. Instead he camped under the beech tree; it was now his site. While back in Canada he'd bought his own cast-iron pots and pans. He kept them near him, with his other gear, in an old steamer trunk. He had an open fire, cooked his meals, and even grew a garden there. He slept under the tree, out of the frost. For a long time his flysheet was his 'bedroom roof': "I was sleeping outdoors, rain or shine, for twelve or eighteen months before deciding I should build something." He next became involved in demolition work in Nelson. He'd met a demolition contractor. "It started a phenomenally productive relationship. I was able to just build and build and build, using recycled timber." His first house was "a straight up octagon", an extravagant design with a different shaped window on every face. He pulled this off, finding that he could build, at hardly any cost. The little income that he did need wasn't hard to find. As well as doing demolition work, he was a beekeeper, and for a while manufactured wind chimes too.

He had his land, and didn't need to work away from it. Carol arrived with Raylene Good in early 1974. Jane N. came a few years later, giving Stephen a new partner and a family.

“Ultimately we got together, stayed together, and built a massive two-storey house, with demolition timber, all by hand. We had six kids. We pioneered, cleared land, we had a ball.” There was no pressure to conform at Marahau. “What our successful setting up allowed was to explore what was important to each of us.

And that's where the community became more divergent. “As time proceeds people go through their stuff and go in one direction or another. You sometimes realise: well, I've got *nothing* in common with this person, except that we share the lease.” With Dave gone Stephen's been there longest, but he's never wanted to provide the leadership: “you get a lot dumped on you if you take that role. I didn't want it, but it happened anyway.” Most recently in the court fight with TDC; he had support, but not as much as he'd have liked. With that sorted, he now has plans of starting up another ecovillage, which he sees as “a more intentional community”. And yet he says: “The beauty of this place is that we *have* survived by making it up as we go along.” So even when his new community gets off the ground, he sees no reason to leave Marahau: “I like it here. And I can easily have a foot in each door.”

He's always stood a little back from ‘the communal thing’, yet he believes that people stand to gain a lot by doing it, and in the future there will be a need for it: “The systems we've been living in are terminally dysfunctional. If you want to go down with that mess, just carry on. But if you want to change the direction, get together with people. Because strength is in community, strength is in cooperation, and strength is in working towards a shared vision of something that is worthwhile and sustainable, of yourselves, other people and the environment.”



As Dave tells it, Marahau Community really began ‘one dark and stormy night’ at Sandcut Creek, near Malahat on Vancouver Island. While he and Jennifer were woodcarving and painting, police burst in armed with a warrant and commenced to search their house for drugs; it was a turning point for them. They had already thought of moving to New Zealand, and now Dave was convinced that the Canadian police were determined to bust him. His thought was, “no, we’re out of here”, and so began a journey that would lead them both to Marahau.

The year was 1971. Carol, who had lived with Dave before Jennifer, and was the mother of his daughter, also made the move to New Zealand that year. Arriving before Carol did, Dave and Jennifer stayed for a time with her brother in Whangarei. Jennifer, who had a daughter with her from a previous relationship, now conceived again with Dave. The couple travelled south, looking for land, as Jennifer had family money in a bank account. They’d heard of some alternative communities near Nelson. The Riverside community was opening up to new alternatives, and Dick Roberts was inviting people interested in communal living to join him at Todd’s Valley. Nelson region sounded very promising. They crossed Cook Strait and “through a process of elimination” soon arrived at Marahau. The land was cheap, the climate was sunny, and the people were welcoming.

At first they rented, just across the river from the land they would soon lease. In December of 1971 they had a baby boy. Carol, a midwife, came to help with the delivery. During her visit Stephen came as well. He too was a Canadian looking for land. Dave showed them both a recently abandoned old tobacco farm nearby. Soon afterwards, the lease became available and Jennifer and Dave bought it. It seemed too good an opportunity to miss: Stephen: “The lease was bought for \$9000, and servicing it in those days only cost \$25 a year. So \$9000 bought effective ownership of 83 acres of land for \$25 a year.”

Such leases didn’t benefit their Maori owners much, and at that time some lessees who applied for freehold of such land were granted it. Soon afterwards the practise stopped. Stephen remembers that the man who previously leased the block sold off that lease to Dave and Jennifer in order to buy freehold title of another Maori block, while he still could. Apparently he’d seen the writing on the wall. A lot of Maori were opposed to the continuing

alienation of remaining Maori land; during the 1970s their opposition grew too fierce to be ignored.

Dave was just twenty-six, and to him Marahau was like a dream come true: he saw it as his land, a place where he could live his counter-cultural ideals, including heightened states of consciousness. When Leary co-authored *The Psychedelic Experience* in 1964, Dave was eighteen and living in a redneck part of Western Canada. But television had expanded his horizons; he was powerfully drawn to Leary's psychedelic path. Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters were another influence. When Dave saw them he thought, "That looks like much more fun than I've been having." So he saved up some money and set off to have adventures of his own.

In 1966, near Barcelona, he had his first good taste of marijuana and it was a peak experience: "I'd only had little dibs and dabs before. I stuffed this pipe full and commenced to really lean into it. All the lights went on and the whistles sounded."

In 1968 he was in London, stoned because he was involved in making up grams of pure acid with bare hands. "I got invited to a Rolling Stones party. This big black guy, quite a known person in the scene those days, used to come around to our apartment to buy a couple of hundred hits on their behalf. He said 'Come to the party', so I did."

After experiences of that kind, it's not surprising his subsistence goals included growing his own weed, and Marahau seemed the ideal spot. He planted half a dozen seeds close to his rented cottage when he first arrived. They yielded a bumper crop: "There were six plants about two and-a-bit metres apart, and two people couldn't touch hands around one of them." At harvest "the subsistence thing was taken care of". There was enough for him to smoke, to share with friends, and a substantial surplus left to barter with. At first, he says, it wasn't really a commercial thing. "Because at that time dope wasn't really heard of in a place like Tasman Bay, it was a rumour, if you like." Dave helped to turn that rumour into a reality.

After about a year at Marahau there was a parting of the ways for him and Jennifer. She moved to Nelson with a new religion, Ananda Marga, and a different Dave, Dave G. (Goodi, as he would soon be known at Marahau). Dave now needed money to give back to Jennifer. His answer was dividing up the property. In 1973 he offered quarter shares to Stephen and to Claudia, a US friend of Carol's. They each paid \$4,500, which was enough for Jennifer. Dave kept a half share, but soon gave up bits of it to other people coming in. Shared ownership made sense to all of them. Stephen: "the lease would obviously go up if land prices went up.

We figured that we had the advantage if we were a community. They couldn't disproportionately raise our lease, and if one family could afford it ten easily could'."

It was a vintage year for such communities. Crowds of young people had become enthusiastic about sharing land. It was the year that Matiu Rata, Minister of Lands in the Kirk government, announced the Ohu Scheme. The Nelson region was a magnet for a host of land-seekers, some wanting an existing group to join while others hoped to start one of their own. A number of the former moved to Riverside, while many of the latter visited Tahuna Farm, seeing it as at least a useful staging post. Tahuna was an 'open land' community in Nelson that would last for six more years. It too began in 1973.

Dave looks back on "thousands of visitors" in those first years, and thinks that Marahau was inspirational to some of them. But he and other members didn't want it to be open land: "if a whole bunch of people came along, set up their tipis and went 'far out, man', anyone that truly had some money to invest in the place, and make a commitment, wasn't going to be very interested." So although many short-term visitors were able to hang out, the ones who wanted to stay on had first to be invited in by all of those already there, and ultimately had to buy themselves a share.

Carol says Marahau was nearly self-sufficient in the early years, with home-grown grains and vegetables, chickens and sheep and cattle, milking goats, and a milking cow. Gardening at first was shared: "We worked together in the garden joyfully, that was our main time of being together. We were creative people and we planted some fantastic things, including peanuts. We'd meet once a month and decide what to plant." One project was an almond orchard. It was intended to provide some income but eventually flopped. The almonds soon reverted to hard shell, and so could not be harvested without machinery.

Few communes, even in the heady free love era of the early 1970s, agreed with orgies or group marriages, because New Zealand's flower children never opted for polygamy; they mostly stayed with serial monogamy. Old partnerships broke up as new ones formed, but former partners often stayed good friends. Pundits like Leary warned against possessive love and sexual jealousy, which they equated with stupidity and misery.<sup>74</sup>

Carol and Dave when they split up in California, remained good friends. In early 1974, at his request, Carol moved in at Marahau and settled there, not as a partner, but a neighbour and a

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<sup>74</sup> Leary, Timothy, Metzner, Ralph and Alpert, Richard, *The Psychedelic Experience*, p. 151: You will be reborn on an animal level. You will experience possessive desire and jealousy, you will suffer stupidity and misery.

friend. Friendships were possible between successive partners too. Goodi had married Raylene, but split up with her to be with Jennifer. Dave then asked Raylene to come and live at Marahau. When she got back together with Goodi he moved in at Marahau as well. Though he'd succeeded Dave with Jennifer, there evidently wasn't too much acrimony over it. When Jennifer moved to Australia, Dave teamed up with a new partner, Steph. Stephen had partnered Anna, who was from the Hokianga. When that was over Anna introduced him to her friend Jane N., also from the north. Anna moved on, Jane N. stayed with Stephen, and all three remained good friends.

An early visitor to Marahau was Cheryl Dean. She'd met with Stephen when he visited the Puketa community, and he'd invited her to come to Marahau. She did so on her horse, arriving at the start of 1976, and found a very different lifestyle than that of Puketa: "Archie was such a mentor, and a real central figure there. At Marahau it was quite different. It was summer, and they were using the Green House as a communal building. At Archie's we would all have been gardening, or involved in other work. It seemed much more relaxed at Marahau."

At Marahau there was no guiding figure such as Archie, or as Dan at Wilderland. Asked if he ever wanted such a role, Stephen replies, "there is a trap in that: the other people become followers, and then you're stuck in a position that you may not want." Only a few communities, including Wilderland and Puketa, had single leaders, but at Marahau there didn't seem to be a clear decision-making plan at all. Meetings were held, but they became less frequent over time. Jane N., who experienced them first in the late 1970s, kept "absolutely silent" in them, and felt terrified. Partly it was that she was new, and "they all had their own stuff going on." Yet Jane R. remembers how "incredibly impressed" she was by Jane N.'s effective speaking at a meeting just a few years later, held at Riverside. Decision-making by consensus at a meeting isn't easy, but Riverside had somehow made it work. During her time at Marahau, Jane N. says, meetings have always been "a real bone of contention".

Carol says it was different in the early days: "We kept minutes of every monthly meeting and we referred to action points and treasurer's reports." She's kept some early records. After she left, not much seems to have been written down until the court battle with Tasman District Council that began in 2005. Sally arrived in 1980; she recalls: "there were a lot of heated discussions which were considered to be meetings, but I never went to one where there were minutes or anything like that." As Dave remembers it, "we'd hold them here or there, at one

house or another. And the more we got established the less we had time for them.” For Stephen, lack of any formal structure was a plus: “The beauty of this place is that we have survived by making it up as we go along”. Jane N. is amazed by that as well. She sees it as “a mystery and a miracle”.

When after two years Claudia moved back to the US, she split her quarter share. Stephen: “She wanted to recoup her money. David [Goodi] and Raylene bought half of that so they got an eighth.” When people left and wanted to sell shares or rent a house, they needed the approval of remaining residents. Carol says this was decided in the early days of the community, and there was a written agreement that shares had to be sold to other shareholders, or else to people with “100% backing”. But this agreement wasn’t always honoured in the 1980s, when some departing residents began to sell their shares or rent their houses just as they saw fit.

And what that often came to mean was that remaining residents would try to find potential tenants or potential buyers they were happy with. When Raylene moved away, she pleased herself. Jane N.: “When she left the farm she owned a quarter of the shares. From the distance of Saudi Arabia, where she was living, she decided ‘Oh I’ll just cut them up into sixteenths, and sell them off to whoever.’ So we managed to get friends together to buy them.” Sixteenths have since been halved again. It’s now agreed that thirty-seconds are the smallest shares, though there is still no legal document to spell that out.

Stephen began his first small house in 1975. Dave let the Green House be the main house for the whole community. While not the leader, he was then a central figure. Jane N. speaks of the impression he first made on her: “a wonderful person to know, funny, amazingly charismatic. He was into everything.” Carol and daughters lived beside him in the Bach. Claudia had the old tobacco kiln, or ‘barn’, and Raylene had begun to build an A-frame. Goodi helped her finish it. Once houses were established each was separate, and Carol says that people “kept within their nuclear families.”

By the late 1970s four families had houses, three of which they’d built themselves, mostly with timber trucked from Nelson demolition sites. Those houses all had permits at the outset, though not all the later changes and expansions were approved. Dave built a new house, and also a studio for Steph, who was an artist. Carol and family moved into the Green House, which she renovated. Stephen and Jane N. were hard at work on their new house while Goodi and Raylene were still completing theirs. Dave, Stephen and Goodi shared a demolition business; the demolitions mostly took place in Nelson, and they provided the resources for a

building boom at Marahau. As Dave remembers it, “The Goods were building across from where I built my place, and Stephen was also building his place. All those three projects were transpiring as fast as we could get to town, tear down houses, cart the lumber to Marahau and put it back together.”

Sally arrived with Malcolm, on a horse and cart. They got there in 1981, at the Spring Equinox. Malcolm, who came from Graham Downs, already had three children and was in his mid-thirties. Sally was twenty and had seen a lot of 1970s communities. She’d stayed at Pear Tree Farm, Fox River and Tahuna, and had lived at Sunday Creek. But she thought Marahau was the most beautiful place she’d ever been to, and immediately wanted to live there: “I just thought that it was my dreams come true.” Though not on the lookout for further members, Marahau agreed to let them stay. Stephen and Jane N. suggested they could have the empty bach.

They bought a twelfth share of the lease. Sally would have two children in the next five years, a daughter in the bach and then a son in the new house that she and Malcolm built together. “We had to go for a specified departure to get our permit. I knew we wouldn’t really own our house; we had a twelfth share so we’d own a twelfth of everything. But we all had an understanding that it was to be our house, just as Stephen and Jane N’s was to be theirs.”

In Golden Bay the district scheme was altered in 1983 to provide for multiple-occupancy in ‘rural communes’. This allowed Rainbow Valley, Happisam and Tui to develop and expand. The Motueka scheme did not provide for such communities in any way, and when in 1991 the Resource Management Act took effect, Marahau’s ‘resource consent allowance’ was for just five dwellings – those already built.

Marahau was a splendid place for kids. Some of the older children moved away, but more arrived. Jane N. came with two, and then had another four. Malcolm had three who sometimes stayed, and Sally had two more. Yirka and Jane R. brought another four. Most births were home births; that had started in the 1970s. Toddlers grew up with nature and a large extended family. Sally’s children “didn’t go to pre-school, they didn’t have to go anywhere, they were all playing, growing up just happened. William would wake up with his little basket and be off to the best fruit tree for breakfast.” Carol’s children did go to pre-school, at Motueka, and she worked as a pre-school supervisor for a time. Once they were school age, most children attended the nearest school, Riwaka Primary.

But for the adults there was friction. Carol left in 1981, and subsequently did teacher training in Christchurch. Raylene and Goodi left and so did Dave and Steph. Dave says that, “people started bickering.” There were divisions and he couldn’t stand “the bitching and the moaning” so he left. On one side, some were ‘out of it’ on drugs and booze. The other side felt that they held the higher moral ground. Jane R., looking back, reflects: “I was like that, about our lifestyle, as though it was superior. I think that they were sometimes justified in thinking we were arrogant.” Two sides of one community; it led to stress.

One major source of friction was the dope. Income from growing it perhaps explains why life at Marahau was so relaxed when Cheryl visited in 1976, but that was never something widely advertised: “I would have been aware that people there were smoking it, but I had no idea that it was being grown to sell.” Though crops were grown discreetly off the property, some people came to think it was too dangerous. Just one or two were growers, Carol says, and they hiked miles into the surrounding bush to plant and cultivate. For her it brought in a dark element, the gangs, “because that’s who you sell drugs to, they are the ones who own that world.”

To Jane N. it was seductive: “What else can you grow that’s worth that much?” Carol thinks the major problem was never the drugs: “It was the easy money, that’s what changed it. So you get the greed. People think, I can buy myself a brand new car.” Easy for some, but not the whole community.

Jane N. used to smoke some dope herself, but now began to see it differently: “in terms of the effect that way of life was having on my soon to be teenage children”. Carol did not allow dope smoking in her house or near her kids. However, when police came searching with their guns and dogs, they overran the whole community. A raid in early 1980 finally convinced her it was time to leave. Police had chosen her house as their base, and with one daughter clutching at each arm in terror of the dogs, Carol thought, ‘Okay, we are out of here!’ Ironically the same affect an earlier drug raid had on Dave and Jennifer.

She moved to Christchurch with her daughters, though for thirteen years she couldn’t bring herself to sell her share of Marahau. Instead she rented out her house, returning in the holidays as much as possible. Yirka and Jane R., who came from Riverside in 1984, were tenants in the Green House until 1992. They slowly built a business selling food to tourists and to trampers. Now they are owners of The Park Café at Marahau beach. Soon after they arrived in 1994 a grower sounded Yirka out about the dope: “We can do it together” he

suggested. Yirka's response was, "I don't want to. This is not what we are here for." Sally eventually felt the same: "I didn't like it. And it wasn't just the drugs, it was the alcohol."

Sally moved out in 1987. Malcolm was murdered over dope in 1991. Dave says: "We had an old association with the murderer. Malcolm had three pounds of seedy dope. This guy showed up, and unbeknown to us he had gone nuts on whisky and amphetamines and he was in a lot of debt. So he arranged to meet with Malcolm at the top of Marahau Hill for this three pounds. Then he cold bloodedly murdered Malcolm and tried to murder his son. He actually took a sheet to wrap the body in."

Malcolm had told his friends that deal was to be his last. The murder had a lasting impact on the whole community. Dope growing didn't stop at once, but Dave says Malcolm's murder was "kind of the end of it." Jane N. says that now: "there is no income from the growing of dope here. And I am very proud to tell you that."

Before the 1990s, local governments amalgamated to form Tasman District Council (TDC).<sup>75</sup> After Sally and Malcolm's, four new sites were developed by existing and new leaseholders. Jane N. says two of these were granted building consents without resource consents. One was a new house built by Stephen and the other was a yurt; "Because the council were allowing this we understood that everything was fine". Two other sites had caravans with built on canopies.

But problems did arise concerning dwellings that had no resource consents; in 2002 a group of travelling musicians, Kiwi Jam, bought a share from a departing leaseholder, who didn't ask the other leaseholders before he sold. Jane N. says no one minded, as: "we knew them, they'd been staying here, and we all thought that they were really nice." Carol, who finally decided to give up her share a year or two before this happened, says she would certainly have minded: "I sold out because I anticipated this exact scenario", she says. Kiwi Jam moved onto a piece of land that the community had never used before, across the river, near a neighbours boundary. "They got it all cleared", Jane N. says "and then set up a couple of yurts."

The neighbour then complained to TDC, ostensibly about the yurts set up by Kiwi Jam, although he'd also mentioned to the Maori owners of the land that he would like to buy the lease if Marahau for any reason gave it up. Though Kiwi Jam departed, selling back their share to other leaseholders, TDC now began a series of inspections. Nine dwellings were

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<sup>75</sup> In 1989 the Golden Bay and Motueka County Councils merged with those of Richmond and Waimea to create the Tasman District Council.

discovered, with consents for only five, and this led to a serious dispute which lasted until 2008, and cost the Marahau Community \$100,000 to resolve.

Dwellings that had consents, the council said, must be compliant with the current codes. Dwellings without them were to be demolished and removed. Meeting the first demand would take some time and money; it was difficult, but possible. The second would have meant that roughly half the leaseholders and tenants would no longer have a house. Although the shares at Marahau were not divided equally, leaseholders all made equal rental payments for the land. Land values in the area were rocketing, and rentals for the lease were soon to rise; the new assessment was to be in 2009. Council's demands would have reduced the population, and accordingly the money coming in to pay the rental for the lease. Having largely ignored multiple occupancy and resource consent problems at Marahau for twenty years, TDC now seemed ready to close down the community. In order to survive, they had to take on City Hall.

One of the houses council challenged was the one that Stephen built when he and Jane N. split up. He'd had no wish to be a leader, but he did become one now: "it was like 'you're better at this, you're a better public speaker, so it's up to you to sort it out'." Some others helped; Marahau took its case to the Environment Court, got a sympathetic judge and won a stay of execution: there would be ten more years to bring the first five buildings up to code, and new consents were to be issued for at least a further four.

It was a compromise, requiring leaseholders to think about and to protect their whole environment. The idea of an ecovillage had emerged. Something of that kind would be needed, to ensure there was a future for a Marahau Community. Through the whole legal process, structure had been forced on them. Jane N. considers that although they were "incredibly resistant," they have needed it, and adds: "We've only just begun. There have been dark times, when I've thought 'My God, this place is doomed!' but we've moved through them. And the fact that we continue to evolve and grow the way we do seems quite miraculous."

Dave is proud of how the children have turned out: "Nurture and nature, it's a bit of both. They've got good memories of being brought up in that lifestyle. The concept is still very much alive." Carol sums up: "We hoped we could do better, keep a softer footprint, carbon footprint as it is known today. We worked, in a focused way, to create a beautiful paradise. In its heyday, and even now, you can see there's a lot of growth, and it's gone on for a long time.

During those years it was, I guess, living your dream. We did that; we did it successfully. I still see past and present members and their children as extended family.”



From left: Goodi, Steph, Stephen, Carol, Dave



Room with a loom, Sally and Malcolm's house

## Cheryl



Cheryl was the third of four daughters born to British immigrant parents, and the first born in New Zealand. Her mother was Scottish and her father was northern English. Her father was in the Royal Navy, which brought him to Christchurch, where he decided to stay. Her mother followed with the older girls. Cheryl was born, in 1953. They settled at Diamond Harbour, which she remembers as “a beautiful little rural community”. Most of the other people on the street were also immigrants. To her they were “all aunties and uncles, so to speak.”

There was a big garden, a hen run, and milk freshly delivered from a local farm. For many years the family had no car, so everybody walked, whether to primary school or to the wharf. When they were High School age, the older sisters went to Lyttelton by ferry and then on to Christchurch every day by train and bus. Even to get to primary school it was a two-mile walk. So Cheryl’s family were “really fit.”

Cheryl began horse riding at the age of three, and once at school would walk for miles for a chance to ride. Her eldest sister had been keen on horses too, but Cheryl’s passion never slackened in the least. Her family moved to Christchurch when she was eleven, and she kept on riding. By sixteen she at last had her own horse.

Her sixteenth year was 1969. It was the year that several thousand US student activists set out to take over what they called ‘People’s Park’ in Berkeley California, intending it to be a bastion of free speech. Police replied with buckshot, killing one and wounding hundreds more. Within four months New Zealand student activists had staged a re-enactment here, claiming and occupying Auckland’s Albert Park, and calling it a ‘People’s Park’ as well.

In 1970, aged seventeen, Cheryl began an arts degree at Christchurch University and studied education and psychology. After a year of that she thought she’d like to be an early education teacher and began a three-year kindergarten teacher’s course at Teachers Training College. “I was very interested in educational alternatives. I remember doing a paper that compared a

state school, a catholic school and Tamariki alternative school, and realising the reason I had chosen early education was to facilitate a really creative learning environment”.

By then she had begun to feel different from her sisters, whose goals and aspirations she no longer shared. A worldwide hippie counter-culture was emerging partly driven by mass media, and Cheryl was becoming part of it. One day, while she was still a teenager, her father asked what birthday present she would like. When she replied “*Bullshit and Jellybeans*”; he was aghast.

During those years she avidly read every book that she could get her hands on about peace and activism. A book that influenced her then was *Future Shock*.<sup>76</sup> “By the time I was about 18, I would say yes, I was a hippie. I remember my sister used to be driven crazy. She was very tidy, and I would have all sorts of hippie stuff in our shared bedroom, like sarongs on the wall, and hand-made shoes.”

Some of those hand-made shoes she might have made herself; she worked part time with a young shoemaker called Gus, owner of *Noddy’s Nipples*, a Christchurch leatherworking shop. She also met a “very interesting man” whose name was Graham. He was a keen gardener and ran a wholemeal bread shop in Christchurch.<sup>77</sup>

And now she met another interesting man. When she looks back, she says of him: “He definitely changed my life.” He was called Archie Hislop and he was a beekeeper and organic gardener. Graham sold up his wholemeal bread business and went to live with Archie, where he hoped to learn about sustainability. Cheryl began to spend her weekends there as well. Archie had family land at Puketa, on the Kaikoura coast.

In 1974 a loose community of young people had settled near Kaikoura with the common goal of living more sustainably. Some were with Archie; others lived not far away. Heather, Dude, Pearl and others were at Puketa. Gordy had modified a former milking shed on Postman’s Road into a small communal living space he called ‘The Cowshed’. John, Betsy, Robert and

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<sup>76</sup> *Future Shock* (Alvin Toffler; 1970), dealt with the ill effects of too much change in too short a period of time, leading to ‘information overload’.

<sup>77</sup> It was called *Vital Foods*. Cheryl thinks Graham may have sold it to the Christchurch Chippenham community. Tim Jones found a bread-making business there in 1974, and wrote: “This enterprise not only produces delicious bread (made of several types of wholemeal plus malt and molasses) but also provides paid employment for the members of the commune. (*A hard Won Freedom* p.105.)

Karen now shared this with him. Another group were in a house nearby on Schoolhouse Road. Also nearby there were the Donovan's, a family with an amazing garden who became, John says, "as close to being self-sufficient as I've ever seen."<sup>78</sup>

Some of these people thought of Archie as a guide and teacher, though it's unlikely that he would have used such words himself. The Hislops were a farming family, whose interest in organics put them, Cheryl says, "way ahead of their time". Archie was nearing fifty, and though he had once been in the navy he was now an anarchist. John had arrived at anarchism too: "The thing that Archie gave me was an affirmation that the only real government, responsible government, is government by the self, and the name for that is anarchy".

Christine, a young teacher who lived at Puketa during the later 1970s, remembers Archie's anarchistic take on education very well: "I was really proud of what we were doing in Kaikoura schools. We used to come home to Archie and he'd say, 'have you had a good day?' and we'd say 'yes', and he'd say 'bugger!' It took me ages to figure out what he was trying to tell us: as long as you do a good job in supporting the system, you are keeping it going."

At Puketa most people gardened, or did other work, and much of what they ate they grew themselves. Archie imbued the place with his resourceful and direct approach to self-sufficiency. "People lived very simply there", Cheryl reflects. Like others she was drawn to that simplicity, wanting a simpler and more satisfying way of life herself.

There is a proverb: 'Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach'. Towards the end of 1974, with kindergarten teacher training almost over, Cheryl decided not to teach, at least not yet. A man called Robert, from Barbados, who had recently been riding in the mountains, helped her focus on the kind of life she really wanted most. She graduated and she then set off on horseback up the east coast beaches. Christchurch was now behind her; in the distance mountains were ahead.

At the Waimakariri River, she turned west to Loburn; then she rode inland to Okuku Pass. There she met Grasshopper, a big station bred horse she would eventually buy for herself. From Okuku she carried on to Lake Sumner, then over the Hope Saddle to the Lewis, through Poplar Station, briefly to Hanmer for more supplies, then over the Dillon Ranges, into the

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<sup>78</sup> They did a trip to Grassmere to get salt. As John remembers it the only thing they bought was Red Bush tea.

Clarence, and so down to Kaikoura. On this and later trips she didn't take the easy routes, because she hated riding on the roads. The first place that she stayed at with a horse once she got to Kaikoura was the Donnovan's.

During that summer there were three pregnancies at Puketa, and self-sufficiency extended to the women's way of giving birth. Few Kiwi obstetricians were accepting of the home birth movement, pioneered by hippies in America, but Puketa was, and began a movement of its own.<sup>79</sup> Cheryl believes it was because the choices were so limited. "If we said we wanted dim lights, or didn't want the cord cut straight away, the doctors in Kaikoura just wouldn't listen. They'd go 'That's not the way we do it'. So we took responsibility. We said, 'we want to do it our way', and we did."

Home births in 1970s communities were often shared experiences, involving friends and neighbours rather than professionals. Pearl's baby was the first home birth that Cheryl saw, and Archie helped: "I think that Archie caught that baby, and he cut the cord. Pretty amazing for him." Amazing too for Cheryl, who went on to be a Kiwi 'direct entry' midwife, and helped to take responsibility for more than twelve home births over the next eight years.<sup>80</sup> When Dude and Heather's eldest child was born, Dude helped with the delivery. Cheryl rode flat out from the Donnovan's to be there, but didn't quite get there in time to see that birth.

Archie's small cabin, as she now remembers it, was lined with books: "there were books on Krishnamurti, books on organic gardening, books on the Soil Association, books on alternative education, you just name it. There were phenomenal resources there." Cheryl observed he never took much credit for himself: "I remember him going on years later about how Dude and Heather's garden was fantastic. I said 'Well Archie, we had such a great mentor' 'Oh no, no, no. That was Walden, wasn't it? Didn't they read Walden?' He sort of always fobbed it off. I don't think he realised the enormous impact he had on people."

Though not constrained by outside rules, Archie was health conscious and wasn't keen on drugs. "He wouldn't be into smoking cigarettes, and he certainly wouldn't be into people smoking dope. It was a bit of an unspoken rule, really." Cheryl had smoked some dope, though not at Puketa, and had tried LSD at university, but she soon came to feel as Archie

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<sup>79</sup> In 1971 Ina May Gaskin and husband Stephen popularised home birthing as they and 300 other California hippies travelled in buses and other mobile homes to found The Farm community in Tennessee. The Midwifery Centre they established there has been open ever since, with low rates of medical intervention and good birth outcomes for babies. (*The midwife of modern midwifery*, Granju, 1999, see electronic resources)

<sup>80</sup> Ina May Gaskin has also been credited with the emergence and popularisation of direct-entry midwifery (i.e. not training as a nurse first).

did: “I’ve always been a fairly active person, fairly driven. I tried it, and it didn’t particularly appeal.” To her the use of drugs and alcohol had the potential to become a problem: “It happened to quite a few communities, and sunk them to a certain extent.”

Archie did not have grazing for a horse at Puketa. Graham had hoped that Cheryl would live there with him, and when she didn’t, he himself moved on. Horses were still her first priority, and at the Donovans she was in touch with other horse people. Betsy and John had come from Nelson on a horse drawn cart, John, who had built it there, now offered it to Cheryl to take down to Christchurch for a brood mare so that she could raise a foal. She made the trip with sixteen-year-old Hazel and with Byron Donovan, a four year old. She bought the mare, and also Grasshopper, which meant that as she travelled north again she had one horse to draw the cart, and two more following behind.

She wintered in Kaikoura, working on a dairy farm for Archie’s brother. Towards the end of 1975 she set off travelling on Grasshopper; and after that for eighteen months she didn’t settle anywhere for long. “He was a big bay horse, with stockings and a white blaze. Bold! He’d go anywhere, swim any river, and he got me through some sticky situations where I could have lost my life.”

They had a special bond, and people were amazed at where they went: “I remember one trip riding over the Seaward and Inland Kaikouras and arriving at Molesworth quite early in the morning. I thought: ‘I’d better just pop in and let them know I’m here.’ The farmer’s wife looked at me and she asked where I had come from. I told her Lake Macrae. Oh my God! She said. I think you’d better come in for a cup of tea.”

Cheryl was interested in yoga and meditation. For her the journey wasn’t only physical: “When you spend hours alone with a horse, you are getting back to silence, for a start, which is an amazing meditation You’ve also got to be very present, because otherwise things come unstuck. And it made me realise there’s very little we really need to survive and be happy. Which is the essence of my spirituality: inner calm and contentment.”

Their journey took them north to Tasman Bay to visit Gus, her leatherworking friend from *Noddy’s Nipples*. Like Graham he had given up his shop in town and gone back-to-the-land. He and a partner with two other couples were now renting Famagusta, a big old villa in Upper

Moutere. They had productive gardens and some milking goats, but art was the main focus; Gus was making shoes to order, other members practised other arts”.

Graham had shown the way to Puketa. Now Cheryl’s trip to visit Gus took her to where she helped to birth a new community. Recently bought, the land at Sunday Creek was still unoccupied. Two of the owners, Jan and Dean, were living in the White House up the road. They happened to be on the road at Sunday Creek when Cheryl came past riding Grasshopper. Stopping to chat, “She told us she had ridden all the way from Kaikoura and was on the way to Famagusta” Jan recalls.

At Famagusta Gus and partner Julianne were soon to have a child, and asked if Cheryl would stay on and help them with the birth. She passionately advocated home deliveries, and no trained domiciliary midwife was available. She had read everything she could about home births and previously helped at four or five. So she delivered her friends’ baby and she helped them afterwards. “That’s often the more important job, to make sure everything’s okay”. At twenty-two she took responsibility. As she looks back, it was “very intuitive”.

From Famagusta she rode on to spend the summer months at Marahau. “I really loved it, though I wasn’t there for long; I had to go and find some work, so I rode off again.” She found some orchard work: “during that time I’d often ride my horse to visit people, and I sometimes rode to Sunday Creek. My intention was to earn some money and go back to Kaikoura, but by the time I finished the picking season, the snow had come in early. I couldn’t ride back through the high country, and didn’t want to ride on roads.” Jan offered grass for Grasshopper at Sunday Creek. Cheryl could stay at the White House with Dean and him, he said. But Cheryl knew there was a little shed at Sunday Creek, and she asked Jan if she could live in that. She’d put a fire in and fix it up. He said okay. “No one was living there; I was the first.”

