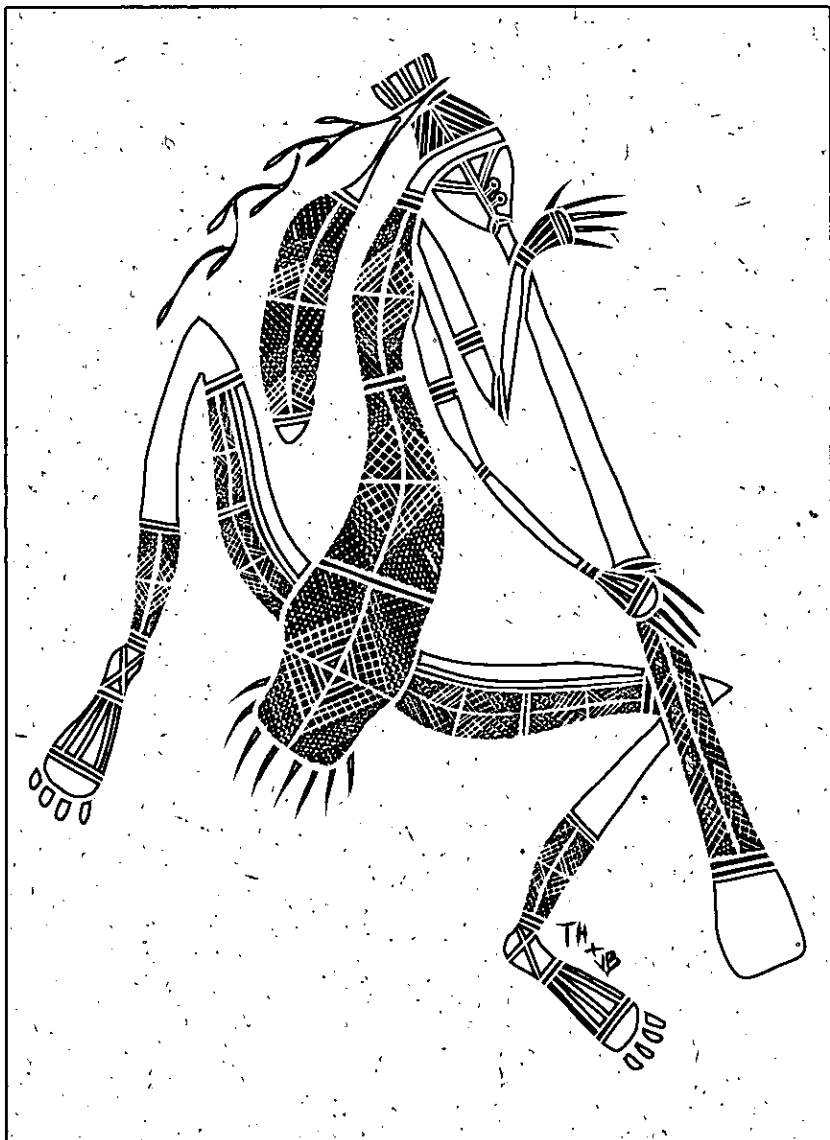


DIDGERIDOO – A beginners guide



Alastair Black



Alastair Black

Dear Future Didgeridoo Players,

I've known Alastair Black for five years as a Doo player. His methods are easy to follow and his book should be of great value as a learning aid.

Signed Tim Hardy

Didgeridoo Man

Mindle Beach Markets

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping 'T' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

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Alastair Lachlan Black,
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Magill, S.A. 5072
Australia

DIDGERIDOO - A beginners guide

Good eh! My name is Alastair Black from Australia. I learnt to play the didgeridoo some years ago, assisted by my Aboriginal friends from Arnhemland.

I am encouraged by a number of Aboriginal Elders to teach the didgeridoo to "help bridge the cultural gap between black and white". Hence this booklet that explains the basic steps in learning to play and gives you, the reader, an introduction to the history and purpose of perhaps the world's oldest instrument.

The didgeridoo is a unique and fascinating wind instrument credited to the Australian Aboriginal from the North of Australia. It is generally made from trunks or branches of trees hollowed out by termites or from bamboo.

The didgeridoo was generally considered a male instrument. However it appears this was more a role delineation in some areas whereas in others only fully initiated men could even see the 2.5 metre didgeridoo used in "Djungguwan" ceremonies where it represents "Yurlunggur" or the Rainbow Serpent. In other areas women had the didgeridoo dreaming to take care of and/or played the instrument as recorded on Dr. Alice Moyle's research tape in 1966 for the Australia Aboriginal Institute in Canberra ("Aboriginal Sound Instruments" - Larrikin).



The didgeridoo is played by loosely vibrating the lips on the mouthpiece with air expelled from the lungs and mouth cavity, employing the use of the diaphragm and cheeks respectively. At the same time short, sharp breaths are taken in through the nose. The process is known as circular breathing. The instrument is often decorated with ochre and clay designs, using totemic symbols and bark painting techniques.



The origin of the didgeridoo is not accurately known, though some research indicates its birth may be as recent as one thousand years ago (World Archaeology, Vol. 12, N0.3, Alice Moyle). Other archaeological estimates are 5,000 and 20,000 years. However, the Dreamtime stories trace its use back to the creation of the world and this understanding is still supported by Aboriginal Elders today.

In fact myth has it that the didgeridoo played its part in sounding the world into form in the Dreamtime and at one stage in the process of the creation of the world it saved the Wawilak sisters (important creator beings) and their respective sons after they had been swallowed and regurgitated by Yurlunggur (Rainbow Serpent). As they all lay on the bank of the billabong as if dead, the Yurlunggur Trumpet (Didgeridoo) rose up out of the billabong under its own volition and breathed the breath of life back into the Wawilak sisters and the two boys. This act allowed the process of creation to continue in the world.



Perhaps the increased interest in the didgeridoo that is now occurring around the world is indicative of the openness to change occurring in the consciousness of many people. The words of a wise Aboriginal Elder Bill Neidjie put it so aptly, "... Didgeridoo magic, got power on its own. When it speaks to you - you gotta listen!".



*Bill Neidjie and the author at
"Cannon Hill" N.T.*

There is little written record of the healing use of the didgeridoo however people still alive today and known to the author have shared their experiences and observations relating to its use in Aboriginal culture.

It has been traditionally, and may still be used in producing a trance-like state either for the wirinun (shaman) by playing it over him or for the didgeridoo player himself. It is used for cleaning and rebalancing a person's energy field by way of stimulating or sedating the chakra and meridian system of the human being (The Australian Aboriginal Yidaki/Didgeridoo by James John Wafer).

Playing the didgeridoo has a number of health benefits. There is no right or wrong way to play the instrument. Once the student can produce the drone and circular breath, they can





experience the fulfilment of whole brain activity (see Life Energy in Music Vol. 1, Dr. Diamond), i.e. enjoy the results of spontaneous creation. As indicated in the Eastern wholistic approach to health, all the acupuncture meridians are represented on the lips. The vibrating lips stimulate and “open up” these gateways, allowing life energy or “Chi” to flow more freely.


The extra breathing and lung activity increases the oxygen supply to the body, similar in effect to exercise (useful for asthma sufferers). The short sharp breaths through the nostrils can help clear out the nasal cavities, eliminating excess toxin-carrying mucous.

The use of the diaphragm, particularly in active rhythms and vocal sounds, has a similar effect on the intestines as do specific yoga exercises designed to enhance assimilation of food and elimination of waste. Also this active use of the diaphragm aids in toning the “tummy” externally. It also appears that the playing vibration of the didgeridoo allows body organs to vibrate in sympathy freeing up disease causing crystallisation and allowing the true vibration of life to re-establish, resulting in health (see Cymatics - the study of sound on matter by Dr. Hans Jenny and as utilised by Dr. Peter Guy Manners).



“The haunting music of the didgeridoo touches peoples’ hearts and calls to remembrance our spiritual and earthly





heritage". In these days of rapid change on all levels this, perhaps, most ancient of musical instrument is re-sounding the tone of life once more on earth.... listen it may be speaking to you!

The Digeridoo or Yidaki, as it is more commonly known in Arnhemland may be played standing, sitting or whilst walking, depending on the occasion.

I have divided the learning process into two sections:

A. Five Primary Ways of Producing Sound

B. Circular Breathing.

A. FIVE PRIMARY WAYS OF PRODUCING SOUND



Step 1 Basic Drone (which is a loose-lipped blowing technique)

Relax and give yourself permission to look a little unusual. Do some face stretching exercises. Open and close your mouth, puff out and squeeze in your cheeks. Now blow out air allowing your lips to loosely vibrate, like blowing a 'raspberry'. Transfer the loose-lipped blowing technique to the mouthpiece of the didgeridoo, making sure that no air escapes around your mouth. Initially, medium blowing pressure is preferred - not too hard or too soft - as both make it difficult to keep the lips vibrating as required to produce the drone.





Step 2 Variation on the Drone

This variation incorporates blowing harder and softer by utilising the diaphragm, exerting pressure on the lungs and in turn expelling air through the mouth in varying volume and pressure.



Further sound variation is obtained by squeezing the cheeks together, slow and faster. This cheek co-ordination may take some time to master as initially when the student squeezes his cheeks, the lip position on the mouth piece changes, stopping the drone - so practise this exercise in front of a mirror gradually developing the ability to squeeze the cheeks in fully whilst maintaining the drone.

The mouth actually becomes part of the instrument and varying the size of your mouth, changes the sound produced through the didgeridoo. Similarly by altering the position of the tongue in your mouth, you vary the sound produced.

Step 3 Vocals

By utilising a simple technique known to ventriloquists, a variety of animal and bird sounds may be produced. Now commence playing the basic drone and make a noise like a dog yelping with your vocal chords. If this proves a little difficult, try making the sound without the didgeridoo. As you may now appreciate, any sound you can make without moving your lips unduly can be reproduced through the didgeridoo. A useful exercise is to look into a mirror and





practise various sounds whilst keeping your lips as still as possible. This skill, developed, will allow you to talk whilst you play the didgeridoo, eg. you can say "Hello mate, how are you going?" Initially, it is easier to practise some simple animal and bird sounds, eg. the bush pigeon, howling dingo, brolga, feral donkey, mo-poke and kookaburra

Step 4 Tongue

The tongue is used to change the shape of your mouth or air chamber, or for making sounds, eg. visualise a kangaroo hopping across an open plain. This sound is produced by quickly placing the tongue on the roof of the mouth and just as quickly removing it whilst you continue to drone. This action creates a vacuum which sends a small shock wave down the instrument resulting in the sound just described.

Now visualise a returning boomerang circling through the air. This sound is produced by rapidly pulsating your tongue whilst droning.

I find this effect is enhanced when the cheeks are close together and the tongue forward in the mouth.

The tongue is used a good deal in traditional didgeridoo playing, eg. by saying as you play "do-do-didero" emphasising the tongue.



Step 5 Overtones or Harmonics

By playing with cheeks contracted and tongue forward in the mouth, many didgeridoos will produce a variety of subtle overtones that add richness and colour to the overall effect.

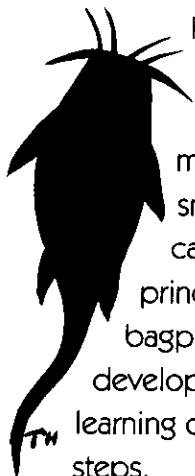




This effect may well occur naturally in spontaneous playing.

Now by incorporating these five primary ways of sound production, musical rhythms can be produced.

B. CIRCULAR BREATHING



Physiologically, it is impossible to breathe in and out at the same time. By developing the technique of squeezing the air out of your mouth using both the cheeks and tongue whilst snatching short breaths through your nose, so-called circular breathing can be attained. This principle is similar to that utilised in playing the bagpipes. There are a number of approaches to develop and reinforce this co-ordination skill. For learning convenience, the process is divided into eight steps.

Step 1

Strengthening the cheek muscles. In the course of everyday living, our cheeks perform the tasks intended of them, e.g. stopping food from falling out of the mouth, etc. When called upon to do the extraordinary, some training is required. Facing a mirror, puff out and squeeze in your cheeks. Repeat this process continually. Don't overdo it initially as it may become painful. The emphasis should be placed on the squeezing in, as it is this contraction that is later utilised in forcing the air down the didgeridoo whilst you snatch fresh breath through your nose.





Step 2

With both hands free, fill your cheeks with air. Squeeze the cheeks together with your hands whilst resisting the air expelled through tightened lips. The resultant "farting sound" produced indicates you are on the right track.

Step 3

Now repeat Step 2 (with both hands free....) and as you do, snatch a short breath through your nose, making sure both activities occur simultaneously. This is a co-ordination exercise. If results are not immediately attainable, fill your mouth with water and as you squeeze the water out (preferably outdoors or over a sink), breathe in and out through your nose. Once this is achieved, repeat the exercise with air only.

Step 4

Now, using your own cheek power, squeeze your cheeks as you did with the water. At the same time, with each squeeze and expulsion of air, snatch a short breath through your nose.


Step 5

The above technique is now transferred to the didgeridoo and the inhaled air is then expelled by way of the drone through the didgeridoo.

Step 6

Now the exercise becomes a little more challenging. Slow down your lip vibration as you squeeze your cheeks and breathe in to produce the drone rather than the





“farting sound”, the rest of the exercise remains the same. Now speed up the process to eliminate the gap.

Step 7

To further reinforce this newly developed technique, place a straw in a glass of water. By squeezing the air out of your mouth using the cheeks and tongue (which slides forward, something like a piston in a pump), produce a steady stream of bubbles as you snatch short breaths through your nose.



Step 8

Another approach to achieving circular breathing may prove useful. Playing the basic drone, squeeze your cheeks in and then allow your cheeks to puff out. (Imagine a black smith's bellows operating a forge.) Now once this becomes automatic, snatch a short breath every second squeeze utilising the breathing timing technique mentioned earlier.

