

# **SALIENT HAPPENINGS**

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## 1. DISTANT RELATIVES



This first parable has also been used  
in the opening paragraph of:  
*Resilience Adaptation Sustainability*

Our ancestral heritage harks us all back to the same territory — Equatorial Africa.

Late in the cooling afternoon on the 20th of July 1969, my daughters Anna and Kate (then small children) took off with me on a jungle adventure, three up on the family scooter. What we sought was an archaeological dig on the southern edge of the vast Kumasi University campus, work finished for the day.

Here, twenty thousand years previously, our ancestors trudged in from distant flint quarries to the sandstone edge of Campus Creek, still flowing today at our feet. They brought with them rough flint shards. The purpose of their journey being to grind these into useful shapes; digging tools, cutting tools, fighting tools.

To one side the modern-day archaeologists had piled the adzes and axes broken during the grinding process — thrown away in probable disgust. Every laboured item was a Stone Age relic reflecting satisfaction during manufacture; and anguish at the moment of breakage and discard.

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That evening, gathered around a short-wave radio with other campus families from Texas and Alabama, we shared the modern marvel of a moon landing by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin.

## 2. CHRISTMAS 1933: HOMEBUSH



My parents, William and Winifred, married in 1926. Sister Claire was born a few months later. Eight years on, in the spring of 1934, I came along, their second child. Clearly an unintended mistake!

Mother told stories about her life and times at Homebush; the family farm skirting the rugged southeastern extremity of New Zealand's North Island. A favourite recollection was her account of hacking solo from nearby White Rock to Ruakokapatuna; then driving the farm truck to the birthing centre at Featherston, where she was 'confined' and I was 'delivered'.

Over time I learnt from my sister that our parent's marriage was forged in hell. They seldom lived together. And although my Grandfather had misgivings about his son-in-law, he found occasional work for him. Mostly, what Claire recalled, was her parents arguing, fear of her father when he was home, and the gentle love of her grandfather.

Times were tough, work on the farm was hard, money was short; everybody was caught in the whiplash of the Great Depression. On Christmas day 1933 farm work was forgotten; food was roasted, liquor flowed. Resentments were sidelined. Conviviality ruled.

Late in the afternoon, outside below an open bedroom window, Claire heard intriguing noises; not of her parents arguing, but something exultant. It was, she believed, my first 'happening' — conception!

### 3. MARTINBOROUGH TO MASTERTON

I have no memory of the move from Homebush to Martinborough; but I do recall moving from Martinborough to Masterton.

What event or incident brought this on is not known. Of Martinborough, what I remember is a treeless flat green-grassed landscape and an isolated bare cold house. All the occupants, except myself, were female; my mother and sister, along with two or three other women. I have no sense of my father's presence.

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A large black car pulled up on the gravel verge. At the time it was sleeting through thin winter sunshine. Two stolid over-coated people, a man and a woman, entered the house. In later life Claire told me that she recognised them as the Martinborough policeman and his wife. A suitcase and some strung-up parcels were in the hallway: their arrival was expected. The woman led my sister and I outside into the rear seat of the car and settled us down with the suitcase and parcels. The man followed a little later and got in on the driver's side. Mother stayed indoors. Uppermost in my mind was the anxiety of missing out on my fifth birthday and starting school. It was late afternoon when the car drove away.

At first, in the unheated vehicle, it was cold. As the interior began to fuff-up I dozed off. We arrived at our destination in darkness. Asleep and unaware, I was carried out of the car, roused and fed, then put to bed.

In the morning I woke to the presence and watchful gaze of four boys, two about my own age, two older and bigger, all dressed like myself in identical night-shirts, our names tagged on the pockets. I had no idea where I was.

### 4. SPRING 1938: WHATMAN HOME



The Whatman Salvation Army Home for school-aged children stood (1938) sentinel on the rural side of the train track into Masterton, a solid two-storied pile well back from the road. It had a central entrance to a foyer from which stairs led 'left' to the boy's dormitory and 'right' to the girl's. Downstairs on one side of a generous foyer was the dining room; on the other side a day room.

A state primary school adjoined the grounds.

As a twelve year old, sister Claire exceeded the Whatman age-range; and as I was not yet five I was younger than the age-range. We attracted interest because we were the oldest and youngest; Claire a pubescent teenager, myself a pre-school infant. Claire blossomed. Both in and out of school I was engulfed in friendly, mostly feminine, warmth. Looking out for each other was a Whatman rule.

Years later Claire told me that no child was ever ridiculed or physically punished. There was the novelty of Sunday school, Prayers at bedtime, and Grace before breakfast; all of which invoked an initial question in my mind about this entity, or spirit 'God'. What lingered in my memory was the warmth, routine certainty, sense of safeness, and my serene happiness. Impossibly, what I most desired was a Teddy Bear — gifted to me 50 years later by a thoughtful Heather.