Jan and Marcel began demolishing a house in Stoke for timber to be used at Sunday Creek. Woody and Bob came down from Wilderland and joined the team. Cheryl helped too. The men all lived in the White House. In cold midwinter an officious neighbour saw the smoke from Cheryl’s little fire and told local Council that the shed was occupied. The local building inspector soon arrived, informing Cheryl that she must move out. “This is ridiculous,” she said. “I’d have to live in my tent-fly. Isn’t it better that I live here with a fire, even though it

might be illegal?” She failed to convince him, but she didn’t have to live alone and cold for very long. Woody moved in with her, and they began a partnership that lasted twenty years.

The three official owners didn’t mind sharing the land. Maureen and Jan were in their early thirties with a son and daughter, Mark and Bindia. Their marriage had just ended, but they still remained close friends. When land at Sunday Creek became available, Jan asked Maureen and current partner Dean if they would help him purchase it. Each paid a thousand dollars and in 1975 the land was theirs. They weren’t quite sure what to do with it, but when it blossomed into a community that suited them. Jan had grown up next door to Riverside. Maureen believed in voluntary simplicity. Jane R., a later friend of Dean’s, saw him as “totally idealistic” too.

As spring of 1976 turned into summer Jan began to organise the building team to turn the timber into the first house. Cheryl had good ideas on how to delegate: “Get Gus to draw the plans for you,” she said, knowing that Gus had done Tech Drawing while at school. Woody’s a carpenter, he’ll peg out the foundations”, she suggested; on it went. They ate together every night around a campfire, and quickly bonded as a sort of adult family.

Cheryl delivered Janice and David’s daughter in 1978. Soon after that a midwife was available for Sunday Creek. When Janice had her second child, a son, in 1980, Jan’s daughter Bindia was eight: “I got to see a baby being born. There were a few of us outside looking in and just the midwife inside. It might have been the whole community at that time, probably about ten people. It was pretty exciting.” Where domiciliary midwives weren’t available, Cheryl was still prepared to take responsibility and still had Grasshopper. “I had difficulty in saying no, because I could see there wasn’t any alternative for people with bad hospital experiences, or who chose something different.” She also feels the effect was positive: “the good thing was, it meant that the whole home birth thing got a bit of action happening, and we got a domiciliary midwife service.”

In 1979 she rode to Rainbow Valley, close to Takaka, for a delivery. One thing she never did was charge a fee. For her it was an honour and a privilege to help in any way. When Jane and Yirka had their eldest son at Sunday Creek in 1980, Cheryl gave support. “People would ask would I come and do massage, would I come and do breathing, would I come and look after the other children afterwards.”

Even before the first big house at Sunday Creek was finished, more were going up. Cheryl and Woody thought outside the square: “I was fascinated with spirals and wondered if we could build a house based on a spiral. We found a shell, and looked at it. He made a little model in the ground with sticks, and he said yeah, we could do that.” Away it went. It was an innovative three-year project, largely built with manuka and recycled materials. The monetary cost was just \$300, Cheryl says, although it took a lot of time and craftsmanship. In 1980 council said it wasn’t up to code so she and Woody couldn’t live in it. They left, but others soon moved in; the Seashell House has actually been lived in ever since.

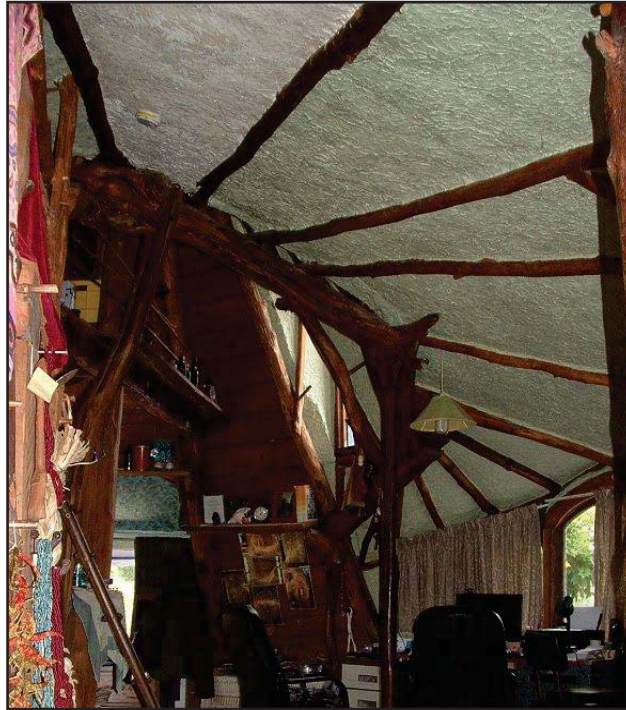
From 1979 successive members of Sunday Creek became sannyasins, followers of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, till half of the community were wearing orange coloured clothes. Though Cheryl and Woody were in the other half, Cheryl says she didn’t see it as divisive: “We didn’t jump in and dye our clothes orange, but we saw what they were gaining from it. It was like a family member deciding to do something a bit different; we’d dance and meditate with them.”

Jan and Maureen’s daughter Bindia, who became a sannyasin at seven, remembers Cheryl as “a really bubbly, friendly woman who had horses.” Religious differences were not the reason Cheryl and Woody ultimately left. It was becoming hard to find the grazing for her animals: I had a flock of sheep with one neighbour, and I had a cow to find other grazing for in the winter, and horses of course. Being an animal person, I was quite excited when this land in the Baton was offered to us.”

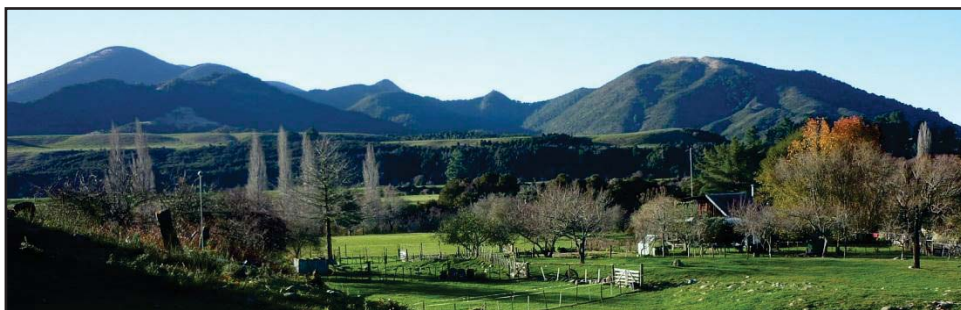
In 1980 the young couple had a special reason for considering a second start. Cheryl had always wanted children; now she had conceived, and now they got the chance to buy a fifty-hectare block of river flats no more than a day’s ride away. They thought it over and then went for it. Though they got nothing for their home at Sunday Creek financially, Cheryl could live with that. “I guess what we felt was that we were both enriched by the experience. I couldn’t put a monetary value on the skills I learnt at Sunday Creek.”

With help from Woody’s parents they raised the deposit, and with their horses, sheep, goats and a cow, moved onto what was then an empty block of land. They were still further off the beaten track and didn’t have a car. During that pregnancy Cheryl was camping in a tent-fly all over again. It wasn’t easy; “I must love a challenge, somehow,” she admits.

They built another house and raised two daughters, Cheryl bred horses and built up a business around horse trekking.<sup>81</sup> Woody went on to do amazing things with wood. In the mid 1990s he moved out and for a few years Cheryl lived alone. She has remarried and now also works in early education, it is work she trained to do before she set out journeying with Grasshopper. In Tapawera she facilitates creative learning opportunities for preschoolers. ‘Those who can do’ is what the proverb says. Not everyone can teach, but Cheryl can and does.



inside the Seashell House today

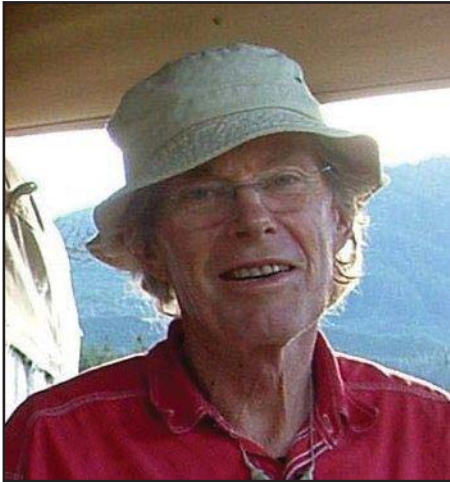


Cheryl's farm in the Baton Valley

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<sup>81</sup> That business, Western Ranges Horse Treks, recently won the top Envirogold Award for excellence in every aspect of environmental practise.

## Jan



Jan's parents grew up in the Netherlands. His mother Tora was the daughter of a liberal church minister.<sup>82</sup> In 1934 she married Kees, a coffee planter ten years older than herself. Their first two sons were born on a plantation in East Java, but they returned to the Netherlands in 1939, and by the time Jan was born, in 1942, their world and prospects had immensely changed: the Netherlands was occupied by German troops and Japanese were 'liberating' Indonesia from the Dutch.

They had two other sons, one born in 1944 and one in 1946. When war in Europe ended, Kees tried plantation work in Indonesia again, initially without his family. The war there hadn't ended, he was lucky to survive an ambush, and at Tora's urging he came home. She'd started up a children's home, but Kees could not find any other work. In 1950, with a newborn daughter, they successfully applied to be New Zealand immigrants. Kees came before his family and found work on an apple orchard at Mariri, close to Motueka. Tora and children joined him in December, in New Zealand's summer holidays.

Jan was then eight. He and his family enjoyed the countryside, learned English, and adapted to the Kiwi way of life. Kees was now middle aged and he was working as a labourer, whereas in Indonesia he had been a manager. But he worked hard, and when there was a sudden need to leave their rented house, Tora and he were able to buy their own, on two acres of land at Lower Moutere. Financially it was a struggle, and the boys helped any way they could. Tora and Kees had one more child in New Zealand, a daughter, Inez, born in 1954.

Jan thinks he was a loner in his early years: "There were five boys. The older two were very close, so were the younger two, and I was in the middle. I don't think that I played a lot. I was a very responsible child." His mother mostly "ran the show", he thinks. Like her, he was articulate, the two would later have "endless discussions of theology and politics".

He didn't know his father very well, although they worked together quite a lot. There were some special qualities he saw as strengths: "If we were working in the gardens, or digging a

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<sup>82</sup> In *From The Lowlands to The Hills* Tora describes both her parents as "progressive". Her father was at one stage chaplain to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands.

well, or building an extension on the house, he would often say: ‘It’s a beautiful day. Drop things and go and have a swim.’ He loved nature and he loved the mountains. I’m sure he contributed a lot to my life.”

The move to Lower Moutere meant the young family were neighbours of the Riverside Community. Soon after their arrival at Mariri they met Hubert Holdaway, who had begun it ten years earlier, and he arranged a visit for them; Tora was immediately impressed. She too was pacifist and was attracted by a simple Christian way of life. Kees began full-time work for the community in 1956, and he and Tora lived there after their retirement. The children grew up part of Riverside’s extended family.<sup>83</sup>

Jan left high school and went to University in 1960. Like Tora he was a progressive Christian, and his radicalism grew at university, encouraged by the Student Christian Movement (SCM). He completed his BA in Canterbury, and in 1964, at twenty-two, he was at work on his MA in Wellington.<sup>84</sup> That year he attended the SCM Annual Conference, and it was there he met Maureen. At nineteen she’d already spent two years at Otago University majoring in English and history. Jan was attracted to her, and they quickly became friends, but when the conference was over there seemed little chance of a continuing relationship.

He told a friend in Wellington; the friend replied by asking what he meant to do about it. “It’s always been someone in my life who asks a very simple question”, he reflects, “and prompts me to decide ‘Oh yeah, okay’.” He didn’t have much money, but he flew to Christchurch, which changed everything. Maureen: “I was on holiday at home, and Jan came down from Wellington, and that was really where we fell in love.” As he looks back on it Jan now reflects: “all my big things in life, my major changes of direction, have come from my listening to what the universe is telling me.”

They talked and wrote as often as they could during the rest of 1965. Like Tora, Maureen was the daughter of a minister. Like Jan she was a Christian radical. SCM camps and study groups helped open both to new ideas. Early in 1966 they married, and then lived in Wellington. Jan had a job in Treasury while Maureen taught, and then in 1967 did a BA honours at Victoria. Both joined the campaign against war in Vietnam.

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<sup>83</sup> After Kees died, Tora became a full member.

<sup>84</sup> His thesis was on ‘third world economics’.

Jan had long dreamed of going to the Netherlands. In 1968 they travelled there together, then to London, after which they stayed for ten days at an urban commune in Berlin. That was more radical than any other place they'd been. Jan: "There was so much happening, we couldn't believe where we'd landed. There was a guy there doing a PhD in theology on Lenin." Europe was starting to break free of the cold war and 1968 was a momentous time for student radicals of any stamp to be there. Rebellious new ideas were voiced in Western Universities and matched by calls for liberation from the vice of Stalinism in the east. In Czechoslovakia, Dubček's reforming government was hearing and responding to such calls, and that was where the two emerging radicals from Wellington went next, to what Jan calls "a Marxist Christian conference" in Prague.<sup>85</sup>

There he and Maureen met a delegation from the NLF, the communist National Liberation Front whose goal it was to drive the US and their allies out of Vietnam. They gave some money as a sign of their support, and had the chance to say how it was spent, either in any way the NLF saw fit or only for medical aid. "It was the principle involved, and that was big. Were we prepared to hand our few dollars over and say 'You use it for what you want', including fighting and buying weapons? And we decided to hand it over without any tags." For Jan it marked the end of rigid pacifism.<sup>86</sup>

Europe in 1968 helped firm their radical ideas, and led Maureen to write an article on revolution for a Wellington church magazine.<sup>87</sup> Asked if he now believes ideas of revolution were utopian, Jan says, "We didn't think that we could make a perfect society, but that we could make society a whole lot better."

They came back to Australia, where Jan had a scholarship to do a Doctorate in economics. His base was Canberra, but his research would be in Indonesia, and living in a foreign culture was the icing on the cake for him: "I was never interested in the PhD as such, I just wanted to live in a third world country." Maureen conceived, son Mark was born early in 1969, and three months later the young family were in Djakarta.

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<sup>85</sup> Their visit was in Easter 1968, just at the height of what is now remembered as 'Prague Spring'. Dubček's reforms had started, leading many Eastern Europeans to hope that socialism with a human face had come at last. But it had not; Russia and other members of the Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia four months later, suppressing freedoms that they saw as dangerous.

<sup>86</sup> He had been strongly pacifist till then: "I grew up next to Riverside and I was very influenced by that, as well as some elements of my mother's background. At one stage Don Brash and I argued the pacifist case in an SCM debate."

<sup>87</sup> Kolff, Maureen, *The new conception of Revolution*, in 'Metropolis', Published by St. Peter's Church, Willis St., Wellington. August/Sept 1968, Number 20.

A baby was a splendid way to bridge the cultural divide.<sup>88</sup> Three decades earlier, Tora and Kees had taken their sons out of Java, and Tora had begun to wonder whether it was ethical for Europeans to own and to exploit much of the world.<sup>89</sup> Jan and Maureen agreed with her on that, and definitely weren't there to colonise.<sup>90</sup> They wanted to experience another way of life, and learn from it. Their eyes and ears were open, so they did. The music of the gamelan was everywhere. At first it didn't make a lot of sense, but then it started to.

Jan smoked marijuana for the first time in Java, and for him it was a huge opening: "Having got very political, and suddenly being stoned and thinking: Wow! Life is far bigger than I thought." He also had his first taste of eastern religion: "I had no idea about any eastern religion until then. The first time I met Krishna, whose namesake I would become, was in a dance performance in Jogjakarta. It was sort of a follow on from the Prague experience. Arjuna is wondering 'Can't we avoid killing?' and Krishna says 'Don't you worry. Do what needs to be done'."

The sexual revolution caught them up in Java too; Maureen had a relationship with an American. For her it was an act of freedom, based on principle: "I was looking at the structure I'd grown up in, of being a good girl, and all these proper ways to live, questioning that. Thinking 'it's okay if it actually brings more into the relationship', and 'can love be exclusive?'" Jan thinks he only partially accepted it. Once back in Canberra in 1970, they tried an open marriage and he also had outside relationships. He comments now: "as I remember it we got a bit carried away: 'look at us, we can do anything; we're together and we're not together'."

He didn't have much further interest in his PhD, and after one more year he gave it up: "I did intend to finish it, but it became too hard." After their daughter Bindia was born, Maureen wanted to go back-to-the-land in New Zealand.<sup>91</sup> Jan says their marriage was a mess: "falling apart, really." He had a girlfriend, and he thought, "Do I stay here and get involved in third world politics, perhaps the Fair Trade sort of area? Or do Maureen and I go back-to-the-land?" He chose back-to-the-land: "Alright, and what's the easiest way? I'll write to Riverside and ask can we go there."

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<sup>88</sup> Maureen: "they loved him. If you didn't have kids, it would be 'No children? What a pity!'"

<sup>89</sup> *From The Lowlands to The Hills*, p.52

<sup>90</sup> "The phenomena of injustice are not disconnected and accidental, but rather the result of an international system of imperialism, economic exploitation and militarism which dehumanises man." *The new conception of Revolution*, p.1

<sup>91</sup> Maureen: "It was finding a way to live with less imprint, it was choosing poverty. I can remember people saying 'why don't you buy a house, an insurance?' and I could not go there. I didn't want my children stuck in that little box, you know the song: 'little boxes on the hillside?'"

In 1973 they were at Riverside. They stayed about a year, though after nine months they both knew it wasn't right for them. Jan was attracted to "the whole organic thing", while Riverside's approach to farming was conventional. Maureen says she and Jan wanted to share the child care, but at Riverside, "the men worked and the women stayed at home". Jan spent a month searching the district for another place where they could live. Eventually he found an empty house in Dovedale. The problem was that owner Maurie wasn't keen to rent it out. Eventually he let the family live in it rent-free and help out in the woolshed and around the farm in lieu of rent. They got to work to make the old house liveable.<sup>92</sup> Dove House would be a home to Maureen and the children until 1982.

Jan didn't live there with them very long. Maureen was now in a relationship with Dean that had begun at Riverside. When Dean moved into Dove House, Jan found he no longer wanted open marriage and he quit. Maureen agrees the situation was impossible: "None of us could handle it really, and Jan was the one who had the courage to leave. He moved away. We didn't ever live together after that."

So in 1975 Jan lived alone, although he saw his children when he could. He did an apple season, then tobacco, and then Maurie helped him get a long-term job on the new Dovedale water scheme. He had been hurting badly since his marriage ended, and now stumbled across a cheap piece of land. Once again a simple question set the ball rolling. Seventeen acres was for sale for \$3000. He hadn't even thought of buying land, but while relaxing on a Sunday afternoon he told a friend about the bargain down the road. The question came back; "Well, why aren't you buying it?" That prompted him to take the idea to Maureen. They had \$2,000 in the bank, remaining from the scholarship they'd lived on in Australia. Dean put another \$1000 in and all three bought the block of land. Jan says it was a case of thinking they'd be crazy not to, and that initially they had no plans for it.

Jan's friend Marcel from Riverside had also split up with his wife. "Now that you've got that land, what are you going to do with it?" he asked. When Jan said that he didn't have a clue, Marcel mentioned a house in Stoke that was available for demolition and would provide cheap second-hand materials for building with. He said they should put in a tender, Jan agreed; they put in the right tender and they got the job. With help from others they pulled off

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<sup>92</sup> "she scrubbed up well, with meagre resources and abundant creative improvisation – the scouting of local tips to uncover antique treasures or useful junk, the unpeeling of already peeling wallpaper, the sewing of curtains, cushions and covers for mattresses on the floor – who needs thousands of dollars to furnish a house, we don't, we can transform, we, a family with as many cracks in the seams as the old house." Kolff, Maureen, *An Exorcism – Perhaps*, unpublished MS loaned by the author.

the demolition in May or June. In spring the question came “What are you going to do with all that timber Jan?” He then began to think about a house. Tora gave her support. A friend of hers at Riverside lent him a caravan, and gave \$500 towards living costs.

During the winter of 1976 piles of materials waited at Sunday Creek under a covering of snow. When spring came, Jan Marcel and Dean moved onto the land. Cheryl and Woody were already there. Bob stayed, and Gus and Julianne from Famagusta came to help. Then David arrived, from Katajuta on the west coast. He’d met Cheryl there, and wanted to meet her again: “She was the draw to Sunday Creek but meeting Jan was the reason I stayed. He was open, welcoming, idealistic, wounded and real. He was building a house and needed help. That I could do.” David and Gus became the two main builders, while Jan helped as needed and assembled the materials: “I clearly remember building that house and being as high as a kite. I was moving. Life was looking after me, and saying ‘just get on with it and get stuck in’.”

He lived at Sunday Creek for three more years. He made good friends there, but had no new partnerships. He organised the building of the house and kept one bedroom in it for himself. Jane R, who arrived in 1977, remembers him as something of a mother hen, and says he also tended to withdraw: “There was a lot of music in the main house, and it was great fun. Jan went to bed really early, with everyone right next door playing music, talking or whatever.” Jan says he’s always liked a good night’s sleep, but does agree he wasn’t always part of it. Age could have been a factor: he and Maureen were about a decade older than the rest, which meant their life experience was very different.<sup>93</sup> But Maureen did have other partners, two from Sunday Creek. Jan didn’t, and his three years there were sexually lonely ones. Perhaps it took him longer to adjust to separation. His sister Inez stayed with him in 1975 and thinks that like her he was sexually ‘innocent’, and at that time might not have been quite ready for a new relationship.

A Nelson Evening Mail article described him as the leader of the group.<sup>94</sup> Maureen thinks that outsiders saw him as the leader because he articulated The Farm’s philosophy on social

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<sup>93</sup> In *An Exorcism – Perhaps*, her story about returning to Dove Cottage Maureen writes of being astonished at the idea that she, her family and Rajneesh friends might now be thought of as ‘a bunch of hippies’: “Who me! Deep thinking, university educated me! Widely read in literature history theology, advocate of social justice; steeped in the culture of dance film music, inspired by A.S. Neil’s Summerhill and student protest of the sixties to review attitudes to education, society relationships the meaning of life, in fact everything. Bunch of hippies indeed!! I didn’t even smoke much of that weed in those days. Kolff, Maureen, *An Exorcism – Perhaps*, unpublished MS loaned by the author

<sup>94</sup> ‘*A New Way of Life*’, by Arch (A.B.) Barclay, was probably written in 1978. One section states: “... a group led by Jon Kolff has established itself on a derelict block of land in Sunday Creek near Dovedale. They have built a central home for members and several ‘sleepouts’.”

and environmental issues.<sup>95</sup> Apparently he made the case for voluntary simplicity, spoke about special housing needs that weren't met by the existing planning codes, and helped set up a Waimea County Rural Resettlement Association.<sup>96</sup> There were already a variety of huts and shacks, and several couples now required sleep-outs for their families, but local council was beginning to enforce existing codes. As late as 1979 he seems to have been working hard for the community.<sup>97</sup>

Gus became a sannyasin, or follower of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, in 1978.<sup>98</sup> That year a Rajneesh family from Christchurch visited Dove House, and seven-year-old Bindia, who had been known as Joey until then, also decided to become a sannyasin. She corresponded with Rajneesh, began to listen to his tapes, and ultimately changed her name to Bindia.<sup>99</sup> All sannyasins wore orange clothes and the mala, a bead necklace with a locket picture of Rajneesh.<sup>100</sup> Many took Rajneesh names as well; Gus now became Dinesh. Being a sannyasin, for adults anyway, meant a commitment to meditation and 'awareness'.

Maureen had become close to several sannyasins. In 1978 she read a book of Gus/Dinesh's that decided her to meet Rajneesh herself: "there was something about him, like Christ in the 'come follow me' story; I needed to go and find out." In February 1979 she went to Pune, India, leaving the two children with Jan. At first the Rajneesh costume put him off: "It was the orange stuff and wearing the mala that I reacted to at first. I thought, Oh this is crazy!". Then he began to read Dinesh's books himself, and quickly found that he agreed with much of it.<sup>101</sup>

Maureen's first letter came from Pune, saying, 'I have found my home', and made Jan think 'I need to look at this'. He wasn't sure about Dinesh, but Maureen definitely wasn't crazy. She

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<sup>95</sup> By this time 'Sunday Creek Farm' had become accepted, and appears in *'A New Way of Life'*. Some subjects spoke of it as just 'The Farm' in interviews, the same abbreviation being used at Marahau.

<sup>96</sup> Barclay describes Jan as a 'spokesman' in *'A New Way of Life'* and says that he and others with the same concerns formed the Association as a way of fighting for "a better understanding of their way".

<sup>97</sup> Bindia: "When my mum was away we went and lived there for a few months. It felt like Sunday Creek was a huge part of our lives. Dad was so focussed on the community that sometimes it felt like he wasn't available at all as a father. We'd see him and spend time with him, but often he'd be very busy."

<sup>98</sup> In 1957 Rajneesh had graduated with an MA in philosophy from Sagar University in central India. On speaking tours round India, and also as a lecturer, he spoke against religious self-denial and austerity. He thought religion should help people get enjoyment out of life, and told his followers not to repress their sexuality. Such teachings scandalised most Hindus and in India and overseas newspapers often saw him as a sex-guru. By 1979 his Ashram in Pune, a city of about three million in west central India, was attracting tens of thousands of devotees each year. *Osho (Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh)* see electronic resources.

<sup>99</sup> Bindia: "We had these friends from Christchurch who had two kids as well; the girl was about my age. They came up to Dovedale and stayed with us, and they were sannyasins. I imagine they got my parents quite excited about the whole thing, and then I was quite excited. I thought they were pretty cool people, and I wanted to be like the girl." Jan says even before she was Rajneesh, Bindia had been drawn to Hare Krishna. He thinks "something in that area" must have appealed.

<sup>100</sup> Bindia: "I remember being teased a lot at school. I had to wear orange clothes and a necklace around my neck."

<sup>101</sup> "I'd pick up those books, and say 'Yes! I know that! Of course!' To be authentic, to be true to yourself!"

came back in May deeply committed to Bhagwan. Dove House became a centre for Rajneesh eventually The Prabhat Meditation Centre.<sup>102</sup> Jan kept on reading till October, when he took sannyas himself. Because he had till then felt so ‘responsible’, he actually relished putting on the necklace and the orange clothes and taking the new name of Krishnaraj.<sup>103</sup> Early in 1980 he set out for Pune by himself. He knew he wanted it, so it was going to be possible. He went to Sydney, and in two weeks he had almost forgotten Sunday Creek, which helped him see he’d been there long enough. Working in New South Wales as a labourer he saved \$3000 in a few more months.

He got to Pune, and his first priority was sex: “I came into this vibrant community, people from drugged out hippies to millionaires; it was hard to believe what was going on. We all know life is more than sex, but if you’ve got all these hang ups and repressed stuff, get it over with.” For several months he also joined a lot of workshops and encounter groups. One exercise involved developing a more authentic sense of self: “There were probably about thirty of us, running around a room with padded walls, with music to encourage us; pushing people around and saying ‘Get out of my way! Get out of my way!’ And that was really liberating; I had let myself become ‘Mr Nice Guy’ and I had to get back in tune with what *I* really wanted.”<sup>104</sup>

From personal growth he moved into a new and positive relationship: “It was sex, but it was also a lot more.” In Pune, sannyasins managed their own accommodation; the ashram wasn’t where they slept or ate. As Jan and his new partner focussed more on each other, they would sometimes not attend the ashram for days. Then she went home to France, and when he followed her he found that she was with another man. This time he did not fall into that same black hole; this time, he says, he handled it “amazingly well”.

A year had passed since he had left the farm, but he was not in any hurry to return. In 1981 he went from France to Germany. He visited Jane R. and Yirka there, and went on to see his brother in Denmark. Then he attended a Bhagwan convention in Sydney. After twenty months away, he found he still had “a fear of coming back to Sunday Creek and getting stuck again, especially of ending up alone.”

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<sup>102</sup> Maureen: Officially it became a Rajneesh centre, probably about 1980. There would be meditations at my house, and even a couple of therapy groups. Bindia: “People came to do meditations, and listen to discourses, and do sufi dancing.”

<sup>103</sup> “You could ask not to change your name, but I really liked the idea, because I had become so responsible, and I remember wanting to do something crazy to break that. My friend Marcel was really angry with me.”

<sup>104</sup> Rajneesh encouraged ‘active’ and ‘dynamic’ forms of meditation, and thought these worked especially well for westerners.

He did go back though, and connected with his children, who were eagerly awaiting him. At Sunday Creek he found some faces missing and some new arrivals. Cheryl and Woody were now living at the Baton River, and Jane R. and Yirka weren't back from Germany, but there were newcomers, including other sannyasins. Tora accepted Jan's commitment to Rajneesh,<sup>105</sup> Inez, now living at the commune too, with partner Julian and their two sons, found this more difficult. Jan says he was "all fired up with Bhagwan fervour" then, as were the other sannyasins, and had begun to think of Sunday Creek as a Rajneesh community. This led to arguments with David, Inez, and especially Julian, who says: "They couldn't handle me, but I kept telling them, 'That guy's only doing it because he's got pretty women all over him and he's getting millions of dollars'."

Within a month of his return, during a weekend Rajneesh group at Riverside, Jan met Shantam, who lived at Graham Downs and later became a sannyasin herself. They became partners, and he only spent about four months at Sunday Creek, from September 1981 till January 1982. "When it was looking like religious warfare at Sunday Creek, I said, "I don't want this, I'll leave. I'm not going to fight here. And fortunately my girlfriend invited me to come and live with her." He did, and never lived again at Sunday Creek.

About this time the word went out from Pune that Rajneesh would be an urban movement now, and not a rural one. "That message came; 'We're finished with the country now; move to the cities.'" Jan's first reaction was "Like hell", but Maureen Mark and Bindia all made the move to Wellington in 1982, where Maureen helped set up a new Rajneesh Centre.<sup>106</sup> Jan changed his mind; after a few months, he and Shantam went as well, and Gus/Dinesh, with partner Nirmala would join them there. For Jan it meant that he was close to Bindia and Mark again, though he's aware he didn't spend much time with them. He was invigorated by the move though, and he helped set up a business called Dynamic Contractors. It made good money, meaning he could visit Bhagwan's Oregon community three times before its messy end in 1985.<sup>107</sup>

Jan and Shantam split up after three years. In 1984 he moved to Sydney, and subsequently took over the care of Bindia and Mark. The revelations that brought down the Oregon community in 1985 were shattering for Jan; he experienced "deep shock", and took some time

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<sup>105</sup> "She said 'I don't understand all this Bhagwan stuff, but I can see it's making you happier, so that's fine by me'."

<sup>106</sup> Bindia had by this time disconnected from Rajneesh: "I made a decision when I was ten not to be a sannyasin anymore. Then we moved to Wellington and I just started fresh; I didn't wear the clothes anymore.

<sup>107</sup> The Oregon community was closed down after crimes committed by top management. One incident involved a 'bioterror' (salmonella) attack on nearby citizens. Bhagwan said that his former deputies, who he now called 'a gang of fascists', were to blame. However he was held to be partly accountable and was expelled from the US.

recovering at Riverside. He now regrets being one of many who allowed the abuse of power in Oregon. “I let go of my powers of discrimination”, he says, “and there’s a big learning in that.” While many Rajneesh Centres fell apart, Rajneesh returned to Pune in 1987, in 1988 adopted the new name of Osho, and died at his Pune Ashram in 1990.

Osho is still revered; his followers have gone on to build more communities. Jan’s lived in several, and at one, Gondwana Sanctuary, he met his second wife.<sup>108</sup> Though only in her twenties when they met, she later suffered from multiple sclerosis, of which she died in 2007 after a very long illness. Jan was her main caregiver until she needed full time care. He lives now in the small community of Wantoo Wantoo, west of the Motueka River and only a short drive from Lower Moutere.<sup>109</sup> He doesn’t own a legal share in it; Like Sunday Creek, it isn’t about ownership.<sup>110</sup>



Unloading the demolition timber for the community house.



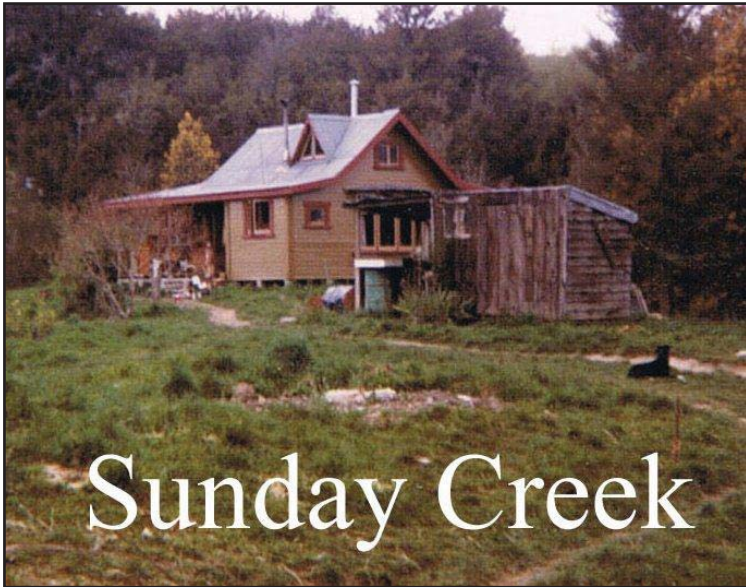
Sunday Creek Sannyasins and friends.

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<sup>108</sup> Gondwana Sanctuary is near Byrons Bay in New South Wales.

<sup>109</sup> In 2011 Wantoo Wantoo became engaged in a dispute with Tasman District Council over dwellings that don’t have resource consents. One of those dwellings is Jan’s present house, a yurt.

<sup>110</sup> He sold his share of Sunday Creek to Janice, in 1983, for just the \$1,000 he’d put into it.



At first it was an open-land community. Three people bought the land and shared it with whoever came along. In 1976 a house was planned and built for everyone to share. Couples paired off, and other dwellings were put up. Children and babies started to arrive. Numbers went up and down, but for around five years the core community were an

extended family. The new decade brought rapid changes, and for varied reasons people moved away. By 1983 all those who'd been there in the seventies were gone and what had once been open land was being privatised. It's now a rural cross lease, and no longer an intentional community.