Now you have the basic circular breathing. It is only a matter of practise to refine the technique to incorporate the amount of air you need to play various rhythms. For example, the rhythm “Wild Man” from the tape “Earth-Tones” takes a good deal of breath. Another rhythm from “Earth-Tones” called “Earth Rhythm” requires less breath (see bibliography). Musical rhythms can be further created by repeating certain words or phrases whilst you play, e.g. “didumaldi” or “umbutadija” or “didgeridoo”.





Sometimes an empty metal bucket may be used to act as a resonator (traditionally some Aboriginals use a bailer shell). With the trumpet end half-way in the mouth of the bucket, proceed to play; the sound bounces back in an amplified manner, making it easier for the player to hear and appreciate the music.

ACQUIRING A DIDGERIDOO: WHAT TO LOOK FOR


You may already have an instrument that is adequate for your needs, however, I suspect that as your proficiency increases, your desire to own other didgeridoos will also. The following may assist your choice.



Initially, an instrument between 1m and 1.3m in length may be easier to play. The internal hole, at the blowing end, should be approximately 3cm in diameter, ideally flaring out to a trumpet end of up to 10cm in diameter, although between 5 and 8 cm is fine. The walls of the instrument should not be too thick as this tends to deaden the resonance and, particularly if the timber has not been seasoned, the didgeridoo may split.

The wooden didgeridoo may also be treated internally with linseed oil, taking care to avoid over-soaking if the instrument has ochre artwork on the outside, as the oil will diffuse the clarity of the artwork.





Beeswax makes an excellent mouthpiece, allowing the size hole required for a particular player. It is easily applied by placing it in a container and heating gently. Put the container on an insulated pad on the floor. Dip the blowing end of the instrument into the melted wax, rotating the instrument so that the wax adheres to the full circumference of the mouthpiece. Then withdraw the didgeridoo, allowing wax to cool and congeal. Repeat this process, building the beeswax up layer by layer until the desired effect is obtained.

For those on a low budget, 40mm PVC low pressure pipe makes a reasonable learner's didgeridoo. The mouthpiece may be softened with beeswax.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Alastair Black was born in New Guinea in 1950 and spent his formative years in a multi-culturally influenced environment, both in New Guinea and on a farming property near the Aboriginal reserve of Point Pearce. His secondary education was in a boarding school that hosted students from Borneo, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and all over Australia. As a wool-classer, he spent some time in New Zealand



and was impressed by the Maori people and their colourful culture. Following this period, Alastair spent time, over a number of years, continuing his wool-classing in western and northern South Australia, northern NSW and southwestern Queensland. This time of travel exposed him increasingly to the Aboriginal culture which he grew to further respect.


Playing the didgeridoo was a natural extension for Alastair who appreciates that to understand a culture you need to participate in it. Over a number of years, his proficiency in playing developed to a point where, with the encouragement of family and friends and in particular, Rolf Harris and Burnum Burnum (well-known Aboriginal leader), he undertook to introduce others to the wonder and enjoyment of the didgeridoo. Alastair sees his current vocation of teaching the didgeridoo as an avenue of reconciliation between black and white. It was in this vein that



*The author with David Blamatji of
Beswick Station, N.T.*

Burnum Burnum encouraged his career as have notable Aboriginal Elders David Blamatji (who taught Rolf Harris and played for the Queen in London), Big Bill Neidjie (Australia's Kakadu Man) and George Jungawonga.





Alastair specialises in lessons for beginners, facilitates workshops such as "Didgeridoo - Catalyst for Change, Attunement and healing", teaches the didgeridoo and its associated culture at schools, and plays at seminars and conferences as an atmosphere creator. Notable achievements have been Womad '93 and '95, Adelaide Festival of Arts, National Folk Festival, Maleny Folk Festival, Goolwa Folk Festival, Broken Hill Aboriginal Lands Council and as an integral part in the nationally acclaimed world music group Dya Singh.



Alastair has played for the Dalai Lama, Burnum Burnum in his dreamtime workshops, Rolf Harris, Professor Suzuki (at Apollo Stadium to 3,000 people), Yogi Amarit Desai and has taught Michael Brecker (Paul Simon's saxophone player). He has had several television appearances, numerous radio and newspaper interviews all with the interest to encourage multi-cultural harmony and planetary healing.

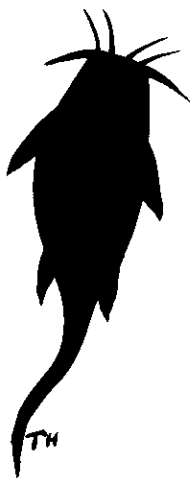
Alastair has released two CDs "Didgeridoo Dreaming" and "Balanda Dancing", also three tapes "Didgeridoo - Earth Tones", "Didgeridoo - Haunting Harmonies" and "Didgeridoo - How to Play".





Ultimately, Alastair's interest is in allowing a mutual respect and understanding of different cultures to occur to a point where people may transcend cultural differences and recognise that we are all part of the one body of mankind.

Alastair Black
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- Jenny, H. "Cymatics - the study of sound on matter"

Tapes available to support this publication

(by Alastair Black, PO Box 384, Magill, South Australia 5072)

"Didgeridoo - How to Play"

"Didgeridoo - Earth Tones"

"Didgeridoo - Haunting Harmonies"

CDs available

"Didgeridoo Dreaming"

"Balanda Dancing"



SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Please send me the GEN (Oceania) newsletter. I enclose a cheque in Aust\$ made payable to Global Eco-Village Network for \$..... to cover issues. (Subscription is by donation - you decide the amount. As a guide, we suggest \$2 per issue plus postage.)

NAME

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Tel: Fax: email:

☐ Please send me a printed copy ☐ Please send me a copy via email

☐ Please send me more information on GEN

I am willing to have my details included in GEN's mailing database ☐ yes ☐ no

Return to: GEN (Oceania), 59 Crystal Waters, MS 16, Maleny Qld 4552, Australia.

Permaculturalists Dream!

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Situated near Mapleton Village in the Sunshine Coast Hinterland, Queensland. 1/2 hour to the Sunshine Coast beaches, 1.5 hours from Brisbane. 1.36 ha (3.5 acres) of level, frost free, fertile red volcanic soil. In an agricultural precinct, which prevents further subdivision in the adjoining area.

Established permaculture gardens, approx 15 years of Grade A biodynamic certification. Hundreds of producing fruit trees, up to 17 years old. All produce currently sold via property's roadside stall, which is on a tourist route to a nearby National Park.

Solid 30ft x 30ft (10m x 10m) concrete shed.



Fully automatic bore to header tank supplies vegetable garden water

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Upstairs: Large lounge/formal dining room. Sunroom/casual dining area. Stunning modern stainless steel kitchen. Bathroom, separate toilet, 3 bedrooms, covered verandah, entry/office.

Downstairs: Car accommodation, large workshop area with ample bench space. Shower, toilet, 2 bedrooms - the area would be easily converted to a self contained unit.

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PRICE: \$350,000

Established Permaculture Property in Subtropical Queensland

Contact: Paul Sykes. Phone: (07) 5445 7316, fax (07) 5494 4578, email: ecosol@peg.apc.org

A bumper issue!

This month's newsletter is a bumper issue, as we simply couldn't bring ourselves to cut out enough of the articles we received to fit into our standard size! Happy reading!

Our Recent Activities...

GEN Oceania goes visiting...

From early February to the beginning of April Max Lindegger, Regional Co-ordinator of this office, visited six countries of our region - Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The itinerary was packed with meetings, tours and speaking engagements. The GEN's message was broadcast far and wide! He was well received everywhere he went, and came back with a bulging bag of information, a head full of ideas and lots of hope for the future. He reports below:

Aims for the Tour

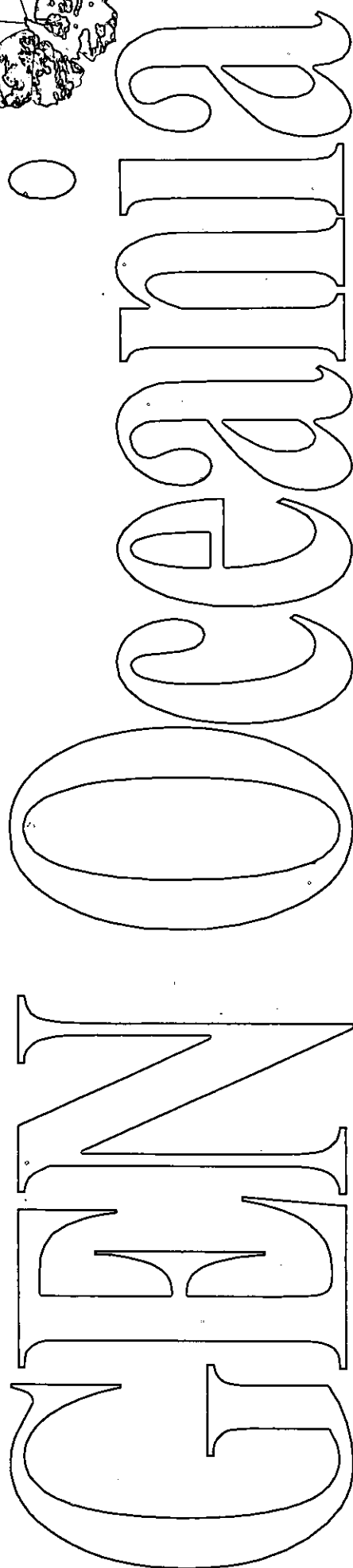
Over the last 15 months we've received a large number of enquiries from various parts of Asia. Some of the countries in this region are not very well served with faxes and email and communication is more difficult than in other parts of the world. By the same token, access to the GEN's web pages is rare. While we mail our quarterly newsletter to these people, this is necessarily fairly broad in subject matter. We received many requests for face to face contact, and from this we decided to plan a tour of the

region in an attempt to meet as many of the people as possible. It was hoped that this would lead to easier and better communications as it allows us to put faces to names, and personalities to communication styles!

It has to be remembered that countries of the South are not only disadvantaged economically, they often also lack access to some basic information. TV, computers, magazines and books are not freely accessible, as they are in the North. A special effort was considered to be justified within the general aims of the GEN.

Inside this Newsletter

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| 6 | Kuthumba, S Africa
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Results

The tour was successful in taking the GEN's message to a large number of people. As it was possible to contact leaders in the fields relevant to us, it is reasonable to expect that the message will spread well beyond what we could ever expect to achieve on our own. The openness of universities to our organisation was especially encouraging. The students at these universities are the decision makers of the future.

I feel there is much to be learned from an ongoing exchange of information. As I always stressed in my meetings, these were meetings to *exchange* ideas and to learn *from each other*.

I was able to meet organisations and projects on a face to face level, and am now in a better position to be able to determine where best to focus our energies. Some of the individuals I met were outstanding in their achievements, and their work inspiring. This newsletter will feature some of these projects over the next few issues. In the area of slum re-settlement incredible results can be seen in the Philippines, India and Bangladesh. Often the success is due not to the availability of huge amounts of money but to a few dedicated, innovative designers and managers. These individuals don't generally get rewarded for their efforts by medals or any recognition. Our web pages will shortly feature photos of some of these inspiring projects and the people behind them.

This visit to many large cities and tiny villages allowed me to make an assessment of the problems as they exist in 1997. I am sure that it will lead to a better understanding of the situation under which such a large percentage of the population is living.

Next Steps

Workshops and Information Provision

The face to face contact with NGOs was very valuable and needs to be continued. The next step I believe should be workshopping, information exchange and project work. This needs to happen at the community and village level. We need to go into the villages and slums and live with the people. The demand for short workshops, to 'inspect' projects, to help with design, to help with solution finding and research is seemingly without limits. I found that a lot of the information which is available is repetitive and often outdated. We need to learn from the successes, spread the information and see that they are repeated in the many places of need.

Working on Partnerships:

Assistance and aid appears in many cases to be very piecemeal and poorly directed. With better co-ordination model villages could be established which could act as seeds from which skills, ideas and initiatives could sprout. Everybody I spoke to agrees that the impact would be tremendous.

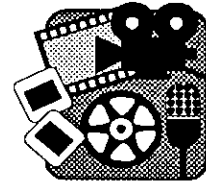
Support to Artisans, as Viable Eco-village Businesses

The viability of artisans is in many areas in jeopardy. Many have something to trade we need. The opportunities for skill exchange should not be missed. We are currently talking to a co-ordinating person in India and a distributor of garden tools in Australia in the hope that the skills of the artisans can be fostered, and the tools become more widely available in the gardens and small farms of Australia. We will keep you posted on this one.

The challenges of the South are huge. While the poverty, lack of housing, the general standard of living and quality of life in many cases is worrying, it is good to see

that there is hope. By working together we can contribute to a better future.

Max Lindegger



Eco-village Video

At last! Our 14 minute video on Crystal Waters Permaculture Village is finished! It identifies the key eco-village elements used in the design of Crystal Waters, illustrating the points with footage of the many different homes, people, wildlife and scenic spots of the property. It has been produced to introduce developers and individual land purchasers to a viable alternative to practices currently applied in most subdivisions. It is not intended as a 'how to' video, but as an inspiration. It does however come with a small pamphlet which identifies some of the more technical elements and ecological considerations that were taken into account during the design process. Available for the very modest sum of \$14.95 plus p&p, all monies received will go towards GENs projects. If you know a developer who would be interested, or could be persuaded to 'think green', we'll happily send them a complimentary copy. Contact this office for more details.

Oceania News

Eco-village workshops

Max will be co-presenting with the full GEN team three eco-village workshops later this year. The first will be in St Petersburg, Russia on 13-15 June. Contact: Natalie Winslow on email

Vasudeva@dance.spb.su. Two workshops will be run in South Africa, in Thlolego and Cape Town, in late October (dates to be confirmed). Contact: Paul Cohen, Thlolego, Fax: +27 142 27090, email vildev@iafrica.com

Donations

THANK YOU! To those fabulous individuals and organisations who have donated money to the GEN. While particular thanks must go to Permaculture Nambour Inc, who made the extremely generous donation of \$8300, please remember that *every* dollar counts, and we are truly grateful for those smaller donations as well as the large ones.