**Once upon a time—  
The bossy people came.  
They made us lolly scramble—  
And no one caught the same,**

**Kids were in a heap,  
And some couldn't see.  
But I got a handful,  
For little brother and me.**

*Sister Claire*

Spring came and it was my birthday.  
At breakfast, Grace was given.  
Still standing, everybody sang Happy Birthday — to me!  
We all sat down.  
The special Whatman birthday breakfast treat was placed before me.

On a dinner plate, surrounded by white bread 'soldiers' was a pale blue  
eggcup holding a brown boiled egg, topped off with its soft yoke gleaming  
gold. Bliss.

## 5. THE WAR YEARS: 1939–1945

Mother moved to Masterton. She had a job as the live-in housekeeper for a well-to-do Landsdown family of five: the Greenwood's and their three young daughters; one my age, one younger, and one older.



On Sunday Mother would arrive at Whatman in a taxi to take Claire and I out window-shopping in town and visit the town park; then on to Landsdown for a substantial teatime riot with the Greenwood girls. Claire and I were returned to Whatman in the family Oldsmobile, all five children in the back seat. After a few months it was arranged that Claire could live with the Whatman warden's teenage family, and I could live with Mother in the Greenwoods' attic and attend Landsdown School.

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Over the course of those war-years I was initiated into half-a-lifetime of emotional experience.

### **Achievement**

I learnt to cycle on an adult man's bike; from the left side, right leg awkwardly through the triangle. And on the day following that success I learned, on my own, to swim in the Ruamahunga River, inspired by a local Maori boy diving in and coming up with a wriggling trout held aloft in his right hand.

### **Angst**

Early one summer morning I crept out of the house to steal strawberries from a neighbor's cherry tree enclosure. Busy at work, then sensing a presence, I looked up to see a man and a woman standing at the entry gate, my sole line of exit. Questioned, lying, I gave them the name and

address of a schoolmate. They let me go and allowed me to take home the strawberries already in my punnet.

### **Death and Finality**

Sunday: by the lake at the park, on a jetty with others feeding the ducks. Spiraling up from the clear dark watery depths a massive black eel, observed by me alone, jerking a tiny duckling under by one leg: plink, gone, no more. Weekday: on my way to school I came upon a huddle of men surrounding a cow stuck in a cattle stop, struggling and yowling. Then a loud rifle shot, causing the men to leap back to reveal the beast slumped into a soundless heap: dead.

### **Arousal**

Being dressed-up by the Greenwood girls and their friends, all of us in frilly girls' clothes: awakening pleasurable and unexpected thoughts, emotions and stirrings.

### **Fear**

Obsessed with cinema I wagged school to catch a Wednesday matinee at the State Theatre. The potluck billing was *The Cornish Rhapsody* with only myself and a little old lady watching. The screening was a haunting horror, way beyond my endurance range. As I'd wagged school, I couldn't seek solace and for some time after needed to sleep with a light on — after looking under the bed.

### **Horror**

During the same school term two of my classmates were vaporized. Firstly, the fastest runner in my class was shot accidentally by his brother while fooling around with a US Military Policeman's pistol; their teenage sister being the MP's girlfriend. Then my side-by-side desk partner was gunned down along with all his immediate family by his father, who then took his own life.

### **Compassion**

Polish refugees, most of them children, were housed at a reception camp at the northern end of the Wairarapa Plain. I holidayed with cousins nearby; and from social visits to the camp learnt of harsh treatment and suffering by both the Germans and Russians.

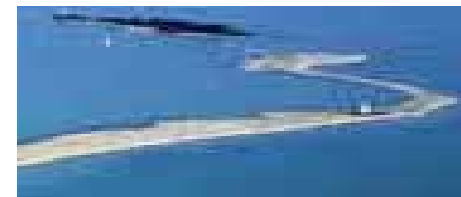
### **Loyalty**

Cohesion around loyalty and allegiance emerged slowly: during school and on the school playground, from practicing and playing barefoot rugby, from the walk-to-school and in the after-school cluster group, and at home with Mother and the Greenwoods.

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Mother got engaged to Fred on the eve of his departure for three years of war, mainly in Egypt. Alan hung around my mother as her male companion for most of the time Fred was overseas. On Fred's return as the proud warrior, flat-footed Alan was seen off and Mother got married, to Fred; then realised her mistake. Alan was preferable to Fred; and, as it turned out, to me as well.

One autumn afternoon late in 1945 Mother and I took the train to Wellington where we transferred to the *ss Arahura* bound for Nelson in the South Island. Six hours later I was on deck at the crack of a cold mist-wispy dawn. The *Arahura* chugged slowly along the Boulder Bank toward the entrance of Nelson Haven.