Maureen and Jan and Dean began it when they pooled their money in order to buy a seventeen-acre triangle of hilly scrub and bush in Thorpe, an isolated part of Tasman Bay. Because the previous owner wasn't sure that anyone would be allowed to build on such an unproductive block, he sold it for the bargain price of \$3,000. An un-bridged stream called Sunday Creek ran down its western boundary, and vehicle access was a muddy ford.

They bought it in November 1975. All three had been at Riverside, and thought that was too hidebound and conventional. At Sunday Creek they wanted 'a new way of life'. Maureen: "behind it all was the thought that nobody owns anything. We'd bought the land, but I didn't ever feel like an owner. It was like, 'we are the kaitiaki, the guardians'. It was wonderful to see all these people who came, and they felt it was their home. We really wanted a new way of living, free of preset rules or judgements."<sup>111</sup>

Jan's sister Inez, who was twenty-one, had recently returned from Nimbin in Australia. She enjoyed the freedom and the colour there, the feeling of 'we can do what we like'. But back in Tasman Bay the sexual freedom of the times confused her: "I came into this world of free love. We would go to parties and everyone would be eyeing everyone else up. I was quite young, and got caught up with Ray, from Wilderland." She followed him from Tasman Bay to

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<sup>111</sup> Eight years before Maureen had written that young people wanted "genuine freedom" through "institutions and systems which do not manipulate or control people's minds and lives." *The new concept of Revolution*, p.1

Wilderland, only to find he had another partner there. But she stayed on in what was then another fast developing community.<sup>112</sup>

Early in 1976, Marcel and Jan teamed up to do a demolition job in Stoke and get materials for use at Sunday Creek. Two other young men, Bob and Woody, who had heard about this new communal project from Inez, came down from Wilderland as visitors and stayed to help. Cheryl helped too, as did Maureen; even the children were involved.<sup>113</sup> It was a big house they were taking down; Marcel asked Jan how he would use the timber. Jan said, “I don’t really know”, but with encouragement from others he accepted there would be a house, and it was his to organise. Maureen thinks he was a co-ordinating influence: “Never a leader, all were equal, but he definitely brought focus and drive to the vision that unfolded. And he was more involved with ‘straight’ people than the others.” Cheryl was something of a guiding force as well. Jane R: “She is a powerful woman in her way. She’s very idealistic; she was a very impressive person.”

Jan got approval for a house from the Waimea County Council.<sup>114</sup> Then he went to the west coast to check out houses there, and come up with ideas for a design. He says “I was at least to have a bedroom in that house”. Cheryl’s friend Gus, from Famagusta, helped draw up plans; Council accepted them. Next David came, from Fox River and stayed to help.<sup>115</sup> Dean moved in with a little caravan, Marcel built his small yurt up in the bush, and other new arrivals lived in tents. Woody, who was a carpenter, laid out foundations for the house. David began on concrete piles and stayed on to build. Gus and his family camped over summer while he helped as well. Jan: “I was organising supplies. I knew where the timber was, and made sure there were nails and God knows what.”

As if by magic, people were converging on the property, many with previous experience in one or more communities. Cheryl remembers energy and spontaneity: “With all these people living in tents, it started to happen. It was amazing, starting a community, and with a lot of very idealistic people.” At twenty-two, she’d learnt at Puketa that anarchy meant people being personally responsible.

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<sup>112</sup> Wilderland was purchased by Dan and Edith Hansen in 1964. They’d come from Beeville, an anarchist community near Hamilton that started in the early 1930s. By 1976, thirty to forty mainly young people were sharing Wilderland with Dan and Edith. Though Dan was paraplegic, his work-ethic was inspirational, and visitors helped him maintain the beehives, organic gardens and orchards that supported everyone. Though some were drug users and alcoholics, Dan turned none away, instead rehabilitating anyone he could. The only legal dwelling was his home, yet there were fourteen others and a large communal hall. Till 1984 it was effectively an open land community. (Sargisson and Sargent, 2004, pp.33-38; Jones, 2011, pp. 113-129)

<sup>113</sup> Bindia, then four, can still remember it: “I remember going to that demolition and helping get stuff there. It was a very exciting time.”

<sup>114</sup> Maureen thinks Maurie, a friend and neighbour who was Chairman of the County Council, may have helped.

<sup>115</sup> Like Jan, he’d walked away from a triangular relationship, and a new project was exactly what he needed to move on.

At least four rented houses in the district gave support to Sunday Creek. The White House was the closest, just a short walk up the road. Jan lived there first; then Viv moved in with her partner. He and she both had close connections with the new community, and she eventually became a part of it. Jan's other sister Maggie lived at Brandy Creek, and others there were also friends of Sunday Creek. Inez and Maureen saw that as 'a party house'. Then there was Famagusta, the artisan community in Upper Moutere. Three couples, Gus and Julianne among them, shared that lease. <sup>116</sup>

But the connection with Dove House and Maureen was the closest, lasting for six years, till she moved on in 1982. Although she had a third share in the property, she didn't see herself as owning it. Rather she cooked for builders while the house went up: "My house was a food house," she says, "food and children." The commune was a second home for Mark and Bindia and several men from there were Maureen's lovers at Dove House. There was a standing joke, she says, that 'Maureen's rejects' were at Sunday Creek, since after Jan and Dean she had relationships with Gus and Bob.

Janice, who lived in a house along the road to Wakefield first visited in 1977. Woody had picked her up while she was hitch-hiking. He took her to a party which turned out to be in Marcel's Yurt. Later her house burned down, and she moved in with David in his corrugated-iron shelter by the creek. She liked the freedom, and the way that everything was shared. David did too: "sitting around a campfire every night, working together all day. People contributing in whatever way they could. It was exciting and rich." Maureen: "Every evening we would light an outside fire. We'd sit round it and cook on it and eat, and people would be playing music and singing, and there would be stars." Bindia too remembers that simplicity: "We didn't have electricity there, I used to love that, it was a novelty. Candles and lanterns; dim light at night. Lots of people making butter and cheese and brown bread. A cow, chickens, horses when Cheryl and Woody were there. And the gardens, and watching people build their own houses."

Dope wasn't much in evidence. Cheryl, who didn't smoke or drink, says those who started Sunday Creek weren't stoned and that their energy was "similar to that of Puketa". Some may have known about the drug problems at Wilderland. <sup>117</sup> Jan never smoked dope much there, and Jane R. says that she didn't either: "you didn't do that sort of thing when you had babies, it wasn't part of your life really". David had been a grower but was not at Sunday Creek. He

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<sup>116</sup> In 1978 Tim and Judy Finn acquired the property, which then became the Neudorf Winery.

<sup>117</sup> Inez remembers drug addicts at Wilderland: "I think that Dan was hoping it might help them, but in fact a lot of them died, which was quite an insight to me."

says there was “less interest” there than at Katajuta. Neighbours were close, income from other sources was available, and anyway, “I never was much good at it.”

The main house was slowly built. Maureen remembers that “the next big thing was when the first tap was turned on, and the water came, cold water. Up till then everyone had washed in the creek.” That house remained the heart of Sunday Creek Community for six more years. Twenty or more people might share it over summer, though some drifted off in winter when the outdoor living was less comfortable.<sup>118</sup> Janice and David’s daughter was the first delivery at Sunday Creek. For David, the responsibility of fatherhood meant a new kind of life, one more responsible. “There is something about free loving or open relationships that shifts when raising kids. The familiar patterns, nuclear family style, tend to reassert themselves when faced with crying kids in the middle of the night.” Before the birth he’d built a separate house for his new family. Cheryl and Woody had also begun their seashell house. They had a foster son called Lance much the same age as Jan’s son Mark.

Jane R. had heard about the place from Dean, who’d been her partner briefly in Australia. She has a clear memory of her arrival in 1977: “the beautiful Dovedale hills. It was spring I think, green. The guy I got the last ride with took me all the way. I arrived in the evening and here were all these totally hairy freaks. To me they were odd looking guys, with all this hair and beards. It was not what I was used to; it was such a different place. We all sat down and had silver beet and eggs for dinner. That was sort of standard, wasn’t it? And someone said, “What were you doing in Australia” and I said, “I was a topless barmaid” and everyone just sort of looked at me with their mouths open.”

Within six months Jane R. would marry Yirka, a Czech who had lived on a rural German commune before arriving in New Zealand at the beginning of 1978 and attending the first Nambassa festival. “It was amazing”, he says, “it was like coming home.” From there he found his way to Riverside, and so to Sunday Creek where he and Jane R. rapidly hooked up. Yirka: “The day I arrived at Sunday Creek I decided to leave Riverside. Then Jane offered to marry me so I could stay in the country.” A ‘marriage of convenience’ was just the thing at Sunday Creek. Jane R: “it wasn’t cool to get married in those days, or to get engaged.” Because, supposedly, the future wasn’t a concern. “You just go with whatever’s happening,” she explains. They married and have stayed together ever since.

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<sup>118</sup> Compared with Dove House, Sunday Creek was primitive. Maureen: “Because I had children I did want to have hot water and things. I didn’t want to move them to a community that had nothing much in the beginning.”

One goal most people shared was self-sufficiency. Jane R: “We baked our own bread, had eggs from our own chooks, milk from the cow and a big veggie garden. We made our own butter. Jan managed the bulk buying and looked after the chooks. More land was often being cleared as well.” The luxuries were basic ones. “We all smoked tobacco, but it was a lot cheaper in those days. And we drank soy-bean coffee and black tea.” There was an ancient car to get to countercultural events such as the local food co-op. Cheryl: “We helped to run it, with some of the closer houses in Dovedale, and also Riverside and the Graham. We got together once a month, with shared food for the evening meal, and had a big dance at the local hall. We had The Sunday Creek Veranda Band. Riverside had their band too, and it was fantastic. Each group took turns to organise the bulk-food buy.”

People contributed in different ways at Sunday Creek. Rules weren't drawn up, formal meetings weren't held. Decisions were made over dinner, if they had to be. Cheryl: “We ate together every night and there was discussion across the table like in a family. Initially it was round a campfire, and then in the community house.” Jane R: “We would come together and discuss things, like problems with the council, and work out a way to approach it.” It helped that there were few divisions in the group. Jane R: “The guys got on pretty well, there weren't too many ego battles going on, and the women were all pretty supportive of each other too.” If people chose to stay at Sunday Creek they could. No one was ever asked to leave while Jan was there. He says, “there was a sort of magic happening; joint responsibility.”

That sort of magic also happened at Tahuna Farm in Nelson, a commune that began in 1974. John and his partner Betsy, who were friends of Cheryl's from her days at Postman's Road, were at Tahuna for four years and then moved on to Graham Valley to begin another open land Community.<sup>119</sup> Jane R. stayed at Tahuna while in Nelson for a weaving course: “I used to hitch-hike in on Monday, stay at Tahuna in a little hut, and then go to my course. I didn't pay very much. My contribution was to help cook the dinner. Then I'd hitch-hike home for the weekends.” Money was often shared at Sunday Creek as well; in 1980 Janice and David shared their 'dole'. David: “Our \$90 per week supported everyone! Suddenly everyone was paying very close attention and was very involved in all aspects of our life together.” But he goes on to say those close connections didn't last: “Living on the land communally did not in itself remove the anger and jealousy and internal strictures we all brought with us.”

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<sup>119</sup> At Renaissance John and other founders “deliberately set out to establish a community that would be as unregulated as possible and accepting of anyone who wanted to live there”. (Jones, 2011, p. 81)

Gus took sannyas in 1978 and Maureen did in 1979. Soon Jan, Janice and Bob had followed suit, which meant two camps. In 1980 the non-sannyasins began to leave: Cheryl: “there’d been a lot of change at Sunday Creek, half the people had become orange; Jane, Yirka, Woody, myself and Viv, we didn’t get swept away with the Rajneesh movement. Viv went off and sailed the world for a couple of years, Woody and I came up here, and Jane and Yirka went to Germany to save some money. They were going to live up here with us. That was the plan, we were going to start a community up here.”

By 1980 Bob had also taken sannyas, and sannyasins from outside were becoming frequent visitors. During the first five years there’d been harmonious diversity, augmented by a steady stream of different people and ideas. But taking sannyas seemed to lead to uniformity: all sannyasins wore orange; all revered Rajneesh. Inez: “Whatever he said happened. People decided never to have children. It was crazy.”<sup>120</sup> Seemingly blind obedience to such an outside leader brought division within Sunday Creek: Yirka: “the Bhagwan started, and I wasn’t into that. I said, ‘Look, it’s a little dictatorship. Who needs a guru?’ It was like an epidemic. They obviously were not very happy with themselves, to look for something else.”

David was not so doctrinaire: “Some aspect of Sannyas was also present in many ways, right from the beginning, when Gus’ friends from Christchurch would come up and lead Sufi dancing on the hillside. Not only Sunday Creek residents but visitors from all around came and loved and delighted in it.” Maureen concedes the orange movement challenged the community: “In the early eighties a community that had functioned harmoniously as one whole with many parts was becoming divided – or perhaps challenged is a better word.” She looks back on it as a time when each found his or her own truth and then set off to follow it, leaving ‘the safe and cosy nest of Sunday Creek’.

But most existing dwellings weren’t warm in winter, and the main house wasn’t adequate for three young families. A different sort of challenge faced those hoping to stay on, and it was paramount: the challenge of constructing warm and well-appointed houses local government would let them occupy.

By 1979 Waimea County Council was aware that dwellings without permits had been built.

<sup>121</sup> Building inspector A.G. Wood had first inspected Cheryl’s little hut in 1976 and ‘tipped

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<sup>120</sup> After Rajneesh suggested it, numerous young women allowed themselves to be sterilised at Pune. Janice says some have since deeply regretted it.

<sup>121</sup> One came to their attention very publicly: a photo showing half a dozen longhairs raising three rough-looking poles was printed in the Nelson Evening Mail in 1978 as an illustration for A.B. Barclay’s ‘*A New Way of Life*’ article. The caption reads: “There was no shortage of hands and brawn when members of the Sunday Creek Farm community turned out to raise the tripod frame for “Woodie’s” seashell house.” ‘Woody’ is usually spelt with a ‘y’, but is spelt with an ‘ie’ again in

her out of it'. Housing at Sunday Creek was challenging for everyone concerned. Cheryl: "While Woody and I were there we were challenged fairly continuously. When the council heard about our illegal buildings it got pretty stirred up. We did bizarre things, like the inspector would have to walk up through the bush, which was quite dense, to get to where we'd built our house, and we constructed a doorframe with a door on the track; he'd have to open this door to walk through, and he was quite nervous, poor chap." He may have feared their 'door to nowhere' was a booby trap, and must have realised they were making fun of him. In 1980 Council once again refused to legalise the seashell house. Cheryl: "It was a three-year project to get that house to the point it was when we were told we weren't allowed to live in it: 'You can have it as a workshop but you're not allowed to live in it'."

Efforts were made in 1979 to regularise the situation. Jan, Dean and Maureen signed an application that requested Council to accept communal living on the property and to approve three sleep-outs. Because the district scheme would not allow more than one house, such sleep-outs seemed the only possibility.<sup>122</sup> On August 21<sup>st</sup> the council gave approval for "three detached bedroom units to be used in conjunction with the existing dwelling-house". But strict conditions were imposed: all three must be completed by September 30<sup>th</sup> 1980, and all other buildings without permits were to be removed. Each 'bedroom unit' must consist of one small room, and be within a hundred metres of the legal house.<sup>123</sup>

Five dwellings without permits were already there, as well as mobile homes like caravans. Janice and David's first house had been built, close to the main house prior to their daughter's birth in 1978.<sup>124</sup> Cheryl and Woody's seashell house also got underway that year. Then there was Marcel's yurt,<sup>125</sup> a small hut which belonged to Gus, and David's corrugated iron shelter by the creek, which Jane R. and Yirka later occupied.<sup>126</sup> Of these the seashell house condemned by council was perhaps the best.<sup>127</sup> New ones were needed; families now wanted separate houses with their own facilities.

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building inspector A.G. Wood's report to Council after his October 1980 inspection: "Woodies House" and the hexagonal building near the rear boundary of the property still stand". It's likely that Inspector Wood had seen the Barclay article, as he had been inspecting Sunday Creek since 1976, and Council may even have held a file copy of it.

<sup>122</sup> Rainbow Valley in Golden Bay had a similar experience; over a period of five years, from 1977 till 1982, the Golden Bay County Council agreed to building permits for six sleep-outs to one approved Main-house, some at a considerable distance.

<sup>123</sup> Each was to be no smaller than 7.42 square metres and no larger than 13.37 square metres.

<sup>124</sup> In 1980 they would move it to a higher site, close to the seashell house.

<sup>125</sup> Building Inspector Wood describes this in his October 1980 report as "the hexagonal building near the rear boundary of the property."

<sup>126</sup> Yirka: "Me and Jane lived, until our first son was born, in this little sleep-out in the woods. It was bloody cold."

<sup>127</sup> Unlike the others, most of its original design has lasted till the present day, though various improvements and extensions have been made.

The sleep-outs council had approved got underway. Woody helped Yirka build a small nine-sided one, and he and Jane R. moved into it after their son was born in March 1980. David and Janice built an octagon; their son came in November and by then they had begun extending it.<sup>128</sup> Inspector Wood, who paid a visit on October 6<sup>th</sup>, was able to report: “The commune has obtained permits and erected two detached bedrooms of the three that were allowed under the Planning hearing list of conditions.” Although the third permit was probably intended for the seashell house, Wood stubbornly refused to go along with that. But he pronounced the two new sleep-outs “safe and sound” and finished his report by saying that “perhaps consideration should be given to allowing regularization of the situation.” The two new sleep-outs were approved, along with Marcel’s yurt, although the latter wasn’t authorised for living in.<sup>129</sup>

Before the end of 1980 Cheryl and Woody had decided to move to the Baton, where they expected Jane R. and Yirka to join them. Yirka imagined it as a joint farming venture, not a new community. Why did these four all choose to leave the ‘cosy nest’? For Jane R. and Yirka the new sleep-out wasn’t adequate,<sup>130</sup> and both the men were getting tired of community. A real farm was Cheryl’s dream, with pasture for her animals. But still, she says the leaving was “a wrench.” And none of them were ever going to be sannyasins. Would Sunday Creek stay open land now two of the original owners were sannyasins? If some felt this as an impending threat, Cheryl says she did not: “I didn’t feel upset or divided. We were such a close group of people.” But after Cheryl left divisions grew.<sup>131</sup>

Jan’s sister Inez, her partner Julian and their two baby sons moved in when Jane R. and Yirka moved away in March. Inez and Julian had lived in communes in the Coromandel and their first impressions of the farm were very positive. Inez: “There was just this big community house’ you’d go there and someone would be making meals. And a big community garden; the nudity thing was there, as it had been at Wilderland. It was a really nice atmosphere, very relaxed. Sally, aged eighteen, also came to Sunday Creek in March. She stayed eight months, living in Marcel’s yurt when Viv moved out of it. Though young, she had a real interest in community, and Janice saw her as ‘a breath of fresh air’. “Wwoofing before wwoofing was invented” is how Sally looks back on it. Gus/Dinesh now came back from Pune with a

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<sup>128</sup> On 28th November 1980 council determined “That the extension to D. Adams house be permitted in substitute for the third sleep-out already approved by Council.”

<sup>129</sup> “The building on the hill’ (presumably the yurt) was permitted to remain “as a workshop provided it was not used for sleeping or living purposes”. ‘Mr Woodward’s house’ was to be removed from the site. The two sleep-outs approved as dwellings were required to be completed within six months.

<sup>130</sup> Jane R: “Our house wasn’t self-contained, so we were using the main house as well. The young people there weren’t contributing much, and it was hard to keep everything clean and tidy for the baby.”

<sup>131</sup> Jane R: “Cheryl was probably one of the strengths of Sunday Creek.”

Rajneesh partner, Nirmala. She had a daughter and the two were soon to have a son. They lived in the Main House at first, then moved into the seashell house, where Bindia remembers visiting with them.<sup>132</sup>

Spring came and Sally left to live at Marahau. The sannyasins were now a clear majority. Inez: “It worked quite well at first, some of us were Rajneesh and some weren’t. But more Rajneesh people came in from outside, and bit-by-bit they started putting posters and meditations up. Slowly we began to feel it was becoming a Rajneesh community.” When Jan returned from Pune in September, “fired up with Bhagwan fervour”, he was one of those who pushed for that: “We sannyasins all wanted it to be a sannyasin community.” Among those who didn’t were Inez, his sister, and David his old friend.

Inez and Julian now lived apart.<sup>133</sup> David’s estrangement from Rajneesh now meant that he and Janice were in separate camps as well. When she put up a Bhagwan portrait in their house he took it down. David: “I did resist for some time its intrusion into Sunday Creek and felt, like Julian that much of it was complete nonsense, a phony surrender of one’s responsibilities in the guise of spiritual insight. Inez: “It was only Julian and I and David, in the end, who were not Rajneesh. And then we had an enormous flood, and I remember that there was this moat going around our little place, and it was sort of symbolic of being cut off from everyone else.” Julian, who had lived in India for six years from seven till thirteen, had seen the role that gurus played there and considered it a valid one.<sup>134</sup> But he himself was not at all religious and was scornful of Rajneesh: “I saw it as complete and utter rubbish, and I used to tell them so. I’d say, ‘That guy’s only doing it because he’s got pretty women all over him and he’s getting millions of dollars’.”

Jan moved away from Sunday Creek and went to live with Shantam at the start of 1982. He was, he says, unwilling to continue a ‘religious war’. By that time smaller groups of sannyasins were beginning to combine to form larger ones, often in cities. Inez: “I think in the end everybody kind of left, because of the instructions.” Maureen and partner Gyanam took Bindia and Mark to Wellington in time to start the 1982 school year. Jan and Shantam moved there soon after, as did Gus and Nirmala. Eventually David was persuaded to attend a

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<sup>132</sup> Bindia: “often I’d stay a few nights with Janice and David or Nirmala and Dinesh. They were like my extended family.”

<sup>133</sup> Inez: “Julian was getting drunk all the time, and I’d had enough of that. We actually split; I lived in our place with my children and he had a little hut.”

<sup>134</sup> Julian: “People would say ‘Oh he’s a guru, he’s a healer’. They would go in to see him looking really crippled and come out looking quite good. And that was that, that happens there.”

Rajneesh meditation group in Wellington and came back as a convert. Inez: “That was a hell of a blow for Julian and I: the only person who was still with us.”

In taking sannyas, David threw his lot in with his closest friends and family: “Reluctantly, but perhaps inevitably, I went into it myself, I started to wear red and put a mala around my neck. When I look back, I wonder if that decision, which led to us leave Sunday Creek and New Zealand, was partly motivated by a sense of wanting to keep the family together, to share what Janice and so many people dear to me valued. I clearly remember the day I left Sunday Creek and the sadness I felt. It had been home.” He and Janice packed their children and belongings in a Commer Van and went to Wellington, then Auckland, and eventually Los Angeles. As David was from Canada they settled there. Like Gus and Jan they visited the controversial Rajneesh Oregon Community.

By the first half of 1983 all of the four main houses had new occupants. Inez: “the community house suddenly became empty, it was just abandoned, Dinesh and Namala were still up the top, and they didn’t want it. No one wanted it. Then Julian said “Why don’t you move in?” I did, but I felt so uncomfortable I moved back out again. Then Julian and I got back together, and we both moved in, and it became our house. That was the time when Jan and Rene, a Dutch couple with children, stayed a while.” Then Dean came back with Louise and they moved into the seashell house, while Dave and Wendy occupied the sleep-out on the flat.

That year the legal ownership of the community began to change. Janice obtained Jan’s share in January. He only asked the \$1000 he had paid eight years before, but when she sold it on to Pravera four months later he paid eight times that amount, which Janice says caused “quite a strong debate” at Sunday Creek. Back-to-the-landers of the 1970s tended to think, as Maureen had, that nobody could really ‘own’ the land, and with this went the view that people shouldn’t profit by its sale.

Maureen had ascertained \$10,000 was a fair price for a one third share of Sunday Creek: “By 1982 I was a bit more worldly, and I thought ‘I need some money, why give it away? Then I thought ‘All those other people put in energy.’ In the end I decided to get a valuation for the unimproved value, which came to \$30,000. So I decided a third share would be \$10,000 and I negotiated from that point.” Inez and Julian wanted a share, but they considered that \$10,000 was too much to ask. Inez: “I think it was because Jan had sold his share for \$1000 and we

expected the same. Maureen agreed to sell for \$6,000, but not for less. Julian: “I said to Maureen, when this money thing came up, “Well that’s Sunday Creek destroyed.”

Negotiations stalled until Pravera paid \$8,000 for Janice and David’s third share, making it hard to argue that \$6,000 was too much to pay for Maureen’s. Next Murray, a house-trucker with a family, applied to Dean: “I was told there was this bit of land up here and I thought ‘well I’ll go and have a look’. And once I saw it I wanted it. I heard that Dean had paid \$1,000 for it, so I said, ‘will you take \$5,000 Dean?’ He jumped at it.” The open land was in the open marketplace.

Inez and Julian were able to raise three thousand dollars; they invited John S. and Penny to put in the other \$3,000 in order to buy Maureen’s share. Dave and Wendy, who had been offered a chance to buy in ahead of John S. and Penny, chose not to.<sup>135</sup> Those buying in agreed the land should be divided equally four ways. By August Penny had produced a planning application on behalf of Sunday Creek to that effect. Land transfer records show that on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1983 Maureen and Dean gave up their thirds, and Pravera reduced his to a quarter. Three other couples then acquired quarter shares, Inez and Julian, John S. and Penny and Murray and Sue. On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, the same day the land transfer was made, Penny met County Council to explain what the new owners had in mind for Sunday Creek.

Council were asked to grant full residential status to the two existing sleep-outs and the seashell house, which would continue to be occupied by Murray and his family. The Assistant County Planner tabled his report on this on August 24<sup>th</sup>. In it he made the following three points:

1. “There are four ‘family groups’ presently on the property. It has been submitted that each resident will hold an equal share in the subject property and a legal document is apparently being drawn up.”
2. “With a legal share in the land the residents should be more stable than previously. It is intended to move away from the commune idea to that more in keeping with a small village. Each dwelling is to have a ‘private section of land’.”
3. “Council’s main concern with communal lifestyle groups in the past has been with the maintenance of standards and this proposal would seem to reduce that concern.”

The report went on to recommend that if council agreed to residential status for the three occupied sleep-outs, the total number of dwellings should be limited to four. On September

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<sup>135</sup> Julian: “Dave didn’t have the money to buy in, so we asked John and Penny.” Dave and Wendy then moved to the nearby community of Waiaatawhenua.

9<sup>th</sup>, after meeting “a deputation from members of the Sunday Creek Farm” consisting of Penny, Karen, Inez and Pravera, council approved the application, and allowed “four single unit dwelling-houses on the property”. They wrote that this “would not be contrary to the public interest and would have no planning significance beyond the immediate vicinity of the property.”

In 1989 permission for a fifth house was obtained and the existing quarter-shares were changed to fifths in order to create another equal share. Andy and Fiona, whose house it was to be, paid just enough to build a bridge for other residents.<sup>136</sup> They built their house, but didn't live in it for very long. When they sold up and moved in 1995 the other residents could see the growing value of their properties. Murray: “He got it super cheap, and in five years he sold for \$132,000 to the people who are there now. So he did really well.” Much of the increased value came about when council gave consent for rural cross leases. Dave H: “Andy and Fiona wanted to be able to raise a mortgage, but they couldn't because they were tenants in common. Through some miracle, from what I understand mainly through Penny, they managed to convince TDC that you could have a rural cross lease, which meant you had a separate title which you could then get a mortgage for.”

In 1990 Nelson surveyors Staig & Smith approached TDC on behalf of Andy and Fiona about “a better form of tenure for the individual buildings”. In May 1991 a ‘Sunday Creek Partnership’ submitted a ‘Cross-lease Proposal’, and in June it was approved; since then there have been five exclusive occupation zones and since 1993 the remaining land has been vested in a QE2 covenant. In 1993 Dave H. bought Pravera and Karen's share. Cross leases have substantially increased the values of the separate properties, though each now has to pay its separate rates. Murray, Dave H, John S, Penny Inez and Julian are all still co-owners of Sunday Creek and all save Inez are still living there, although John S. and Penny are often away.

Inez moved out in 1986. She saw the change to private ownership as gradual, but Murray says he never really opted into a community: “To me, it was just a beautiful spot. I loved the bush, I fell in love with it, and it was cheap.” Dave H. sees community at Sunday Creek as still existing, but as a low-key affair: “we usually have a Boxing Day get-together, a Barbie and a few drinks, or a Christmas do. We're still good friends and we all get along well.” But they

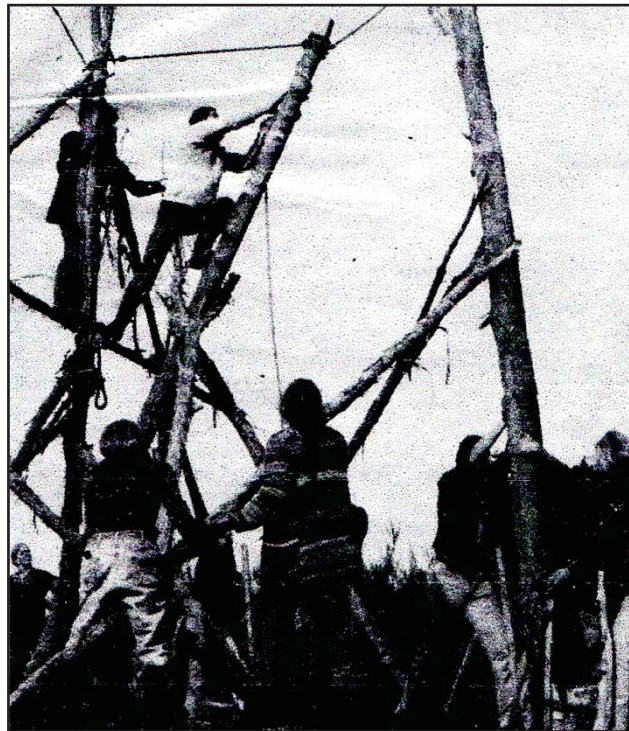
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<sup>136</sup> Dave H : “My understanding is it was for the existing residents, who needed a bridge across the creek. [Andy had] sold his house in Dunedin and had three or four thousand, which was enough to do the business, so he got the fifth share.”

are neighbours now and they live largely separate lives. Privatisation that began in 1983 was legally complete by 1991.

Some people built a house for a community. They shared it for five years as an extended family, and started building other houses too. By 1980 there had been a split: some weren't Rajneesh sannyasins and others were. First those who weren't and then those who were all moved away, leaving their houses to succeeding nuclear families.

Thirty years on Rajneesh no longer polarises those who shared a block of land at Sunday Creek during the last half of the 1970s. Many still see their time together as a pivotal experience and think of one another as extended family. Some reconnected recently to celebrate.<sup>137</sup> Though ultimately not confined to Sunday Creek, it was and in some ways still is, a strong community.



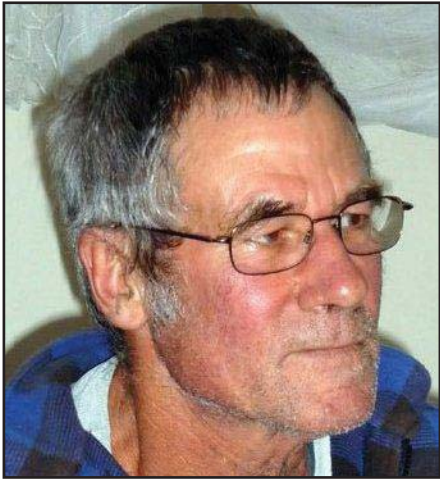
This picture, which appeared in the *Nelson Evening Mail* article 'A New Way of Life', shows members of Sunday Creek raising the tripod frame for the Seashell House.

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<sup>137</sup> Ten Sunday Creek 'originals' held a reunion early in 2012 at Cheryl's home in the Baton Valley. Four others who lived overseas and couldn't be there either rang or emailed to share their thoughts on how much Sunday Creek had meant to them.

## Other journeys

### Alan



Alan was born in Napier in 1942. An adopted child, he left home at fifteen and joined the army where he was trained as a panel beater. He married in his early twenties and eventually had four children, but left the army after refusing to accept what he saw as an unjust punishment. For seven years he ran a panel-beating shop in Fielding. In 1977 he met Nambassa people there, who'd helped set up Mahana band and wanted to establish a commune in the Coromandel.

He and his wife began to wonder if that lifestyle might be a better option than their life in Fielding. They went up to a land meeting to check it out. Alan: "Everywhere I went I'd look at it and think, 'Would I like to grow up here?' And Mahana seemed like a paradise for kids." They sold their place in Fielding, and in 1978 they helped to found Mahana, which has since remained an open land no-rules community. They built a house, but only stayed a year before they relocated to Karuna Falls. Alan had been invited to help construct a methane digester there, and felt his skills were likely to be better used. Another factor was that at Karuna kids all went to school. The family moved to Karuna and stayed on. Both parents have had a variety of jobs. The children grew, and two have settled in the neighbourhood, though none have so far asked to be members of Karuna. Alan believes Karuna members mostly have the life they want: "At the end of the day we want the same things, and that's probably why we're all still here: peace, quiet and a comfortable place to live."



### Carol

Carol was born in Manchester in 1948. Her family moved to Canada when she was six and when she was eleven to Los Angeles. She was involved with blues and alternative music as a teenager, and it helped make her more politically aware: "I was one of the kids who waved the flag and campaigned for John Kennedy's election. I was a very politicised teenager in High School." At university she went out of her way to attend guest lectures by Ginsberg and Leary, and followed counter-

culture music up and down the coast, often going to concerts in San Francisco. When her older brother, a conscientious objector, was drafted for the war in Vietnam he fled to Canada: “There was a big anti-war movement. All of a sudden we were all embroiled in that politics. And then I went to Europe in 1968, and the Parisian riots were going on.”