City Farm Network

The Australian City Farms and Community Gardens Network was established in July 1996 and is rapidly growing. It now represents approximately 60 sites around Australia and has started to develop links with New Zealand and the Solomon Islands. This year we are seeking to create links with other projects within the Australasian region and internationally.

The Network's aim is to support community based urban agriculture by providing advice, information and education to individuals, community based organisations and local government interested in community gardens, city farms and community supported agriculture projects.

The network also promotes urban farmers markets, sustainable living education centres, enterprise centres, food co-operatives, food banks and urban food security through community self help.

An advisory service is being established for new and existing community based agriculture initiatives and for local government and other landholders thinking about making land available for community use.

Another major focus is education, including the publication of educational materials, the organisation of tours and workshops, and presentations on urban agriculture.

For more information please contact: Morag Gamble: PO Box 167 Wilston, Qld 4051, Ph/Fax 07 3857 8775
syzygy@mailbox.uq.edu.au

RACO, Calcutta, India

RACO is named after a Catholic priest from Italy who converted Mr Prasad and his wife to Catholicism. Their target group mainly consists of landless, poor farmers and artisans, women and children. They focus on education (many of the people can't read), social development and justice, and help in organisation so that these groups may help themselves. The wages are very low (for women as low as 8R - around 25c - for a 12 hour

day). The dowry system is still alive and growing and suppresses the education of women (an educated woman will require a more substantial dowry). The caste system too is still practised in rural areas, resulting in an untouchable group of people. The use of chemicals (many of which are banned in the west) is high and no safety measures are taken.

To overcome some of these problems, RACO is trying to:

- a) organise the poor to solve their own problems
- b) education centres provision
- c) establish hostel facilities
- d) income generation activities
- e) farmer education in sustainable farming
- f) give cash assistance to those in extreme need
- g) provision of clean and safe water
- h) improve housing and sanitation
- i) assist reforestation
- j) establish counselling skills
- k) give legal assistance and education in rights
- l) health awareness, medical distribution

RACO pioneers, Mr Prasad and his family



It appears that they are making progress in a number of areas:

- youth programmes are up and running
- education of farmers is showing results
- existing forests are better cared for and managed
- women's co-ops are producing woollen garments, quilts and blankets.

It takes only about US\$300 to purchase materials and tools to get a co-op for 15 women up and going - not a great deal of money for those in the over developed countries of the North, but a lot of money in Calcutta, and literally a life-saver for many women. If any readers of this newsletter would like to contribute to this fund, please contact this office.

RACO does not receive any grants at present. They provide courses to a number of NGOs and use the money earned to support their work. They hope to raise sufficient money to buy land, plant crops and earn a regular income from agriculture in order to fund other work.

Mundially Fishermen's Co-operative

An enterprising group of fishermen in Calcutta, India, have found a way to 'farm' the city's waste!

The 150-member co-operative utilises the effluent from the city, using natural systems to clean the water and farm fish. The total park area used is 80 ha, of which 60 ha is under water. Fishing takes place every day providing each member with a monthly income of \$US50-60. No chemicals are used and the members have a high respect for natural processes; for example



Max with Mundially Fishermen's Co-operative, Calcutta

lime is not used - instead Calliandra planted close to the water's edge has been found useful in moderating pH

About 35 million litres of sewerage a day finds its way via 425m of canals to this amazing site. The wastewater (70% industrial and 30% domestic sewerage) is pre-treated by water hyacinth and reeds before it flows into a pond 125ft (38m) deep. Here much of the sludge containing heavy metals settles and oxygen content is often zero. The second pond is 100ft (30m) deep and improvements are clearly visible in the water quality. The 3rd pond, 75 ft (25m) deep, always contains frogs (which at times move into pond two) which are seen as natural water quality indicators. Ponds 4 and 5 are planted with reeds and water hyacinth as well as lemna. From here water of satisfactory quality is directed into 9 ponds. These are stocked with fish (Tilapia, various carp, catfish) which grow up to 2.5kg each..

Max Lindegger

Water Facts



Sub-Saharan African Country governments spend on an average less than US\$17 per person on water supply, sanitation, drainage, garbage collection, roads and electricity. Other comparative figures are: South Asia US\$15; East Asia US\$72.5; Latin America and the Caribbean US\$48.4; the Middle East US\$86.2; West Europe, North America, Australasia US\$656.

Source: Habitat Journal/
City Summit Agenda

The demand for water is doubling every 21 years. In 1996 chronic water shortages affected 40 per cent of the world's population in 80 countries. A billion people do not have access to fresh water.



Source: Habitat Journal/The
Global Management of
Resources.

The Urban Sustainable House

An inner city terrace in Sydney was rebuilt last year to be wholly self-sufficient, effectively cutting itself off from the city's power, water and sewerage system. Situated only 2km from the central business district, it is open to the public, by appointment. Call SolarCorp on (02) 9566 4340.



Agenda 21

Since our last newsletter we've heard from a Council that not only knows what Agenda 21 is, but is actually doing something about it! While they acknowledge the process is still in the very early draft stage, it is encouraging to see an Australian Local Council take Agenda 21 seriously. We'd love to hear similar good news from other councils and businesses!

Sustainable City Plan - Mandurah Council

The City of Mandurah lies south of the Perth Metropolitan Region and is sandwiched between the Indian Ocean on the west and the Peel Harvey Estuary to the east. It was part of an ambitious settlement scheme by Thomas Peel in 1829 which failed due to lack of capital and knowledge. In the past fifteen years, Mandurah has exploded from a small rural shire with a population of 12,700 to the fastest growing regional city with a population of 40,000.

Accordingly, the pressures on the environment have been growing considerably. The Peel Harvey

estuary, a WA's largest inland waterway, has been under increasing pressure not only from urban development but also from unsustainable farming practices further inland. The coastline is also under increasing pressure. The City undertook an extensive community consultation programme to produce a Community Charter and from that, a Corporate Plan. The consultation process clearly identified the environment as a major concern, along with economic development, youth services and the provision of infrastructure.

As a result of this, an action plan was developed which commits the Council to the preparation of a Sustainable City Plan under the guidance of Agenda 21 and within the framework of existing documents such as the Coastal Strategy and Town Planning Scheme No 3. A submission to Council has just passed the Planning Committee, and will be presented to the full Council in May. The format currently under consideration is a large multi-stakeholder steering committee, with 3 consultative working groups beneath working on economic development, environmental protection and social infrastructure.

Kylie Carman-Brown
Strategic Planning Officer
City of Mandurah, WA.

Permaculture in Sri Lanka

GEN co-sponsored a Permaculture Design Course in Sri Lanka. This report is from Adam Tiller of the Australian Conservation Foundation:

After more than a year's preparation, the first Permaculture Design Certificate course in Sri Lanka was taught in May, at Gami Seva Sevana, a grass-roots training NGO in Galaha, near Kandy. Lorraine

and Rene van Raders of Malanda, North Qld, were the permaculture trainers, alongside a number of specialists from local NGOs. The course participants were local organic farmers and development workers who had attended an Introduction to Permaculture course taught at GSS in December last year, by Jill Finnane of Action for World Development, Sydney.

Many of the techniques of permaculture are not new to Sri Lanka. Local production by small farmers is the main source of Sri Lanka's food, and whilst poverty, war, deforestation, inequitable and unsustainable plantation agriculture and severe land degradation are significant problems in Sri Lanka, traditional methods remain. For example, 80% of Sri Lankans consult traditional healers. And the peoples of the cloud forests above Kandy still cultivate an ancient example of a permaculture-style food forest.

The PDC course is just one part of a on-going development project in Sri Lanka managed by the Permaculture Global Assistance Network (PGAN) at the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), and funded by AusAID, the Global Eco-village Network and donations from the Australian public. Over the coming years, the PGAN-ACF program in Sri Lanka will assist GSS to develop locally appropriate permaculture training programs across Sri Lanka.

For more information, email GSS at lrdsdes@eureka.lk or PGAN at pgan@peg.apc.org. Or write to GSS at Office Junction, Galaha, Sri Lanka.

Donations to the ACF Sri Lanka Permaculture Project are tax deductible. If you are interested in helping the project with time, money or advice, please contact Jo Tenner or other PGAN staff at the ACF on (03) 9416 1166.

Kuthumba Nature Reserve, S Africa

We wanted to develop a village on land with as much indigenous forest on it as possible in order to protect the forest from abusive development, and to establish a co-creative relationship with the elemental forces on the land.

Kuthumba is predominantly virgin forest and borders on a massive nature reserve of old forest along the coast - ideal stomping ground for the environmental education and skills training programs we envisage.

We wanted land with beautiful views too, not only for the joy and upliftment of the people who live here but also because we see ourselves as healers. Establishing a holistic healing centre will become a central focus for the community. Not only will this provide a vital service to the outer community, but the work opportunities generated by the healing centre, country lodge and conference centre will make it possible for people to relocate from the city.

Our only uncertainty was water. The streams are intermittent, so it remained to be seen if a bore-hole would yield enough water to service a community and run a permaculture program on the arable land. This 'little' obstacle provided me with a two-year training program in trust and perseverance as I carried water in on my truck whilst struggling to establish a functional bore-hole.

Kuthumba now has ample water to support the community but this experience has highlighted the need to ensure the sustainability of this resource. All houses on *Kuthumba* will have rainwater tanks to capture the run-off from roofs. We have also included large storage tanks in our infrastructure, built a dam, and will recycle our greywater. (It took three years for our local authorities to pass our proposal

for a wet-land greywater treatment system. At last we are now able to get on with it.)

The *Kuthumba* community is forming itself around ethics that relate principally to a love of the earth and a desire by its members to honour the unique expression of that love through each individual - thus forming a bond of unified purpose.



Kuthumba has been established through the sale of

free-hold title plots. This will not be the only means by which people are able to become part of the community but it does form a structure through which people retain their individuality and their financial independence. At the same time it has also created a format for group decision-making through the Home Owners' Association. Our first Home Owners gathering occurred on the Easter weekend this year, and brought a major shift for the community. All the committed Home Owners made the effort to travel to *Kuthumba* for the occasion. Even the few people with options to buy came and we had a barn full of excited, enthusiastic people making friends with their future neighbours. It was amazing to see how open and loving these supposed strangers were to each other - the first move to integrating as an intentional community, having been drawn to participate in this community by the resonance of this land.

At the moment *Kuthumba* is a hive of activity as services are laid, the dam is being built, trenches for water and electrical services are dug, the roads pushed and gravelled, and houses are being built. All houses will be built of natural materials. Many will be wattle and daub, and clay, with a good measure of

cow dung thrown in - which has proved invaluable in our climate!

Bruce and Helen Varney, our first buyers, are well on their way with the building of their wattle and daub house. Alec Brown has moved onto the property and is preparing to build his log cabin. Elzunia von Maltitz is now living in the area, waiting to build. New homeowners are all in different stages of preparation to relocate. There has been a general acceleration in activity, and we have only five more plots to sell.

We are very privileged to have Ron and Avice Hindmarch heading up our permaculture farming program which will begin later this year. Other major tasks include finding the people to develop our Healing Centre, and establishing the Skills Training Centre.

We look forward to connecting with other eco-villages, now that the groundwork has at last been done and we have the right 'bits' of technology.

Patti Ovenstone

The Centre for Alternative Technology

Peter Harper is a biologist, gardener and landscape designer who has worked at the Centre of Alternative Technology (CAT), possibly Europe's best known eco-centre, since 1983. His analysis of the lessons learned by CAT over the last twenty years is both fascinating and a source of valuable information for any one attempting to initiate a settlement outside the 'norm':

The following is divided into four parts. First, the things that have gone well for CAT over the last 20 years. Second, the things that have not gone so well. Third, the lessons we have learned, or where we have changed our minds, and fourth, some suggestions for future directions.

1. Successes:

- Renewable energy: about 90% of our electricity is from wind, water and sun, and its more reliable than the local public supply, to which we are not connected.
- Ecological building: all the materials are chosen with environmental criteria in mind, and the life-cycle energy consumption of our latest buildings is about 10% of the typical levels.
- Biological wastes: we treat all solid and liquid wastes, converting them into compost and clean water. 90% of the nutrients are recovered.
- Ecological land use: we use no agrochemicals, and take care to build habitat diversity into all new developments. Plants of all kinds flourish, and more and more animals turn up each year, including rare species such as red kites, otters and dormice.

All this is fairly standard technical stuff, and relatively easy. What about the organisational side?

- The structure is not fixed, but has evolved continuously, seeking a balance between democracy and efficiency.
- It is a worker's co-operative, owned and managed by its staff of about 30.
- All are paid equally
- Management is largely decentralised, but with an elected co-ordinating group.
- Most decisions are by consensus, with provision for voting if absolutely necessary: this has only been invoked twice.

These features are quite common in alternative organisations, although rare in the mainstream world. But it is of little value Being Green in isolation: the ideas and practices need to be amplified a hundred, a thousandfold. The ideas must get

out into the world and propagate themselves. At the same time an ecovillage must be economically self-supporting. One of the most important things we have done at CAT is to develop activities which *simultaneously get the message across and provide an income*. These include a visitor demonstration centre with 80,000 day visitors a year; innovative residential courses in green subjects for up to 40 people at a time, ranging in level from young children to professionals; an information and consultancy service; and publications, with up to 50 new titles a year.

The operation has survived, grown, spawned several independent enterprises, and has an annual turnover of more than 1 million sterling. Success? Yes, but let us turn quickly to something far more interesting: *failure*. Can you recognise your own organisation in any of what follows?

There is an important role for ecovillages here as test beds, precisely because they are not afraid of life-style changes.