*Boulder Bank*

Across the bay to the west there were mountains blushed rose with early sunlight. Behind the town was pile upon pile of dark green bush clad hills. Far to the south were distant peaks at the northern end of the Southern Alps.

Over my teenage years Nelson's vast uninhabited verdant backland was to lure and centre my soul. It was a wonderment waiting to be explored.

## 6. LATE 40S: EARLY TEENS

Moving as an eleven-year-old to a new community in Nelson set me the problem of how to get recognition and make friends. In this I started off badly with the wrong crowd, yet came out well with a pal for life, Keith Hendle — each of us the ‘best man’ for the other’s wedding ten years later.



*Ten years later [1956]*

My first prank was so adequately impressive it gained direct entry into the local brat pack.

It began with the discovery of a 25-pound bag of old fashioned gunpowder, lumpy black stuff, in a contractor’s shed over the back fence from our rental home. ‘Gunpowder’ and ‘Danger’ on the written label. What good luck! Initially I helped myself to a handful. Later, elsewhere, I laid this out in the centre of a newspaper page, and lit the edge. It wasn’t so much the flash and whoosh that impressed, but the magnificent pall of black smoke. Spectacular! I went back to the contractor’s shed, nicked the whole bag, and stashed it under the house.

I confided my good fortune to a hooligan kid, Dessy, who lived a few doors down the street. We hatched a plan for putting the precious loot to good use.

With the load divided between us we cycled to Auckland point, a mudflat reclamation about half a mile distant from the Nelson town centre. A

light breeze blew in from the harbour over the town. We trailed the gunpowder away from each other in a long straight line, and returned to the centre point where we’d set up a newspaper fuse. The fuse lit, we retreated. In a rapid swoosh the whole line fired up in a few seconds, sending up a cloud of black smoke the size of a football field drifting slowly over the centre of town.

The *Nelson Evening Mail* ran a piece based on enquiries fielded by the police about the massive pall of smoke which passed over the town the previous day. The *Mail* reported that the police had no explanation for this.

## 7. TOPHOUSE

Alan followed mother to Nelson. He got a job at Central Motors with the occasional use of a car. One-by-one we visited places with magic names — Pelorus Bridge, Cable Bay, Golden Downs and Tophouse.

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Alan had elderly relatives living on a smallholding at Tophouse, an upland between the Nelson and Marlborough provinces. It was arranged that we would visit them and stay overnight.

From his youth Alan knew the district well. Stopping at a stream adjoining the farm he took me into the ankle deep water, and moving against the current, began to turn over river-stones one after another. Suddenly, glittering in magnified contrast to the grey stones, lay a brilliant speck of gold. Years later I returned with Norma to pan the stream for gold to fashion wedding bands.

The Tophouse landholding was mostly bare grass grazed by sheep. A small house stood well back from the road on a rise. Smoke rose from the chimney. Alan's relatives, an elderly couple now living alone, were plain folk. Inside the house there was an iron range giving out warmth, cooking food, and supplying hot water. One wall of the room was covered in family photographs, including Scat the cat, and Ding Dong the horse.

Around tea-time, the pioneering stories and histories flowed.



The iron range once bulged from the back wall of the house; later this was walled-in and roofed-over making a narrow lean-to scullery with a door at either end. During a prolonged cold snap Ding Dong had become droopy, so on a particularly frosty evening he was eased into the narrow space to shelter. During the deep of night Ding Dong died! In the morning he was found squeezed tight between the back of the range and the outside wall of the lean-to. He had to be removed by.....

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Scat. Overnight, with the fire dying, the oven door would be left open to keep the room warm. In the early hours after the stove cooled down to a comfortable temperature Scat, as cats do, had taken to climbing into the oven to sleep-off the rest of the night. In the morning, one morning, the stove was filled up with kindling and lit, the oven door banged shut, it was then off outside to milk the house-cow. When discovered Scat was.....



## 8. COURTHOUSE



Tahunanui School, a Nelson outlier, had twenty-four of us in the combined form I and II classroom. It surprised the Headmaster, and Mother and Alan, when I was apprehended for theft, fraud and damage to public property.

### Theft

On another of our weekend trips we pulled-in at the gates to the Takaka Hill quarry, supplier of marble to the then unfinished Nelson Cathedral. I squeezed under the gate for a look around. Beside the smoko shed there was a locked corrugated iron box labeled 'DANGER EXPLOSIVES'. Pulling back a panel and squeezing through a skinny arm I was able to extract a stick of gelignite and some percussion caps. With the gelly stick hidden in my shirt, and the caps in a pocket, we drove on to Takaka. Here I fell in with a local lad. He led me to a secluded spot up-river where we placed a smidgen of 'jelly' on a rock with a detonation cap, and whacked it with an axe-head. The scariest of big bangs and a split rock persuaded us to chuck the unused gelly into the river.