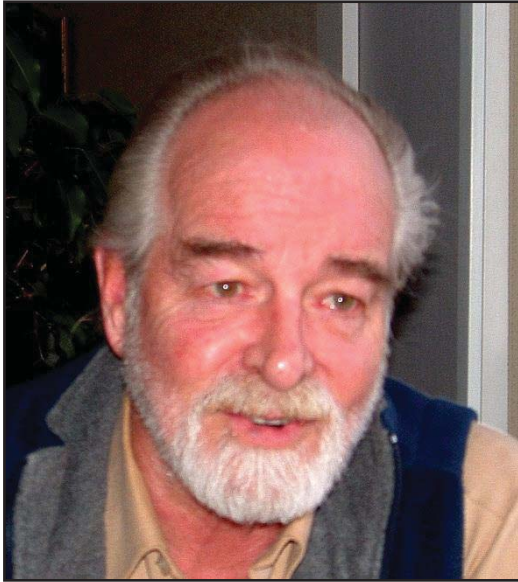
Carol got pregnant while at university, and had a daughter in 1969 on “the very weekend of Woodstock”. Dave was the father, and the two remained good friends, though not long after Carol married someone else. Dave married Jennifer, and for a time both couples lived as rural neighbours on Vancouver Island. “We were all friends, in quite a big community of friends.” Soon afterwards Carol and her young family became part of a remarkable group exodus: “About twelve of those people came to New Zealand at the same time. It was eighteen percent unemployment in British Columbia. A lot of our moving off had to do with the lack of jobs. New Zealand had the reputation of being the land of milk and honey, and had zero unemployment.”

They made the move in 1971, and soon they were renting a house in rural Hokianga. But Carol’s husband then got bored, she says, and for a time he went to India. She wasn’t on her own for very long; a group of hippies moved into the house next door, Treefoot, a Stanford graduate from the US was one of them. By 1972 Carol and Treefoot among others had set up Long Louis on a nearby property. It may have been the first New Zealand open land community.

Carol had trained as a midwife in Canada, and was sympathetic to the call for midwives by New Zealand’s counter-culture in the 1970s: “A lot of the younger women were against going into hospital because they didn’t want stirrups, the harsh lights, and their men sitting in a waiting room.” When Dave and Jennifer asked for her help in birthing their first baby at Marahau at the end of 1971 she willingly obliged. In all she would attend at twelve New Zealand home deliveries.

In 1973 after the birth of her second daughter she moved to Marahau. She and her children lived there until 1981, when she began teacher training in Christchurch. “I think really I needed a profession, my kids were old enough now for them to move into a city. I wouldn’t do it any earlier; I wanted them to grow up on the farm.” For many years the three kept going back to Marahau at Easter and for summer holidays.

With children grown and gone, Carol lives with her present partner in Wellington. Her love of blues and alternative music, which began on the US west coast in the sixties and helped shape her politics, is still a big part of her life, and she now performs regularly with blues-man Dave Murphy.



### **Dave**

Dave was born in British Columbia in 1946. By age eighteen, in 1964, he'd saved a thousand dollars, hitch-hiked across Canada and got on a freighter to Liverpool. "My burning desire was to get away. Initially I got to Europe and just wandered around aimlessly. But I wanted to turn on, or do something with my consciousness, and all of a sudden I started meeting other people that were in that thing: hippies, if you like."

He spent time in London, travelled in Europe and turned twenty-one in Marrakech before returning to Canada, where he and Carol met and had a child. They didn't stay together as a couple, and Dave married Jennifer, then moving to New Zealand and beginning to live on the land at Marahau. In 1973, after Dave and Jennifer split up, Stephen and Claudia became his partners at Marahau Valley Farm. Carol moved in as well, bringing his daughter, and for him the next half dozen years were good: "Cows chickens pigs, hay harvesting, planting, acres of ground together, and in the salad days of youth. It was phenomenal."

He only stayed in the community until the middle of the 1980s though: "I thought 'the dream is changing'. You've always got to have your dreams. The property next door came up, and it was freehold." He has remained in Tasman District and now lives in Nelson.



## **Inez**

Inez was born in 1954 in Motueka, the youngest child of a large Dutch family. Her parents immigrated to Lower Moutere in 1950. They then had a new baby daughter and five older boys. Inez remembers that her early life “focussed around my sister and myself, because the boys had left.” She saw her mother as the instigator and the leader in the family. Because her mother strongly believed in pacifism and simple living, the family became closely associated with Riverside. At seventeen Inez was accepted into teachers college, but didn’t feel she belonged: “I felt it wasn’t really where I wanted to be.” Instead she dropped out, and began to change her life: “It was quite conscious.”

By the beginning of the 1970s both her sister and her older brother Jan were also in the counter-culture. Inez and her then partner Brian visited her sister at Nimbin in Australia in 1972. By 1975 she and her sister had both returned to New Zealand: “There was a lot of free love going on at that time and I found it quite confusing. I was still quite young.”

She was at Wilderland in 1976, and there met Julian. “We found we had a lot in common. His father was also a pacifist and had been through the war, and his mother was Dutch, so we had quite a strong understanding of each other’s lives.” Then Brian, who had stayed in Canberra, came back for her: “He wanted us to get back together and he came to visit. I went over to Coromandel to see him and just got utterly confused.” She chose to stay with Julian for ten more years and had two sons with him. In 1981 they moved to Sunday Creek.

Inez left Julian in 1986. She left the house at Sunday Creek to him, and now lives with Ralph, with whom she has another son and owns a small property in the Wangapeka Valley.



**Jane R.**

Jane R was born in 1955 in Christchurch. Her father was a Dutch immigrant and her mother a New Zealander. She started training as a nurse, but then read 'On the Road', a book about "just hitting the road with your thumb out, and that really appealed to me."

She's always been an individualist; in Australia, aged about twenty, she walked out of an encounter group: "I really fancied one of the guys in the group. The guy who was taking it tried to pressure me into staying – to leave the group was – well, you don't do that. I thought I'd be honest and told the whole group that I fancied this guy. So I wasn't just walking out without giving anything to the group." She then became a topless waitress. "In those days it was legal, there were topless waitresses all over. This was in an ordinary pub, and you just got so much money. I just did it for a couple of months."

By 1978, at twenty-two, she was at Sunday Creek. There she met Yirka, and within a day proposed to him: "I don't think I'd brushed my hair for a couple of weeks. I must have been one of the first dreadlock people, because I decided I wasn't going to brush my hair anymore; that was it, no more hair brushing. It must have been pretty wild. And I remember him walking in; what he was wearing, I remember everything."

She lived at Sunday Creek with Yirka for about three years. They built a house together and had their first baby there. They then lived in Germany and after that tried living at the Baton River with Cheryl and Woody before moving to Riverside. From there they moved to Marahau, renting Carol's house there for about five years. They had three more sons, and gradually built up a business making food and selling it to tourists at the south entrance of Abel Tasman National Park. Together they now own and operate the Park Café.



## Joanna

Joanna was born in Sussex in 1947. During her childhood she spent all her holidays at her grandparents' farm. "I loved it. The beautiful old thatched farmhouse my mother grew up in. They couldn't earn a living off it, but I didn't care." At nineteen she was studying psychology in London. "My family were planning for me to be a doctor. I knew I didn't want to, but I was very interested in how people learn and what makes them tick, so psychology was an obvious choice." While studying she saw the 'swinging sixties' at first hand. "It was really exciting. I was in West London in 1966; Earl's Court, Kensington, Carnaby Street and all that."

In 1967 she first visited the US, travelling with a friend and mostly by bus or car. "The flower power movement in San Francisco fascinated me, but my friend was much more conservative. My cousin drove us around. I really wanted to be on the street."

After graduating Joanna trained as a teacher at Leicester University and taught briefly in England. Teaching itself was not her first priority: "The only reason I ever earned money was so I could travel." She hitchhiked around Italy, worked in Switzerland as a nanny for a year, then immigrated to Australia, where at first she taught again. The Quaker movement there was an important influence: "They were very politically active and had a huge anti-war influence. I became very aware of what was happening in Vietnam. I went to all kinds of demonstrations and met a lot of young people who were politically aware. We talked a lot about community, and then we said, "What's all this talk? Why don't we just do it?" She began living in a Sydney urban community, and in 1973 attended the Nimbin Aquarius Festival.

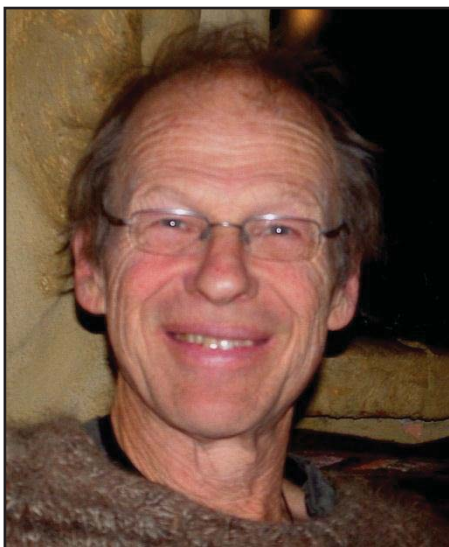
Joanna then returned to England, taking a whole year to see Asia on the way. She then spent about ten months in England, helping people to grow food in their own back yards, training in 'non-violent action', "so you knew what to do if you went to a demo", and working with women's health groups. "The women's movement was very strong. I was part of that."

Aged twenty-nine, in 1976 she was again in Sydney, this time working as a full time race-relations worker for the Quakers. In that year she helped organise a national conference on race-relations, and in 1977 she was working in the Northern Territory tackling the

unemployment problems faced by aboriginals. She then conceived, and after some consideration she decided to have her baby in Ina May Gaskin's Tennessee Midwifery Centre.

This came about because, while pregnant, she attended the Nambassa festival in January 1978. There she met Ina May and Stephen Gaskin who invited her to have her baby at The Farm. "I lived there for four months before I had the baby and for two months after. There were lots of things I didn't like; I thought it was pretty sexist. The men all went out to work and the women all had to look after things at home." From Tennessee Joanna accepted an aunt's invitation to live for a time on Vancouver Island. By the end of 1979 she had a new partner and decided to go with him to New Zealand: "I was on my way to Australia and he was on his way to Eastern Canada, and we decided to travel together to NZ." She'd met Karuna members at Nambassa, so suggested that as a community: "I said: I know a nice place in Coromandel called Karuna Falls."

Joanna joined Karuna Falls, brought up her children there. She's still a member, and still has a house there, but now is involved in teaching sustainable practice and chooses to be at Awhi Farm in Turangi, or elsewhere, most of the time. After teaching permaculture at Karuna during the 1990s, she and her present partner moved away: "We ran the Ecoshow. They were enormous events that brought people in from overseas. The idea was that you could get business, government, non-government and individuals all relating to each other about sustainability. We did two in Auckland and two in Taupo." Her focus now is Awhi farm at Turangi: "Awhi Turangi Trust is a charitable trust and one of the projects of the trust is Awhi farm. We're a bicultural trust. We've had two Community Max programs there; that's a WINZ program for youth unemployed."



### **John**

John, who was born in 1945 in Nelson, regards his upbringing as privileged. He wonders, though, if he was something of a problem child: unlike his younger brother he was sent to board at Nelson College even though his parents lived in Nelson.

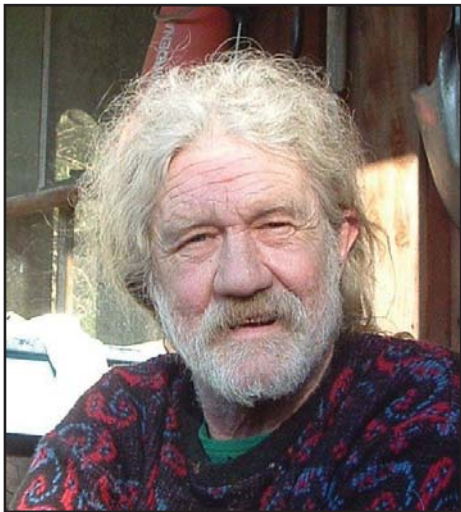
After completing a degree in Geology he went mountain-climbing in South America, and once back in New Zealand he became a Mount Cook mountain guide. By 1972 he had begun to think he was an anarchist. In 1973 an invitation to an acid trip proved

to be life-changing: “I went to Roy’s and we all did a trip. His wife was Betsy, and we just hit it off. I was twenty-five or twenty-six, and she was three years younger, married, without children. And we effectively eloped.”

They lived at Teal Valley, then at Postman’s Road near Puketa. “Our friend Gordy befriended a cow cocky down there and he had an old milking shed that was vacant and said we could live in it. So we converted it into a kitchen-come-bedroom. There were the three of us, and Cheryl, Robert, a whole lot of people. Down the road were the Donovans, and on the coast was Puketa.” From Postman’s Road John and Betsy moved to Tahuna Farm, and from there, in 1978, to Graham Downs, a new community they helped set up.

Horsepower was, for John, a major part of it: “The idea was that we wouldn’t put a tractor on the ground. A horse treads quite lightly on the ground, and for a while we had ploughs, we had tine harrows, we had rollers, and we had seed drills. I think we had fifteen acres one year under crops, all of it done with horses.”<sup>138</sup>

When Betsy died, John chose to move away from Graham Downs. He lives with Sally now, at Pikirangi, and they have a son.



### **Julian**

Julian was born in Malaya in 1950. His father was an English language teacher and his mother was from the Hague. During the war his father was imprisoned by the Germans. “He’s a very serious conscientious objector, my father, and I think my grandfather was, and I am too.” Julian’s family travelled widely while he was a child, living in England, The Netherlands, Switzerland, Bhagdad and India. “I really enjoyed it, and I’d never wish for anything more, but it does sort of space you out when you’re young. You’re settled, and you get all these friends and pets, and then you have to move and leave them all behind.”

His family finally settled in Wellington, where at fourteen, in the mid-1960s, he became a pupil at Rongotai College. Since he’d first seen and heard The Beatles and The Rolling Stones

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<sup>138</sup> Quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

on TV and the radio they had been role-models. During his fifth form year at Rongotai he was expelled for his long hair. The headmaster first called him in to talk it through: “He said, ‘how’d you like me to ring your father up?’ I said, ‘Well you can if you want to’. My father said: ‘Well what’s that got to do with learning and teaching?’ And my father was an English professor. Rongotai College put me right off learning and teaching.”

“I just bummed around most of the time. I got a job if I needed money. And I got in trouble with the police, mostly for drugs.” From alcohol and dope he had moved on to acid, heroin and speed. “I had a lot of friends all around Wellington. The drugs were sort of like travelling. I did get into it quite a bit.”

Two of his mother’s Krishnamurti friends now sparked his lifelong interest in alternative communities. They’d come from Beeville, a community near Hamilton. “Tim Jones and Judith stayed at my parents place when I was about fifteen or sixteen. Then in the summer holidays my whole family went up and stayed there for about a month; I took a girlfriend up. It was such a beautiful place, it blew me out.” In later years he kept on going back, and often stayed with a particular family: “I either hitchhiked north or got the train. When I first went there they gave me a room. They had an amazing big house, with under-floor heating from the open fire, and were really creative. I got really friendly with the five boys, especially one of them.”<sup>139</sup>

In the mid-1970s a lot of Julian’s young friends from Beeville moved to Wilderland. So did some other friends from Wellington. Julian moved in too; in 1976 he met Inez there. “I’d been at Wilderland a while when she arrived. She was in her early twenties and I was a few years older. I was attracted to her when I saw her and we got together.” They went on to live at Hahei in the Coromandel, at Pearse Valley in Tasman Bay and finally at Sunday Creek. Julian still lives in the house first built by the community.

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<sup>139</sup> Beeville, founded in 1933 was firmly opposed to war, favoured the abolition of private property, was against all forms of organized religion and was to be an experiment in anarchy. “Anyone in the world was free to walk through the gate and join in.” (Jones and Baker, 1975, pp.20-30) As a community it lasted forty years till 1973. (Sargisson and Sargent, 2004.)



## **Kathi**

Kathi was born in 1955 in Lower Hutt. Her Dad was a good handyman who did whatever needed doing round the home. Her grandparents, who lived in nearby Silverstream “had a totally subsistence lifestyle: they generated their own power, had two house cows, a big free-range chicken farm, turkeys, ducks and huge gardens and orchards.” Her mother, who had been a law clerk, did no paid work after marrying, and Kathi saw her as “bored silly” at home.

When she finished school Kathi completed a diploma of horticulture through Lincoln and then worked briefly as a gardener for the Hutt City Council. She didn’t like their use of chemicals, and in 1974 became a part time student at Victoria University, also working for the Soviet Information Office.

Kathi was one of those drawn into Labour’s Ohu Scheme. “How it happened for me was that I flatted in Wellington with a group of people who were very close; we worked as a community within the city, and it was a next step to push it out and go somewhere else.” Kathi and others went to an Ohu meetings held in Lower Hutt, and after that began to look for land themselves. Four of them then went on to occupy a Taranaki Ohu for about two years.

Kathi got pregnant, had a daughter, and then moved to Auckland as a single-mum. There she became involved with Nambassa. Some of her former flatmates joined Mahana, and she got involved with that community: “I was involved in the initial walking of the land, to decide whether to buy it or not. Then I decided I had other things to do before I lived that lifestyle, so I went overseas. I spent a couple of years in London, and travelling through Asia with my little girl. I went to India and Nepal.”

When she got back she re-enrolled part time at Victoria University, supporting herself by working as a secretary and doing gardening jobs. She finished her degree with honours, in religion and philosophy. Though she went back in summertime to live at Mahana, she was ambivalent about making that permanent. Aspects were positive, “There was the community cookhouse, and the support a lot of the adults gave each other and the children. The kids could hang out together, and had wonderful relationships.” But there were problems, the dope-culture, and the lack of boundaries for kids. For her it just remained a summer place.

Kathi got married to a man she'd flatted with in Wellington who had become a member of Moehau Community, although he usually lived in Auckland. She lived there with him for some years and had a son with him. In 1997 they both moved to Moehau, and Kathi joined, but then their marriage ended and in 2002 she moved to Karuna Falls.

She still lives there; Wayne is her partner now. The two have separate houses but work as a team: "Wayne and I were founders of Moehau Environment Group. We thought 'we'll go for some funding and perhaps get a group of volunteers to help us'. It's grown exponentially. I'm now employed part time as a wetlands ecologist, and so is Wayne, doing educational components. It's the biggest conservation NGO in New Zealand."

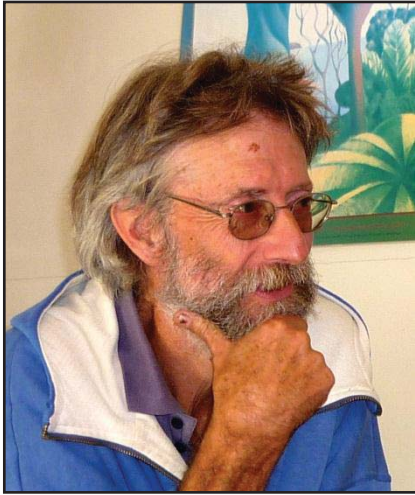


### **Maureen**

Maureen was born in 1945 in Mosgiel, near Dunedin, and was the oldest of six girls. Her father was a Presbyterian Minister. When she was nineteen and at university she met Jan, and in 1966 they were married.

In 1968 they travelled together in Europe, and the experiences they had led her to see the world another way: "I felt at that time that the Western way of thinking and being, which was basically consumerism and dominating other cultures, was not the way to go, and we needed to embrace other ways of looking at things and learning to work together as a planet, actually, and accept different points of view and work towards peace and harmony."

Though she and Jan split up in 1975, they worked together after that at Sunday Creek. Both became sannyasins in 1979. Maureen helped set up a Rajneesh Centre in Wellington in 1982. She now lives on Waiheke Island.



## Patrick

Patrick was born in Shropshire in 1946 and went to a boy's grammar school. "I never particularly liked school, I found the environment totally oppressive." He left young, and then worked for several years while also studying part time at an adult institute. In this way he received a Higher National Certificate, enabling him to study at a London university. He did, but didn't stick at it for very long: "I only ended up lasting a year, because there was so much going on. It was the late sixties."

He went back home and met a woman called Sue Coppard who had begun to form a fledgling group called Willing Workers On Organic Farms: "I think when I joined there were about ten of us. My interests had turned towards self-sufficiency." Patrick came to New Zealand in 1973 as a WOOFer and was soon WWOOFing at Todd's Valley near Nelson, growing organic vegetables. He visited Tahuna Farm, met Toppo there, and started to supply the Middle Earth Café with its organic vegetables. From there he moved to Ahuahu Ohu. "I was only around Nelson for a couple of years before I moved up to the Ahuahu with Gavin and the others. I went up with Toppo actually."

At Ahuahu Patrick built himself a small thatched house. The thatch was straw, harvested with a sickle: "I went through a whole paddock, a couple of acres; it probably took me two or three months. It was basically a tipi shape, kanuka poles. The thatching was my version of traditional English thatching, probably not as thick. I lived in it for about three years and didn't have to replace the thatch. It was dry. I had a little stove in there"

After about eight years at Ahuahu, Patrick and partner Joy moved on from there. They were expecting a baby and considered that a commune in the Coromandel might suit them better after that. "We were looking around, really. We did come and look at Karuna Falls. We also looked at Mahana. For some reason we decided Mahana. I think it was probably a bit easier to move in, financially."

Joy found another partner at Mahana and moved on with him. Patrick and she have stayed in touch and are good friends. Patrick spent twenty years at Mahana. One job he did from there was teaching sound theory and engineering at neighbouring Moehau. "I've always had an interest in electronics and music combined. There was a recording studio at Moehau and I

originally started teaching sound theory there.”<sup>140</sup> About four years ago he moved to Karuna Falls.



### **Sally**

Sally was born in Lower Hutt in 1961. Her parents both came from the UK but were married in New Zealand. From 1973 till 1979 she was at High School, and looking back on that she doesn't think she fitted in: “When everybody else was riding their ten speed bikes I was riding my old bike with a wicker basket on the front; and my salad crammed lunches – to me it was just an intuitive thing.”

She finished school aged eighteen at the end of 1979, and made her way at once to Tasman Bay. That summer she did seasonal work, including apple picking at Riverside. Then she decided to see if she could last a year without earning or spending any money. “I just wanted to explore, and find life; let life find me.”

She walked the Abel Tasman, then the Heaphy, and during 1980 slowly made her way down the West Coast. “When I walked over the Heaphy I had nowhere to go. People said, go to Pear Tree Farm. Then Pear Tree Farm knew about Fox River and Fox River knew about Tahuna.”

In March of 1981 she arrived at Sunday Creek, and lived there for about eight months before she moved to Marahau. She had two children there with Malcolm, but left after about six years. Today she lives at Pikirangi Community with John and has another son with him.



### **Stephanie**

Stephanie was born in 1950 in Nelson. She sang Bob Dylan and Joan Baez's songs as a teenager, and while at university became convinced through her studies in Social Psychology that alternative communities were a good idea. In 1972 she visited California, where she learned more about them: “I think it was the sense of a global movement, and I learned about the history of intentional communities.”

<sup>140</sup> The Moehau recording studio was a continuation of the Aerial Railway, see pp. 115-116

Back in New Zealand she attended the first Ohu Scheme meeting in Wellington in 1974, and met a woman who was working to create a new community. “She was the driving force behind buying Moehau Community. There was a house in Auckland where they were having meetings. She was trying to find 25 shareholders at \$4,000 each to buy their farm. I thought, “Mmm, do I go the government scheme or the private scheme? I don’t believe the government scheme will last so I’m going to go with the private scheme. So I became a founding member of Moehau Community.”

But when she surveyed other shareholders to see how many really did expect to live there, half of them did not ever intend to live on the land and were investors. “So it wasn’t going to be that close, pioneering community that I was looking for.” But at Moehau Community Stephanie met an architect called Richard and with him she went off to check out a nearby property.

“It was a wrecked piece of land, it was barren and it was burnt. We went for a walk, found the waterfall, and got covered in black charcoal. I thought ‘this is not my dream’. But then we came across these old fruit trees, and that did it for me, because I’d come from a fruit growing family. I just said, “This place can grow fruit trees. I’m in.”

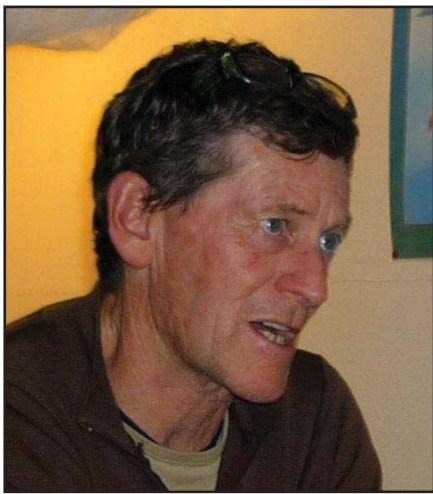
In 1975 they formed a company and bought the land. The aims were broad, including “To develop and maintain a community based on the spirit of co-operation and self-reliance, organic food production and environmentally appropriate technologies” and “To provide facilities for educational workshops, retreats, and camps.”

During the first five years people lived in simple sleep-outs and shared a communal cookhouse. That changed in the 1980s as more permanent institutional and physical structures took shape. “The early eighties was the second phase of the community. We’d changed from a Company to a Co-operative Society Ltd, and a number of young families came to settle here and there was a new start.”

Stephanie had a son, but there was not a High School close enough for him to be a day pupil, so like a lot of other parents at Karuna she took on a city job. She lived and taught in Auckland and Whangarei, always returning to Karuna Falls during the holidays. She’s now back full-time at Karuna Falls, working in the locality and intending to live at home in her retirement: “I can have a good retirement here. This will be my base, I can jump in a car and

do research, write my books.”

The community made a conscious choice in the 1980s not to connect to the national grid and to continue to develop solar, wind and waterpower energy systems to power the village in line with the original aims. Since its inception in 1975 the community has hosted over sixty retreats and workshops. Native forest is now regenerating, and with stoats being trapped, kiwi and other native bird species are recovering. Stephanie wanted that since first arriving at what she saw as wrecked land, barren and burnt. She’s confident about the future of Karuna Falls as a village community, and speculates one day her ashes may lie there. Above them there might grow a kauri tree.



### **Wayne**

Wayne was born in 1949 in Port Chalmers. His family moved a lot when he was young, and he left school at fifteen to help support his family, working at Dalgetys for over a year. Then he decided to leave home and go surfing. “It was 1967. We were smoking hash then, and there was new music coming in, and people from Australia and beyond. The world was a bigger place than I had thought it was.” He earned some money and set off to see a bit more of the world himself. He went to Australia, did seasonal work, and made his way to Cairns where he would stay for more than half a year. It was a magnet for the counterculture then.

Back in New Zealand in the early 1970s he finished High School as an adult student and went on to begin a degree in sociology and psychology at Waikato University. While there he struggled with drugs and alcohol, but also joined some of New Zealand’s first encounter groups: “We were the first ones doing it. A few people had come from overseas; we were being influenced by people like Alan Watts.”

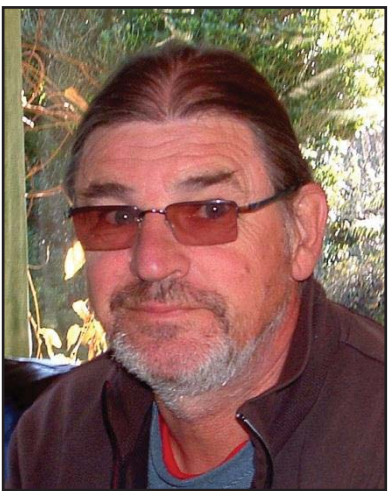
He didn’t finish his degree. Instead he took a job as a farm labourer, set off to walk around the East Cape, hoping to connect with Maori there, and finally arrived at Riverside Community. “I liked the work there and I liked the young people.” He helped to run the dairy farm, worked as a plumber, and met Judy, a second generation Riversider. Although he seriously contemplated membership, in the event he only stayed three years; “Judy had had a guts-full

of living in communities, she didn't want to live in one any more. I respected that, so we chose to move after Marla was born.”<sup>141</sup>

With their new baby girl the couple moved to nearby Pokororo, where they helped to run a food co-op: “We put a couple of cents extra per pound or kilo onto the items that were being sold on, so there was always something in the kitty, and we weighed everything out in bulk. People would put in orders. I think in the end we lost money, but everybody was happy.”

Judy and he split up and he became a solo dad. With money loaned by Riverside he now put in a large organic garden, bought some hens, and sold organic vegetables to fruit-pickers: “a salad mix every week, for five or ten dollars a box.” He also helped promote rural resettlement: “I was involved with the Rural Resettlement Association; we set up a magazine called Waterwheel.”

In 1982 he met a woman at a Rajneesh festival in Nelson who told him about Karuna Falls. He visited, and felt it was the place he had been looking for. “It was the way the children treated each other. I thought ‘If that’s the way the children are, there must be something good about the adults’.” Marla and he moved in when she was five. She lived there with him till she turned thirteen. Wayne has stayed on, and works now mainly in protecting the environment.



### **Yirka**

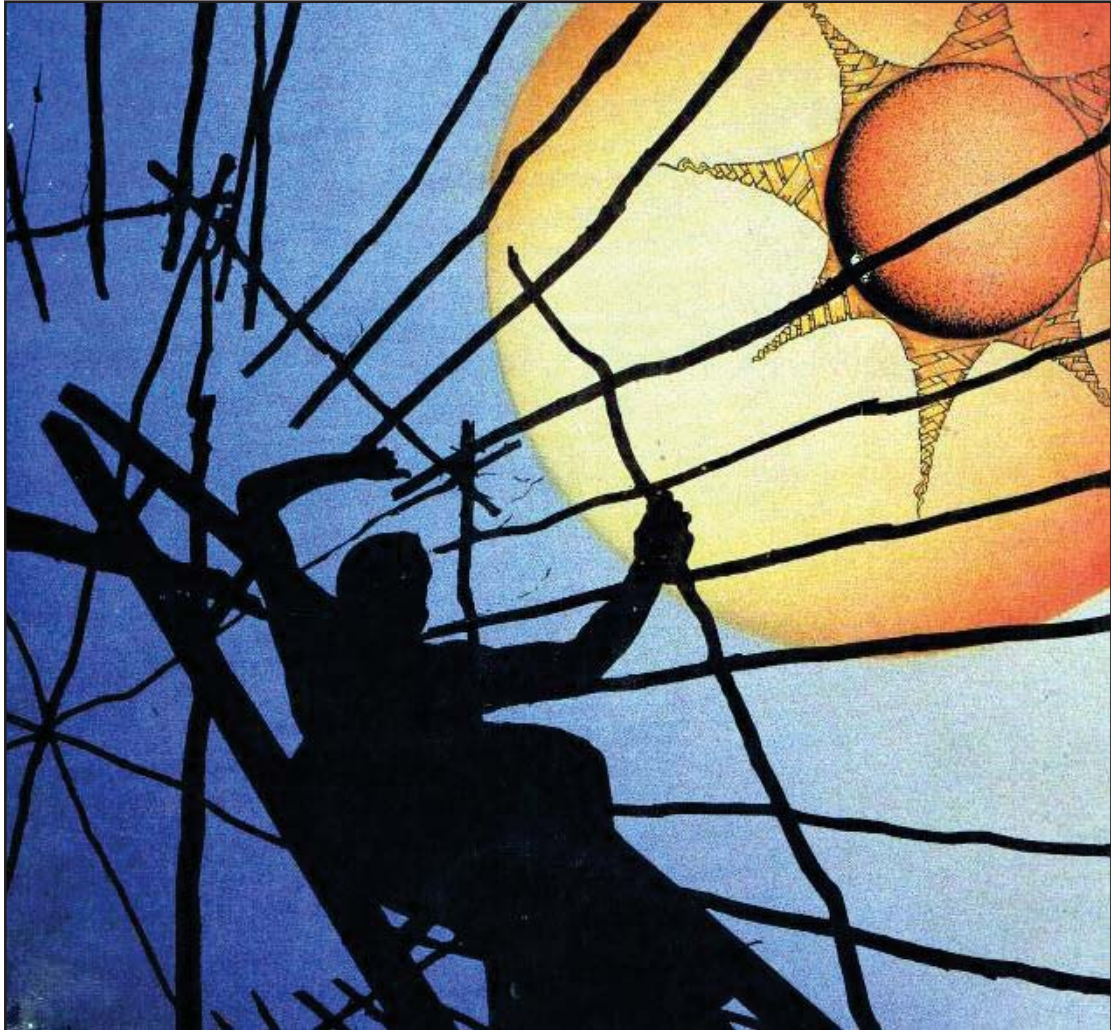
Yirka was born in Opava, Czechoslovakia, in 1951. His family were middle class, with peasant farmer origins. During Prague Spring, in 1968, he and a lot of other Czechs wanted to liberate themselves from socialist dictatorship. “People started coming to Czechoslovakia, bands from the west.” In 1969, after the Russian’s took control again, he moved to Germany.

At eighteen Yirka was ‘in the west’, in Germany outside the Soviet block, and at the cutting edge of the environmental movement. “I met some young people with the same thinking as here. My friends were land freaks, people who wanted to live on the land. When people start talking about global warming – well, we were talking about that forty years ago.” He improved his German, learned plumbing, and in 1972 began living on the land.

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<sup>141</sup> Rain lists him as a member from 1976 to 1977. (*Community, The Story of Riverside*, p.209) Wayne says this membership remained probationary.

By 1977 he had begun to think that Germany was fast becoming a police-state. He decided to explore New Zealand on a three-month visa, arriving at the first Nambassa festival in January 1978. From there he moved to Riverside, and at Sunday Creek met Jane, who at once offered to marry him. He jokes: “We married for convenience: she married me for my convenience.” It turned out to be rather more than that. They stayed together, moved to Marahau, set up a business and have had four sons.