2. Failures:

- In spite of our avowed purpose and our green rhetoric, we have failed to make a very careful eco-audit of everything we do. We cannot put our hands on our hearts in every case and say "Yes, this method or technique is an environmental improvement, a clear step towards sustainability."
- Transport: not very good at all. Lots of cars. It's a rural area and people tend to use cars rather than bikes or public transport.
- Communal life: has declined. Only a minority of staff now live on the site, and currently only one child. There is little interest in classical communitarianism.
- We have not integrated very well with the local population. Our 'universal' perspective

means we tend to ignore local matters.

- Finances and fundraising: we always seem to be broke. Still here, but it's always a struggle.
- Maintenance: the place always looks a bit scruffy. By temperament we tend to be creators, starters - not maintainers. That's a tough one.
- People care: individually there's a lot of solidarity and affection, but we haven't institutionalised it very well.
- The spiritual dimension: well, thinking about the much vaunted three-legged stool representing the balance of ecological, social and spiritual aspects, all I can say is that we're not bad on ecology.

3. What have we learned, or how has our perspective changed over the years?

- When you first start off in these experimental fields you have very little idea of what is going to work and what will not. Well, by now we have sorted out a lot of the wheat from the chaff and can give helpful lists identifying the good, the bad and the maybe. *Some eco-techniques that look irresistible on paper turn out to be lemons.*
- We take a much longer view now. In the early seventies I remember thinking that we had perhaps five or ten years to Save the Planet. We were in such a panic! Well, twenty years later things remain urgent but we realise they cannot be changed overnight. *Now we're thinking it terms of fifty or hundred years.*
- We have accepted that we are modern people. We have to somehow achieve 'sustainability' but *we do not want to be peasants and there will be no 'going back'*. Sure we love elegant, simple solutions where you achieve a lot with a little, but we are not embarrassed by industrial high-tech if it does what we want. Once upon a time we thought the

future lay in a sophisticated kind of neo-primitivism. Some still do, we don't.

- We recognise now that collective, shared, large-scale systems are sometimes the right solutions and give the best ecological answers. *Small is not always beautiful.* It may well be the first thing to try, but don't apply it dogmatically.
- We also accept that *most of the action is going to be in the cities*, where most people will be living. Farming, as always, will have its part to play, but will not figure prominently in most people's lives.
- Once we thought that modern society was terminally corrupt and we should have nothing to do with it; that we should be a self-sufficient as possible. Now we see ourselves as inevitably part of British and global society and want to participate in and change it. *We have moved from withdrawal to engagement.*

- There is no substitute for numerical accuracy. The modern world is so bizarre that if you don't make at least some attempt to measure what you are doing you can easily make awful mistakes and be out by a factor of 100 without noticing it, leading to years of wasted effort. *You must do the numbers.*

- We have learned that reality does not necessarily speak for itself. At the beginning we thought people would come along and look at our work and say, "Wow! That's Fantastic! I'm going to do it too." No. They don't. Somehow they don't see it in the right way, or in some cases don't notice it at all. *Ideas, principles, structures, equipment all have to be presented in the right way to command attention and understanding.* Suddenly we find we are in showbiz; presentation and communication may demand more of our time and effort than actual content.

- Rotation of tasks, once thought to be essential to the development of each individual and their relationship with the organisation, has only a minor importance. *Skills are precious* and take time to develop; they need conserving and feeding with training and long experience.

- Originally it was thought that consensus-based decision making by the whole group was good because it was maximally democratic. But its inefficiency soon becomes tiresome, and now we happily accept the existence of an *elected management team* to deal with general and interdepartmental issues.

- In earlier days we thought we had all the answers. Now we know that this is pathetically false, and that *we must play our part in the wider movement.* It is useful therefore to have maps of the whole movement, the better to know where our most useful contributions may lie.

Peter Harper's Guide to Greenery....

COOL! Where can I get some? (Eco-chic)	ALL RIGHT if I must. (Light Greens)	ER...would rather not, thanks. (Gung-ho Greens)	YOU MUST BE JOKING! (Neolithic Green)
Email	Low energy light bulbs	Using public transport	Secondhand clothes
"Body Shop" products	Sorting domestic solid waste	Job-sharing	Composting toilets
Super-insulated houses	Re-using envelopes	Biking to work	Thermal underwear
Lead free petrol	Eco-friendly washing products	Car pooling	No freezer
Lightweight, 200 mpg cars	"White cars"	Home composting	No fridge
Miniaturisation	Laundry services	Wholefoods	Not buying much
Hydrogen fuel	Water meters	Clothes from recycled yarns	Local diet
Amazing glazing	Solar water heating	Insulated shutters	No air travel
		Bikes with electric boost	No car
			Cold showers

4. Where are we going next? How should we apply some of the knowledge and insights that we have collected?

The basic problem is one of sustainability, but this is a notoriously vague term and it would be nice to put some numbers into it. Our provisional understanding is that it will require something like an 80% reduction in the throughput of energy and materials for European countries - more for North America. This sounds fairly drastic, but it seems we are stuck with something of the kind. What to do? It is noticeable that some positive measures (such as more efficient car engines) are popular, parallel with the grain of mainstream culture and are easy to sell, while others (such as not using cars at all) are not. So the 'take up' of popular measures will be rapid and could be multiplied by millions of times, while the unpopular measures will be largely ignored. But it is also noticeable that the popular measures tend to offer only a marginal improvement in environmental impact, while many of the unpopular ones, if widely adopted, could offer a very rapid progress towards our target.

There is a dilemma here, and we have tried to analyze it a bit more systematically to see whether we can pick out the 'cherries' - items that are both environmentally powerful and potentially acceptable to mainstream society, perhaps with a bit of technical development and institutional support. At the same time we could perhaps spit out some 'pips' - items which don't make much difference and nobody wants to do anyway.

An example of this 'cherry picking': In order to reduce household waste by 80% you start with fewer and more discriminating purchases (not very popular, but not repulsive, and could be encouraged). Once

the stuff is in the house you obviously have to separate out the solid recyclables: cans, bottles, newspaper. This is typically around 40% of the total, is popular, is encouraged from on high and widely practiced. Most of the rest is kitchen and garden waste, packaging paper and card, and plastics. Householders can't do a great deal with plastics themselves; although they have a bad environmental image in a landfill they squash down to less than 10% and they take some CO₂ with them. So let them go: they are a 'pip'. The rest is relatively easy to compost, and home-composting is in one of the intermediate-popularity categories: promising! Local authorities don't like organic waste because in bulk it smells and causes all sorts of health problems, so generally they will encourage householders to compost it: this is even more promising.

- As well as environmentalists wanting to remove them as potential pollutants, gardeners are going to be interested in the plant nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus, potash, etc) contained in household organic wastes, because if reclaimed they could save the cost of fertilisers and soil improvers. If we rank all the household organic wastes, including the liquid ones, in order their nutrient content we get:

- Kitchen waste
- Garden wastes
- Urine
- Faeces
- Grey water
- Paper and card

It is encouraging that the two richest items are also ones that are familiar and easy to handle. This is a potential cherry. It is noticeable also that of the liquid wastes the one which is free of pathogens and easiest to collect is also the richest in nutrients: another potential cherry here? In fact if we add the first three

together we have got 95% of the nutrients flow through the house: the rest of the liquid wastes - hard to collect and very much against the grain of popular taste! - we can reject as 'pips'. Notice here the important part played by 'doing the numbers'.

The biological difficulty in releasing the promise of these potential cherries is that the three clean wastes are far *too* rich: in order to be composted effectively they need to be combined with a bulky, fibrous material poor in nutrients but rich in carbon. But - another cherry coming up - this is just what we have at the end of the list, readily available and very easy to collect, which most paper banks will not take, and which occupy huge volumes in landfill: packaging card and miscellaneous waste paper.

It turns out that paper and card compost extremely well. In fact they considerably improve the quality and quantity of ordinary domestic compost. You can also combine urine and cardboard effectively and the composted product is indistinguishable from fine soil.

Picking cherries and spitting out the pips is a preliminary process. Then you go on to designing the hardware, securing the institutional support, stitching up coalitions of interested parties, training, informational campaigns and so on. It is rarely just a simple piece of hardware, but a complex mixture of technique and lifestyle. There is an important role for eco-villages here as test beds, precisely because they are not afraid of life-style changes. They can try things out, make improvements, get the bugs out. They should be the laboratories of techno-social innovation in the field of sustainability. Their very diversity is a strength because they can sample many different styles and standards of living. The wealthier, bourgeois communities will be more in tune

with mainstream western culture, and the radical, low-cost Bohemian communities could develop stronger cherries with longer-term potential and wider global application. Something for everyone!

Peter Harper
Centre for Alternative Technology
Wales, UK

Events, Courses

Please send us details of your course/event/workshop for inclusion in this section.

GEN Eco-village workshops: Tholego and Capetown, October 97. Dates to be confirmed. Contact this office.

Solar '97. Australian and New Zealand Solar Energy Society Conference, 1-3 December 1997, Canberra, ACT. Contact: Solar '97, PO Box 1402, Dee Why NSW 2099.

Catalyst '97, Design and Environment Conference, 5-8th December, Uni of Canberra, ACT. Interdisciplinary conference on the relation between environmental design and the transition to a sustainable society. Focus on stimulating a paradigm shift through ecodesign. Contact Dr Birkeland, Centre for Environmental Philosophy, Planning & Design, University of Canberra, PO Box 1, Belconnen, ACT, 2616, Australia. E-mail: cat97 or jlb@design.canberra.edu.au, Ph: (+61) 06 201 5754 or 2693. Fax: (+61) 06 201 2279

World Futures Studies Federation Conference Global Conversations - What You and I Can Do For Future Generations. 28 Sept-3 Oct 1997. Brisbane Australia. An experiment to reinvent conferencing. Aims to be a lively active engagement of people from different parts of the world. Contact: Morag Gamble, PO Box 167, Wilston, QLD 4051. Ph (07) 3857 8775.

Permaculture Design Certificate Course. 30 Aug-13 Sept 1997, Crystal Waters, with Max O Lindegger and guest speakers. Sustainable property design strategies applicable to both rural and urban environments. Covers design, species selection, establishment of vegetable gardens, orchards, windbreaks, tree crops and aquaculture. Strategies for healthy and energy efficient homes, soil rehabilitation, community development and water management. Tours of working Permaculture examples, hands-on experience, practical design skills. Contact GEN office for contact details.

Ecovillage Training Course on Green Kibbutz. 7-21 Sept 97. Jan Bang, permaculture teacher, founder of the Green Kibbutz movement and Middle Eastern member of GEN will lead this programme. Contact: Jan Martin Bang, email ecowork@gezernet.co.il.

Crystal Waters Lifestyle Experience Weekends. Become part of the community lifestyle for a weekend and participate in a diverse range of interesting workshops. Stay in camping area or with community hosts. Relax and experience the beauty of living in harmony with nature whilst learning skills to enhance your lifestyle. Contact Crystal Waters Co-op, ph +61 7 5494 4620, fax: +61 7 5494 653.

Wanted!!!

⇒ My partner and I have been very interested in eco-villages for some time, and would like to know of, or make contact with any eco-villages along the eastern coast of NSW Sydney and the Qld border (especially any close to Port Macquarie). If any readers are able to help us in this area please be assured of any confidence that you may require. Contact: Anna Gear, 18 Harold Court, Whittlesea Vic 3757.

⇒ Looking for eco-village projects and contacts in Southern Australia. Please contact: John Daglish, 9/22-26 Cecil Avenue, Castle Hill 2154.

News from Other Regions

Update from ENA

This report from Albert Bates, ENA's Regional Co-ordinator in the United States:

We are busy preparing for our big summer conference July 16-22, during which we hope to formalize a mission statement, bylaws and operational protocols for ENA. An on-line discussion group, called enaprep, is laying the groundwork for this meeting. What shape will ENA (and GEN) take? We'll update you with more as we continue to develop and vet various models in the real world.

Our central office has been quite busy! So far in May we have received 3240 inquiries and other external communications, up from 2560 in April. You can see that the ecovillage concept is of great general interest and attracting more at an accelerating rate. We are grateful to have more than 10 volunteers at any given time to help us handle this workload and to make our limited resources stretch farther.

Our full-time staff is also evolving. Melia Lando returned home to Istanbul, but promises to be back next winter. Gayla Groom, our webmaster extraordinaire, moved to Virginia from where she continues to email us bits and pieces for our newsletter, *The Design Exchange*. Jillian Hovey joined us in February and has been contributing to the organization of the Ecovillage Training Center and expansion of our educational programs. We have a large cob office/studio under construction that we hope to complete this summer. Bob Kornegay, who developed the experimental homestead for Mother Earth News in the 1980s before joining the Gesundheit Institute in West Virginia and designing their ecovillage (soon to be the subject of a major motion picture!), has joined us to develop biodynamic farming, innovative architecture, and integrated systems. He heads up the cob construction project, has completed two greenhouses, and the food at our table is definitely getting better! Joan Thomas, one of The Farm's stalwart accountants and editor of our community newspaper has come aboard as general office manager for ENA. When he is not translating books from Tibetan to English, Edward Sierra is serving as our fundraising consultant and helping to expand our donor base. C.R. Cheney, who spent 20 years as a community development specialist has agreed to become full-time editor

of *The Design Exchange*. He begins work with our summer issue.

I, as GEN's regional secretary for the Americas, traveled to Belize in February to visit Latin America's largest (at 15,000 members) eco-development association. I visited Mexico for a brief tour in March. I will be attending a permaculture think tank being hosted in San Francisco May 30th by Permaculture Institute Australia and Permaculture Institute USA. After a brief stop in England June 3-5, to film very old cob and mud structures, I'll continue on to Russia where the GEN board will be meeting.