### Fraud

Using a false name and an empty house address I ordered the delivery of a Stamp Collectors Catalogue 'on approval'. When a Registered notice arrived I persuaded the ditzzy mother of one of my gang-friends to sign for, and collect, the package.

### Damage to Property

I set fire to the Tahuna Beach bus shelter.

\*

'Blossom' Lake, the local policeman, had an old-fashioned British Bobby look about him, and was respected as a local sleuth. Walking home from school across Swamp Road, water and reeds on either side, I was confronted by Blossom, dressed in slacks shirt and tie. On that afternoon he was 'detective' Lake. Sitting me down in his Model 'A' Ford, in full view of passers-by, he itemised much of my criminal litany, cross-referencing with the confessions of others. We attended the Courthouse for juvenile offending. I was identified as a 'ringleader'.

One of my associates went on to a stellar criminal career and another came to a sticky end. For me the experience, assisted by the avuncular judge in chambers, was salutary. Undoubtedly he had a word with Hugh Brown my Headmaster, who probably had a word with my school-friend Keith's parents.

Starting afresh, I made it into the Nelson Provincial Schoolboy rugby team, and was befriended by Keith's wonderfully average family. I appreciated his normal domestic situation, and he took a shine to my family's chaotic and laid back alternative style.

Nelson college was a summer holiday away.



## 9. POORMAN'S TUNNEL



Part of that 'mischief-and-excitement' period included cycle visits up nearby Poorman's Valley to raid a white passionfruit grove.

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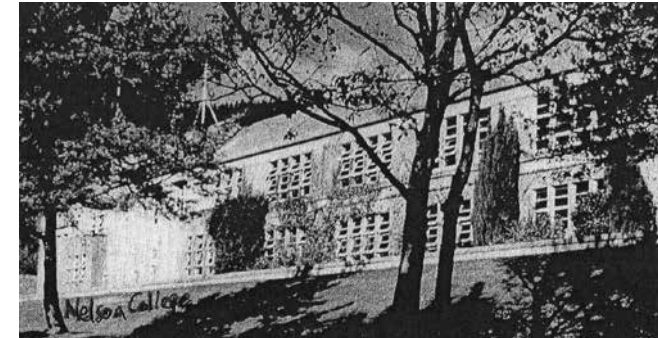
During a school holiday Keith and I met workmen emerging from an open steel-door, entrance to what we thought was a store room. In fact it was the door to a two-mile long tunnel supplying water to Stoke and Tahuna.

We returned next day to check it out further and discovered that although it was bolted, the steel door could be lifted from its hinges — so we ventured into the dark a little way. Next day we returned equipped with torches, eased the door off, got inside, replaced the door on its hinges and plunged on. After twenty minutes we glimpsed light at the far end, emerging another twenty minutes later into the Roding River Valley.

Over the years we used this secret 'wardrobe door' to Nelson's backland time-and-time again; exploring a vast lonely space beyond all parental knowledge.

*\*Ten years later, as a surveyor, I mapped the Poorman's Valley cemetery; not of course, for 'poor men'! The area has since been discretely renamed Marsden Valley!*