Cover illustration from *Nambassa - a new direction*

## Other Communities

Drawing on a variety of sources I have listed all New Zealand's current secular intentional rural communities. I've then listed those formed in the seven decades between 1900 and 1969 followed by those formed between 1970 and 1979.<sup>142</sup> These lists are based on definitions of community and of intentional community given in the introduction.<sup>143</sup> While it is likely that these lists are incomplete, they are as complete as this research has been able to make them.

In geographic terms they show that Golden Bay now has the highest number of intentional communities relative to population. Coromandel is a close second, Tasman Bay comes third and Northland is fourth. Those patterns date back to the 1970s. Northland did better then, but went on to experience the highest failure rate and now has no surviving 1970s communities. And Golden Bay, which was an Eldorado for communities back then, still seems to be.

Not all the hippies who moved into rural areas intended living in community. Most bought themselves small blocks of land and settled down as 'homesteaders'. When groups of homesteaders lived close to one another, as they often did, they sometimes did create real communities, though such 'fortuitous' communities aren't listed here. Those that are usually involved shared land or common ownership. Even if these were just the icing on the cake, the number of them founded in the 1970s is still extraordinary. Beeville was the only secular rural intentional community in New Zealand until 1970, and during the next ten years another fifty-eight came into being.<sup>144</sup>

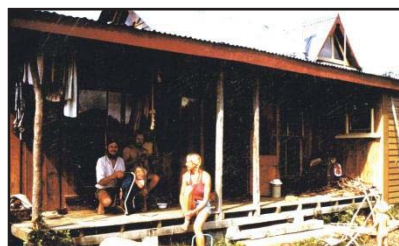
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<sup>142</sup> In these tables the Acronyms used for sources have the following meanings: EC = Endless Connections, i.e. information drawn from all the research for this paper; NZIC = *New Zealand Intentional Communities: A Research Guide*, Sargent's most recent update of his 1997 paper; LIU = *Living in Utopia* (Sargisson and Sargent, 2004); Utz = *Utopianz* (Greenaway, 2004); KIT = *Keeping it Together* (Jones 2011); HWF = *A Hard Won Freedom*, (Jones 1975); SOM = *Shadows of Moehau* (Simons, Wendy, (ed.) 1990). DBH = *Dirty Bloody Hippies* (Salmon, 2010, Media); TDR = *The Double Rainbow* (Newton, 2009); The suffix (WI) means Web Information is (or was) available.

<sup>143</sup> A community is "a group of five or more adults and their children, if any, who come from more than one nuclear family and who have chosen to live together to enhance their shared values, or for some other mutually agreed upon purpose." Intentional communities are those in which "members actively strive to forge a shared identity". Circumstantial communities are those whose members develop little if any sense of shared identity.

<sup>144</sup> Though land at Wilderland was bought by Dan and Edith Hansen in 1964, I argue that until the 1970s it wasn't an intentional community. Riverside began as an intentional community in 1941, but didn't become secular until the early 1970s, see Rain, pp.88-94.

Current NZ secular intentional rural communities				
Name	Year founded	Location	Number of households or adult residents	Sources
Anahata	1996	Golden Bay	5-7 adults in 2004	Utz; LIU
Autumn Farm	1984	Golden Bay	4 households in 2004	EC; LIU
Rainbow valley	1974	Golden Bay	18 adults in 2012	EC; Utz; NZIC; LIU
Tui	1984	Golden Bay	35-40 adults in 2011	EC; Utz; LIU
Happisam	1974	Golden Bay	7 adults in 2012	EC; LIU; NZIC
Marahau	1971	Tasman Bay	15ish adults in 2012	EC
Riverside	1941/1970s	Tasman Bay	21 adults in 2010	KIT; Utz; LIU; NZIC
Te Manawa	2008?	Tasman Bay	5 households in 2012	EC(WI)
Wantoo Wantoo	2004	Tasman Bay	8 adults in 2012	EC
Pikirangi	1983	Tasman Bay	7 adults in 2012	EC
Atamai	2009	Tasman Bay	6 households in 2010	EC(WI)
Karuna Falls	1975	Coromandel	22 adults in 2010	EC; LIU; NZIC, SOM
Mahana	1978	Coromandel	30 adults in 1990s	EC; SOM; NZIC
Moehau	1974	Coromandel	10 adults in 2003	LIU; SOM
Wilderland	1975	Coromandel	15ish adults in 2011	EC; LIU; KIT; NZIC
Whareroa	1978	Coromandel	3 households in 1990	SOM; NZIC
Motu Moana	1979	Coromandel	5 households in 1997	SOM; NZIC
Te Kauae O Maui	1980	Coromandel	6 adults in 1990	SOM
Aradia	1989	Coromandel	7 adults in 2004	Utz; LIU; NZIC
Valley Farm	1999	Paeroa	5 adults in 2004	LIU
Gricklegrass	1973	Oxford	4 adults in 2004	Utz; LIU
Kohatu Toa	1999	Northland	11 adults in 2004	Utz; NZIC
Mamaki farm	1984	Northland	12 adults in 2004	LIU
Otamatea	1996	Northland	24 adults in 2004	Utz, LIU; NZIC
Awaawaroa Bay	1996	Waiheke Is	43 adults in 2004	Utz; LIU; NZIC
Volco Park	1996	Waitati, Otago	8-16 adults	Utz
Katajuta	1971	Punakaiki	6-8 adults in 2003	LIU, NZIC
26	11 from 1970s, 6 from 1990s, 5 from 1980s and 3 from 2000s			



Marahau Bay in the early 1980s and Sunday Creek Main House in the late 1970s

NZ secular intentional rural communities founded before 1970				
Name	Year founded	Location	Number of households or adult residents	Sources
Beeville	1933	Waikato	19 adults in 1964	HWF; LIU; NZIC
Riverside (founded in 1941, became secular 1970s)	1941/1970s	Tasman Bay	21 adults in 2010	KIT; Utz; LIU; NZIC

Continuing intentional NZ secular intentional rural communities founded in the 1970s				
Name	Year founded	Location	Number of households or adult residents	Sources
Rainbow Valley	1974	Golden Bay	18 adults in 2012	EC; Utz; NZIC; DBH
Happisam	1974	Golden Bay	7 adults in 2012	EC; LIU; NZIC
Marahau	1971	Tasman Bay	15ish adults in 2012	EC
Wilderland	1975	Coromandel	15ish adults in 2011	EC; LIU; KIT; NZIC
Karuna Falls	1975	Coromandel	22 adults in 2010	EC; SOM; LIU; NZIC
Mahana	1978	Coromandel	30 adults in 1990s	EC; SOM; NZIC
Moehau	1974	Coromandel	10-20 adults in 1990	SOM; LIU; NZIC; DBH
Motu Moana	1979	Coromandel	5 households in 1997	SOM; NZIC
Whareroa	1978	Coromandel	3 households in 1990	SOM; NZIC
Katajuta	1971	Punakaiki	6-8 adults in 2003	LIU; NZIC
Gricklegrass	1970	Oxford	5 adults in 2004	Utz; LIU
11				



Karuna Falls Community and Rainbow Valley community in the 1970s

<b>NZ secular intentional rural communities founded in the 1970s that are now abandoned, privatised or circumstantial</b>				
<b>Name</b>	<b>Year founded</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of households or adult residents</b>	<b>Sources</b>
East Farm	1977?	Golden Bay	6 adults in 1976?	EC
Parapara	1973?	Golden Bay	5 adults in 1978	EC
Moonsilver Forest	1974	Golden Bay	5 adults in 1975	EC; NZIC
Tahuna	1974	Tasman Bay	10ish adults in 1978	EC; KIT; NZIC
Waiatawhenua	1979?	Tasman Bay	6ish adults in 1983	EC
Famagusta	1973	Tasman Bay	6 adults in 1975	EC
Sunday Creek	1975	Tasman Bay	8ish adults in 1979	EC; NZIC
Renaissance	1978	Tasman Bay	20 adults in 2010	KIT; DBH; NZIC
Tauwi Takakau	1972	Tasman Bay	?	NZIC
Teal Valley	1973	Tasman Bay	?	EC; NZIC
309 Settlement	1974	Coromandel	100 visitors in 1974	NZIC; HWF; EC
Opuhi (Colville)	1970	Coromandel	12ish adults in 1973	SOM; NZIC
Te Whanau Hou	1975	Coromandel	?	SOM; NZIC
Sunburst	1975	Coromandel	?	LIU; NZIC
Driving Creek	1973	Coromandel	?	NZIC
Awa Marire Farm	1979	Coromandel	Four households in 1979	NZIC
Gentle Annie Ohu	1976?	Coromandel	?	NZIC
Nambassa	1978	Coromandel	15 adults in 1978	NZIC;
Sunflower Farm	1970s	Coromandel	?	NZIC
Tapuetahi	1977	Coromandel	9 adults in 1990	NZIC
Omana (Evergreen)	1976	Northland	?	NZIC
Clearwater	1970s	Northland	4 households in 2003	LIU; NZIC
Earth Extract	1975	Northland	?	NZIC; LIU
Long Louis	1972	Northland	13 adults in 1974	EC; HWF; NZIC
Home Port Farm	1976	Northland	?	NZIC
Rangiputa	1974	Northland	5 members in 1974	NZIC
Tapuaetahi	1970s	Northland	12 adults in 1978	NZIC
Tapuhi Farm	1977	Northland	5 families in 1980	NZIC
Timatanga	1972	Northland	12 adults in 2003	LIU; NZIC
Whenua Pa	1972	Northland	44 adults in 1972	NZIC
Whenuakura	1976	Taranaki	10ish in 1978	TDR; NZIC
Reef Point	1971	Taranaki	8ish adults in 1973	HWF; TDR; NZIC
McFarlane's Farm	1972	Waikato	21 adults in 1973	NZIC
Tauhai	1971	Waikato	?	NZIC
Puketa	1973	Kaikoura	12ish adults in 1973	EC; NZIC
Postman's Road	1973	Kaikoura	5 adults in 1973	EC
Mahoe Farm	1974	Karamea	5 adults in 1979	NZIC
Jerusalem	1970	Wanganui	20-30 adults in 1970	TDR; LIU; NZIC; DBH
Ahuahu Ohu	1974	Whanganui	8ish adults in 1985	NZIC; DBH
Wharemanuka	1972?	Otago	?	TDR
Huia	1972	Waitakere	16 adults in 1974	NZIC; HWF
Ellimata Ohu	1973	Southland	?	NZIC
Goodwill	1974	Raetihi	?	NZIC
Miro	1974	Westland	?	NZIC
Wharekahika	1970s	East Cape	14 adults in 1979	NZIC
Willowbrook	1976	Manawatu	?	NZIC
46				

From 1980 the numbers of communities founded diminished rapidly. Although I have not listed those that have now ceased to be communities, I estimate there were about the same number as the number of surviving ones, seventeen, which would mean a total of thirty-four new communities over the last thirty years.

Eleven of those started in the 1970s are still communities and I've found records of another forty-six that aren't. Many were called but few were chosen it would seem. There were a lot of high-hopes in the 1970s. Not all the forty-six I've listed qualified for very long. Sunday Creek had, and still does have, a shared identity. Moonsilver Forest doesn't now and maybe never really did. Members weren't always there, so there was little hope of a continuing community, and I have learned the same was often true elsewhere. I estimate that of the fifty-seven listed, approximately thirty-two were short experiments that didn't work.

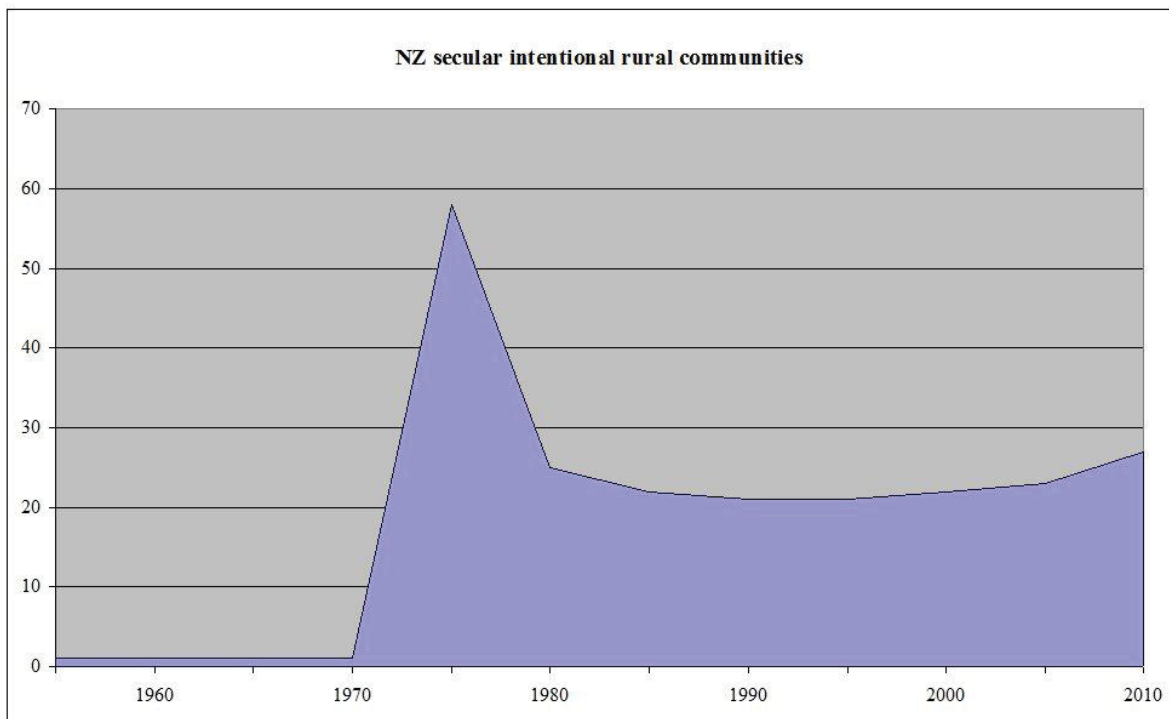
A lot of people then migrated from communities that looked as if they were about to fold, to others, that were still unfolding, in a better way. Patrick and Joy grew tired of the isolation at the Ahuahu Ohu, so they moved to Mahana. It wasn't that they'd changed their minds about a simple rural life; rather they wanted other people, more of a community.<sup>145</sup> Kathi tried two communities before she reached Karuna Falls. Wayne first experienced community at Riverside. From Sunday Creek Jane R. and Yirka moved on to the Baton, and from there, by way of Riverside, to Marahau. Recruits from previous communities had knowledge and experience; they also linked the 1970s communities through branching networks of friends and relationships.

I estimate that only twenty-five of fifty-seven 1970s communities were peopled long enough to really qualify. A lot of members walked away, and sometimes did repeatedly. It wasn't always that they were discouraged by arguments, isolation or hard work. Often communities they'd left behind were failed experiments and they moved on to more successful ones.

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<sup>145</sup> Patrick: "It was a bit socially stifling. Not so much the arguments, just not enough people to relate to."

The graph below is crude and partially conjectural, but gives a fair idea of numbers of communities from 1955 to 2010. It shows the massive spike during the 1970s, but also shows that less than half that number lasted more than a few years. Numbers then stabilised and new communities appeared as old ones disappeared. Effectively there was a giant upward step; where there had been just one there became more than twenty-one. By 2010 the 1980 figure had been passed for the first time, and with the coming of the eco-village a continuing rise could well be possible. This might depend though, on the fate of aging 1970s communities, which still make up well over a third of the total.



## Riverside

This study only deals with secular communities and that makes Riverside a little hard to classify. Founded in 1941, it wasn't secular until the early 1970s. The turning point seems to have been around 1971. In that year Dave Silvester queried Dave Mitchell's membership application, since Mitchell was evidently non-Christian. Mitchell was accepted anyway and Silvester subsequently left.<sup>146</sup> From then on Riverside grew more and more closely aligned with 1970s alternative communities. It became a sort of mother ship, a place that was there when you needed it for a meeting or a festival; Yirka: "Riverside was very important. It was a central point. They had the venue."

<sup>146</sup> Rain, pp. 89-90.

It was also the place where many had their first experiences of structure and continuity; Wayne: “A group of us were being ‘mealed’. It was Sally Cole who started this, to get to know the young people who were coming through. She invited us up for dinner once a week.” People who stayed at Riverside could see how meetings worked, or sometimes didn’t work. Jane R: “We were there for half a year, and we thought about becoming part of that community; obviously it was the easiest thing to do. But I think the idea of their meetings put us off. Because it’s such a big community there were a lot of different people with quite strong differing opinions. We didn’t want to get involved with that.”

But Riverside was proof that a long-lived alternative community was possible, and led the way towards non-violence and decision-making by consensus. Women there had a voice; Jane R. remembers hearing Jane N. speak effectively in public for the first time in a gathering at Riverside. But gender roles there didn’t always suit the liberated women of the 1970s: “Maureen: “I didn’t participate fully in the community, because I wanted to have a life other than being a mum and washing dishes all the time.”

### **Long Louis and Jerusalem**

When open land advocate Lou Gottlieb deeded Morningstar commune’s land to God in 1969, he challenged the US establishment.<sup>147</sup> To Houriet, such communes were “a neuromantic gesture of defiance against the great asphalt-roller urban society”.<sup>148</sup> US hippies helped found Long Louis, and their dollars helped to pay for it. Carol and ‘Treefoot’ both helped set it up and both had been at US universities. His real name was Larry Pischoff, formerly of Stanford University, and she thinks almost all the money came from him.

The couple that first lived there were New Zealanders, and Jane N. speaks of passing by their house as she moved in. Before they built that house, Pipi and Mani only had a bus. Carol: “Pipi was Philip Rutherford, descended from the famous physicist.” He and Mani were living in “one of those great big buses that had pictures of flowers all over it”.

In 1967 the New Buffalo commune was founded in New Mexico. Its young inhabitants were drawn to American first peoples, and saw themselves as a new tribe.<sup>149</sup> When Tim Jones visited Long Louis in 1974 he learned that Pipi and Treefoot were the original purchasers. They’d bought the land in 1971 and added all their friends’ names to the title deed, intending

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<sup>147</sup> Lou Gottlieb advocated ‘open land’ in the US. In 1969 he formally deeded to God land he owned legally but wished to give to Morningstar in perpetuity. Eventually that controversial US commune was shut down by the authorities. So far Long Louis hasn’t been shut down, though only Snail is still living there.

<sup>148</sup> Houriet, p.143

<sup>149</sup> Miller, p.64

it to become tribal land.<sup>150</sup> By 1974 thirteen adults and six children were living there, and they were very interested in both Maori and Native American cultures.<sup>151</sup>

Jane N. admits that Long Louis was primitive. Jerusalem, another ‘tribal’ commune of the early 1970s, was too. The ‘pa’ was well established and had houses, but these were dilapidated.<sup>152</sup> Rhys Green: “We were called ‘filthy’ and ‘scum’ and we slept on the floors. The sanitary conditions weren’t the best. We were outcasts. But in summer I washed in the river, I went swimming every day. I was a free spirit.”<sup>153</sup> Jane N. enjoyed that freedom at Long Louis too.

In *Hippies to the rescue*, Mark Scott quotes condemnation of the Hokianga hippies in the media for such a life-style: “Headlined “Showdown with hippies looms”, a newspaper account from the time reported Health Inspector Mr M.S. Peters condemning the living conditions typical in the communes: ‘there are earth floors, nikau palms and canvas roofs with bucket privies, open fires with wastes from sinks being discharged into the ground. I am surprised that cases of disease such as hepatitis and dysentery have not occurred- the standard of the housing is conducive to such an outbreak’.”<sup>154</sup> However, as Scott goes on to relate, not all were hostile. A Mr S. J. Brindle leapt to their defence: “The reason they have set themselves up like this is they are fed up with our sick society. Many of them are well educated. When you consider the privations they have put themselves to, it says much for their guts and determination.”<sup>155</sup> New Zealand hippies may have had detractors in the media, but usually they had defenders too.

Like many subjects in this study Pipi had travelled overseas before he went back-to-the-land: “When I came back to New Zealand I discovered we were living on a beautiful South Pacific island. And then I heard rumours land was cheap up this way. Why would you sentence yourself to living in a city when all of this is available?”<sup>156</sup> Mark Scott now sees Pipi and others like him as having brought in much needed new ideas and creativity. In 1970 it seemed the Hokianga was “destined for nothing but decay.” Then came the hippies, bringing new initiative. Scott sees their influence in art galleries, pottery and woodcarving studios, yoga retreats “and other creative venues dotted around the harbour.” He argues that their ideas and their energy helped to prepare the Hokianga for a tourist boom. The Abel Tasman benefited

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<sup>150</sup> Jones, 1975, p.92

<sup>151</sup> Jones, 1975, p.97

<sup>152</sup> I visited in 1970, and slept in the ‘Jerusalem Hotel’. There was no charge, nor was there any maintenance.

<sup>153</sup> Quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>154</sup> New Zealand Geographic

<sup>155</sup> Here cultural capital, being ‘well educated’, is clearly seen from outside as important in relation to the hippie way of life.

<sup>156</sup> Quoted in Scott, Mark, *Hippies to the rescue*.

from the hippies too. Yirka: “I reckon we were probably the first people who used blueberries in cakes. There was a local grower here. We worked really hard. There wasn’t Abel Tasman like we know it now. Tourism hadn’t started; we were probably a part of starting it.”

Tourists who came to gawp at hippies were the problem at Jerusalem: “you could go to sleep and you’d wake up and there’d be people taking photographs of you, we were getting through in the weekends a hundred to two hundred people; it was more like a zoo – come and look at the hippies!”<sup>157</sup> Tourists were never any part of Baxter’s plan; his path was never a materialistic one. He wanted his ‘Nga Mokai’ tribe to learn the Maori kaupapa: that they belonged to land not it to them .<sup>158</sup>

For Jane N. the connection with Maori at Long Louis was of primary importance. “The Maori people up there are still very connected to the land. And they’re living a very authentic way of life. They’re right by the beach, they go down and get their kaimoana; they’ve got a connected way of life with the land. And in a way we were experiencing that at Long Louis. But we were all Pakeha; it wasn’t the same, but it was a way of connecting into that.”

Hippies like Jane N. were keen to learn from Maori, and so were Pakeha writers and thinkers like Baxter and Tim Jones.<sup>159</sup> And many populist modern texts now look away from urban and industrial realities in an attempt re-invent a ‘better’ pre-industrial society.<sup>160</sup> In North America, Australia and New Zealand, first peoples have an intimate recent link to such societies. Increasingly that link is being shared. Newton believes Jerusalem was part of starting this.<sup>161</sup>

Jones questions whether people in New Zealand’s intentional communities were interested in Maori at all, and says the ones she knew were apolitical.<sup>162</sup> It’s clear the founders of Long Louis were exploring tribal values; it’s clear that they engaged with Maori ones. It’s also clear they were political: Carol: “I’m in the Hokianga. I’m in a little blue house with a swing bridge on the Gorge Road, and I’m probably the only hippie alternative person in New Zealand – in my mind anyway. And right next door to me, into this old abandoned house move all these

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<sup>157</sup> Rhys Green, quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010.

<sup>158</sup> Jenkin, pp.26-27

<sup>159</sup> Jones, 1975, pp. 11-20

<sup>160</sup> e.g. J.R.R. Tolkien, : *The Lord of The Rings*, 1955; James Cameron, *Avatar*, 2009

<sup>161</sup> ‘Nga Mokai’ came to know “the true potential of a bicultural partnership”. (*The Double Rainbow*, p.197)

<sup>162</sup> Jones, 2011, pp.48-49: “I argue that in general, the people who chose to live an alternative lifestyle were not influenced by Māori communalism. Rather ... I assert that they were apolitical.”

Americans: Len Prager and the Prager boys, and his daughter, and this kid Treefoot. They were refugees from the bomb; strong politically minded people, and well educated.”<sup>163</sup>

### **Tahunanui and Famagusta**

Jones writes of Tahunana from first-hand knowledge and at length.<sup>164</sup> John says he moved there at the end of 1973; accordingly it was, with Marahau, Famagusta and Teal Valley, among the first of Tasman Bay’s communities.<sup>165</sup> Dave: “Marahau was already an established and establishing concept, well known. It might have even been the inspiration for Tahunana. We were closely associated at that level.”

John sees Tahunana as the starting point of various communities: “From that core came the Graham, Waiatawhenua, a lot of influence spread out from there. People went there, and then the Ahuahu happened, and the migration up to the Coromandel. Tahunana was a very pivotal place.”

Cheryl knew Gus in Christchurch in 1971, before he moved to Famagusta. She went on to deliver a baby of his there in 1975. By 1978 the property had changed hands; it’s now the Neudorf Winery. Cheryl: “they were all artists, so that was their main thing. Gus was such a well-known shoemaker that he was making and selling shoes through orders. There were three couples, and probably other people that came and went.”

### **Wilderland**

I argue Wilderland is best seen as a hybrid, marrying Beeville’s anarchistic principles and work ethic with open-land ideas that came from the US. Though *Living in Utopia* lists Wilderland as a community in 1965,<sup>166</sup> I think the hybrid I’m suggesting didn’t really come about until the 1970s. During the later 1960s there were no doubt working guests, but can a family, by hosting guests, be seen as a community? Jones mentions Beeville’s struggles with consensus, and observes: “it seems surprising that Dan and Edith would consider relinquishing ownership of their land a second time.”<sup>167</sup> Tim Jones writes in *A Hard Won Freedom* that in the nine years before his 1974 visit several thousand people had stayed at

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<sup>163</sup> For Tim Shadbolt and every other visible participant, including subjects in this study the 1970s communes were political statements. Even 1980s alternative communities were radical, in that they tolerated or encouraged public nudity, illegal drugs and disregard for building codes. I argue that a lived ‘alternative’ cannot be apolitical .

<sup>164</sup> Jones, 2011, pp. 83-85

<sup>165</sup> John: “I was an anarchist, we’re talking 1971 and 72. And then, in 1973 I think, I met Betsy. We lived first in a community at Teal Valley with our friend Gordy, then we moved down to Kaikoura and lived there, and then we came back to Tahunana and lived there from 1973 until 1978

<sup>166</sup> Sargisson and Sargent, p.122

<sup>167</sup> Jones, 2011, p.136

Wilderland: “for some period of time”. He adds that Dan and Edith might, if things got crowded, ask new-arrivals to limit their stays. This suggests that some guests were seen as semi-permanent, but shows the property was not quite ‘open’ then.<sup>168</sup>

Sargisson and Sargent cite ‘The Wilderland Manifesto’, which was evidently posted at a community entrance not long after Jones visited in 1974. It says: “much dissatisfaction with present day society exists and there is a widespread feeling that a new society must be created”. It goes on to suggest that this can only come about through “initiative in the individual.”<sup>169</sup> This seems clear evidence of an intentional community with anarchist ideals.

Inez remembers Wilderland in 1976, by which time unproductive visitors could just ‘hang out’. She saw it then as very much a hierarchy: “there were the people right at the top who were very close to Dan, there was a sort of middle group, and then there were a lot of people from Auckland who were just hanging out, including drug addicts.”

### **The Ohu Scheme**

When David Young discussed the Ohu Scheme in 1979 in *The New Zealand Listener*, there were just three Ohu left.<sup>170</sup> Sargisson and Sargent believe the bureaucrats killed off the scheme, and may be right.<sup>171</sup> But it had been a bold idea that sparked huge interest.

Stephanie: “I went down to the original Ohu Scheme meeting in Wellington. I can see it to this day. The Defence Minister with his white shirtsleeves rolled up, and there were all these young people perched in the trees! I remember him saying, ‘We want to create this scheme where you young people can do your own thing, a bit like a kibbutz; we want to make Crown land available.’ And there was this ‘Wow!’ It was the one government where we young people felt ‘they’re actually on our side’.” This, like the freeing of Auckland’s Albert Park, says quite a lot about how the relationship New Zealand hippies had with our authorities differed enormously from that of US hippies with US authorities. Buckshot was not fired at radicals in Auckland’s Albert Park, Armed soldiers were not used to contain student protest here, and our authorities did not use bulldozers to flatten communes, which was the fate of Morningstar in 1971. New Zealand didn’t even have the draft, and well before it launched the Ohu Scheme the Labour government had sent a frigate to ‘bear silent witness’ to the ‘shame’ of nuclear tests in the Pacific.

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<sup>168</sup> Jones, 1975, p.75

<sup>169</sup> Sargisson and Sargent, p. 126

<sup>170</sup> Young, ‘Then there were three.’

<sup>171</sup> Sargisson and Sargent, pp. 42-46

When Baxter died in late 1972 New Zealand mourned him as a cherished son, which must have caused a lot of 'straight' New Zealanders, including Maori, to think more favourably of Jerusalem. Kirk is considered to have first conceived the idea of 'Kibbutzim' for New Zealand young people as early as mid-1973, and Matiu Rata, then Minister of Lands, announced it as an Ohu Scheme soon afterwards, perhaps implying with a Maori name that such a scheme could be bicultural.

Not many Ohu actually got off the ground, perhaps because a lot of people felt, like Stephanie, that governments should not to be counted on. The three surviving Ohu Young described in 1979 were Earth Extract, Sunburst, and Ahuahu. Eventually they failed too, but Kathy thinks the Ohu scheme was an encouraging development: "We all went to the Ohu meetings out in Lower Hutt, and I think that coalesced a lot of airy-fairy ideas into thinking more about finding some land."

### **Karuna Falls**

I would need to write another paper at least as long as this in order to achieve a useful history of Karuna Falls. In *Keeping it Together* Jones quotes one subject as saying: "You know community when you come across it".<sup>172</sup> I'll let Karuna Falls people speak for themselves.

Joanna: "In spite of all our shortcomings, I think we've done something useful and are still making the attempt to be accepting of each other and work cooperatively. I am still hopeful and optimistic that we will make it through the succession to the next generations."

Kathi: "There was very little of a drug culture, whereas both other communities I'd been in had quite a drug culture and that really wasn't my thing. I think at its core there have been a group of people here, from day one, who have been on a bit of a spiritual path, and I think that makes a huge difference."

### **Nambassa**

Nambassa 1978 was a peak experience for several people in this study who were there: Yirka: "It was like 'Wow! I am 'the chosen one' to be here'. It was amazing, like coming home." Jane N: "Corben Simpson from Blerta was singing 'Dance all around the world' with these Hare Krishna people, and the energy was electrifying." It was also a meeting place; Joanna

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<sup>172</sup> Jones, 2011, p.13

met the Gaskins there, and they invited her to have her baby at ‘The Farm’ in Tennessee. And at Nambassa she connected with Karuna Falls Community.

Kathi believes Nambassa gave a lot of impetus to communes in the later 1970s: “It was a set of festivals put on by Peter Terry and Fred Older, a whole group of us really. The first was at Ngauruawahia, outside of Hamilton, then it went to Waihi and we had a number there, and out of Nambassa there was another group of people who got together and staged the Sweetwaters festivals. It wasn’t just the music; it was about everything else as well. You’d have mime artists, fire-pois, all that sort of stuff; people on stilts, workshops on adobe, all of that.”

The Nambassa movement began in 1976, with a newsletter called “Nambassa Sun”: “We are using up our natural resources at an ever increasing rate and they are not going to last for ever,” it warned. “Consider this and ask yourself, “Is this a natural way of life, is this how we were meant to live?” ... Now, more than ever before, there is a need and a growing desire for people to learn to live outside the collapsing economic and social system, with its greed and avarice, and it’s denial of individuality: Peter Terry.”

His message found a ready audience, and music festivals began, including workshops on survivalism self-sufficiency, and alternative medicine. The movement grew, and staged two very successful three-day festivals. The first in January 1978 attracted an audience of twenty-five thousand while the second, in January 1979, attracted over seventy-five thousand.

Swami Satchidananda, who had previously opened Woodstock, opened Nambassa 79 with the announcement that big change was going on: “You are the people who are going to make the new world. The new age is called the Aquarian Age. There was only music in Woodstock. Here you see the various spiritual groups coming together and elevating our consciousness.”<sup>173</sup>

Among such groups at Nambassa in 1979 were many Rajneesh sannyasins. A shift was certainly occurring, as the new age ushered in more spiritually based communities. Maureen and Jan would move from Tasman Bay to a Rajneesh community in Wellington in 1981. Tui Community had its beginnings at a weeklong new-age gathering held in the Baton Valley in January 1983.

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<sup>173</sup> Jones, Judith, and Broadly, Colin, (eds.) 1979

It had been hoped Nambassa would become another large community. ‘Nambassa Mother Centre’ was to be the site, a four hundred acre farm north of Waihi where Nambassa had staged its two big festivals. Details of this appear in *Nambassa, a new direction*, and in 1978 there were fifteen members.<sup>174</sup> But plans collapsed when it became impossible to buy the farm after the 1981 Nambassa festival made a loss of \$100,000; only 14,500 of an expected audience of 20,000 turned up for it.<sup>175</sup> In the new age New Zealanders turned out to be less interested.

Perhaps the festivals themselves were massive though short-lived communities. Sargent has written that in designated spaces, short-term alternative realities are often possible. He adds: “in every performance, be it music, dance, theatre or some forms of public art, there are at least two things going on, one among the performers and one in the audience. In rare cases the two bond together, and a truly utopian moment is created.”<sup>176</sup> Subjects in this study describe something of that kind as having happened at Nambassa festivals.



Nambassa Festival, 1979

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<sup>174</sup> Jones, Judith, and Broadly, Colin, pp.132-135

<sup>175</sup> Sargent, 1997

<sup>176</sup> Sargent, 2010, p.48; One name for such a designated space is a temporary autonomous zone, or T.A.Z.