Around the ENA offices

Our southernmost ENA Office is near Buenos Aires. This report is from Silvia Balado and Gustavo Ramfrez:

Hi! We are Asociacion Gaia Argentina. Our challenge is to create an ecovillage in this south part of the planet. The social and economic situation in this country and our lack of previous experience makes the work quite complex. We can feel lots of interest in and need for alternatives in the people in general, but participation and commitment in the project is slow. Anyway, a small group of us are living and working with enthusiasm on a 20.3 hectare piece of land in a rural area, 110 kms from Buenos Aires. There are old buildings that were used for a milk powder factory, abandoned 35 years ago. We are restoring some buildings for community use. We are reforesting with native tree species and also started an organic vegetable garden. The general design of the village is based on Permaculture principles. We are members of ENA and GEN, and that for us is a source of inspiration and an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience. We aspire to be in the future an ecovillage training center for

South America. Any interested people willing to participate in this project, or collaborate in other ways, please contact us and you'll be welcome!

ENA's Eastern Office is at Sirius Community in Massachusetts. Jeff Clearwater provided this report:

Our Ecovillage Project office has three functions:

- 1) To systematically develop the appropriate technology and Permaculture infrastructure of Sirius Community,
- 2) To create and cultivate the School of Ecological Community Living, and
- 3) To serve as the Eastern Region Office of the Ecovillage Network of the Americas.

We are about to launch an intern-based outreach campaign for ENA-recruiting new member communities and individuals and generally spreading the word.

In August we're hosting our annual conference-Sustainability: From Vision to Practice. This 4-day event will provide an opportunity to assess the current state of the movement toward sustainability on a global, national, and local level, and provide an opportunity for active networking. We will explore practical applications of permaculture and appropriate technology as well as look at the human side of sustainable health and relationships. August 15th - 18th. Mark your calendars!

News from ENA's western office in Los Angeles Eco-Village was submitted by Lois Arkin:

We continue with our eco-retrofitting work in the 40-unit apartment building we acquired last year, as well as creating a more formal set of sustainable design and development criteria for our whole two-block neighborhood. We are doing this as part of our work with the City of Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency. Because

we are in a redevelopment area, and because we are at risk of absentee owners buying and/or developing property on our two blocks in ways that may not be aligned with the ecovillage vision, we felt it essential to accelerate the process of creating sustainability criteria. Our challenge will be to persuade property owners in our neighborhood to see this process as good for their property investments.

The lovely thing here right now is the winter garden! Lots of veggies growing out front. We completely redid the front yard, and now have three huge compost piles out there too-which should be ready for summer plantings. A Permaculture discussion group has started in L.A., and we have hosted three meetings of about 20 here.

EVEN Experience

We would like to invite you to the Eco-Village Experience week in Lebensgarten Steyerberg, Germany, from 10th. to 15th. August, 1997.

We will start each morning in the heart of our community: the village square, with Circle Dancing in the morning with some of the community members and other guests. After breakfast we will experience permaculture and how to live in harmony with the earth. Various alternative healing methods will also be demonstrated in this exciting week. We can learn about them and be treated by the healers themselves (first treatment free of charge!!).

We will tell you "our" story and deal with your questions, inspirations, dreams and wishes. We will get to know each other as a group in playing New Games, singing and meditating together.

The experience week will start at 15 hours on 10 August and finish on 15 August.

During the week we will see and talk of practical examples - first hand - of eco-village construction, of people living together with the aim of sustain-ability, however small.

Come and enjoy Lebensgarten and the GEN events.

Declan Kennedy, EVEN, Europe.

Update from Denmark

Here is a short update on the progress GEN is making with the Earth is Our Habitat proposal for 50-70 demonstration villages across the globe.

There has been much activity by Declan Kennedy and Rashmi Mayur the last month or so.

Declan attended the Rio +2 in March, and felt that he made good contacts. He had a short visit to Germany before heading for the CSD meeting in New York (April) where he had good contact with CRLE and others, among them a representative for the Global Environment Fund (GEF). He built on contacts from Rio and got clearer on a strategy for bringing the proposal further. Rashmi took over after the first week. It's looking like the proposal would need to be formulated as a project / programme under the auspices of one of the UN agencies such as UNCHS or UNEP or GEF. On this basis it was decided that it would be worthwhile making the trip to Nairobi (UN Commission on Human Settlements 16th session) to try to consolidate contacts and get clearer on what chances there are for an approach to UNCHS or UNEP.

The original idea of getting a UN committee to take care of administering the \$100 mill. with GEN acting as advisers is not feasible in these times of reform of the UN. Instead it looks like we would have to put forward a suggestion for our own

administration which expands the brief considerably.



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Special Autumn Green Notes available now!

Green Harvest, 52 Crystal Waters, MS 16, Maleny Qld 4552, Australia. Tel: (07) 5494 4676, Fax: (07) 5494 4674

It looks like being necessary over the next period to build committed support from a number of nation states, since the proposal has otherwise little chance in the UN system.

The most important brief for Declan is to get a clear strategy for how we go forward. Its a costly affair to get to this stage, but following the input at Istanbul we need to come to some firm conclusions. We'll know more when Declan returns from Nairobi and will then reformulate the strategy.

Anyone interested in UNCHS material can join the discussion list: h2o-l@nygate.undp.org

Hamish Stewart

Subscriptions

We are asking readers to subscribe to the newsletter, to help pay for the costs of producing it and "spreading the word". What you pay is up to you, but we're suggesting maybe a cost of \$2 per issue plus the cost of postage as a guideline (so \$10-12 per year for Australian residents). Just fill in the form included with this mailing and return to us at the address below

Networking

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep people informed as to what is happening on eco-villages, and related areas. *Please, write in, let us know what you are doing, or what you have seen somewhere else. We'd love to hear from you!*



Global Eco-Village Network

The Global Eco-village Network (GEN) was founded in 1994 and formally inaugurated in 1996 to assist in the following areas:

- Supporting the development of sustainable human settlements
- Assisting in the exchange of information amongst the settlements
- Making information widely available about Eco-village concepts and demonstration sites.

For more information about GEN contact the local secretariat:

Max Lindegger, Global Eco Village Network (Oceania), MS 16, Lot 59, Crystal Waters Qld 4552, Australia. Ph: +61 7 5494 4741, Fax: +61 7 5494 4578, email: lindegger@gen-oceania.org. NOTE: Contact details have changed!

GEN Oceania covers the region from Australia through the Pacific to Hawaii, and through Asia as far as South Africa. The rest of the globe is divided in two geographically and are covered by GEN's secretariats: ENA in the States covers the Americas, and in Germany EVEN covers Europe and Northern Africa.

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW TELEPHONE, FAX AND EMAIL DETAILS: Ph: +61 7 5494 4741, Fax: +61 7 5494 4578, email: lindegger@gen-oceania.org.

Oslo, October 6th -97

Dear Peter

This is going to be a "serial letter" to save time and energy, there are a lot of people I haven't heard from in a long time, and I feel like giving some small stories about what I've been doing for the past two years.

Life in Norway are not bad, feeling a little exhausted, doing too many things at the same time. Since I arrived in Norway after my fieldwork in Australia, there were a little cultural collision going on for me, which took a little while to recover from. The writing of the thesis has going on like a scenic railway, up and down. Was pretty hard to find inspiration. It helped a lot to get hold of Paul Tait/Jeni Kendall's film "Nearly Normal Nimbin" - which cover the alternative lifestyle developments from the Aquarius Festival in Nimbin up till these days of teenage-children growing up in the communities. I show the film a couple of times together with some lecturing on different seminars for undergraduates about my experiences in alternative Australia. Apart from that I've been teaching undergraduates in -96, part-time at the University. The last thing I was involved in, just a couple of weeks ago, was a conferance on "Social science and perspectives on Identity", and I participate with a paper on a rites of passage experienced in the Channon area: "Les rites de passage - Male identity management in the Rainbow Region, NSW, Australia." So all these activities make me reflect very often on my fieldwork and how to go about writing the thesis - to end the writing process. For those of you who are curious and wonder where the hell my thesis are, I can only say that it's slowly coming down now, maturing as a good wine. My supervisor don't care about wine at all, and he think I'm mad, and pretty soon had enough about me using so long time in finishing up. Though he know what's going on.....

Love, that fantastic word and experience if you can find the right one to share it with, and have time to maintain it - I haven't. For those of you who met Liv, my ex-partner who visited me for a while, when I was living in one of the alternative communities - I'm sending greetings from her. She is these days preparing for a concert, singing in a 400 wo/men's choir - Verdi's "Requiem". Liv and I are good friends, seeing each other occasionally, and very often talking about Australia and travel - our favourite subject.

I think that's probably why I started playing the didgeridoo - to get another connection to Australia, through music, not only through the creative academic writing process. For that's what actually happen. I play didgeridoo in a band called "Urd," named after one of the three Norns, also called "the weird sisters" according to Old Norse Mythology. So the style is "world music" interpreted through Norwegian folklore/trad. We have recently re-organised the group, one has quit, and instead we have now a female singer, singing a mixture of jazz/ethnic/power songs/norwegian folklore. Apart from playing the didge, I play jew's harp and frame drum, and occasionally sings.

It's so fantastic fucking great, I have not in my wildest dreams believed to end up in a group playing the didgeridoo while at the same time writing up my thesis. Developing the inner musician is something new for me. To make a long story short it's worth mentioned that we had done heaps of concerts, vernissage, had a release of our debut CD in July; selling own made didgeridoos from a plant, wild angelica, growing outside Oslo, importing eucalyptus didgeridoos from Bellingen, NSW; running classes in the art of playing the didgeridoo etc. I think I must have a didgeridoo on my brain. Anyway, doing something else apart from being at the university every day was vital for me, I guess.

It gave me a new fresh angle on how to accomplish the thesis, and I'm back on a different level, with respect to (new age) academic life. Parallel to all this I joined an idealistic organisation called Fabo, translated to "The society for alternative living." We started up in -96, and having by now 150 members. Everyone having ideals of living communally, rural or urban, in existing buildings or building new ones. Since the climate is quite different from Australia, there is of course other variables to look into, when planning such projects. Much of the inspiration comes from the Danish model of co-housing, eco-villages etc. In Denmark they have long experience in alternative living, in Norway not. So the intention is to do something with it here in Norway, but it's a very slow process - much talk, and less effort to really start doing things. The best way is to extend existing buildings/infrastructure, that's the cheapest way, it's almost impossible to buy land. The Government will not subsidize such projects yet, but in Oslo there are some options in some city neighbourhoods on a so called eco-village project. Actually I almost got a job, as a projectleader, in one of the house building cooperatives in town, concerned with such a project. Too bad I didn't get it.

Recently I got really interested in politics for the first time in a long period of dormant speculations, green politics, not to change the world - rather change locally the values people have about environmental issues. So I'm a fan of the Greens. They are also the best alternative political party in Norway when it comes to create a sustainable living. The Greens also value alternative communities as a good option in pooling resources, etc. I don't know how much political engagement I will be involved in, but it pisses me off when environmental issues are not respected. Maybe I can do something with it, using some anthropological/musical know how. Anyway, the "deep ecology movement" à la Arne Næss are alive - but for most people issues are about concret action, not philosophical speculations. It is a little pitty, because I think one of the key factors to change peoples attitudes is to go "deep" enough so that they realise they are partly on the wrong track. That realisation is probably more lasting than purely activism. So maybe a balanced mixture of both is the right thing to do. And maybe "deep" philosophical speculations also invite to a more refined spiritual path - for some.....

What else, yes, I have changed my first name from "Putte" (old nick-name) to "Svein" (my natal name, and are pronounced "Sven"). I did that actually in -96. So the "Putte-period" are definitively over. My old friends are familiar with it now, though it was pretty funny in the beginning.

A female friend of mine, Eva, are these days near Alice Springs to work as a teacher, visiting a friend of her, helping an aboriginal community. She's been there before some years ago. Eva also will try to establish some good contacts for me, with respect to aboriginals and their way of living.

Together with Halvdan, a friend of mine, I'm planning to go overseas late, late next year. Nice thing to do after the thesis, and instead of walking in the unemployment queue, would be nice to visit some of you guys in Australia. It's all a matter of money of course, but I think it's possible to raise the necessary money - with some careful planning. Until then take care in your beautiful country. Hope everything is fine, and good luck with your things. Would be nice to hear from you.....

Svein



Here's my new address:

Svein P. Wesenlund
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N - 0864 Oslo
Norway

Telephone: +47 22187324
Email: s.p.wesenlund@ima.uio.no

I wonder how's the MO-debate going on
in your "Rainbow region". Noticed that Pan Community Council have a web-site
Looking forward to give you my thesis, sometime
during springtime (northern hemisphere) - - - - -

on the International Communities www-a.dh

MORE from M.O.R.E.

Pan Community Council - Multiple Occupancy Review Collective
Peter Hamilton, 27 November 1997

MO GETS COVERAGE IN A "COFFEE" TABLE MAGAZINE

"Timber Living" (Issue No.8) is a glossy "coffee" table magazine now available at most newsagencies throughout Australia at \$5.95.

The current issue contains an article titled "Aquarius Still". This is a pictorial article of a few aspects of the use of timber on Bodhi Farm.

(The use of the name "Bodhi Farm" does not appear at the Farm request in accordance with the policy to limit unannounced visitor exposure.)

The article contains a potted history of MO settlement since the late 1970's and sympathetically describes details of selected low cost building techniques and the quality of life experienced by residents.

Agreement to be interviewed for this article stemmed in part from the Pan Com policy to seek new ways of reaching out to the broader community for an understanding of, and support for the reintroduction of the former SEPP-15 Policy permitting MO state-wide.

With this objective in mind your support in bringing this article to the attention of your friends and acquaintances would be appreciated.

A copy of this magazine is being sent to Premier Bob Carr with the request to "hurry up" the reinstatement of this Policy in accordance with his election policy!"

Any like support letters to Premier Bob Carr you may be able to arrange with those in your personal network or community, would be appreciated.

- MO facilitates an increase in housing choice.
- MO helps those on low incomes to build their own self-help houses!

I am advised the magazine will remain in stock in newsagencies until well into the New Year. (1)

Please consider the use of this magazine as a Christmas present!

(1) If your local newsagent does not have stock on display ask the shopkeeper to replenish as stock is readily available. Distributor contact is (02) 9282 8777 or (03) 9465 7300.