## 10. FLOREAT NELSONIA

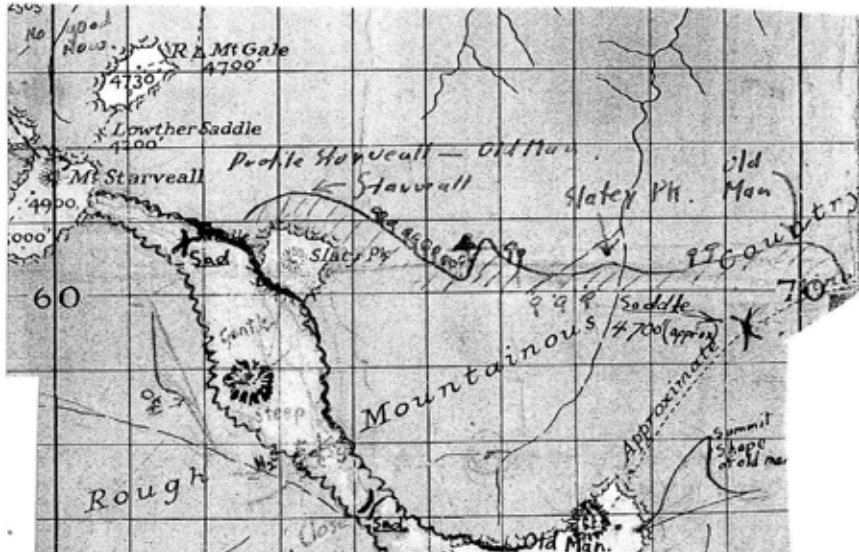


Appearance before the Children's Court had a salutary effect, and influenced my grasp on morality in the switch from childhood to adolescence. Nelson College was modeled on the British public school prototype. Single sex, boarders and dayboys, military parade days, caning, scholarship with sport, and nicknames for all the Masters. Keith and I were in separate study streams yet the same House, Monroe, for boys from up-country. Our most celebrated *alumnus* was Earnest Rutherford of atom-splitting fame at Cambridge University. Cambridge! 'Jerp' Patterson was our Housemaster and Rugby coach. Keith and I were in the winning 1952 Inter-House rugby team. The college ethos was certain and confident, with all sporting and academic goals set at fair play and achievement.

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The hilly backdrop to the city was bush clad, penetrated by three small rivers; the Maitai, the Roding and The Brook. The end of the road for all three streams was easily accessible by pushbike, the Roding excitingly so through the Poormans Valley water-pipe tunnel. The mile-to-an-inch 'military' map of that time included the city and suburbs, some humanised farmscape, then a little of the bush fringe. The next mile of bush further inland was tentatively sketch-mapped; and after that the territory was unsurveyed with an indication of streams dotted-in, the whole overwritten

on Map S20 with the words *Rough and Mountainous Country: Heavy Bush*, the most sublime map inscription I ever encountered.



Exploration began for Keith and I with others in a Scouting Troup, bunking down in road-end huts and setting-off on day tramps. I encountered the delights of natural bush, saw wild deer, fringed mossy tarns, encountered native pigeons and the cheeky weka, made billy tea and swam naked in crystal clear streams.

## 11. MURDERER'S ROCK

My first duo-adventure with Keith was a mid-winter hike from Nelson to Pelorus Bridge, retracing the steps of the 'notorious Burgess Gang' who (1866) took the lives of five gold prospectors at Murderer's Rock. Three of the four were hung for their crime. Murderer's Rock is now a popular picnic spot.



We pitched tent at the Pelorus Bridge campground in a cold and sunless spot; then got into a bit of bother from lighting a small fire on the concrete floor of a day shelter, to keep warm. On discovery the caretaker said he'd be asking the local policeman to come by next morning to have a word.



Keith and I packed-up and got out of there well before dawn. We made such good time that before sunrise we were at the last farmhouse, at a place where the road home turned onto the track up to Murderer's Rock. Silently, so as to avoid waking and disturbing anybody, we crept by

the collection of farm buildings. At the barn a dog tied-up inside to a long rope heard our whispering voices, and leapt out through an open window. Giving a single high-pitched yelp his neck broke and he lay dead, twitching, at our feet. We scuttled off quietly as fast as we could.

We were mightily scarred and reflective by the time we got to Murderer's Rock. No stopping for a picnic this time!

## 12. TORRENT BAY AT EASTER

In the full moonlight of Easter Thursday ten of us from scouts cycled around Tasman Bay from Nelson to Marahau Beach. It was a lumpy thirty miles fuelled by biscuits and homemade ginger beer. Early next morning, catching the low tide, we first skirted the coastline then tramped overland to the headwaters of Torrent Bay lagoon. From there a launch was hailed to ferry us over to the holiday settlement.



The rest of Good Friday was spent settling in, and assessing the possibilities for adventure. Of interest was a group of teenage girls who had arrived by launch from Nelson. There were the lesser attractions of flounder spearing, diving and swimming off the wharf. Also, we had the use of a two-person kayak. This had the shape of a kayak, but was sheathed with tin sheets nailed onto a wooden frame. The seams were sealed with tar.

By late afternoon there were just two lads left at the wharf, Murray Whaley and myself, and three girls looking on. Seeking to impress, Murray and I organised some cavorting.

He and I set off across the inlet, a distance of about half a mile. Murray paddled and I was in charge of bailing. Between us, Murray was the

older quieter and more level headed; *and* he was well built and a strong swimmer. His Dad was a butcher.

Halfway to the opposite shore, seawater began to enter our craft at a rate that exceeded my ability to bale it out. I panicked, quickly assessing that both shores of the inlet were now well beyond my swimming range. I stood up, waving and shouting to attract attention and help. This agitation caused more water to surge into our craft. Sinking and drowning became certainties; my life was at an end!

Murray stopped paddling. He sat still, watching, thinking. With me now coming-up to full hysteria, he worked out what he had to do. His plan was simple: emboldened by manic screaming from the girls on the wharf, it involved knocking me out with the paddle, then lifesaving me to a hero's return.

Murray swung the paddle. I ducked, he missed. Our vessel lurched. I lost my balance. Croaking an end-of-life shriek, I pitched out of the canoe.