## Who were these hippies anyway?

*“We had the ability, for that short time frame in history, to really question everything, fearlessly, without reserve and without restraint.”* Tim Shadbolt, quoted in Salmon, Dirty Bloody Hippies, 2010

Subject	Date of birth	Gender	Ethnicity	Birth	Tertiary academic?	Travelled outside NZ by 1980?	Lived in how many communities?	Still lives in a community?
Alan	1942	Male	NZ	NZ	no	no	2	yes
Carol	1948	Female	UK	UK	yes	yes	1	no
Cheryl	1953	Female	UK	NZ	yes	no	4	no
Dave	1946	Male	Canada	Canada	no	yes	1	no
Inez	1954	Female	Netherlands	NZ	yes	yes	3	no
Jan	1942	Male	Netherlands	Netherlands	yes	yes	3	yes
Jane N.	1951	Female	UK	UK	yes	no	2	yes
Jane R.	1955	Female	NZ	NZ	no	yes	3	no
Joanna	1947	Female	UK	UK	yes	yes	3	yes
John	1945	Male	NZ	NZ	yes	yes	4	yes
Julian	1950	Male	UK	Malaya	no	yes	2	no
Kathi	1955	Female	NZ	NZ	yes	yes	3	yes
Maureen	1945	Female	NZ	NZ	yes	yes	3	no
Patrick	1946	Male	UK	UK	yes	yes	3	yes
Sally	1961	Female	NZ	NZ	no	no	6	yes
Stephanie	1950	Female	NZ	NZ	yes	yes	2	yes
Stephen	1948	Male	UK	UK	yes	yes	1	yes
Wayne	1949	Male	NZ	NZ	yes	yes	2	yes
Yirka	1951	Male	Czech	Czech	no	yes	3	no

Newton suggests New Zealand hippies of the baby boom expressed ‘disdain’ for things their parents valued, and did so more than any other cohort has before or since.<sup>177</sup> I think that generally children think and act in ways indicative of parents’ deepest insights and concerns, especially where parents aren’t able to adequately voice these themselves. These children all grew up in the cold war.

Kathi remarks on this, and its effect: “Two minutes to midnight”? That was there. There was a sense of going back to the land to learn the skills so that you could survive if anything

<sup>177</sup> Newton, p.67

happened. The whole nuclear thing was definitely very big for people I was involved with who went back to the land.”

Vietnam was widely seen as an escalating and unnecessary war. During the late 1960s there was an almost complete consensus among popular young mass-media poets and musicians: they opposed that war, and sang and spoke to that effect with great eloquence.<sup>178</sup> Great numbers of young people mobilised against the war in Vietnam and against war in general.<sup>179</sup> Jane N. believed the hippie revolution was “against the power of the system to create these situations. There were all those images of hippies putting flowers at the end of soldier’s guns. And people like John Lennon and Yoko Ono, using their fame to bring people’s awareness to this, saying ‘give peace a chance’.”

I was eleven when, in 1962, I found my parents listening white faced to the kitchen radio. They told me that the Cuba Missile Crisis had brought us to the brink of nuclear war.<sup>180</sup> That seriously frightened me, and I was frightened more when three years later I was taken to ‘*The War Game*’, screened by a local peace group in a Palmerston North theatre.<sup>181</sup> It’s hard to overstate how these experiences shaped the way I saw the world. If an industrial society could lead to nuclear war, then I would not be part of an industrial society. I was receptive to my parent’s deepest values, not disdainful in the least. They hated war as well, and had already been through one. I read their copy of *No Ordinary Sun* in 1964.<sup>182</sup>

Gardner has called the hippies ‘children of prosperity’.<sup>183</sup> I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, and don’t remember them as all that prosperous. When I left home I turned my back on an industrial society, but not because I was a pampered child of prosperity.<sup>184</sup> The hippies were the children of the holocaust; the hippies were the children of Hiroshima.

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<sup>178</sup> Wadleigh, Michael *Woodstock: three days of love and peace*: This movie, screened in 1970, is like a summary of US hippie aspirations and ideology.

<sup>179</sup> “Things started to come apart in the mid to late 60s, especially with NZs involvement in the Vietnam war. Millions of people died in that war, and we just saw it as so important to bring it to a halt as quickly as we could.” Roger Fowler, quoted in *Dirty Bloody Hippies*.

<sup>180</sup> My parents were Christian pacifists and had been young idealists when World War Two began. They were extremely frightened by the Cuban Missile Crisis, and more fearful of Kennedy than Khrushchev. They went on to oppose the US war in Vietnam.

<sup>181</sup> A 1965 television documentary-style film by Peter Watkins about the likely effects of a nuclear war. It contained these lines from a Stephen Vincent Benét poem: "Oh, where are you coming from, soldier, gaunt soldier/ With weapons beyond any reach of my mind/ With weapons so deadly the world must grow older/ And die in its tracks, if it does not turn kind?"

<sup>182</sup> Hone Tuwhare, who had been in post-Hiroshima Japan, published *No Ordinary Sun in 1964*: Tree let your naked arms fall/ nor extend vain entreaties to the radiant ball./ This is no gallant monsoon's flash,/ no dashing trade wind's blast./ The fading green of your magic/ emanations shall not make pure again/ these polluted skies . . . for this/ is no ordinary sun.

<sup>183</sup> Gardner, 1980.

<sup>184</sup> I am a little puzzled by the argument that hippies were ‘the children of prosperity’. My memory is that for the sixty years I’ve lived so far, each generation has been wealthier than the preceding one.

## The sample

Above are listed all the subjects in this study who, as adults, were involved in 1970s rural communities.<sup>185</sup> I cannot claim with any certainty that they are typical. Most of these people still live in intentional communities, and so this sample favours those that were and are the most committed members. But I see this as an advantage, since the most committed members were and are the most important and influential.

Few in this sample were especially wealthy in material terms, but most did come from comfortably-off families, and almost all had travelled overseas. More than two thirds had been to university or teacher's college.

Apart from Sally everyone was either born during World War Two or in the following decade, and this supports my view that hippies were children of World War Two and of the Cold War. Ten subjects were born in New Zealand and nine overseas. Only eight are ethnic New Zealanders.<sup>186</sup> All those who came from overseas were strongly influenced by war.

Carol, Dave, Stephen Joanna Patrick and Yirka all came as adults, at least partly because they saw New Zealand as a safer place to live in a nuclear age: Patrick: "I knew there was a risk. You never knew when it would happen." The families of Julian, Jan and Inez suffered directly during World War Two. Jane N's parents were caught up in the war as well. All parents of this generation were to some extent involved.

Time spent at University, Art School or Teacher's College is seen as tertiary education. Thirteen of nineteen have it, and through it what Bourdieu calls 'institutional' cultural capital.<sup>187</sup> The travel quotient in this sample is exceptional. Fifteen had travelled overseas, just four had not; let's look at each of those: Alan declined to travel when he had the chance: "I never volunteered for anything outside the country. A lot of my friends went to Vietnam, and a lot of them are paying the price, the ones that are still alive." But Alan is a hunter, and he knew the wilderness.<sup>188</sup> As a young mum Jane N. took her baby to Long Louis. She subsequently hitch-hiked between Northland and Tasman Bay with two small children, which shows she

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<sup>185</sup> All lived in 1970s communities during the 1970s except Sally and Joanna. Both of these women came into them in 1980. However, Joanna was at Nambassa 1978, which was in some ways an intentional community, and writes: "I certainly identified as belonging in intentional community from about 1972. Hence going to the Aquarius Festival (a 10-day experiment in community living, which we had been planning for months in advance)". Sally represents a younger group who went to communes after leaving school. John, now her partner, was included as I knew that he had been at both Tahuna and Renaissance. His early memories of people like Archie Hislop and Cheryl have been very helpful.

<sup>186</sup> Inez's first language was Dutch

<sup>187</sup> Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital*, pp. 47-48, see electronic resources; Bourdieu distinguishes between economic capital, social capital and cultural capital.

<sup>188</sup> He left the army following a longer-than-expected hunting trip. He'd kept on searching for a missing mate without 'official leave'.

was a fearless traveller indeed. Cheryl's horse journeys were remarkable, and so was Sally's West Coast tour, with nothing but a backpack and a pair of boots. It's safe to say these people were all travellers.

Travel builds up what Bourdieu calls 'embodied' cultural capital. He writes: "embodied capital, external wealth converted into an integral part of the person, into a habitus, cannot be transmitted instantaneously". In other words embodied cultural capital is non-transferable.<sup>189</sup> You get to take it with you anywhere you go, even if you decide to live a life of voluntary simplicity.

I do not see this sample as defined by wealth, ethnic diversity or educational attainment, though all of these are evident; I see it as defined by cultural capital of all three kinds, 'embodied', 'social' and 'institutional'. Cultural capital has the ability to promote social mobility beyond economic means.

Did these people, who put their extraordinary cultural capital into forming intentional rural communities in New Zealand in the 1970s, have common goals and were those goals achieved? They hoped to live more peacefully and more communally. Like every way of life communal living has its ups and downs. However, I found no-one who regretted it, and in this sample more than half are still involved in it.

"One thing most educated Americans 'know' about communal utopias is that they invariably 'failed'", Wagner wrote.<sup>190</sup> And the accepted wisdom is that former hippies then became rampant materialists. But Miller says that in the US this was not the case: "Some literature ... has portrayed many former counterculturalists as upwardly mobile professionals who have exchanged their tie-dyes for power suits. Our experience, however, was exactly the opposite."<sup>191</sup>

Miller found subjects "mainly by word of mouth (and modem) from the informal networks of current and former communards". I did the same. He thinks, as I do, that the most deeply dedicated counterculturalists were those who joined the communes. He concludes: "They were the ones who tried to live their ideals as fully as possible, and those ideals seem largely not to have vanished." He then quotes Lieberman, another US researcher: "With some

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<sup>189</sup> Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital*, pp. 47-48. see electronic resources

<sup>190</sup> Webb, p.115

<sup>191</sup> Miller, p.236

exceptions, the people I have been able to locate, regardless of occupation or economic situation, share a view that is community orientated.”<sup>192</sup>

The people in this sample mirror Miller’s US research. They were and are reformers and idealists; their values, on the whole, have hardly changed. As young adults they had the confidence and the ability to choose. By choosing as they did they made a difference to our whole society.

### **Dreamers and wanderers**

Miller has said that US 1960s-era hippies were romantics, whose commune building reached “tsunami-like proportions”.<sup>193</sup> Gardner believes they were, “one of the leading edges of a generational revolt the likes of which ... perhaps the world had never seen before.”<sup>194</sup> Both men believe that this extraordinary revolt was caused by post-war comfort and prosperity. I see it as much more related to the threat of nuclear war.

Jones mentions fantasy, and notes the influence that Tolkien had on hippiedom: “*The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) was popular within the alternative scene in the early 1970s and was evident in names adopted by people and places. Nelson’s ‘coffee shop/hangout’ in the early 1970s was called *Middle Earth*, for example.”<sup>195</sup> I think that Tolkien’s trilogy is worth a closer look. Tolkien was in the trenches during World War One, and wrote much of *The Lord of the Rings* during World War Two. Some parts of it were sent in letters to his son, then serving in North Africa.<sup>196</sup> All major fiction writers can perhaps be seen as setting off on vision quests; Tolkien’s ‘war epic’ has been hugely influential since it first appeared in print, though in the early 1960s in New Zealand it was largely overlooked.

Those who unite to form ‘the fellowship’ actively strive to forge a shared identity. Each has to undertake a quest, the only way to stop an evil tyrant from enslaving all ‘free people’ and destroying the environment. War offers little or no hope of final victory, and Sam and Frodo, the main characters, do not approve of it: “It was Sam’s first view of a battle of Men against Men, and he did not like it much. He was glad that he could not see the dead face. He

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid, p. 237

<sup>193</sup> in Jones, 2011, p. 16

<sup>194</sup> Gardner, 1978, p.4

<sup>195</sup> Jones, 2011, pp. 48-49

<sup>196</sup> Carpenter, pp. 88 – 94; pp 189-203

wondered what the man's name was and where he came from; and if he was really evil of heart, or what lies or threats had led him on the long march from his home ...”<sup>197</sup>

But it is not just an anti-war story, it is religious, and its central message is: ‘Hope seems impossible, but you must go on hoping anyway. There *is* a purpose; those who seem like common people have a major part to play in it’. Tolkien was not postmodern in the least.

Hippies believed in Gaia, Mother Earth, and in an even larger ‘cosmic consciousness’.

Jane N: “I believe in a vast intelligence in the universe. I don't believe in a random big bang theory. Well, maybe that's how it happened, but I believe there's a force of intelligence behind that.”

I was extremely passionate about the trilogy, which I devoured over and over, from age eleven up. Tolkien had not yet reached the local bookshops, so my parents ordered the three books for me from England as successive birthday presents. I'd found them in the library, and for a while I wondered if I was their only audience. But when I got to Moonsilver in Golden Bay aged twenty-three, its founder Piers had named its largest creek the Silverlode.<sup>198</sup> So I believed I'd come to the right place.

As I look back, my search for hope was just as much a quest as Frodo's was. I also was a dreamer, and a wanderer, there were a lot of us: Olive Jones: “I was a teenager in Tauranga, a fresh school leaver, and a person who didn't know what was going to happen next, so I hitchhiked to the South Island. I liked the idea of the wide open Southern Alps and big open rivers and it looked like a romantic place to go, so I hitch-hiked down there and ended up at a place called Tahuna Farm.”<sup>199</sup>

### **Outsiders and individualists**

Gardner regards the hippie commune builders as “individualists more than communalists.”<sup>200</sup>

Alan was certainly not one to take an unjust punishment: “The Camp Adjutant had me marched in. I was a sergeant in those days, so it's quite difficult to discipline a sergeant. He lined me up and he said ‘Will you take my punishment?’ and I said ‘No’.”

Punishment, or the threat of punishment, is least successful against individualists. Julian was expelled from school because he wouldn't cut his hair: “I Brylcreamed it all back, but as soon

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<sup>197</sup> Tolkien, J.R.R., p.269

<sup>198</sup> After the river running through Lothlorien in Middle Earth.

<sup>199</sup> quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>200</sup> Gardner, 1978, p. 245

as you went outside - the physical education teacher was a real military man, and the wind in Wellington blew it all down over my ears - they'd freak out and belt me. I got the cane once from the headmaster. And they kicked me out in the end, because of my hair. That really blew me away.”

For Archie Hislop at Puketa and for Dan Hansen at Wilderland, true individualism led to anarchy. They felt that nothing gave the state the right to dominate the lives of individuals. ‘A new society’, as Wilderland’s manifesto proclaimed, could only come about, “through vitality, energy, constant awareness and initiative in the individual.”<sup>201</sup> This view found strong adherents among commune builders; John thinks that anarchy and self-realisation are pretty much the same thing: “close together.” Anarchy often was the guiding principle on 1970s communities, and that explains why some had few if any rules.

These subjects often felt themselves to be outsiders too. Jane N: “I was alienated from the moment we stepped into NZ, I guess.” Jane R: “I was starting to feel rebellious about institutions, the hierarchy. I was starting to get that idea then; ‘freedom’.” So meeting others like themselves was wonderful. Sally: “I was always on the outside of the high school culture. The day after I finished school I came to this area to pick raspberries, and that’s when I started to encounter the hippie community. And then there was solidarity. It was like recognition: ‘I am not alone. There are other people that share my values’.”

A sense of alienation from society and its main goals, combined with strong togetherness and shared identity in a youth counter-culture led to the tidal wave of 1970s communities. Kathi: “I was exposed to a number of exciting things, I was only about eighteen or nineteen, and I was living in a flat with people who were going to change the world.” Maureen: “We were looking at how to change things, and how to find a way to move forward, with more honesty about our values.” Stephen: “To me a hippy was someone who was not the least bit interested in the offerings of the establishment; who had had an insight that there was way, way, *way* more to life than the status quo that was being offered.”

## **Travel**

As noted earlier, this sample is made up of travelers. Some went adventuring by road, or through New Zealand wilderness. There was no shortage of adventure there. Cheryl: “Heaps of adventures, amazing adventures. I think people were surprised sometimes. They wondered

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<sup>201</sup> Sargisson and Sargent, p. 126

where I'd arrived from." For those who crossed the world, and in this sample they are the majority, crossing of cultural divides led to adventures of a different kind.

Wayne: "When I got to Australia I was introduced to a lot of alternative people who were moving from Sydney and Melbourne up to Kuranda, north of Cairns. The first movements were starting to happen up there. There was a lot of questioning happening as well, about directions: who we were, what we were doing. Eastern philosophy was also starting to tickle around the edges; that there were different ways of being, different spiritual paths." Jan: "We were given a language course, so we were reasonably fluent in Indonesian, and here we were living in a totally different culture. I was in Java for almost a year and a half." Kathi: "I travelled with a girlfriend in India, and that was good. It taught me that culturally, at that time, we were quite narrow minded in New Zealand. You're suddenly exposed to another world - wow! Total culture shock. And having to learn cultural tolerance, really quickly, otherwise you don't get by."

### **The peace movement**

Stephen: "A lot of my personal friends were draft dodgers from the States. They had a choice: To go and fight a war against someone they had no problems with, and risk their life, or drop their identities, sneak across the border into Canada, and live completely outside the law, knowing that if they were caught they'd be deported and conscripted." Yirka: "I wasn't going to serve any army."

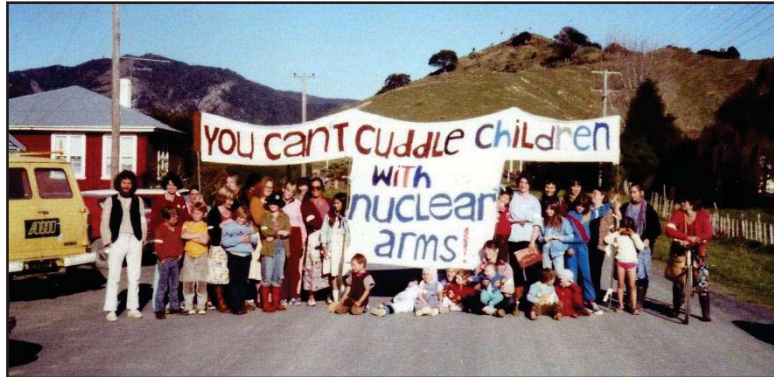
New Zealand did not have conscription. Professional soldiers either volunteered to fight in Vietnam, or, as in Alan's case, they didn't, in which case they didn't have to go. Hippies from overseas believed New Zealand was a safer place, and they had reason for believing it. As has been said Kirk's Labour government protested nuclear tests as long ago as 1973. New Zealand's peace movement was strongly focussed against nuclear weapons and the threat of nuclear war.

Most hippies in New Zealand were committed to non-violence; in that respect there is some continuity with what began at Riverside, the only earlier alternative community to last until their time. Riverside always was involved in peace protest, and this continued in the 1970s.<sup>202</sup> Other alternative communities followed that lead, some members playing leading roles in anti-war and anti-nuclear demonstrations and campaigns.

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<sup>202</sup> Rain, 1991, p.177

Gerard Hindmarsh remembers how one of the Truxton's visits galvanised Onekaka hippies into protest action: "We were all sitting round at the Onekaka Hall, when the Truxton came in, and we were all thinking 'What can we do about the US Truxton, with its nuclear power and nuclear weapons on board', and we felt so strongly about it we thought 'well maybe we could make the hall nuclear free' And everyone in Golden Bay laughed at us, but within four years it was the most popular policy of the Labour government, and it just showed to me: We were only a small group, but we actually had some clout."<sup>203</sup>



Anti-nuclear protest on International Women's Day, Colville, 1984

Encouraged by its hippies, the whole of Golden Bay turned anti-nuclear in 1986. Carol and Simon Parkinson Jones of Rainbow Valley had begun a Golden Bay Peace Group in 1982, after Carol saw an anti-nuclear display at a Nile River Festival and became determined to do whatever she could to prevent nuclear war.<sup>204</sup> The Peace Group held a public meeting and petitioned for all of Golden Bay to become a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. The petition won overwhelming support, and the local council declared Golden Bay a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in 1986. Simon: "This was something that we believed in strongly, and fortunately a lot of other people did too."<sup>205</sup> Hippies have made a major contribution to New Zealand's anti-nuclear stance. As Hindmarsh says, they had a lot of clout.

## Music and theatre

Gardner believes music was more important than any other electronic media in mobilizing the commune movement: "Through the magic of electronics and the purchasing power of middle-

<sup>203</sup> quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010; The Truxton visited first in 1976 and then again in 1980 and 1982.

<sup>204</sup> Nile River was a rock and alternative music Festival held near Westport in March 1982.

<sup>205</sup> In Perkins, Jack, see electronic resources.

class youth, music created by the young for the young carried the message more persuasively and with more feeling than television ever did, especially when the communal living arrangements of many of the rock groups carrying the message, such as the Grateful Dead or the Jefferson Airplane, became commonly known.”<sup>206</sup>

Recorded songs may be the most pervasive and persuasive of mass-media texts; singers like Dylan and The Beatles set ideology to music, and they had enormous influence. Stephen: “There was so much new music. And it was obvious who was on acid, who was on the new wave of consciousness.” Carol: “I was quite influenced by that music and poetry, as a younger person. And I think maybe that’s one thing that made me start looking at alternatives.” Inez: “Every guy I was with loved music. The Beatles were a great influence; Bob Dylan too.” Jane N: “We were playing Fleetwood Mac, all dancing around in a circle, and we were just getting so high and connected.” Yirka: “Music was probably one reason I left Czechoslovakia: the Beatles and the Rolling Stones.” Julian: “The Stones to me were ideal. I saw the world was in a pretty crazy time; really strict on one side, and really free on the other.”

Once people moved back-to-the land, they made their own music. Julian was a good guitarist, which attracted Inez when they met at Wilderland. At Sunday Creek, without mains power, singing and instrumental music filled the long evenings, whether around the fire or by candle-light, and the commune had its own band; the same was true at other communities.

As the 1970s began, home-grown New Zealand music went on tour, with Bruno Lawrence and Blerta, eventually reaching Australia. Joanna: “I’d been at the Aquarius Festival at Nimbin in 1973. Blerta was the main band. It was an alternative living festival, it was an experiment and it was awesome.” Alan had family connection with Blerta, through which he first came into contact with dope. Perhaps inspired by Blerta’s example, other travelling shows sprang into life. Stephanie: “In 1974 we toured the Mommaba Road Show around the Coromandel Peninsula, fifty singers and musicians.”

Mommaba was Moehau Magic Mountain Band, from Moehau Community. After their tour they staged a celebration for neighbouring communities and friends. A strange three-storey structure was put up, with a large climbing net and stairs to nowhere. “And what’s more,” said the Sniff, peering over a nearby rock, and as usual starting her story from the middle, “I rode on the Moehau Magic Aerial Railway – you can’t see it of course,” she added hastily. ... It connects with the sky, sea and land all at once, and you can only see it if you start riding it

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<sup>206</sup> Gardner, 1978, p.17

and you can only ride it if you start seeing it.”<sup>207</sup> By then the Coromandel communards were riding it. Through music and theatre they were presenting ideology as art, and drawing in a host of eager followers. The lists above show fifteen communes founded in the Coromandel in the 1970s.

Aerial Railway went on to captivate Nambassa’s crowds in 1978 and 1979, and did apparently become a D.I.Y. utopian performance space where barriers between participants melted away: “The three days culminated in a monster jam with about 200 people on stage all night until 11 a.m. the next day – the connection was complete: the audience became the performer.”<sup>208</sup>



<sup>207</sup> Jones, Judith, and Broadly, Colin, p. 88

<sup>208</sup> *ibid.*, p.97

## Drugs

Hippies were known for using drugs, and many did. The ones most widely used were dope and LSD. A lot of hippies may have drunk as well, but in New Zealand that was never an alternative. One obvious advantage of dope was the potential for self-sufficiency. Alan: “The reason I got into dope was because you could grow it yourself rather than have to go and spend money on it”; although he adds he now prefers a scotch or a good wine.

Drugs were around at festivals, and were part of the atmosphere at many though not all, communities. At Marahau, they were, but not at Sunday Creek. Most LSD and probably a lot of other drugs came in from overseas, and some no doubt came in with hippie travellers, who were ingenious and not too worried about silly laws. Jan: “We’d got this big Johnson’s Baby Powder tin, filled it with grass and put powder on the top. We knew it was much better grass than was available in New Zealand or Australia.” LSD was believed by some to lead to higher states of consciousness. John: “We were into acid as a meditation, and we took such doses that we weren’t communicating with each other, we were just sitting in the corner.”

Julian felt that drugs enhanced his creativity: “All the artists and musicians, way back, ... were into some sort of drug or alcohol. Because you lose yourself, and then a creative thing comes out.” Others just liked them and felt good when using them. Stephen: “We were absolutely trolleyed, we were so high. And we just had to walk across the street to the love in.” Dave: “We used to ride trains without a ticket, and as part of the adrenaline, swing off the doors when the conductors went by. People were doing all kinds of stuff. Talk about extreme drugs, adrenaline’s one of them, isn’t it?”

But then there was the downside, very evident at Wilderland; Inez: “we’d often sit and watch these drug and alcoholic people performing, they were just crazy. As it became a problem we’d have meetings and say, are we going to continue with these people coming in and really disrupting the place?” Not everyone knew when to stop, and sometimes ‘soft’ drugs led to harder ones. Drugs killed the dream for many, Gerard Hindmarsh says; “you’re not particularly communal when you’re into harder drugs. You’re more reclusive, you live in dark rooms, you don’t live in bright happy sunny times, going ‘free love’.”<sup>209</sup> In this sample the heavy drug users were the minority.

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<sup>209</sup> quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010.

At Marahau some members were ambivalent; Jane N: “I used to smoke, but I’ve never been addicted and I don’t like alcohol. It was always something other people did, and if they wanted to, that was ok.” Yirka: “One of my drug things is ‘never buy, never sell’. So if nobody gives it to me and I can’t grow it myself, I don’t do it.” But others did, and there were frightening raids, not just at Marahau. Hindmarsh remembers a police commissioner saying of Golden Bay: “we are up against hippies”.<sup>210</sup> “Iroquois helicopters are massive, and incredibly loud, and they would fly really low over the farm and the animals would go completely nuts, and the children were traumatised. It was actually a really frightening experience, especially for the children.”<sup>211</sup>

A few communities could actually give help in dealing with addictions. Kathi believes Karuna Falls was fortunate to never really have a drug culture, and when Wayne showed he had addiction problems there, he was confronted and advised he should face up to them: “I was approached by two of the women in the community, saying, ‘Wayne, your behaviour is not acceptable. You really need to do something; you have a major problem.’ Of course I was in denial about that, but it sowed the seed. It was basically alcohol, but it had been compounded by a lot of other drugs.”

## **Sexuality**

The early 1970s were the New Zealand era of free love, at least in the alternative movement. In Canada and the US it had begun a little earlier, and the contraceptive pill, which became available in 1960, may have facilitated it. Sex was freely available at many early US communes, and at some seems to have been almost mandatory; at Morningstar one teenage girl regarded it as part of the deal. “I was supposed to have sex with everyone” she later said.<sup>212</sup> Stephen remembers the late 60s scene in Canada: “Free love was part of the thing, exploring sexuality with different partners. It was available; it was definitely part of the scene.” Perhaps the British miniskirt helped raised the sexual temperatures. Joanna: “During 1967, every week we had to take our skirts up another inch. When I went with my friend to the States our skirts were no bigger than belts, really. And we were way ahead; they hadn’t reached that level in the States.” Maureen and Jan began their open marriage in Java in 1969. Maureen: “There was this whole idea of having a really open marriage, which was what both Jan and I wanted to do. It was all about expanding consciousness and finding new ways.”

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<sup>210</sup> quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>211</sup> Olive Jones, quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>212</sup> Miller, p.48

As they look back, some wonder now if free love really was a good idea: Jane N: “When I started having relationships, at around the age of seventeen, I was right into the whole hippie free love ideal. But even though I kind of thought it was what you did, in retrospect I can see that it was an incredibly empty pursuit.” Inez: “I can remember coming back, and Jan and Maureen had split up. I went to stay in the White House. I was just turning twenty-one and I didn’t know what I was getting myself into. Everything was a bit out of control.”

The open marriage idea didn’t work for Jan, though he went on to try another kind of sexual freedom, with other sannyasins in India. Gerard Hindmarsh believes the free love of the 1970s was ideological: “The hippie era put relationships on the line. We were thrown way out of our comfort zones, and we decided to do it on the ideological level.”<sup>213</sup> His implication seems to be that in this case the ideology was flawed, since he goes on to say what came of it: “relationship break-ups and all that sort of stuff”.

Olive Jones thinks it was rejection of existing social norms: “There were people who thought that monogamy was terribly uptight and you could love more than one person at a time, so there was quite a lot of that going on. ... It was all part of this whole idea that we were rejecting the norms of society and we were kind of creating our own.”<sup>214</sup> During the 1970s many young women were rejecting social norms, which they considered oppressive. Joanna: “I rejected nuclear war, nuclear power and nuclear families. To me they were connected.” Marriage was seen as out-dated by some, though such ideas were seldom lasting ones. At Rainbow Valley, where there was ‘re-partnering’ in the mid-1970s, monogamy quite soon became the norm again.

For many years the norm was also nudity. Robyn: “We gardened with clothes off a lot, and we swum with no clothes.” Carol P: “I can remember once taking the children on a picnic, and I had no clothes on. And these poor men from the power board came up in a truck. And I just didn’t think anything of it.” Gerard: “You’d go to the beach and you’d take your clothes off. We never had clothes; I remember that. If you had a visitor you often wouldn’t put on clothes, as they came up the driveway, why would you?”<sup>215</sup> Yirka: “We lived with nudity. It didn’t make us more promiscuous.”

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<sup>213</sup> Gerard Hindmarsh, quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>214</sup> Olive Jones, quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>215</sup> quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

In many communes women looked for liberation through ‘equality’. Carol P: “women in our day were very interested in that whole collective thing to do with empowering ourselves. And the idea that we would be able to do what men can do. And for me personally there was quite a rejection of my own femaleness: wanting power.” Women in communes often wanted gender roles to change because they felt they were still doing more than their share of the dirty work. Olive: “It was the age-old thing; the women did most of the drudge.” <sup>216</sup>

Hippies had no particularly perfect recipe with which to overcome the age-old challenges of sexual difference. Sally: “When I was travelling down the West Coast, I just wanted a nice warm bed for the night a lot of the time, and I was always surprised that for men that was a hard thing; they always wanted more.” However, Hippies were as good as anyone at learning from mistakes and, often more adventurous in trying out new recipes.

### **Maori and Maoritanga**

Tim Jones devotes ten pages of *A hard Won Freedom* to what he evidently saw as an enlightened and communal Maoritanga. He notes the Ngāti Wai connection to the land, and was intrigued to hear that some Maori preferred old-style nikau whare to their modern ones. <sup>217</sup> Baxter presented his poetic view of Maori values to Nga Mokai at Jerusalem, which was the best-known commune of the early seventies. <sup>218</sup> His books of poetry concerning that experience, *Jerusalem Daybook* and *Autumn Testament*, were among a handful of distinctly New Zealand works that could be found in commune libraries up and down the country.

Newton tells how Jerusalem commune members, after Baxter’s death, learned Maori culture as they helped their hosts to renovate two local meeting houses. He also argues that Reef Point and Whenuakura Ohu each had a Maori Kaupapa. If this is true it’s likely to have permeated out to some extent, given the links between the communes of the 1970s. *The Double Rainbow* also tells of Maori members who were influential at Jerusalem and its two offshoots. <sup>219</sup>

Olive Jones is correct in saying that most commune members were non-Maori, especially in the south island, although a Maori member of Happisam was instrumental in the building of

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<sup>216</sup> quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>217</sup> Jones 1975, pp.11-18

<sup>218</sup> Newspaper and TV coverage inspired me to write to Baxter at Jerusalem in 1970, when I was nineteen, telling him of my survivalist plans and asking him to define community. He wrote back with poetic brevity: if people in one room all share one fag, they’re a community. He also said I would be welcome at Jerusalem. I went, walked up the Whanganui on a moonlit night to get there; Baxter wasn’t there. As I look back, that didn’t matter very much. It was my first experience of Maori hospitality on Maori land; it was important, and it planted something new in me.

<sup>219</sup> e.g. Milton Hohaia, Newton, p. 114

‘The Lodge’ at that community, and told me while the building was in progress that it would be a kind of meeting house. If hippies did have large amounts of ‘cultural capital’, that culture generally was the Western European one. A Maori hippie might have needed more: ‘bicultural capital’. I am not sure if Bourdieu has considered this, but I believe it must be common in mature bicultural societies. There were not many Maori hippies in the 1970s, as we were then a less mature bicultural society.

Sargisson and Sargent quote Brian, of Mamaki: “The influence of the Maori cannot be overestimated.”<sup>220</sup> Whatever is distinctive about New Zealand’s alternative communities must have a lot to do with Maori/Pakeha relationships spanning two centuries. Sargent found out in his research that Rainbow Valley has another name, Te Anatoki, which is also the name of ‘our’ river.<sup>221</sup> In 1990 we performed a pageant partly round that name, exploring what its meanings were for our community.



Te Anatoki (Rainbow Valley) Community Theatre, 1990.

Many communities, including Rainbow, have developed hui-style meetings to address difficult issues. I’ll leave the final word to an outsider who is less caught up in our bicultural experience. Joanna: “I think the reason communities are strong in NZ is because we’ve got Maori here. It’s totally embedded in the culture. That’s one of the reasons I love living in New Zealand.”

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<sup>220</sup> Sargisson and Sargent, p.114

<sup>221</sup> see *New Zealand Intentional Communities: A Research Guide*, 1997

## Religion and nature

The hippie movement wasn't really a religious movement, and this study confines itself to 'secular communities', meaning communities that aren't dedicated to any one religion.

Riverside began as an exclusively Christian community, but stopped being one during the 1970s.<sup>222</sup> A lot of hippies were distrustful of religion; some saw it as out of date. Julian: "I was out there looking at the world, Hindus, Muslims, Europeans, all different religions. You have a real insight into all these things if you look at them from outside. People who are indoctrinated can't seem to do that. They don't go forward; they're stuck back two thousand years." Also those drawn to anarchy tended to be 'free thinkers' and often saw religion as a scam: "Religion is the opium of the people" was a statement first attributed to Marx, and it was often quoted by progressive radicals.