UP DATE ON SEPP-15

Following public exhibition of a draft of the proposed Policy earlier this year advice has been received that the Departmental officers completed their recommendation and submitted same to the Minister in June! Since then it has been "sitting" on Craig Knowles desk!

I got to speak directly with Knowles earlier this month. He assured me the Policy was to be released and that he would have a member of his staff call me back. This did not happen! In response to my call today his personal Secretary advised me that he has now requested the file!

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SUPPORTS REINTRODUCTION OF SEPP-15

Ian Cohen (NSW Greens) MLC successfully moved a resolution in the Legislative Council calling on the Government to immediately reinstate SEPP-15.

LOCAL GOVT. & SHIRES ASS. REJECTS SEPP-15

At the recent Local Government and Shires Association AGM a resolution was passed that SEPP-15 NOT be reintroduced. It was argued that the introduction of this Policy should be left to the discretion of local Councils!

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO BYRON COUNCIL MO POLICY

The Byron Shire Council has redrafted its former LEP-MO provisions and has sought approval from DUAP to place this on public exhibition. It is understood that this approval is likely to be granted.

The draft contains a number of new repressive and costly provisions which in effect will restrict the use of this Policy for those on low incomes. Pan Com will be able to make a formal submission on this Draft when it goes on display.

SYDNEY TO GET A FORM OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY

A new State Policy (SEPP-53) enables approval of a form of multiple occupancy (maximum of 5 dwellings) in the Metropolitan Region of Sydney. The Objectives include:-

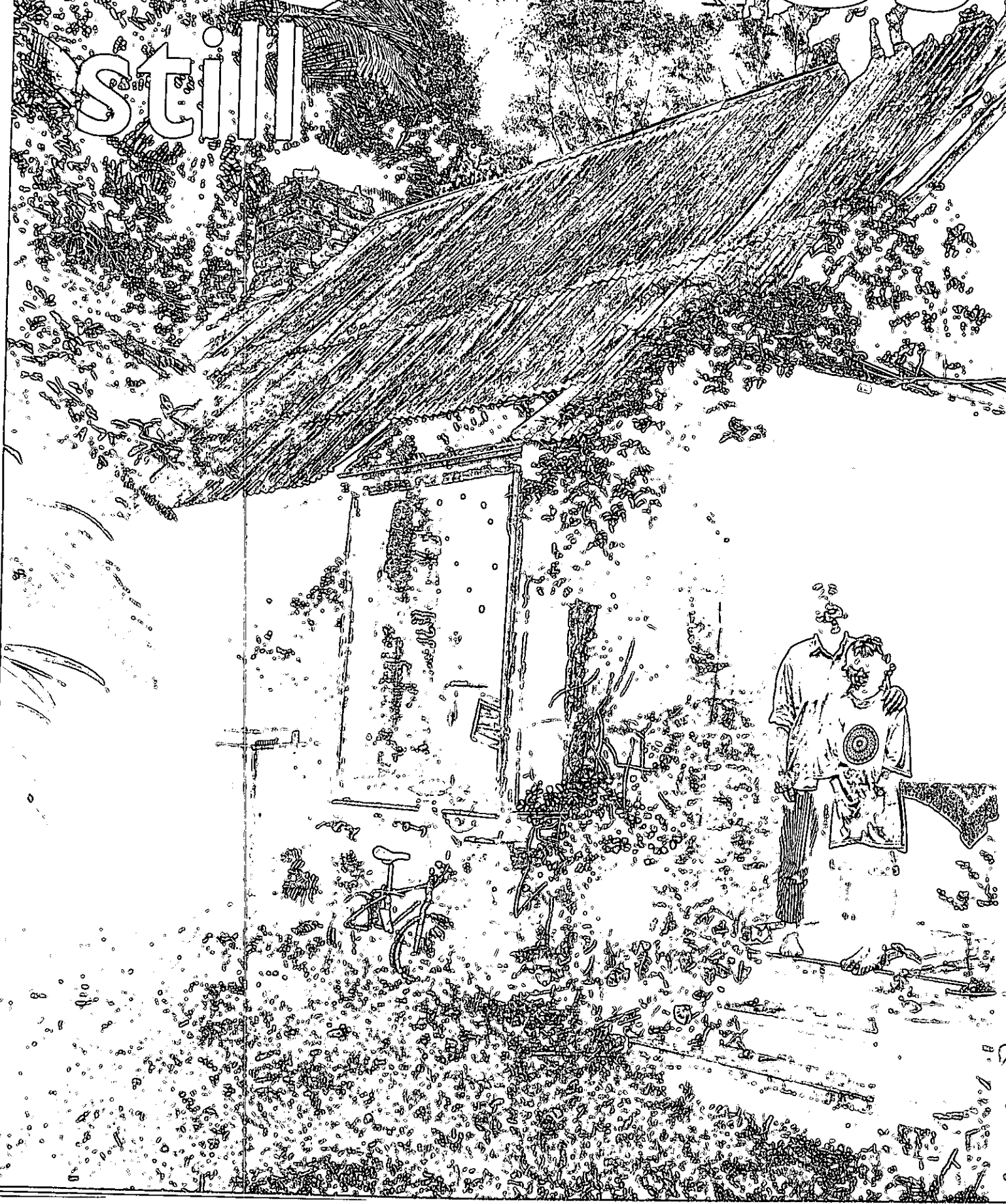
- to increase housing supply and choice.
- to promote social and economic development.

Shades of the MO (SEPP-15) policy for rural areas!

####

AQUARIUS

Still

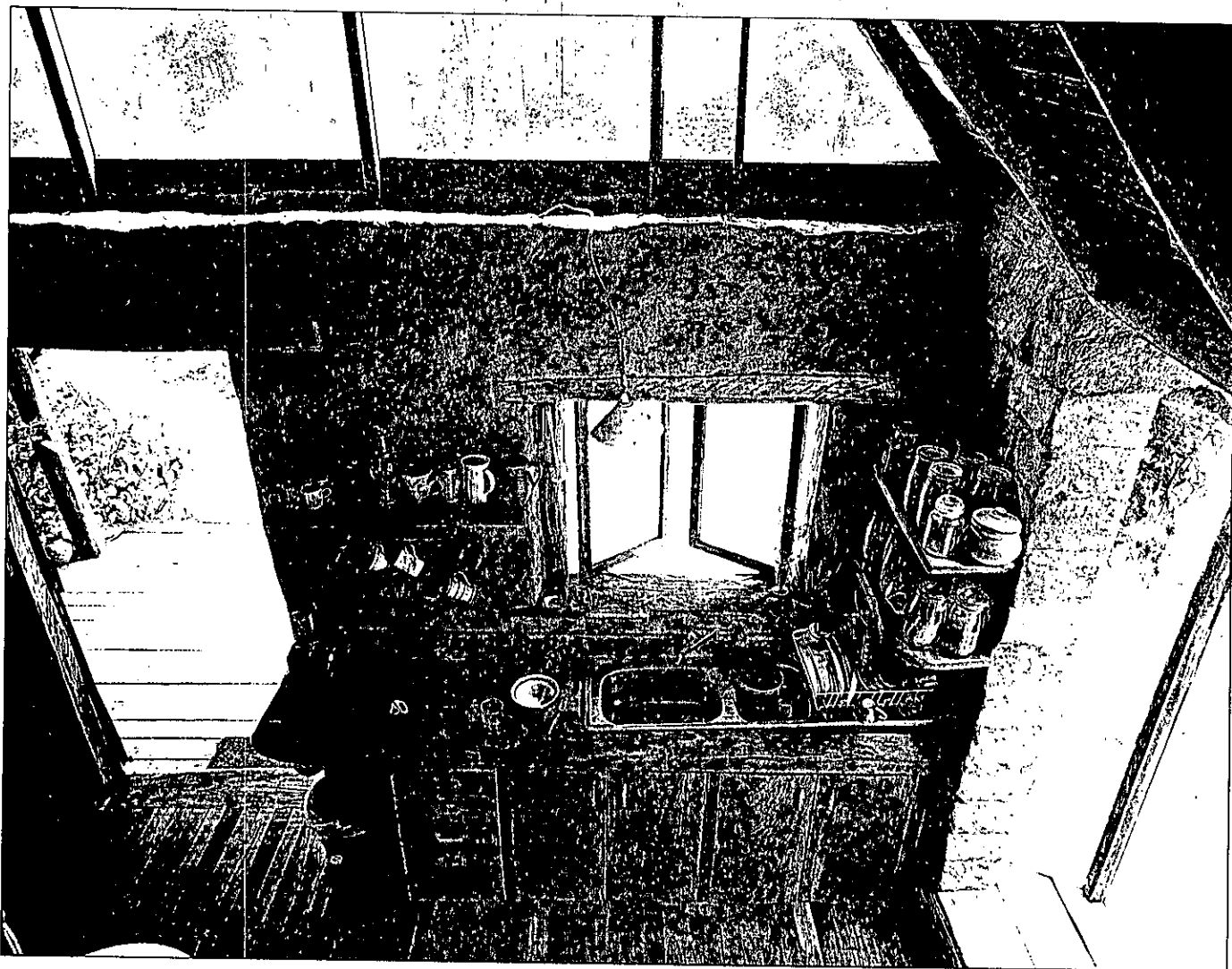




TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY: BARRY ASHENHURST

Twenty years after establishing their alternative community, the people of this group on the NSW Far North Coast have succeeded in their aim to build and live in approved houses of their own design and construction.

Kath and her son Harry live in a house built by Stu Anderson, who has since moved and built another house on the property. When Stu started building, what he needed most was shelter. He erected an army tent for that purpose, then began work on the verandahs, then the roof and then the walls. The house took years to complete and is surrounded by rainforest.



They talk about 'country' but this is genuine country. Stu used timber poles to support the roof during the initial construction, then removed them when the roof was supported by handmade, load-bearing mudbrick walls. The kitchen bench is a solid slab of tallowwood. The cupboard doors were recycled from a demolished church.

The floor on the lower level is a combination of local hardwoods. The window frames are made from a windfall tree. External verandahs are made from Sydney bluegum.

into building timber and furniture.

The people here seem to know what works best in their climate. Living in a rainforest sounds idyllic but has its drawbacks—until you get used to them, at any rate. The climate of the NSW Far North Coast is typically hot and wet. The further north you go from Byron Bay the hotter and more humid it becomes until humidity reaches a personal best in the Darwin. And it rains. A lot. Living in a house that leaks in this climate would be like living in a stormwater drain, so the buildings must be waterproof. Wide verandahs provide protection in the wet and in the dry provide additional living space at a relatively small extra cost.

The houses are constructed from all sorts of materials, many conventional—sheet iron roofing and so on—but much of the material was recycled. The builders have extensively used out-of-the-ordinary materials such as cement, sand and sawdust as in-fill panels between wallstuds. These are easy to build, unappealing to whiteants, rodent-proof, weatherproof, cool in summer and warm in winter, and hence ideal for the climate. Many of the houses have solar power. Communal power is generated by a turbine positioned to take advantage of water flow in a nearby creek. This innovative turbine was designed and built by one of the members and at peak flow satisfies power demand for the entire property.

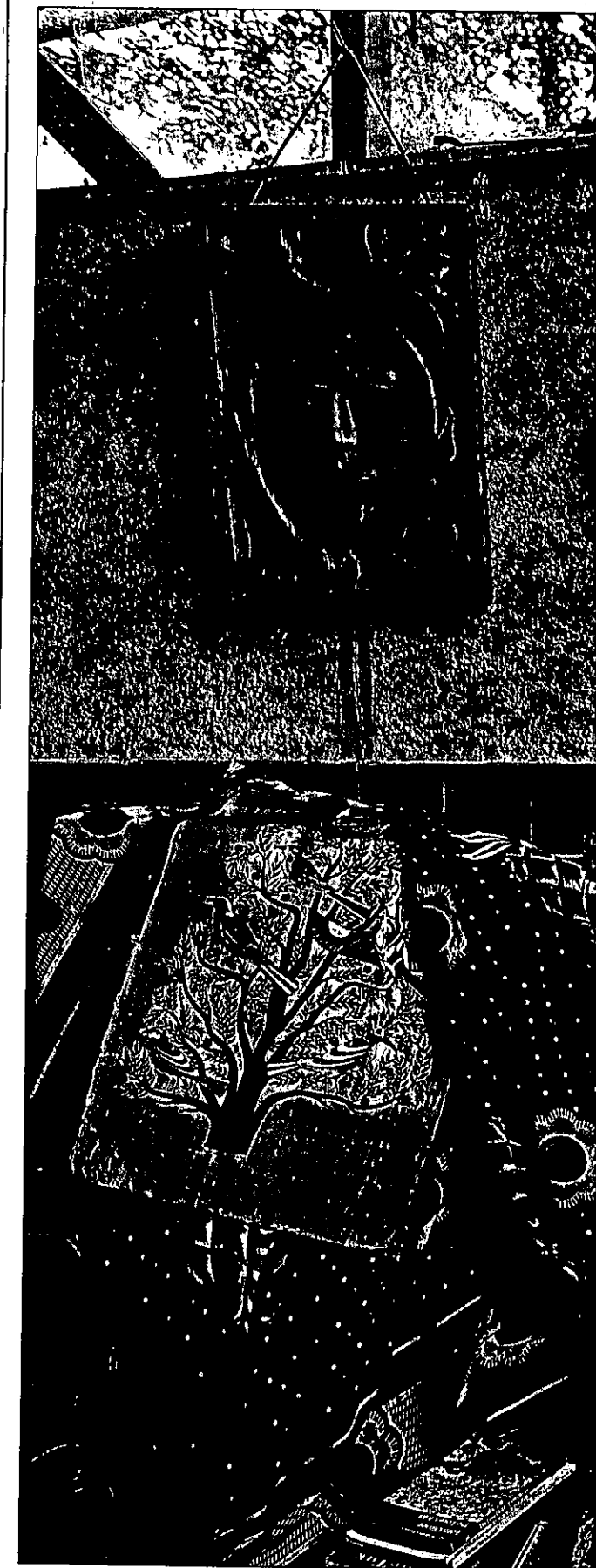
The policy of using and re-using is typical in the community, as we discovered when we asked to photograph a house built many years ago by Stu Anderson. Stu didn't know much about building when he started in 1977. "I reckon I probably built this house in the wrong order," he says, but the result is a comfortable, practical split-level house with character, room to move and a view of rainforest on all sides.