I was standing knee deep in water covering a hidden sand bank!

## 13. MUTUAL TRUST & SUPPORT



Every venture undertaken by Keith and I into the unmapped Nelson hinterland included a mishap: flooded rivers, weather diversions, sodden gear, lost stuff, and accidents — always resolved in an self sufficient manner using the resources to hand.

The most ambitious of our trips was a pre-planned ten-day winter climbing venture into the Traverse Valley south of Lake Rotoiti, home to Nelson's tallest peaks at the northern end of the Southern alps.

Heavily laden we made it over two days from the roadhead at St Arnard Village to the John Tait Hut in the upper Traverse valley. Next day, in glorious calm winter sunshine on crisp firm snow, we climbed Traverse at almost 8000 feet. The day following, in cold light fog, we had a crack at the magnificent Cupola, lost our way and ascended a lesser, probably unclimbed, peak. Strenuous stuff, warranting a rest day.

We had a .22 rifle with us. Solo, Keith went off hunting for deer and returned with venison! By now we were pretty rank and in need of a wash down. To hand were two rope-handled 4-gallon ex-kerosene cans. One was placed half-full on the fire to heat, to be added later to the other for the great wash-off. Near boiling-point the bucket tumbled off its embers scalding the end of Keith's left foot. Within seconds we were looking at inch-high blisters. Not a pretty sight for isolated teenagers !

Taking stock: we had a minimum first aid kit, plenty of food, and there was no rush to get back to Nelson as we wouldn't be missed. Our plan

was for me to run out to St Arnard the next day, obtain medical advice, pick up treatment essentials, and return to the hut the next day following. We would treat the blisters, sit tight to recuperate, and make our way out in due course.

The following morning I made it to St Arnard the roadhead settlement in about five hours. A doctor and chemist were contacted in Murchison; and the instructions and medicines arrived by bus later in the day. A holidaying family took me in to clean up, feed me, and bunk me down for the night. Around 10 o'clock I was woken up; 'Nip' Keith's dad had arrived. The Doctor prescribing for 'Keith Hendle' had phoned his home number.

Early next morning our host took Nip and I to the head of the lake in his motorboat, and we then set off up-valley. Poor Nip! Although slim and fit and unburdened, the up-valley slog turned into a nightmare. As was the case with my mother, Keith's parents had no idea about the range of our exploratory jaunts. Late in that short winter's day Nip and I made it to the hut.

Keith was given painkillers, the blisters were cleaned-up then carefully punctured, and we settled into two days of convalescence.

Nip was a craftsman. Over those two days he cut away and shaped Keith's boot around the area close to the blisters, and made two stout walking poles. Pre-dawn, four days after the incident, leaving needless stuff behind to lessen our burden, we began the trek out. This time it was tough going for Keith. Well, tough for me too as I was obliged to pack-out all the gear! Two hours short of dusk I pushed ahead solo to the lake head, dumped the gear there, ran around the shore to St Arnard Village, and organized a motor boat to go up to the lake head to meet Keith and Nip.

It was never part of our mind-set to be rescued by a third party; but on reflection Keith and I were mercifully lucky to have his Dad on hand to help.

## 14. SCARRED FOR LIFE



In the August 1950 College break Keith and I cycled from Nelson to Franz Joseph Glacier on three-speed roadsters. We covered 600 miles there-and-back over mostly graveled roads, with only an occasional flat patch of easy going. Our intended nightly shelter was a pup tent; which kindly West coasters never let us use. We took five days to get down to Franz Josef, spent three days exploring the ice, and then took another five days to get home.

The worst section was from Greymouth to Westport on the return leg; a route taken in the deluded belief that travel along the coast would be flatter and easier. It was only 60 miles; but being a rugged coast it was up and

down ridges and valleys all the way.

This trip was total madness. I vowed, as we mended our last puncture ten miles from home, that I would never go touring again by bicycle ever.

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What I didn't know then was that in later life, in Cambridge, I would ditch car ownership in favour of fixed-speed full-on full-time roadster cycling.

## 15. THE MATTER OF GIRLS

From my 17 year old sister, and tauntingly so from her friend Margaret, I obtained a visual appreciation of external female accessories — the peaks and valleys, and Margaret's ginger tush. With no attempt at concealment Margaret primped and swapped underwear skirts blouses and dresses before me (then 9 years old) in a flaunting-taunting manner I felt compelled and scared to watch.

Nelson College boys wore grey socks, grey shorts, grey shirts and jerseys, and a grey cap. I got my first 30 shilling pair of also grey longs in my mid-teens to kit me out for a college holiday job on Buxton's haberdashery counter.

My anxiety with girls had its origin in segregated college schooling; symbolized by the high-walled Nelson College for Girls. Nelson College (for boys) was a mile to the south. Two worlds apart; to which we were conveyed in a shared bus!