People who weren't religious sometimes found it hard to understand others who were; John: "The whole religious thing, it's a bit of a puzzle: you go 'What are they talking about?'"

Jane R: "I was fairly open to Rajneesh, not too critical. I used to go and dance with them. But it just did nothing for me."

Though hippies were religiously diverse, eastern religions were attractive to many, and were perhaps a part of global hippie ideology.<sup>223</sup> Dave: "I had my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in Marrakech in Morocco. It was all part of the hippy trek, to break free of the whole western Judaeo Christian ideal. The big attraction was going into another culture, and you did. It was like passing through the looking glass." Jan and Maureen, who were at first Christians, moved on to be progressive radicals, and then chose a religion where the emphasis was on the self, though paradoxically, self was discovered through a deep relationship with an enlightened teacher: Maureen: "The message was to do with meditation and coming back to yourself. Every day he spoke. And basically, the first time I saw him I just felt that I'd come home."<sup>224</sup>

One powerful and possibly religious view most hippies shared was love of nature and a sense that it was under threat. Inez: "I became vegetarian. We decided we would not use tins. We were very careful about our wastes. That was the big thing at that time, the environment, and it has continued through my life. For me, the spiritual thing is connected to nature, the earth." Sally: "Nature's always been my spirituality. This is my temple. The sky is my cathedral roof.

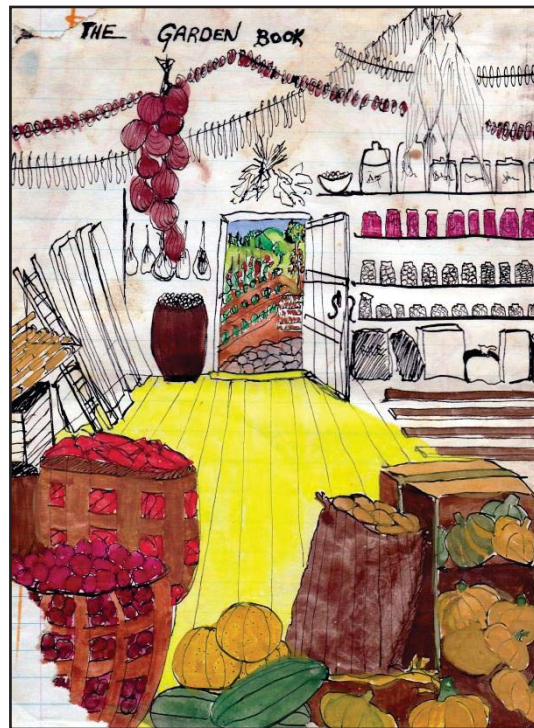
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<sup>222</sup> Rain, pp. 87 – 103.

<sup>223</sup> e.g. in 1968 the Beatles were with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in India, helping to popularise an 'eastern path'.

<sup>224</sup> "Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh is about bliss. Not happiness which has its opposite, but a watchfulness and acceptance of both these and all other dualities. To show us this emptiness, this watching, Bhagwan has his own meditations and therapy groups which help to throw out neurotic rubbish, relax suppressed emotion, and let us flow with life; when we are relaxed and have let go, we have arrived back home." (Jones, Judith, and Broadly, Colin, p.33)

I celebrate the life around me and my communion with it is putting my hands in the earth and putting my feet on the ground.”



A page from Carol's Garden Book

In the United States, Chief Si'ahl (Seattle) is credited with having said: “How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? Every part of the earth is sacred to my people. Earth does not belong to us; we belong to earth. The earth is our mother, and whatever befalls the earth befalls the children of the earth.”<sup>225</sup> In Maori myth the primal parents are Rangi and Papa. Papa is Mother Earth, and reverence for her shapes Maori attitudes to land.<sup>226</sup> A lot of hippies have the same ideas. Patrick: “I've always believed in having minimal impact on the environment, and trying to preserve as much of it as you can.”

In 1973 the Norwegian Arne Naess, concerned by worsening degradation of the environment, proposed the goals of deep ecology.<sup>227</sup> In his view human interference with the non-human world had become excessive, and it was better to pursue a higher *quality* of life, by living in situations of intrinsic value, than to pursue a higher standard of living. Both deep ecology and reverence for the Earth are evident in contributions to New Zealand's Whole Earth Catalogues and Mushroom Magazines. Stephanie McKee wrote in 1978, “The essence of voluntary

<sup>225</sup> Though Si'ahl supposedly said this in 1854, no English translation was published until 1887. (*Seattle Sunday Star*, October 29, 1887, p.3)

<sup>226</sup> Binney, Judith, *Encircled lands: Te Urewera, 1820-1921*, Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2009

<sup>227</sup> Naess, Arne, ‘The shallow and the deep, long ranging ecology movements’ in *Inquiry* 16 (1973), pp. 95-100

simplicity is living in a way that is outwardly simple and inwardly rich”;<sup>228</sup> Peter Lusk, interviewed in 1975, explained, “We’re trying to live in a way that is ecologically sound”.<sup>229</sup>

There is on-going tension between those who agitate for change and those who doubt if any ‘real’ change is possible. The hippies of the 1960s and the 1970s believed in social change. The 1980s saw a swing away from such progressive attitudes, the counter-culture’s focus moved to ‘personal growth’, and academics then became post-modernist. This had a bearing on the way they saw ‘the truth’. Byrnes equates the postmodern view with relativism, which won’t accept that there is any truth, but she goes on to say that most people still look for it.<sup>230</sup>

Hippies believed they had a truth, and one worth following. Stephanie wrote of ‘social alchemy’ in Mushroom Magazine: “All these individual and small group attempts at revitalising the countryside and humanising the cities can be seen in the context of a planetary awakening. People call it different names. Teilhard de Chardin called the process ‘noogenesis’ – the birth and evolutionary process of spirit.”<sup>231</sup> Jane N: “True spiritual teachers teach by example. They demonstrate wisdom by the way they live and communicate. For me, the music of Bob Dylan and John Lennon, the music of the 1970s, was a spiritual experience and teaching. Today we have the living embodiment of compassion demonstrated by His Holiness the Dalai Llama. An on-going quest for the wisdom of peace is the essence of voluntary simplicity and sustainability.

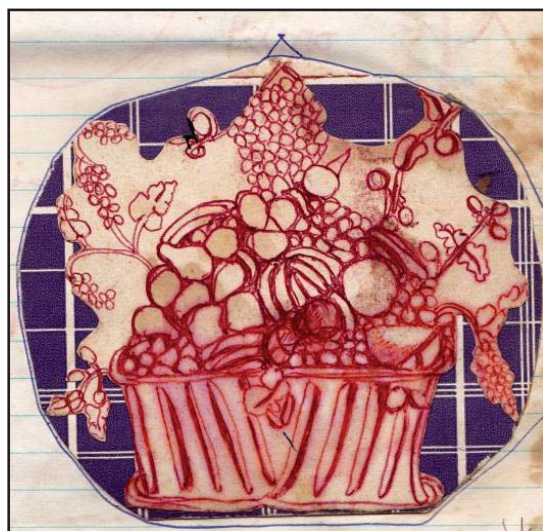


Illustration from Carol’s Marahau Batch Garden Diary

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<sup>228</sup> McKee, p. 3

<sup>229</sup> Admore and Lusk, p.12

<sup>230</sup> Byrnes, 2009, p.12

<sup>231</sup> McKee, p. 4

## Home births

Home births were popular with hippies, for reasons Ina May Gaskin sets out in the preface to the third edition of her 1977 *Spiritual Midwifery*, a book that has been read by hippie mothers ever since:<sup>232</sup> “the return of the birthing process to women is important to society at large, not just to the women and children directly involved. The way babies are treated at birth is likely to affect them forever. The way women are treated during childbirth affects them in all their relationships for the rest of their lives.”<sup>233</sup> Jane R. believed this too, so wanted a home birth herself: “I’d nursed a couple of years in hospitals and I didn’t like hospitals. I thought it was pathetic, often, what went on there.”

Cheryl, before she even had a baby of her own took the responsibility of helping every time she could: “People would approach me and say, ‘I’ve heard that you’ve been at some home births. Would you consider supporting us with ours? I once missed a birth because the weather came in and I couldn’t get through a river on my horse. But that was their second child.” Carol: “I have done twelve home deliveries in New Zealand. There were these young mothers who were in the bush wanting to have their babies away from hospital, and I was trying to get the hospitals to understand the situation and provide private birthing rooms.”



Laurel's 1970 depiction of homebirth, from *Living on the earth*

Carol delivered Pipi and Mani Rutherford's first baby, in an old house in Kaeo, near Kerikeri. Mark Scott writes of a later birth of theirs: “David Lange, who had worked locally as a

<sup>232</sup> Jane N. says that she read it during every later pregnancy.

<sup>233</sup> Gaskin, p.8

lawyer, entered parliament in 1977. With the possibility of a difficult birth for one of the children, the Rutherfords wanted to shift from the rainforest for the delivery to be nearer help. Pipi knew David Lange had a bach out at the beach in Omapere. “The thing is, he’d been going on about absentee ownership of prime coastal land, so I wrote him a letter down to Parliament saying he might want to do his own little bit to fight absentee ownership – by letting us use his bach for the birth. We got a two word telegram back, saying, ‘Key follows.’”

This says a lot about how hippies advocated home-births and presented them as safe and positive. It also shows the kind of self-assurance that is based on cultural capital, and in this case on social capital as well, given that Pipi was a Rutherford. Hippies were fearless, and they often actively engaged with politicians and lawmakers.

# Living in a Community

## Endless connections

In 1974 Archie Hislop and his group looked in on Rainbow Valley. While driving back to Puketa they bumped into old friends. Cheryl: “I remember seeing John and Betsy driving their spring-cart along the road, and we stopped and chatted. We’d been over to Golden Bay and were on our way back to Kaikoura. There was a real thread with horse people, because once you’d met them they were unforgettable, and we just crossed paths continuously.” During the 1970s a lot of commune people kept on crossing one another’s paths, and men like Archie, Topy, Tim Jones and Dan Hansen were well known.

Jan: “Certainly lots of connections, especially when you think of people like Archie Hislop and Dan Hansen, before the hippie thing. I’ve heard Cheryl talk about Archie Hislop a lot.”

John: “We went to Kaikoura, and while we were there I first made the connection with Archie. As soon as we started talking and I said what we’d really like to do was set up a community based on self-government and anarchy, Archie just went “that’s what we’re doing here.” Maureen: “We got some help from Topy, I remember. There was a connection with Renaissance, and Marahau, and the West Coast.”

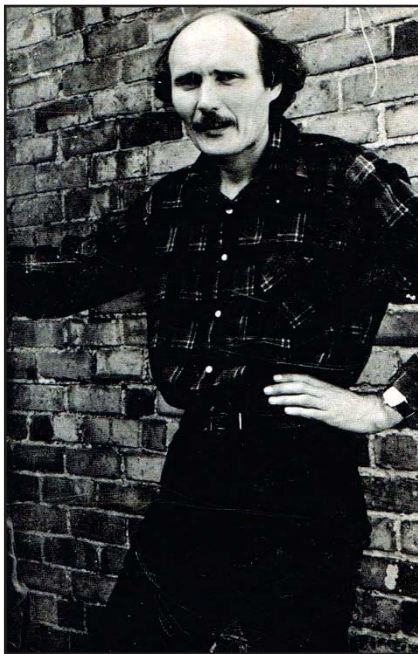
Where communes clustered close, communications were especially easy, but there were networks that went right across New Zealand and beyond. Wayne: “At Pokororo there was Sunday Creek on one side and Graham Downs just up the road. We became a kind of local cluster, which then fed into the bigger network all through New Zealand. There was this amazing communication going on.” Joanna: “I first heard about Karuna Falls through camping beside them at Nambassa Festival. I knew about Riverside already; one of my Quaker friends was born there.”

Tim Jones had numerous connections with New Zealand’s commune scene. He first arrived with a young family in 1964, to be the teacher at the Beeville School. He and his wife were interested in the US civil rights and anti-war movements, spirituality, community living and pacifism. At Beeville Tim met Judith Hansen, who had grown up there and was Dan Hansen’s niece. Tim and his wife split up, Tim married Judith, and soon afterwards they visited Julian’s parents in Wellington, inviting that whole family to visit Beeville for a holiday. They did, and Julian, in his late teens and early twenties kept on going back. When Beeville closed he moved to Wilderland and then to Sunday Creek.

In 1970 Tim and Judith began teaching among Northland's Ngati Wai. They were made very welcome and at some point were 'adopted' as tangata whenua. Tim later undertook a commune tour, visiting Rainbow Valley soon after the land was bought. In 1975 his book *A Hard Won Freedom* was published. In that year he and Judith were living in Mangakino, where Dave H. first remembers meeting him: "that's where I first met Tim. This was in the days of the Ohu scheme. I was in the navy, but my friends were right into this sort of stuff, and I was tagging along."

Tim then moved south, joining the group at Waitati that published *Mushroom Magazine*. Dave H. now crossed his path again: "One of my friends, Wayne Johnston, flatted with him for a while. So I'd swing in there and visit Wayne, and Tim would be there, and there'd be talk of communities. He had a little sort of sleep-out I remember; he was kind of across the road from Bill and Carol P."

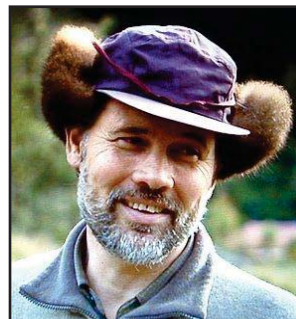
Tim would go on to live and work with people needing help and care in urban residential homes. Dave H. eventually bought a share of Sunday Creek. Judith co-edited *Nambassa - a new direction*, in 1979. Tim's son Simon visited Waitati in 1976, met Carol P, and formed a partnership with her. She was already a member of Rainbow Valley, so Simon joined as well. The two helped build the Main House for the young community and have been members ever since.



Tim Jones, circa 1975



Rainbow Valley Main House



Simon Jones, 2010

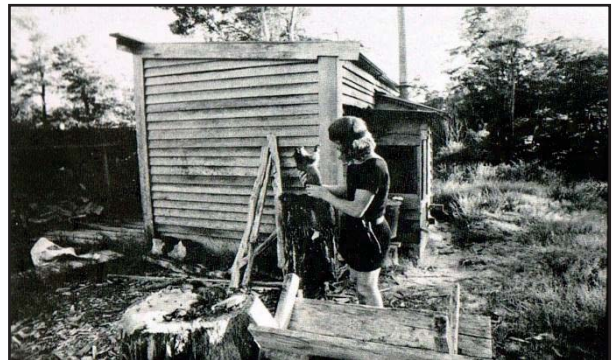
## Survivalism

There hasn't been a nuclear war since 1945. For those born closer to the end of the cold war, survivalism may have been a less urgent concern; it didn't guarantee survival anyway. Sally: "I remember there were some extremists and they had their barrel of spirolena and their guns in a cave. I just think today is the only thing you've got."

US back-to-the-land hippies of the 1960s seem to have been seeking to escape from cities just as much as from the bomb. There was, for some, a sense that cities had been going wrong: "The rebel senses that there is no longer any good reason for the city's existence" Zablocki wrote. "He seeks not to restructure it, but bring it to a standstill, burn it down."<sup>234</sup> Few hippies in New Zealand were that radical, perhaps because there wasn't so much to be radical about, but many of the hippies here rejected cities too. Chris Hegan: "For me it was just about having a retreat, and being able to have that option of coming and living here if I needed to. Other people had this idea that it was going to be an artistic community, and I think some others were quite keen on survivalism in its more severe forms. ... It was a broad church." Gerard Hindmarsh: "I think we expected the demise of the planet within five years and we were going to be the great saviours or something. But we realised that to just do it on a local level was the best power that you could have."<sup>235</sup>



Patrick's thatched hut at Ahuahu Ohu



The author, skinning a possum at Moonsilver Forest

Those who went back-to-the-land earliest seem to have taken the survival side of it most seriously. Jane N: "That's the reason why I lived the way I chose to live, moving to Long Louis and living in the bush really simply. And then moving from Long Louis to here, where survival was actually easier because it wasn't in the bush. And that's why I still grow a garden and milk goats."

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<sup>234</sup> Zablocki, 1971, p.293

<sup>235</sup> quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010.

‘Survival’ wasn’t just to do with nuclear war. Carol: “As a single mum I did have a strong survival instinct. Being near friends, and growing our own food, with no money. And being near other people was a great survival choice for me.” Stephen Gaskin had a simple platform for The Farm in Tennessee, and it was pretty much the same on 1970s communes in New Zealand: “Clean air, sane people and healthy babies.”<sup>236</sup> Survival wasn’t just about surviving war, it was to do with mental health, and city living was not seen by everyone as good for it. Amrita, from Karuna Falls: “I had this big question mark: who decided that we were all supposed to go out and work for forty to sixty hours a week to earn the money to pay for our food and housing, when we can actually do that in a more direct way ourselves?”

Simon Jones: “there were a lot of perceived problems with regular society: crowded cities; overpopulation; the Big Brother state; governments developing nuclear weapons. And these were all things we were against. We did have strong ideals. We wanted to create something different and hopefully better than what was out there, although we never regarded ourselves as completely separate. We were rejecting what we saw as being the worst elements, and saying ‘there are other ways of living that are better’. And part of that was living in community.”<sup>237</sup>

### **Domesticating anarchy**

Simon’s father Tim wrote in *A Hard Won Freedom*: “The most significant difference between the new communes and Beeville is their ability to discuss difficulties immediately and openly. They experience the same difficulties as we did: jealousy, rivalry and so no. But resentments are not buried where they might fester for months or years. There is usually enough affection in the group to discuss matters hesitantly, sensitively. I never saw anyone walk out of the room, when a touchy subject was raised, as I did at Beeville. This means there is not the same danger of people forming factions or of the community polarizing into two opposed groups.”<sup>238</sup>

Beeville was over thirty when Jones entered it, and clearly was in a declining phase. When Carol P. and Anne arrived at Rainbow Valley in their twenties, they had a lot of youthful energy to put into community. Carol P. reflects on how age has affected her: “increased wisdom, less energy, and more discernment about where the energy goes. I was vitally

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<sup>236</sup> Gaskin, p. 16

<sup>237</sup> Simon said this while being interviewed for my postgraduate research paper on Rainbow Valley and Tui.

<sup>238</sup> Jones, 1975, pp. 29-30

interested in other people when I was getting to know myself as a person, but there comes a time when the journey is a more inward journey”. Anne: “I think that what you want when you’re twenty and thirty is different from what you want when you’re fifty and sixty.”<sup>239</sup>

At Sunday Creek a group of people mainly in their twenties related well for several years with few if any rules, just ‘shared responsibility’. Cheryl: “It was just chatting over the evening meal, really. There weren’t any particular meetings, certainly nothing formal.” No one expected that it would be perfect, but it worked quite well. Jane R: “Of course there were personality conflicts. When it was going well it was like all communities; it was going amazingly well, a high. And then that would go, people would be arguing.”

During that era Sunday Creek was open land. At Renaissance, another open land community, Olive Jones had direct experience of what she sees as an ephemeral ‘golden age’, inspiring to experience: “People contributed freely and generously, and the atmosphere that existed generated a powerful sense of community spirit.”<sup>240</sup> This kind of ‘shared responsibility’ may be the better side of anarchy.

It may work best for younger people and communities: Marahau too experienced its golden age, though Marahau was never seen as open land. Dave: “There was a big schism with John. His ideology was that it’s anarchy, and everything is permissible. Anarchy cum Alexander Crowley, if you like. I knew that ship didn’t fly.”

In both communities divisions grew. At Sunday Creek the differences appeared at one point to be cut and dried religious ones. Julian: “we’d buy food as a community, if people wanted money they’d get it out of the kitty, we even had a community vehicle. And then this guru guy comes in and suddenly they’re saying, ‘this has to be an orange place’. I said, ‘That sucks!’” Maureen has a slightly different take on it: “all of the people at Sunday Creek were strong individualists ... It is very challenging when somebody you respect goes off on another tangent.”

Zablocki writes, “It is against the nature of most communes to admit that the needs of the individual can ever really be opposed to the needs of the group.”<sup>241</sup> Webb thought that formal structures were created at ‘Arohanui’ to “regulate the need for group sanctions and the desire for individual freedom”, and she believed those structures were “contrary to the

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<sup>239</sup> Jenkin, 2011, p.49-50

<sup>240</sup> Jones, 2011, p. 87

<sup>241</sup> Zablocki, 1980, p.247

communitarians' anarchical ideas".<sup>242</sup> However, as Robert Houriet found out at Libre in America, people who opted for the anarchy of open land 'communes' while they were in their twenties sometimes preferred more structured and intentional 'communities' in later years.

Not everyone would vote for structures though. Stephen: "I didn't ever see Marahau as a 'community' where we were all living and sharing and agreeing to do things together. I see it as a loose-knit almost anarchic ecovillage, where people do what they want to do, because there is space to do that." But Jane N. believes more structure has a part to play: "We've got more structure now than we ever had; it's been forced on us. We've been incredibly resistant to it. But it's something we've needed."

If there are lessons to be learned from the experiences of Renaissance and other communes based on open land, it may be that mature community requires more than anarchy. Ruby, who grew up at Karuna Falls, speaks of another commune in the neighbourhood: "there's no system or infrastructure in place at all, it was that really individualistic anarchist kind of wave. And so that's really fallen apart in recent years ... there's no payment required, it's free for all. And it's meant that all kinds of characters have moved in, and it has deteriorated."

Entrenched divisions in communities can also have a lot to do with personalities. Sargisson and Sargent say relationships problems are "particularly intense in intentional communities" and suggest two main causes: life is less private, so arguments become common knowledge and are played out more publicly, and relationships are more intense than usual because of higher expectations that arise from 'shared identity'.<sup>243</sup> Abrams and McCulloch have a subtly different view, based on the need for 'institutional relationships' in politics: "because communities are dependent on and contaminated by a mainstream society from which they differentiate themselves, they cannot evolve institutional relationships, and interpersonal relations tend to dominate."<sup>244</sup> Coser suggests that where resentments are permitted to accumulate, resulting conflict can become non-realistic and dysfunctional.<sup>245</sup>

Two subjects from two different places used the same phrase in referring to 'personality conflicts' in communities. Joanna: "We have a thing called Rooster Politics: That is what we call it when (mostly) men have to protect egos and power when we are trying to find a way forward out of some issue or another." Jane N: "The roosters got to be on the top of the dung pile. It's so hilarious."

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<sup>242</sup> Webb, 1999, p.116

<sup>243</sup> Sargisson and Sargent, p. 150

<sup>244</sup> Abrams and McCulloch, p.151

<sup>245</sup> Coser, p.54

Hierarchies don't help either, as they undermine the democratic basis of intentional community. Inez: "At Wilderland we would have a meal and a meeting, so everyone was included. I can remember some of the people at the top definitely dominating." Communities, Abrams and McCulloch suggest, succeed to the extent that they "negotiate their way towards the creation of a society of equals, and do so without sacrificing individuality."<sup>246</sup>

Structure is necessary, in a community of equal individuals. There is a need to regulate group sanctions and there is sometimes also a need to limit personal freedoms. Without some structure, any durable community would be impossible. Riverside has evolved a structure over time. Karuna Falls and Rainbow Valley have as well. Wayne: "There were lots of meetings in those days. We were so hard on each other. There was some good stuff when I look back."

What's most essential seems to be a willingness to compromise. Stephanie: "The key was that we always agreed to sit down and talk about it, and worked on developing listening and communication skills. It's been interesting trying to tread the middle path, which is an approach I got from Buddhism, that line between structure, and not being too formal. We're quite attached to our structure, but we realise we do have the freedom to change the rules. I find it ironic: we create an institution and we say, 'Hey, we created this. We can change it, you know'."



Outside the original community kitchen at Karuna Falls ( circa 1981)

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<sup>246</sup> Abrams and McCulloch, p.161

## Shared parenting

Shared parenting is seen by nearly everyone involved as positive. Carol: “There are some very beautiful areas we created as a group; this paradise for kids to grow up on.” Sally: “These places, for me, represented another kind of family. Suddenly it wasn’t just you. Before I had my own children I loved being with other people’s children.”

Kathi and Patrick did most of their parenting at Mahana. Patrick: “I think it was a good place for children, just having that freedom. They weren’t suppressed: ‘can’t do this, can’t do that’. And they did interact with a lot of people. I think it made them into fairly strong people that could cope with a lot of things.” But Kathi doesn’t think that total freedom is always the right thing: “There was a kind of attitude that you could let kids do anything. I wanted stricter boundaries and got told off for having those views. Because it was counter to the philosophy that you let them grow and develop in their own way, that they were free spirits. I thought kids needed more support and structure than that.”

The parents of Karuna Falls look back on their shared parenting with a sense of achievement. Wayne: “I’ve got these wonderful images of a dozen naked kids, painted in purple clay, running, screaming at the top of their voices, all the way round the community; these little savages.” Stephanie: “The kids were able to go from house to house, ‘grazing’ and snacking, and it was a safe village environment. We also had shared parental care, little playgroups. They had a whole range of adult role models around them, which I think broadened their life experience.” Joanna: “If I’ve done nothing else, bringing our children up in community has made my life worthwhile.” Alan: “I feel the best education is teaching kids self-sufficiency at a level of self-reliance. And they’re all pretty much managing it; they don’t need much help.” This mirrors my experience and that of other Rainbow Valley parents.

I interviewed two ‘children of Karuna Falls’, both adults now. Esther: “It was like having that big extended family all around you. We’d come home from school and run around on the common. We wouldn’t go home. Going swimming in the river, picking fruit, climbing trees, playing and making huts. We’d just run around until Mum would blow her trumpet and you’d know it was dinnertime.” Ruby: “all the kids ran around all day, and sometime around midday it would be lunch time, and all of a sudden whoever’s house you were at would be landed with five kids to feed, or nine kids to feed, and that was never an issue. Ownership of things like food was just never a thing. And different people would take us to school. ... The kids I

grew up with here are my brothers and sisters. And the kids in the other communities, they are my cousins. That's the concept that I feel.”



Christmas Games on the "common", circa 1979

### **Rural re-settlement**

During the 1970s New Zealand local bodies had few plans in place for rural communes, but hippies went ahead and built them anyway. First it was necessary to buy some land. Money was often pooled, experience was often shared, and how-to-do-it articles appeared in *Mushroom Magazine*.<sup>247</sup> Since most back-to-the-land idealists were young, and few were rich, they looked for places where the land was cheap, and this was usually where mainstream farming had been getting marginal. Chris Hegan: “When we came here, this place was going down, because of the oil shock. They’d stopped doing things like the cream-run, so dairying, for instance, had ceased to be viable.” Stephanie: “The local store was bankrupt, the school was about to close: it was a rural community in complete decline.”<sup>248</sup>

But hippies also wanted “situations of intrinsic value”, places with rich and varied natural environments. Tasman Bay, Golden Bay, Buller, Northland and Coromandel all seemed ideal. Hippies poured in. As one of those who went to Golden Bay reflects, “When I think about the number of people that turned up, roughly in the same year that we did, there were probably three or four hundred. In an area of only 3,000 people that was a dramatic influx.”<sup>249</sup>

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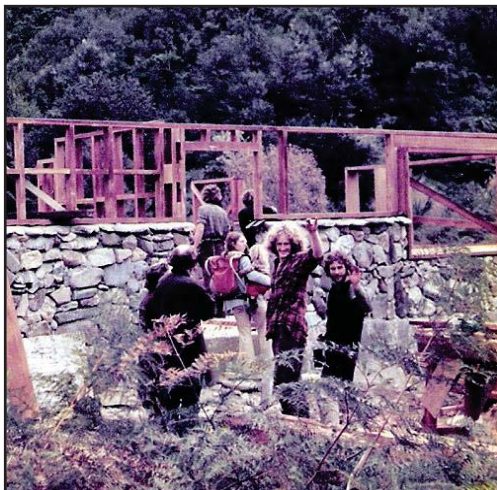
<sup>247</sup> Scott’s ‘Share purchase a farm’ is typical of these. Scott, Dylan, pp. 5 – 8

<sup>248</sup> Quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010.

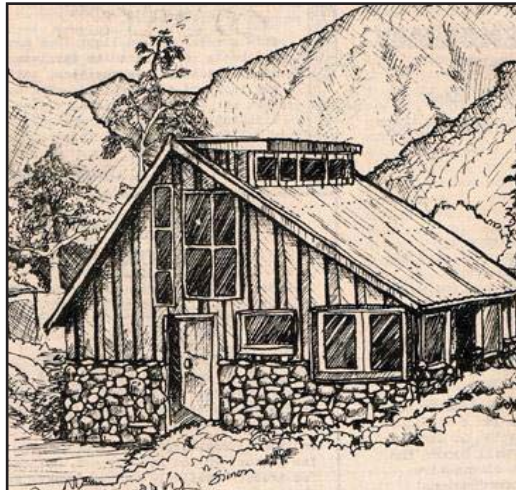
<sup>249</sup> Gerard Hindmarsh, quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010.

Once land was bought, the commune's houses started going up, and they were often primitive at first. Kathi: "A lot of hard work at the beginning, living in hovels. And then everybody helping each other to build their houses." Stephanie: "I figured out I lived in fourteen different places on the land before I actually built a house. Originally Richard and I had a simple bush hut. That later became the first community kitchen." Wayne: "I remember Woody's house. Could that man build! Every single thing he did was such a work of art."

Not all had permits, as most district schemes only allowed the building of one house on rural properties, and even that depended on the property being classed as an 'economic unit'. Some County Council's started off by trying out the tough approach. At the end of 1974, when a local newspaper announced 'substandard accommodation' at Rainbow Valley's barn, Golden Bay County Council tried the tough approach, and ordered that the hippies leave the barn. The hippies' answer was an application for a building permit for a legal house. That kept the council off their backs a bit, and next they asked for sleep-outs round their one 'Main House'. Council was flummoxed and so went along with it. In 1978 Simon Jones wrote an article in which he recounted this for *Mushroom* magazine.<sup>250</sup> The 'Main House' method was then used at Sunday Creek. Maureen: "In 1976 the Stoke house was demolished and stacked at Sunday Creek, and they built a small part to live in. And then in the next summer the Main House got built. I was involved in helping out with cooking and also doing a bit of the carpentry work."



Building Rainbow's Main House



Simon's illustration for Mushroom

In 1977 the Buller County Council had demolished Owen Wilkes' house at Punakaiki, near Katajuta, while he was working as a peace researcher in Norway. Horton wrote recently of

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<sup>250</sup> Jones, Simon, 1978, pp. 38 – 39

this: “Those were the days when redneck local politicians waged war to keep out the ‘hippies’”.<sup>251</sup> But even then the verdict of New Zealand media was that the Buller County Councillors had got it wrong; they were portrayed as heavy-handed and small-minded, which must have served a warning to the County Councillors of other areas: there have been few if any other demolitions of such houses since.

Young referred obliquely to the demolition of Wilkes’s house in his 1979 *Listener* article on Ohu, comparing it to Cheryl and Woody’s Seashell House at Sunday Creek: “At its most polarized, the showdown can lead, as it did in Buller County two years ago, to the complete demolition of an unpermitted house. In Waimea County, Nelson, the fate of an inspired but non-conforming dwelling in a communal group still hangs in the balance.” The journalist sounds sympathetic to the hippies here, which may be why the Seashell House still stands.



The Seashell House at Sunday Creek, in 1984 and today.

Young also interviewed Golden Bay County Council’s new chairman, who was then at work on a new District Scheme: “Some of the people who once quarreled with local bodies on these issues have been thrust into local body politics themselves. Philip Woollaston, voted onto the Golden Bay County Council in 1977, and made chairman, is one of them. . . . He does not want to see the ‘willy-nilly’ development of rural land, nor loop-holes for cheapskates, but there ought to be room for ‘voluntary simplicity’”.<sup>252</sup>

This was a turn-around indeed; it meant that Golden Bay hippies had won the war by taking over the bureaucracy. In 1976, Woollaston had been a member of the Golden Bay Rural Resettlement Association, a hippie pressure group; now here he was writing the District

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<sup>251</sup> Horton, see Electronic Resources

<sup>252</sup> Young, p. 25

Scheme. It took effect in 1983; under it Rainbow Valley, Happisam and later Tui were all granted 'Rural Commune' status, which allowed multiple housing.

The lesson wasn't lost on other councils, although these generally didn't seem to want new district schemes. Instead they looked the other way, or granted permits as specified departures from existing ones; the hippie housing boom went right ahead.<sup>253</sup> Alan: "We went and demolished the old Golf Club in Coromandel, a group of people from Mahana. It was all communal; everybody got together and helped other people. I got some bits for my place and a lot of it went into the cookhouse we were all building. I built the first house. It was fairly primitive, but it was comfortable and had its hot and cold running water, which nobody else there had. It was good practice." Jane N: "We just built together. We didn't have any power, so it was all built with hand tools. It was a wonderful experience. It took a hell of a long time. And in some ways I think it was the beginning of my learning to really work quite hard."

But troubles over houses without permits weren't permanently shelved, as Marahau found out in 2002. By 2005 they had been forced to seek legal advice after TDC challenged the legality of a number of their houses and threatened them with demolition orders. A 2005 TDC report on *Marahau Valley Farm* was prepared after Marahau's lawyers protested on Marahau's behalf, and it explains how TDC had reconstructed the events that led to the dispute.<sup>254</sup> After a site inspection in 1975 "it was established that three structures were being erected on the property without first a building permit being issued," and while a subsequent consent allowed for the establishment of "a dwelling house and workers accommodation, not exceeding three buildings" the County Council then warned that the erection of further buildings without permits would not be condoned.