While life goes on in the community, campaigning for the reinstatement of the MO policy continues. Peter Hamilton and the group, while resolving the demolition orders placed on 12 of the dwellings many years ago, are still involved in the broader planning issues with the local Lismore City Council. The MO issue remains unresolved, largely because of political vacillation at the state level and lobbying by self-interested parties at the local level.

Council is split on its attitude to alternative community settlement in general. The principal objection to multiple occupancy for some is that home owners on MO properties do not pay adequate rates because such a property can have many houses in which all the household occupants utilise council services.

To single out MO in this respect is demonstrably frail since many land parcels besides MO have different forms of 'multiple dwellings'; for example caravan parks, mobile home parks, rural workers' dwellings and corporate blocks

Ken Golding and his Green Man carving (centre). Ken works as a counsellor with men who are prone to violence. He says that living in the community has provided a source of inspiration for creative expression. His Green Man, carved from Australian teak, is an ancient, mythical representation of masculine spirituality.



It was not long after the Aquarius Festival in Nimbin in 1973, an event that would introduce many Australians to eastern philosophical and spiritual values, a group of young adults inspired by the possibility of what might be achieved decided to set up an intentional community on the NSW Far North Coast. With experience of the problems and social fragmentation in urban society, in 1976 they purchased 64 hectares of land not far from Byron Bay in an area known as The Channon.

The group is non-denominational and lives by a code of behaviour based on Buddhist precepts. Unlike many free-thinkers of the '60s and '70s, they avoided 'substances that confuse the mind', sexual misconduct; and among themselves did what was necessary to foster harmonious co-existence. They refused to kill, even poisonous snakes. They supported the conservation movement and took part in ground-breaking protests against rainforest logging in the Terania Creek area. They sought resolution of conflict through mediation and, with the memory of the Vietnam War fresh in people's minds, sought to build a future free from violence.

As group members were poor, they were determined to keep the cost of living as low as possible. They grew a deal of their own food, shared what they had and took responsibility for each other in a way not generally possible in an urban society. They built houses they could afford. Based on their experience that there are only so many people you can relate to meaningfully in any one day, they took it on themselves to limit their population in the belief that this would help each member of the group to keep in touch with the others. There was a spirit of living together as an extended family. A number of the women trained as midwives and men and women were involved in home birthing.

The community successfully challenged the local council's refusal to permit a home burial on the property and, in the process, contributed to a recognition of grief support long before Australian health authorities detected any merit in the idea. Only recently have natal wards in our most enlightened hospitals been able to do anything more for a grieving mother than remove her object of grief.

Before 1988 in New South Wales, the planning legislation allowed the construction of only one domestic dwelling on a rural property. The so-called Multiple Occupancy Policy was introduced by the Wran Labor Government in 1988 when Bob Carr was Minister for Planning. This policy allowed the construction of more than one dwelling on rural land, provided the property was at least 40 hectares and acceptable to the local council on planning and environmental grounds. After only six years, the policy was repealed by John Fahey's Liberal Government in 1994. At the end of 1996, a draft of a reinstating policy was placed on public exhibition by the Carr Government.

The original rough-hewn houses these people made were comfortable and built with much affection but in the eyes of the local council were illegal on planning grounds. One of the group's elders, and a founding member of the

community, is Peter Hamilton. An activist and architect who now practises what he calls 'social architecture', Hamilton is a gentle man, assiduous, quietly spoken, rational and articulate, but the characteristic his opponents have found most irksome over the past 20 years is the man's unbending will. Of his battle over multiple occupancy, Hamilton says simply, "We were morally right if legally wrong, so we kept on building. It was the law that needed changing, not us."

And continue building they did—not brick veneers stacked one against another and separated by steel fences, but unpretentious buildings set in the rainforest, with sufficient space between them to afford the occupants privacy and room to contemplate nature from a backdoor distance. The first structures were rudimentary, but over time the houses have been expanded. Today it's not uncommon for houses to be a cluster of two or more buildings to meet expanding needs.

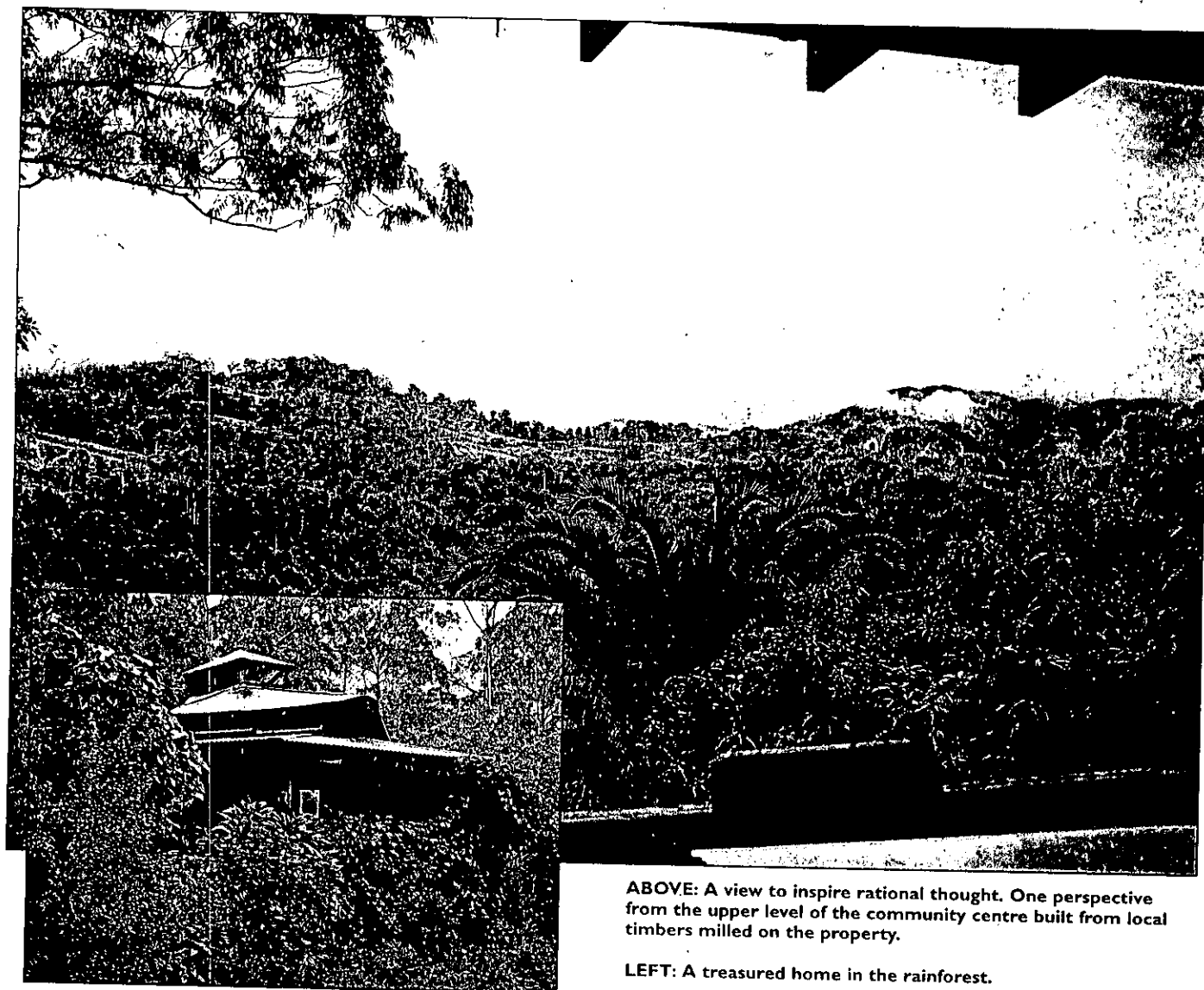
The people constructed a community centre as well, a large and imposing timber building the members use for group meetings, communal meals, meditation, celebrations and for storing communal food supplies. The centre uses structural timbers of local hardwood milled on the property.

All the houses were built mortgage-free and at least expense to their owners, so most are confronting in their unembellished simplicity. Most are characterised by high ceilings, with a textural feel about the materials and an earthy ambience. The homes lack any urban expressions of status or wealth. The builders often used what they could find, scrounge, buy for a song or exchange for something else, so much has been recycled or rescued from entombment in the local tip. Little was actually purchased if it could be made, and, of course, the builders made good use of trees that fell in storms. Two of the houses on the property have been assaulted by large falling trees and one house suffered no structural damage. These trees were literally windfalls and were promptly cut up and turned



These verandah roof timbers are the curved 'flitches' from 2.4-metre railway sleeper logs that Stu Anderson bought "almost for nothing" from a local mill.





ABOVE: A view to inspire rational thought. One perspective from the upper level of the community centre built from local timbers milled on the property.

LEFT: A treasured home in the rainforest.

of units. These all pay one rate based on the value of the land and not the number of families involved. In addition, MO does not create a need for new council roads since all new roads are internal and remain the responsibility of the MO.

It has also been shown that MO residents use public roads less per head than other forms of development, since they share transport. The main damage to roads is by heavily laden trucks, whereas MO transport is normally car. Also, most MOs do not rely on public authorities for power, sewerage, water or garbage services.

The facts are, this community, unlike some in the vicinity, is healthy, productive, grows some of its food requirements, raises its children with specific social and environmental values and has contributed to the construction and running of a new pre-school and a primary school in the area. Clearly the community has been anything but a burden on the citizens of Byron bay, Mullumbimby, Nimbin or anywhere else, but this has failed to impress conservative councillors. One community member is a TAFE teacher, while another a counsellor for men prone to acts of violence. Many are employed full-time and some run their own businesses, but that makes no difference, either.

Despite all the evidence, some people still define these people as unwashed hippies who refuse to keep their eye on the main game. They seldom sell their houses on the open market, a possible reason why the local real estate agents don't like this form of communal land ownership.

The fight over the right to live in such a way has been going on for 20 years. The authorities have taken an infrastructural view of the whole thing while the new community settlers have been arguing on social and planning grounds. Their arguments are sound because the community members have a breadth of educational and professional experience. They are well informed and they have been prepared to vigorously defend their position as a matter of principle.

If the infrastructuralists can negotiate with the moralists, progress will be made. Lismore City Council Chief Planner, Nick Juradowitch, who suggests this community is a role model for MO development, believes the issue will be resolved by Council within the next 12 months. That makes sense. What the people of this particular community have achieved in social terms is more than worth while. In many ways it is exemplary.

PAN COMMUNITY COUNCIL

C/- Dharmananda
Ross Road
The Channon 2480
ph 02 66 88 63 07
fax 02 66 88 61 93
21st December 1997

Dear Ed and Fruit Salad Collective,

Pan Com is the voluntary organisation representing about 80 multiple occupancy communities in the NE of NSW. At our last meeting Pan Com decided to offer to host the next Intentional Communities Conference. There has been a committee established, which I am convening to organise the conference.

Dharmananda community of which I am a member, has undertaken to be the host community for the conference.

Dharmananda has been established for over 25 years and is situated on Terania Creek near the village of The Channon.

It is proposed that the conference will be for 5 days and will take place from 2pm Friday 25th September till 4pm Wednesday 30th September. These dates are in school holidays for most states. The conference will be camped beside Terania Creek with all essentials provided on site. The area is ideal for camping at this time of the year with warm sunny days and cool evenings. We propose that the conference be for a maximum of 80 participants, who all have experience in communal living or be strongly committed to exploring this way of living.

Our committee would like to suggest "Passing on the Torch" - the future of intentional communities - as the theme for this conference. We would particularly like to involve young people in the gathering and its organisation. The publicity will specifically appeal to young people.

Another advantage of the dates proposed is that the weekend before will be "Visions of Nimbin" an alternative exhibition featuring many aspects of sustainable living and the weekend after will be the "Lismore Folk Festival".

Our committee would like to know whether our general offer is acceptable to the collective as soon as possible. We of course are open to all feedback and suggestions regarding every aspects of our proposal. We would also appreciate any funds that may be available if we are to go ahead.

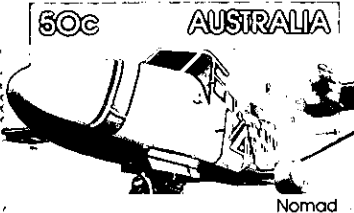
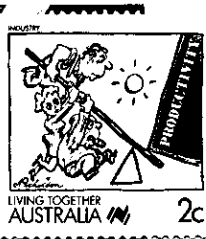
Yours in community
Simon

BY AIR MAIL

PAR AVION



Gateway Bridge, Brisbane, Queensland



COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

Post, Sven = -

- My Times card
- info Metcalf book

"BEWARE OF TROLLS"

"Fare for troll"



Dear Peter!

Oslo, 5th of November 1995

Long time no see! It seems like ages since I left Bodhi Farm, The Channon, Byron Bay and Australia. I needed quite a long time to adjust to friends, family, Liv and of course the Norwegian climate. The feariest part was to go back to the University, start doing my work. So my life is very much occupied with activities at Uni. Together with some student mates I'm co-editing an annual publication of post-graduate students and their fieldwork experiences - including my own experience ("Help!") I'm finally enjoying being a student!

So, how are you Peter, busy as ever can be, I guess. I'll be very much interested in what's going on with respect to the MO-issue. I've start sorting my data, and there are a few loose ends I want to ask you more about in glater letter. Right now I just want to say that I'm "alive & well" and appreciated very much our many talks at your home in Byron Bay.