Over the first few years, with the girls swaddled in black shinny bib tunics and stockings, and the boys in a mid-shade of overall grey, there was little to get excited about. Until, that is, the sturdy 17 year old greenkeeper's daughter, who shared my bus-stop, was elevated to the status of girls college Prefect: kitted-out in bra-visible blouse and skirt with sanded bare legs. It was 'wow' with never a word exchanged. On one brilliant spring morning, after Keith's stay-over at my house and a shared wait with the greenkeeper's daughter for the college bus, he needed to crab aboard shielding his tent-poled shorts from everybody's view.

Relief came with tennis, mixed tennis, colour-coded in unisex white. Here was convention, conversation and courtesy. Tennis bridged to cinema dating; skiving out at halftime for some above-the-waist fumbling by the Maitai!

My girlfriends, after an introduction to Keith, often ended up with him for an equally innocent 'date'; and just once, a girl friend of his took me on. It was a demi-decade of suppressed angst and unrequited desire.



## 16. HOPELESS & CUPOLA



Sixty years ago the key that opened the door to academic advance was a high-scoring School Certificate result; and that became my goal at Nelson College. Weekends in winter centered on playing and watching rugby. Weekends in summer were devoted to cricket on Saturday and tennis on Sunday; and with tennis came the befriending of girls.

The wilderness was always there and always beckoned, with the term holidays providing opportunities for escape and exploration. Together with Keith, these trips expanded from five days in the Nelson backlands, to ten days in the St Arnaud Range at the Northern end of the Southern Alps; ten days being the food-load limit (20lb of hard tack each) we could manage to carry in addition to our other gear and a light .22 rifle. We relied on each other's skills; Keith was a good shot and the cook, I planned and navigated.

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At the end of our Sixth Form year Keith started a job as an Accountancy Cadet and I took the opportunity, before taking up a Surveying Cadetship in the New Year, to team up with Roger Evens for another crack at the

St Arnaud peaks. Keith and I had previously climbed Mt Travers, but were thwarted on the magnificent Cupola, and were awestruck by the adjacent Hopeless. Roger was older and a skilled climber. Our plan was to climb Traverse, have a rest day, then attack Hopeless, which we were led to believe was unclimbed. On Hopeless we were successful, making the summit up the steeply glaciated southern face; but were chagrined to find a tobacco tin under a summit cairn with a list of five names inside!

Roger's skills got us up Hopeless by an ingenious ice route. On Cupola we came to an impasse. It was known that Cupola had been climbed; but somehow we got onto an ever-steepening rock route that led to a difficult pitch which I balked at. Roger argued that we could manage it. I argued that it was dangerous; and anyway it was known that there was a straightforward route to the summit. Roger wanted to go on up the rock face alone. I dissuaded him. We then worked our way down to the base of the peak, cut around, found a lengthy snow and rock chute, and made it to the summit. Roger admitted later that his obduracy had driven him previously to summit a 9,000 footer, Tapuaenuku, in the Kaikoura Range in bad weather, again contrary to the decision of his then leader.

\*

Later that summer, on Mt Sefton in the really serious Southern Alps, Roger struck out alone and away from his party during a group descent. No trace of his body has ever been reported.

## 17. PRINCE PHILLIP



My survey firm's office was with Staig and Smith, accommodated in the late 19th Century Pitt Building on Nelson's upper Trafalgar Street. Keith's accountancy firm was in the same building.

\*

In 1954 the recently crowned Queen and Prince Phillip made a lengthy tour of New Zealand, including a Saturday-through-Sunday stopover in Nelson. There was glad-handing on Saturday and Church on Sunday at the Cathedral. Our precious Royals were accommodated in the modest Nelson Hotel. Their Sunday programme called for a short morning walk from the hotel to the Cathedral.

The hotel and the Pitt Building were a stone's throw apart. With a view to seeing all we could, Keith and I climbed onto the plinth surmounting the roof, overlooking the crowd below. From here we could see everything. Rather more than we anticipated!

As the royal couple made their private way along the rear veranda of the hotel, I rather sheepishly caught Prince Phillip's eye, and waved tentatively to him. No fuss here, Phillip waved back. The contact was silent, eye-to-eye, cheery and understated.

\*

Monday's *Nelson Mail* reported our precarious perch on top of the Pitt Building, admonishing us for exposing ourselves, but (perish the thought) not the Royals, to the possibility of danger!

## 18. DISCHARGED PENSIONED ENGAGED

In the 1950s eighteen year old males were required to enlist for CMT (Compulsory Military Training) which amounted to about three months of basic squady and firearms training. My CMT stint was at Burnham, south of Christchurch, in mid-winter. Sundays were free, but only after Church.