And yet they were erected, and as Council was forced to admit, it had known of most of them for a number of years." But in 2002 a neighbour, Jim Hollingworth, who as Jane N. has pointed out, may have hoped to obtain the Marahau lease for himself, complained to TDC. He wouldn't let it rest, and in 2004 wrote what purported to be a helpful email to TDC's Dave Stebbings. Hollingworth attached his own aerial photo of Marahau Community, with seven marked irregularities. His email questioned the legality of each in turn: "Dave/ Good talking to you yesterday, looks like we are finally moving forward. / You asked about buildings on the MVF that are candidates for demolition orders, the following list should provide some help."

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid

<sup>254</sup> See primary sources

1) “Yurts”; 2) “Covered caravan”; 3) “Green caravan”; 4) “studio”; 5) “Shack on hillside”; 6) Yurt ‘sleep-out’; 7) House-buses.

In each case he provided arguments for demolition or removal. Writing of number seven, he opined: “There was a cluster of these on the right hand side adjacent the river as you drive into the hippies place ... these need to be moved on, don’t know who lives in them.” He finishes: “That should give you enough to go on with Dave, should make your trip out there worthwhile”. And then he has another helpful thought: “Who is handling the complaint about the illegal dwellings on the Ritschny property, while we are on a roll may as well continue./ Regards/ Jim Hollingworth.”

His attitude was not exactly neighbourly; Yirka: “The guy who dobbed them in is a redneck. He’s not community minded, he wanted to get rid of them.” Though TDC might not have relished such complaints, it came to the conclusion that it had to act on them, and act it did, in much the way that Hollingworth had hoped. But Marahau fought back, taking its case to the Environment Court and ultimately forcing TDC to compromise. Don’t take on hippies; even after forty years they still have lots of clout.

### **Self-sufficiency and sustainability**

Maureen: “I’d gone in a completely different direction. I wanted to find a simpler way of living.” Jane N: “We gradually cleared the bracken and dug it over. It was a really thick spongy mat, and we’d dig down below that into the roots, chop it all up, mix it all up. We were quite near the boundary, so we could just go over the fence and pick up cow-shit, and we made gardens. We actually grew pretty good food.” Stephanie: “They were wonderful big gardens. We grew large crops of corn, rice, soybeans and kumara.”



Gardening at Graham Downs

Alan asks whether self-sufficiency is really possible: “Who is self-sufficient? Being independent was more like it. Being independent of rules and regulations, as you can imagine after an army experience. I’ve been a hunter and a fisherman all my life. I enjoy doing it, but it’s not a sport. It’s the way we eat.”

Part of the goal of self-sufficiency was voluntary-simplicity, which had its roots in deep ecology and caring for the Earth. Stephanie wrote that voluntary simplicity meant living in a way that was outwardly simple and inwardly rich. Inez: “You’d go on your bike and pick up some pine cones on the road because you’d think ‘I’m not going to have firewood for my kids tonight, or to cook’. You realise how easy it is to do, or not easy; challenging, but very enriching: you’d sit out in that pool of sunlight on the veranda and you’d feel so grateful you could have a bit of peace.”

A lot of hippies felt that they would rather make the things they needed for themselves than buy them from a shop. Sally: “I didn’t have an intention to have a career. Right from when I was a little girl I was always making things.”

But Coromandel’s northern cluster of communities could not make High Schools for their teenagers. Rather than send their kids away to board, some families were forced to move back to the towns. Now some of those who went are coming back again. Hippies in Golden Bay and Tasman Bay had High Schools close enough, but even so, some chose to move away.

In 1981 Carol and Simon were a part of Rainbow Wares, a business making garments out of possum fur. Simon: “In the early years, the late 70s, we did a lot of possum hunting, when the fur prices were really high. And then when the fur prices started to go down in the early 80s, we thought well, there’s a booming tourist trade going on, we’ll start making them into fur. So in the early 1980s we set up a fur workshop.”<sup>255</sup> Rainbow Wares closed, partly because environmentalists condemned fur coats. Carol and Simon moved away in 1986 and lived in cities for eleven years. Now they are back at Rainbow Valley and intend to stay.

Today the emphasis has moved away from self-sufficiency towards sustainability. This has three aspects, environmental, economic and social.<sup>256</sup> Most 1970s rural communities still try to be environmentally sustainable. In order to be economically sustainable, their members have had to find jobs and incomes, as it soon became apparent that at least some money

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<sup>255</sup> Quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>256</sup> Partridge, 2005, p.5, see electronic resources

would be necessary. As *Hippies To The Rescue* indicates, this sometimes came from arts and crafts, but hippies just as often joined the ranks of other rural workers, some becoming tradespeople and some professionals. Simon: “None of us ever really wanted to be on the dole for any length of time.”<sup>257</sup> Many found out they only really needed to work part-time, since they could have a satisfying way of life on incomes city-people would have found inadequate; to that extent at least the goal of voluntary simplicity has often been achieved.

Partridge believes that to be socially sustainable a community must be equitable, diverse, connected, democratic, and must provide a good quality of life.<sup>258</sup> Some 1970s communities have managed this. At nearly forty, Marahau is now set to become an eco-village. Two new ones have begun in Tasman Bay since 2008.<sup>259</sup> Jane N. “A sustainable loving relationship with the earth, with animals and with the sources of our nourishment is a more important choice now than ever. This is the moment we have been preparing ourselves for.”



Rainbow Valley extended family

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<sup>257</sup> quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

<sup>258</sup> Partridge, 2005, pp.7-11, see electronic resources,

<sup>259</sup> Atamai and Te Manawa

## Conclusions

What kind of people formed intentional rural communities in New Zealand in the 1970s?  
Young visionaries, and they were extremely well connected, in more ways than one.

A good proportion of them came from Europe and America. While it's a truism today that bright and capable New Zealand youth are heading overseas, this study shows that forty years ago the opposite was happening. Nine out of nineteen in this sample came from overseas and all appear to have been bright and capable.

Whether New Zealand born or immigrants, hippies had cultural capital. Many were dreamers and romantics; some were anarchists. Most saw themselves as free; none wanted to be part of a machine of any kind. They were imbued with fantasy, and some were powerfully drawn to Tolkien's books. Even in this respect they've led the way; *The Lord of The Rings* has now become three Wellington-made blockbuster movies. Another recent Wellington-made blockbuster is James Cameron epic *Avatar*, which sees a rebel individualist join with 'first people' to defend a magical environment against military-industrial might. Do themes like these not resonate with the ideals of 'hippy-dreamers' of the 1970s?

Hippies were pacifists and peacemakers. In the US they helped to stop the war in Vietnam; here they were at the forefront of the anti-nuclear movement. They were great travellers; they were great adventurers. They wanted every day to be an adventure. As teenagers they'd been immersed in a youth ideology of peace and freedom. If this mostly started in the UK and the US, it quickly spread around the world through electronic media. As adults the New Zealand hippies of the 1970s made their own art. They were musicians, painters, architects, wood-carvers, writers, poets, actors and entertainers. In their communities they frequently staged parties and performances.

They were adventurous in other ways as well, notably in experiments with drugs and sexuality. Experimenting can be dangerous, but by experimenting openly, smashing conventions that had once seemed indestructible, the counterculture shook things up for everyone and by the 1980s more was possible.

New Zealand used to be a churchgoing society, but since the 1970s it's been more secular. Hippies were at the forefront in rejecting 'Christian' norms based on conventions and

obedience, but they gave spiritual leadership in other ways; values that were once seen as countercultural have now become mainstream. New Zealand as a whole is more bicultural. Most of us now accept and value Maori ritual, and often actively participate in it. Most of us have a growing sense that we belong to 'Mother Earth', and that we need to limit exploitation of our shared environment.

Conformists usually follow paths that have been pointed out to them by visionaries, although they sometimes crucify those people first. Hippies were seen at first as dreamers or as wanderers. As O'Shaughnessy observed in 1874, such people regularly move and shake the world.<sup>260</sup> Joanna saw a choice between two ways of making change: "I knew society was really wrong. You either needed to join it and work from inside to make changes, or you needed to go outside and create new models that would be ready when society needed them."

What common features helped define New Zealand's rural communes of the 1970s? Perhaps their most important feature was connectedness. And their sheer numbers helped to make that possible. There were just two rural intentional communities for thirty years, and then in the five years between 1970 and 1975, another forty suddenly appeared, linked by a common vision, a new way of life.<sup>261</sup> Survivalism was important, particularly in the first half of the decade, and hippies flooding in from overseas in order to escape the bomb contributed to that.

Were common hippie goals achieved in 1970s communities? During the 1970s hippies built houses for themselves in rural areas, and did so cheaply and effectively. This needed motivation and initiative. Hippies worked hard, although at first their neighbours didn't seem to notice it: "We used to joke about that: 'What do you do up there all the time?' We knew damn well that we worked bloody hard. We'd say: 'Oh, I sit around, play guitar and smoke.' Because that's what people expected. And if they came up here they realised that we actually put a lot of work into the place."<sup>262</sup>

What made the communes possible was willingness to share resources and cooperate. If red-necks felt that hippies were subversive, so they were, as they were introducing communism of a kind into the countryside. So far there hasn't been much capitalism in communities. Few have been privatised. Mostly their goals remain unchanged: to hold the land for a continuing community.

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<sup>260</sup> O'Shaughnessy, *Ode*, 1874, (p. 2)

<sup>261</sup> See lists in 'Other Communities' pp. 94-96

<sup>262</sup> John Milne, quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

Most adults who shared parenting consider it worked very well, and children who were parented that way seem to agree. But few have come back to the 1970s communities to settle in and raise new families. James has a theory that could possibly account for this. “The periods of big change in the European era in New Zealand have been about forty-five years, or two generations, apart. In other words they coincide with every *second* generation.”<sup>263</sup> If this were true, then hippies’ children, belonging as they would to a more staid and conventional group, would be unlikely to elect to live in an alternative community; their parents would just have to wait for the arrival of some grandchildren. But I think this idea is too simplistic, and don’t think that we need restrict our view to New Zealand in ‘the European era’. I think the time has come to use the lens of ‘longue durée’.

During the 17<sup>th</sup> century there was a time of ‘levelling’ in England. Reformers overthrew the monarchy and formed a Commonwealth. Some of the more idealistic then began a commune on St George’s Hill. It hasn’t altogether been forgotten yet:

“In 1649 to St. George's Hill / A ragged band they called the Diggers came to show the people's will / They defied the landlords, they defied the laws / They were the dispossessed reclaiming what was theirs

We come in peace they said, to dig and sow / We come to work the lands in common and to make the waste grounds grow / This earth divided we will make whole / So it may be a common treasury for all

The sin of property we do disdain / No man has any right to buy or sell the earth for private gain / By theft and murder they took the land / Now everywhere the walls spring up at their command

They make the laws to chain us well / The clergy dazzle us with heaven, or they damn us into hell / We will not worship the God they serve, / a God of greed who feeds the rich while poor men starve

We work we eat together, we need no swords / We will not bow to the masters, nor pay rent to the lords / Still we are free, though we are poor / Ye Diggers all, stand up for glory, stand up now!

From the men of property the orders came / They sent the hired men and troopers to wipe out the Diggers' claim / Tear down their cottages, destroy their corn / They were dispersed – but still the vision lingers on

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<sup>263</sup> James, p. 9 (my italics)

Ye poor take courage, ye rich take care / This earth was made a common treasury for everyone to share / All things in common, all people one / We come in peace - the orders came to cut them down".<sup>264</sup>

A UK hippie called Leon Rosselson wrote this in 1974. He called it *The World Turned Upside Down*, and took that title from Marxist Historian Christopher Hill's book of the same name, which he had just been reading. Since 1989 *Diggers and Dreamers* magazine has been the primary resource for information, issues, and ideas about intentional communities and communal living in the UK. I wrote about the Diggers visionary goals, as sung by Rosselson, in my postgraduate paper, suggesting that they were almost identical to goals shared by alternative communities today. I went on to propose that there must surely be a link between hippie communes of the 1970s and the Diggers of 1649.

As evidence of this I quoted from *The True Levellers Standard Advanced*, published in April 1649 by Gerrard Winstanley & 14 others: "Break in pieces quickly the Band of particular Propriety [property], disown this oppressing Murder, Oppression and Thievery of Buying and Selling of Land, owning of landlords and paying of Rents and give thy Free Consent to make the Earth a Common Treasury without grumbling ... that all may enjoy the benefit of their Creation. And hereby thou wilt *honour thy Father and thy Mother*: Thy Father, which is the spirit of community, that made all and that dwells in all. ... Thy Mother, which is the Earth, that brought us all forth: That as a true Mother, loves all her children. Therefore do not hinder the Mother Earth from giving all her children suck, by thy Inclosing into particular hands, and holding up that cursed Bondage of Inclosure by thy Power. ... Property and single interest divide the people of a land and the whole world into parties and are the causes of all wars and bloodshed and contention everywhere."<sup>265</sup>

My examiner wasn't much impressed with these ideas, and asked if *The True Levellers Standard Advanced* was ever read at Rainbow Valley meetings. No, but we sometimes sing Rosselson's song after barbecues; it seemed to me that the examiner had missed the point. Each generation of reformers reaffirms perennial reforming goals. Tim Shadbolt: "We thought 'Right, let's go back to primitive village lifestyle and see if we can't evolve a different country altogether, where materialism isn't the main motivator for our communities."<sup>266</sup>

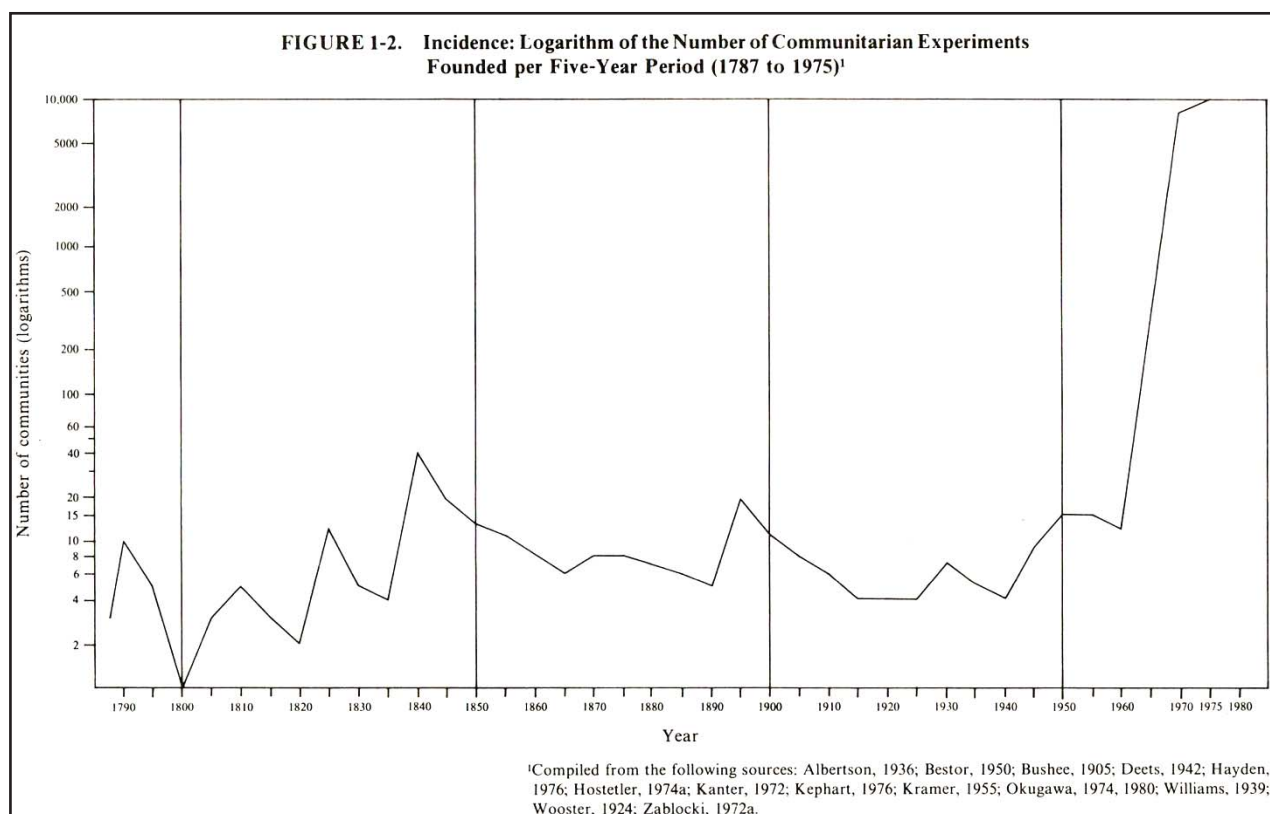
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<sup>264</sup> Rosselson, see electronic resources.

<sup>265</sup> Jenkin, 2011, pp. 24-26

<sup>266</sup> quoted in Salmon, *Dirty Bloody Hippies*, 2010

Most academic commentators who have written of the worldwide rural commune movement of the 1960s and 1970s are struck by how it outstripped all its predecessors by a country mile; this study makes it clear that happened in New Zealand too. Zablocki has produced a graph which illustrates the incidence of what he calls communitarian experiments in the US between 1787 and 1975.<sup>267</sup> This indicates at first successive peaks and troughs.



It seems evident to me that spikes in the 1790s and 1840s coincide with international eras of revolution and agitation for social-reform.<sup>268</sup> The 1890's spike appears to correspond with a large increase in anarchist communes in the UK and Europe, and also with a spate of idealistic intentional communities in Australia.<sup>269</sup> It also coincides with the founding of Wainoni Community in Christchurch by Alexander Bickerton.<sup>270</sup> There is another spike in the 1930s, a period of anarchist and socialist activity here as well, which saw the establishment of first

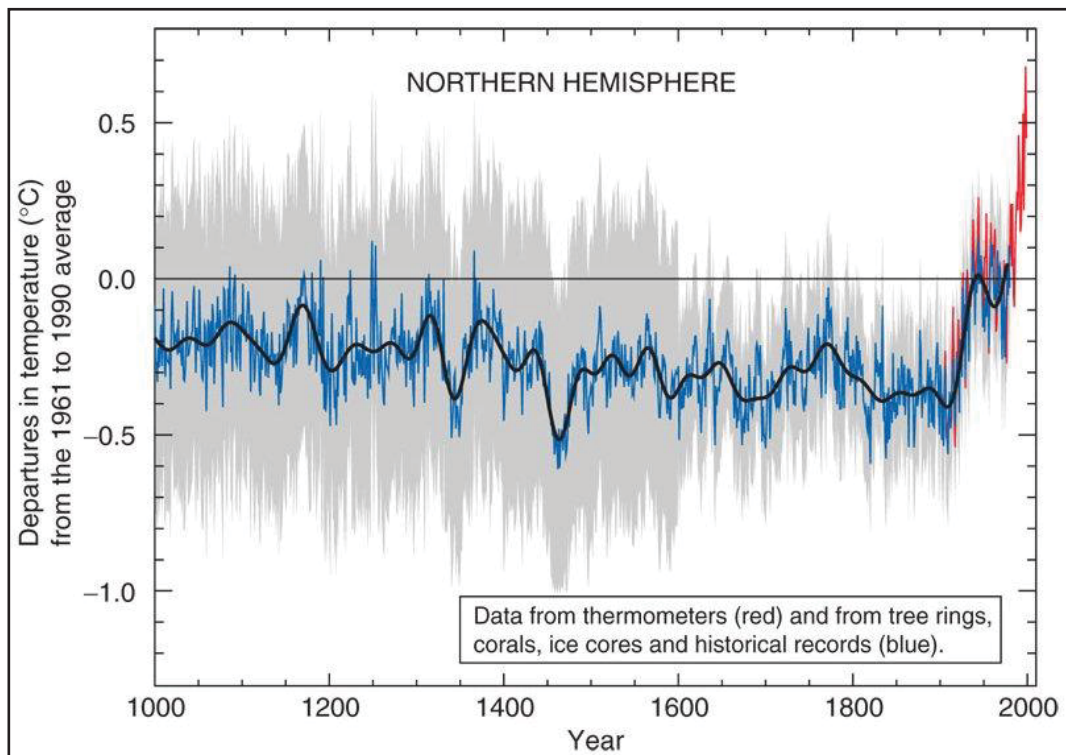
<sup>267</sup> Zablocki, 1980, p.32

<sup>268</sup> It has been argued by Belich in *Making Peoples* and *Paradise Reforged* that starting with the New Zealand Company's colonizing schemes in the 1840s, European New Zealand was itself a reforming social experiment of a kind. Sargisson and Sargent state a similar view: "Paradise, Eden and Heaven on Earth, this beautiful and abundant land has been, for many, a place in which to try to create a utopia. It is, we believe, home to more intentional communities per capita than any other country in the world ..." Since 2004 Sargent at least has somewhat recanted: "Australia appears to have more intentional communities per capita than any other country other than Israel ... New Zealand also has a very strong tradition". (2010)

<sup>269</sup> Metcalf devotes a chapter to this: "The 1890s - the High Point of Australian Utopianism", pp. 18-31. New Australia, Cosme, The Village Settlement Ass., (700 families in seven different 'colonies'), Byrnestown, Leongatha, Murtho, Mizpah, Nil Desperandum and other similar intentional communities were all established in Australia in the 1890s.

<sup>270</sup> Wainoni was an experimental intentional community that lasted until around 1903. Bickerton's social and political ideas were also expressed in his novel *Morganeering* (1895), in *The Romance of the Earth* (1898) and in numerous pamphlets and speeches ... Sargisson and Sargent, pp. 24-25

Beeville and then Riverside. Then comes the monumental spike of 1970. “Everything that happened in America in the three hundred years before 1965 was dwarfed by what happened in the five short years that followed. By 1970 there were at least twice as many rural communes in America as there had been throughout all previous history.”<sup>271</sup> Rigby, writing in 1978, describes related movements in Japan, Germany, Holland, and the UK, and says of Israel “the kibbutz movement has continued to grow to the point where there are some 235 kibbutzim with a total population of over 90,000, about 4% of the Jewish population of Israel.”<sup>272</sup> It is apparent that these trends were multinational and that New Zealand was a part of them. Since they are not all spaced forty-five years apart, James’ theory that each second generation brings reform may well be wrong.



One thing stands out to me: Zablocki’s graph is reminiscent of the ‘hockeystick’ of global warming, as presented by Al Gore in Guggenheim’s 2006 documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*.<sup>273</sup> On that graph too we see a more or less horizontal line of peaks and troughs, until suddenly in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the temperatures rocket.

Supposing climate change to be illusory, that sudden recent upturn can’t be right; but science keeps insisting it is right. Intentional communities have waxed and waned for centuries.

<sup>271</sup> Gardner, p. 3

<sup>272</sup> Rigby, p. 4

<sup>273</sup> This version is from Wikipedia; see electronic resources.

Supposing they are really cyclical, a sort of safety valve for overblown-idealists, Zablocki's US graph could not be right; why would there be this huge explosion of idealists? But it is right; something dramatic happened forty years ago. I've argued here that it was an intelligent response to too much war and too much waste.

The hippie commune building upsurge forty years ago now also seems to mirror recent temperatures. Gore's hockeystick is telling us we're changing our environment. Zablocki's hockeystick is telling us that we can change ourselves.<sup>274</sup>

Science suggests that global warming could soon reach a dangerous 'tipping point'. Consumerism never was sustainable. Humanity needs equity and doesn't need another nuclear war. A post-industrial world could yet decide that rural and cooperative eco-villages, socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and linked by media networks based on light and durable technologies are practical and possible. If that does happen, then a greater commune movement than the hippie movement could eventuate, and make the hippies' goals the new reality. Of course they weren't ever just the hippies' goals.

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<sup>274</sup> Rigby wrote in 1978: "the commune movement .... Has the potential of becoming one of the first genuine international movements for social change. The fact that the global ecological crisis is forcing people to question the role of trans-national capitalist enterprise and to start thinking of the social, political and economic systems of the world as a whole, and not just of their own nation state and society, can only strengthen this process." (p.308).

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*Original Art work and assorted photos supplied by Carol* (16/06/11)

*Assorted photos Supplied by Sally*

*archival documents supplied by Jane N:*

Box: Incorporated Soc./ Folder: Conditions/

Document: 'Resource Consent RM040763' (28/10/09)

Document: 'Final for information re. Certificate of Acceptance' (08/01/10)

Folder/ Resource Consent/

Document: 'Schedule of Conditions, Marahau Valley Farm Community'

Photos: 'Residential Situations 2010'

Document: 'Building Review by Don Frame of House care Ltd.' (10/10/03)

Document: Application for Resource Consent, Marahau Valley farm Community' (31/03/05)

(with Covering letter from Stephen re. Eco-village status)

Folder/ Inc. Society

Document: Nelson Rural lessees Assn.

Document: Incorporated Society Constitution

*archival documents supplied by TDC:*

General Property Information record, 198 Marahau Valley Road, Marahau, lists all planning and building consents, 2 pages.

Email from Jim Hollingworth to Dave Stebbings; aerial photo attachment (09/09/04 6.30 a.m.)

Letter from McFadden McMeeken Phillips, Lawyers, to Mr Stebbings, Re Notice to Fix (27/09/05)

Abatement notices & covering letter re House Care Ltd report, 10 pages, (18/3/2005)

Marahau Valley Farm Report with Summary, Recommended Response and Recommended Council Policy for MVF, 8 pages, undated, evidently in response to Letter from McFadden McMeeken Phillips, Lawyers, to Mr Stebbings, Re Notice to Fix (27/09/05)

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The Marahau Community Proposal, 1 page, typed, signed R&D Good, 'Dave', 'Stephen' (27/09/82)

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Letter to Waimea County Engineer, Re: Extra Dwelling, from Malcolm Macoby, 4 pages, (07/07/83)

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*Documents accessed and provided as PDFs by Jonathan Moffat, TDC archivist in Richmond*  
Waimea Counti Council, Index to Minute Book: Sunday Creek Farm, and 7 related minutes exerpts  
dating from 1980 and 1983  
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*Assorted Sunday Creek archival documents supplied by Murray and Dave H.*  
*Assorted photos supplied by Julian*  
About 50 documents accessed from TDC Archive dated 1979, 80, 83, 84, 87, 88, 89,90, 91,93 & 95

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*Assorted archival documents supplied by Stephanie:*  
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Karuna Falls cooperative Soc. Ltd, Residential Site register (2010)  
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Karuna Falls revised Management Plan 1985 (6 pages)  
14 other assorted documents including *The Karuna Mulch*  
Management Plan, Karuna Falls, with map, 6 pages (undated, pre 1985)  
Karuna Falls Management Plan 1995 - 2005  
*Assorted photos supplied by Stephanie*  
*Assorted photos supplied by Amrita*

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Subjects by community

<b>Marahau</b>	<b>Sunday Creek</b>	<b>Karuna Falls</b>	<b>Other</b>
Jane N.	Bindia	Alan	John
Stephen	Cheryl	Esther	
Carol	Dave H.	Joanna	
Dave	Inez	Kathi	
Sally	Jan	Patrick	
	Jane R.	Ruby	
	Julian	Stephanie	
	Maureen	Wayne	
	Murray		
	Yirka		
	<i>Janice</i>		
	<i>David</i>		

## Appendix 2: Illustration credits

p.24 Photo R. Jenkin	p.83 Photo R. Jenkin	p.124 Painting by Carol
p.29 Photo A. Taylor	p.85 Photo A. Taylor	p.125 Painting by Carol
p.34 Photo from Sally	p.86 Photo from Maureen	p.126 Drawing by Alicia Bay Laurel
p.43 Top photo from Carol	p.87 Photo A. Taylor	p.129 Left photo Ian Baker
p.43 Bottom photo from Sally	p.88 Top photo from Sally	p.129 Right top photo R Jenkin
p.44 Photo A. Taylor	p.88 Bottom photo from Stephanie	p.129 Right low <i>Dirty Bloody Hippies</i>
p.52 Photos R. Jenkin	p.90 Photo A. Taylor	p.130 Left photo from Amrita
p.53 Photo R. Jenkin	p.91 Photo R. Jenkin	p.130 Right photo Ian Baker
p.62 Photos from Maureen	p.92 Cover illustration, Nambassa	p.134 Photo from Amrita
p.63 Photo from Sally	p.94 Left photo from Sally	p.136 Photo from Stephanie
p.75 Cutting from Maureen	p.94 Right photo from Maureen	p.137 Left photo from Jim Buchanan
p.77 Photos A. Taylor	P.95 Left photo from Stephanie	p.137 Right art, Simon, <i>Mushroom 12</i>
P.78 Photo R. Jenkin	p.95 Right photo from Jim Buchanan	p.138 Left, painting, Philly Hall
p.79 Photo A. Taylor	p.106 from <i>Dirty Bloody Hippies</i>	p.138 Right, photo, R. Jenkin
p.80 Photo R. Jenkin	p.115 Photo from Amrita	p.140 Photo from John
p.81 Photo A. Taylor	p.117 Poster from Stephanie	p.142 Photo, Robyn Holloway
p.82 Photo R. Jenkin	p.119 Painting by Linda Williams	

## Appendix 3:

A New Way of Life; this cutting was provided by Maureen and labeled on reverse the 'Nelson Evening Mail 1978'. I have been unable to establish a more precise date, but I was able to contact Author Arch Barclay who confirmed 1978 was probably correct.

# A NEW WAY OF

**By A. B. Barclay**  
**Tucked into odd little corners of our countryside wherever they can find a slender foothold are a whole new race of New Zealanders — the commune people, admired by some, despised, envied, praised and abused . . . but never ignored.**

They are still very much in a minority in 1978 but have shown they are prepared to back their convictions with deeds.

Certainly not the deeds that an orderly business-based consumer society appreciates, but deeds that stamp them as resolved to live life the way they believe it should be . . . and obviously can be.

They are described as "opting out" of society, but the day may soon come when young people (and older) consider it "opting in" to a society which offers the values they treasure . . . concern for others, love in understanding and tolerance, room to grow and time to talk free from the pressures and hollow customs of urban life.

### JOINED FORCES

In support of this new life several communes and independent smallholders have joined forces to fight for better understanding of their way in a Waimea County Rural Resettlement Association.

Through spokesmen like Jon Kolf of Sunday Creek Farm and Rob Francis of the Riverside Community, they are seeking changes to rigid planning laws that would allow them greater freedom to achieve their goals their own ways.

"We are concerned about certain aspects of present planning laws which make it very difficult for us to live in the country," they said in a recent news sheet.

The association believes that planning is for people, so that any new plan should reflect as accurately as possible the wants and desires of the people in the county — themselves included.

"Only then can there be a meaningful and friendly relationship between those administering and those living with the laws," they say.

"We believe that our concerns are not only in our own interest, but in the interests of the land and people of this county as a whole."

"We feel strongly, and there is a vast amount of evidence to support us, that the world we live in — New Zealand as it is — is going to have to change radically over the coming years if this planet, and the human race on it, are to survive.

"Society shows many signs of stress. The disintegration of the family and the increasing violence in our cities are examples of this.

"In our environment too there are numerous disaster areas looming. Our cities are rapidly becoming less fit for human habitation. Closer to home, more and more people are concerned about erosion, water conservation effects from continuously spreading pine plantations, and pollution of Tasman Bay.

"The energy crisis is something we can no longer ignore," they continue.

"Today oil and gas comprise two-thirds of the world's commercial energy. In only 11 years time, world oil production will be declining, yet demand will continue to increase."

### OIL CRISIS

The association also questions whether the New Zealand economy can survive much longer in its present form.

"The oil crisis alone," they say, "is throwing severe doubts on our whole economy — the way it is based on the notion that we can forever continue to live off the export of bulky agricultural products shipped halfway across the world.

"We can no longer believe that all our economic and social ills can be solved by earning more foreign exchange. The balance of payments equation has two sides, and one way of earning it is to save it — not to spend it.

"New Zealand could be far more self-sufficient which would greatly reduce the need for foreign exchange."

They claim that by building a family type of small community they are affirming unity instead of separatism, personal and spiritual growth over material acquisition, co-operation rather than competition and harmony with nature instead of exploitation. They create a feeling of belonging which they consider essential to any healthy society.

In a wider sense they see themselves reversing the rural-urban drift and revitalising rural communities both socially and economically. Small-scale diversified farming should lead to a more balanced society than does the large-scale specialisation typical of modern agriculture.

"We also support the right of retiring farmers to live in the country rather than be shunted off to towns," they state. "All communities need older as well as younger people."

### SELF-SUFFICIENT

The association sees its members becoming more self-sufficient as an example of what the whole country, in their view, must do.

With a low-consumption lifestyle and the recycling of their impact on the environment and contribute to the saving of imported energy.

By using organic manures

more they believe that dependence on imported fertilisers can be heavily reduced particularly over a long planning term.

By using mostly marginal land for development they are following the national policy of preventing land from reversing to scrub.

"Our simpler way of living also reflects the urgent need on a global scale for the affluent countries to reduce their enormous and still growing consumption of the world's resources."

The association acknowledges the need for "some kind of planning" but feels emphasis should be placed on wider social, environmental and long-term economic considerations than the planning code at present allows.

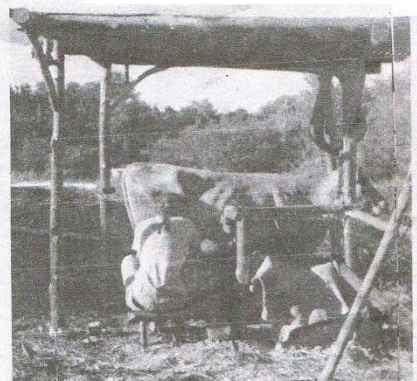
They want greater flexibility to allow individuals, families and communities to lead "a meaningful and productive life without the constant reminder to be an economic unit".

They want recognition of the fact that large numbers have moved back to a rural way of life in recent years and to continue.

These people have special needs which are not catered for in the present county planning code.



**THERE** was no shortage of hands and brawn when members of the Sunday Creek Farm community turned out to raise the tripod frame for "Woodie's" seashell house.



**A MANUKA BAIL** is all Nashka needs to supply the commune's daily milk. This group led by Jon Kolf has established itself on a derelict block of land in Sunday Creek near Dovedale. They have built a central home for members and several "sleepouts".