I guess it must be pretty warm "down under" by now, moving towards summer. Here in Oslo ^{you} had our first snow which disappeared. There's about eight degrees below zero in the air these days, and by mid-December I probably can put on my ski and glide in the forest - with heaps of snow!

Bye for now - take care & good luck with your things

~~My address~~

SVEIN P. WESSELUND
FJELLBIRKELAND STED. BY
26A, 413
SOGNESUN. 218
N-0364 OSLO
NORWAY

LOVE, Pette

PUTTE

- ~~Ground~~ ^{Ground} ~~public~~ ^{public} ~~reps~~ ^{reps} / held by me
- Seminar.
- Project - Abstract.
- Ritual.
Video -
Mac Wedding

Pharmacia

- Uni - Planning Local Health
- { Stephens Knox / Jill Lang?
- [Ensa
- Daughtat Med Centre?
- or Bath?

Pharmacia

PH

- Zee
- Warwick
- Pasteri
- Ingrid?

S/47

Kevin C.

- Pulte.
- Liz J.
- Opi
- Ken

- Kath
- Jerry

Tom Z.

Metcalfe.

Peter C.

Boyd.

Ann

Graham.

Di.

the rural landscape from the corner of The Channon Road looking north.

age is to the left of this view, and Dunoon Village is to

foreground on the left is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Amor. rs to the proposed development.

forest cover in the landscape and the seclusion of the clusters of the proposed development.

ne proposed development will not break the skyline as is e building on the right hand side of the view.

2.

ama view of the site from Keerong Road, ag north-east.

the vegetation cover at the proposed two g clusters.

Radio Abstract. 3.11.94 ~~Review~~ ^{Review} for Coeds: A response to
west-culture for journal

empirical study of values

common ^{phenomena} ~~reason~~ of values, difficulties/acceptance

"identity crises" experienced by individuals

value contrast with main stream

visions of & worry for the future

the ecological crises

so as to ^{desired} ~~be~~ realistic to develop a model that
can compete with that mainstream ^{one} (x)

Alternatives which serve the ability to challenge
the dominant ^{values} paradigm

- * The family structure and lifestyle.

* new social groupings

* alt nodes of the production, distributed
each half of fact.

- * rituals & spiritual values & practices.

④ a "Transition zone"

where - cultural customs meet / clash / cross
fertile / fertile /

Abstract from my project description
in Social Anthropology
University of Oslo
Norway
[SVEIN P. WESENLUND]

'Abstract of Project'

ALTERNATIVE SOCIETIES -

A Response To Western Cultural Fragmentation?

ABSTRACT:

The intention of this project is to carry out an empirical study to find out what kind of values alternative communities communicate about in present day Australia. The analysis will be directed towards the members experience of their possibilities and restrictions in these societies. Further, what does this mean for the actors identity management, in their search to realize some of their ideals - seen in contrast to the mainstream society. On the background that western mainstream society experience an increasingly alarming worry for the future, with reference to ecological crises, socio-psychological sufferings etc. - this project takes as it's point of departure, the following question of current interest: Is it possible to think about constructive alternatives which can compete with mainstream society, which seem to have a charter or monopoly on constituting culture? Alternatives which have the ability to challenge basic values with respect to organizing and maintaining: family or mode of living, social groups; production and distributing goods; rituals/religion - and if so, how can this be done? The alternative movements in Australia have such a goal. The study of alternative communities in present day Australia, could therefore be seen as socio-cultural "buffer zones", where different cultural values are meeting, melting together, revitalizes, and tries to be realized in an alternative context. This special form of incorporating different value-hierarchies, can be viewed as aspects of a model-example for the study of cultural change or transformation in Australia. In addition to this project, the goal is also to investigate how symbolic creativity takes place in interaction with other socio-cultural practices, including the aboriginals contact with the alternative movements.

KEYWORDS: alternative movements; alternative societies; hippies; ecology; utopia; cultural change; symbolic production

Putte. Synopsis of Study 10/1/95

- Values held by cult. comm.
- members experience of possibilities and constraints/restrictions
- "identity management"/self-realisation (actualising) in search to realise this goal/vision - in contrast to mainstream
- Examples of "worry for the future!"
eg. economic, QOL, psycho-social suffering.
- ~~over~~ departures/specifications.
can alternatives co-exist with the mainstream
- To what extent ~~do~~¹⁰⁰ alternatives challenge the main stream values.
eg. family ^{lifestyle}, social groups
production, distribution & exchange
rituals/religion

This study seen as a study of the
encompassing threshold of values,
attitudes, beliefs, & practice.
- a ~~by~~ "social buffer" zone.
Contribution this makes or ~~has~~ the
potential to make, to mainstream
society. viz the cultural change
process.

- ① the study to incl (goal)
"symbolic creativity" interacts
with between the alternatives &
mainstream

of Redgrave/Redford

What qualities and/or knowledge do you feel a consultant/change-agent should possess?

3. Fullan (SDP3-4P) suggests nine factors or pre-conditions that are necessary for a successful implementation phase of change. What actions or activities could you (as consultants) undertake to fulfil these pre-conditions for successful implementation?

D Set Terania file. + forward.

POTTE

Bodhi Farm, 5/6/95

Dear Peter;

How are you?! I hope you are well and not working too much. I'm now back again at Bodhi farm, planning to be here another two more weeks - before moving back to Dharmananda. I will fly out of Australia from Brisbane on 27th July. I feel so far, very good about my fieldwork. A lot have been done, and I find myself busy "rounding off" my work; still some few interviews to do; also contacting ex-members in both communities; collecting secondary data; i.e. articles/videos/maps which cover the social action in Terania Creek in the beginning av the eighties, "mans place in nature", nature vs culture etc.

If you don't mind, I still have some more questions with respect to MOs. I'm still hanged up with some definition problems. So, here is some questions of mine:

✓ Ia) How are the new state government in NSW responding to MOs?

✓ Ib) Do they have a new overall state development policy for MOs, or are they relying on the old SEPP 15?

NA ① Ic) How are Lismore City Council responding to that, as well as the other neighbouring City Councils?

✓ IIa) What other legal terms exist (in the jungle of definitions) in the community title legislations, with respect to MOs. For example, what's the difference between conventional lot land subdivision and strata subdivision? *CT v.*

✓ IIb) And further, what other forms of sub-division of land exist?

✓ IIc) How are they all generally interpreted by Councils vs. MO-dwellers?

IIId) And how do they blend with the term "ownership" - for example "Co Op", or:

In your article "How To Play the Planning Game", p.13 under "Ownership": "The title to the land is 'restricted freehold' in which A M and S Nicholson hold the land as trustees for the Bodhi Farm Co Pty Ltd, which in turn holds it in trust for the Bodhi Church as unincorporation association. The Constitution of the Bodhi Church is modelled on that provided by the NSW Dept. of Services. A copy of the Constitution and Articles of Associations are appended";

What does it in practical terms mean compared to other "ownership-forms", and where can I get a copy of the above mentioned "Constitutions and Articles of Associations" ?

See press file -
Denise

See letter on notice board, no reply but in policy

NA

Advice

Danwick/Gai

Cloutier

I asked Bill Metcalf about MOs in NSW compared to the other states of Australia. His reply was like this: "As far as I know 'Multiple Occupancy' is only used as a legal term in NSW. The term is used in other states, but not in its legal sense, but merely to indicate that more than one family unit dwell on a piece of land. It is not a term for which you can safely assume that everyone agrees on its meaning."

III) Would you add something to this Peter, with respect to differences between use of the legal term MO in other states of Australia? Is it just in NSW it is so widely recognised, because the numbers of MOs are generally high in this state compared to the other states ?

Could you answer some of these questions? Thanks. Some of them I'm familiar with, but not in a detailed way.

*See You,
Pitt*

Re his letter 5/6/95

To the Supt.
Star Putter.

1/30/2000 82 B.B. 24 P.
13.5.95

Thanks for your letter and enquiring
re my health - which is fine - thank
you for enquiring. I had heard you
had left Shorncliffe. I hope your
stay there was fruitful. I look
forward to your observations on
the similarities & contrasts with
Bodhi.

In response to your questions:-

(1a) We are still waiting on reply from the
Minister about revisiting the MO
policy. (Our letter has been on the
Bodhi notice board. If not still
there & you have not seen it
please see Denise & let me know).

(1b) As yet unclear

(1c) (a) There has been no outward/public reaction
by Human Rights Council. No doubt there
are many grounds behind this scene!

No doubt you have followed the further
MO DA matter, which he won in the
Court, overturning the Council's refusal.
He has also commenced an action for
compensation against them.
Council have appealed the decision
re the MO DA decision. This feels

to the Supreme Court. This may not get a hearing to be heard for 2-3 years. This is a vindictive action by Council and is generally unlikely to succeed! This has been the pattern new settlers have had to face since the 70's!

(11a) Community title (CT) is a land tenure system in which shareholders have a defined allotment in freehold title and a share in commonly held land. The restrictions, if any, on the sale of an individual allotment varies with the terms of CT Management Plan. This is a statutory plan, a model of which is set out in the legislation. The rules are binding on shareholders. This Plan forms part of the DA and rules within it can only be changed with the consent of Council.

The rules governing requirements re sale of an individual allotment of land vary from "none" to "restrictive" conditions, i.e. the purchaser must be acceptable to the neighbours and/or community as a whole. In some cases it has been found that after 3 purchasers have been found and that is still no acceptance by the neighbours then the seller can sell to the next purchaser. In other words neighbours

community can not hold out indefinitely to prevent a member selling out.

A CT community could in theory be equivalent to an MO community with the exception of having freehold title to their piece of land.

In practice, with one exception, this has not happened & in my view is unlikely to happen. This is because in my view and observation just throwing my 6 families together does not mean they are going to coalesce as a viable — internal community.

The social dynamics of an internal community require them to be a common held set of vision/aspirations/values/attitudes & beliefs by the core group (which may be say 3-5 individuals). New members are then accepted on a trial basis that have compatible values etc.

CT is not available to MO. The established MO policy specifically excluded any form of subdivision.

Strata Title (ST) is similar to CT and was designed in the first instance to permit separate title to high rise buildings eg

units. In ST the owner has absolute right to sell at market price without the need for consultation/approval of neighbours etc.

The Lismore Council is currently endeavouring to permit existing mo's to convert to CT but this is unlikely to be accepted by the Government as it negates the spirit & letter of the former policy & because it is a poor planning proposition as it tends to fragment the rural area - which is happening elsewhere despite the wishes of the planners!

ST is in effect a "vertical" system of subdivision whereas Torrens (freehold) title is a "horizontal" system. Both are "freehold".

The "Torrens" system replacing the original system created at the time of settlement 200 years ago, now called "Old System" title.

The Torrens system (devised by a man called Torrens is based on the system of ownership of ships). It is simpler and quicker to arrange a transfer of title from one person to another.

Under the "Old System" title, every time a transfer was required it was necessary to require a title search of all the owners.

right back to the original crown grant,
or possibly going back 200 years!

The only systems of land tenure are:-

- 1) Crown land
- 2) Old system freehold
- 3) Tenants freehold

2/ and 3/ apply to ET, ST and individual subdivision. Subdivision legislation is contained in the New Local Government Act not the Planning Act.

Rules governing the way a large parcel of land may be subdivided are set down by each Council.

Generally any large parcel of land may be subdivided down to a min. of 40 ha without the need for Councils consent.

Below 40 ha Council consent is required. The Council specifies zones where subdivision down to urban blocks is permissible.

(11b) Covered above I hope

(11c) As mentioned Mo's originally required a min. of 40 ha but now may be as small as 10 ha. There is a formula for how many dwellings sites are permitted. This relates to the total land size.

(11d) The type of ownership of land varies. There is no connection between the type of

ownership and the land tenure system.

Land may be owned by eg -

- o an individual
- o joint-tenants
- o tenants-in-common
- o a company (various types of Co. exist, eg Co. Co. Pty. Ltd. (limited to 50 shareholders) etc.
- o a trustee etc.

The "restricted" freehold in the Bodhi refers to a system where the Minister has an option to be consulted in the event of it being sold again. For this, the transfer fee charged by the Government is reduced. The reduction of fee is the reason why Bodhi chose to do this.

Am + S Nicolson (no "h") held the title of the property via a "trust deed" for the Bodhi Farm Co Pty Ltd who in turn held it via another "trust deed" for the Bodhi Church an unincorporated association.

Gai has a file of all these documents, including the constitution of the church and Article & Memorandum of the Co.

I agree that the term MO has a legal meaning in New Zealand. NZ has legislation called "cluster development" which has some of

the features of mo. Other states particularly Vic & WA also have comparable systems.

"Multiple occupancy" needs to be read in context, as it may in context simply mean, more than one dwelling. "Dual occupancy" (DO) clearly means "two" dwelling. Special legislation exists for DO so that mo has come to mean 3 or more dwelling.

(iii) I hope the above covers this.

(ic) The former mo Policy provided an option for Councils to introduce mo enabling provisions in their Local Environmental Plan (LEP). Two councils only opted for this choice - Byron Bay & Mundullumbur.

In both cases the Council staff recommended that the mo provisions in their respective LEP's be repealed, & due to our representations both Councils refused to agree to the staff recommendation.

Re the Taramia Creek action. I enclose my cutting file, which I trust is self explanatory. As you will see the forest issue and the mo issue became intertwined. The letters to the newspapers I consider give a fairly good indication of the deeply held cultural values prevailing at that time.

8.
It needs to be kept in mind that it was only
a generation earlier that those expressing
these conservative views were themselves
new settlers! An example of "culture shock"!

If any of the above is not clear, please
contact me.

I trust the remainder of your field work goes
well.

I would appreciate hearing from you before
you depart.

Kind Regards

Peter -

P.S. I have re-read your "Abstract of Project" and make the following comments.

1. Re "... can (alternatives) compete with mainstream society"?

Do you have a check list of values, attitude, beliefs etc against which to test this? If so, I appreciate seeing some.

There is evidence which I suggest supports this contention.

2. To what extent, if any have you been able to still hope to access the impact of aboriginal contact?