A permanent army corporal, with an eye to getting off-camp with-pay on Sunday, organised a busload of 'volunteers' for a Sunday of skating at Lake Ida — departing before church service began.

We arrived at the frozen lake around mid-morning. After an hour of skating and an army hotbox lunch we were back on the ice. Mid-afternoon I walloped down knee-first and smashed-up my right kneecap. This put me in hospital for the rest of CMT and spelt the end of rugby and cricket leaving me, still in my teens, a minimum ranked, honourably-discharged War Pensioner for life — with due respect and apologies to real War Pensioners.

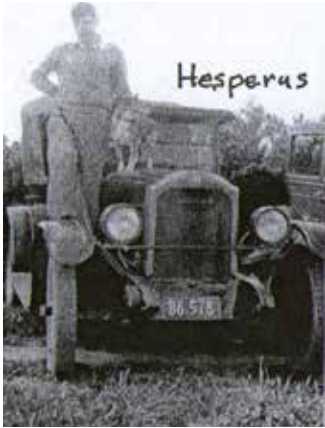


\*

In Nelson the summer following I took up archery, an excellent sport for rehabilitating hobblers. And it was at archery that I met, fell in step with, and courted a lovely exuberant horizon-searching schoolteacher: Norma Logan.



## 19. COURTSHIP



Norma and I lived separately, with our families, two miles apart; so getting wheels (and fulfilling Henry Ford's prophecy about the utility of the automobile in courtship) became a priority.

Our first car was 1924 Rugby 4. We relished everything about Hesperus, except the feebleness of the brakes, 'foot' and 'hand' combined.

Some weekday evenings, and most weekends, Hesperus took us up into those valleys behind Nelson. We relished these trysts, except the frailty of the then available 'family protection'.

Separately, our parents had misgivings about the intensity of our relationship. Both knew my employers, and jointly they appealed to the colourful and worldly Freddy Stag to give me up-country work. This got me out of town during the working week, leaving Norma free to cope with the demands of her job as a primary school teacher.

Norma had a light, partly trained singing voice, was interested in opera and was widely read. She spoke French well and studied the history and life of Scotland and the Hebrides. She was intensely curious about the World beyond New Zealand.

\*

With and from Norma I learned to look, listen, taste, reason and reflect; all part of a trusting friendship spanning 40 years.

## 20. MURCHISON 1958

Murchison (locally known as 'Murch') eighty miles south of Nelson, is the only sizable inland town in the top third of the South Island. Its remoteness appealed, and I relished being in charge of mining and roading installations.

My base was the local clapboard hotel. One evening, amid great excitement, Nelson policemen arrived to arrest a fugitive Australian crook; identified by the local sole-charge cop from his album of 'wanted' mug shots.

A large project involved engineering 10 miles of road along the southern side of the Matakita River. One weekend, at the mid-point for this project, Norma and I planned to be together. She drove down from Nelson after school on Friday, arriving about six o'clock. At the moment of her arrival I was taking a bath, one floor up at the back of the hotel. The walls were so thin I heard her arrive at the front desk to ask if I was about!

The plan for the new road included snaking through the debris and chaos of the 1929-earthquake slip, which careened the Morel House downhill, the children safe inside! It became a challenge to design the road within the technical guidelines — 1 in 8 grades, 100ft curves. At one stage, impasse; an impossibly huge single rock the size of a two-story building straddled the chosen line. As the contractors were low on dynamite we simply skirted the monolith with a single file track. My funding plans showed a smooth pathway over easy terrain! In later years the rock was blasted through, leaving behind a large 'split apple'.



## 21. CONFLAGRATION



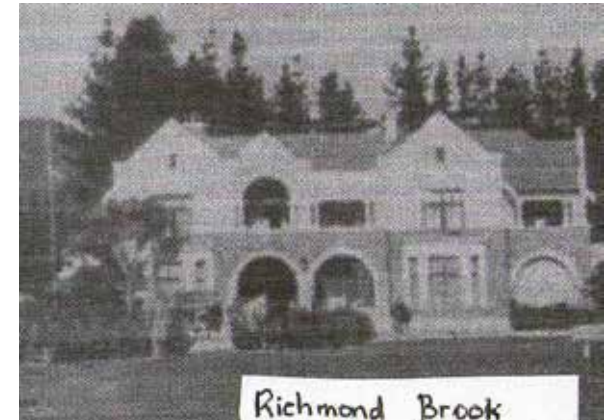
Best Island in the late 1950s was a 100-acre pine-clad lozenge with a dozen holiday cribs (cabins) at its rounded eastern end. Access was over tidal flats *via* a causeway, motorable for only a few hours either side of low tide. Two of us were on the island surveying. During our stay we had use of the Best family cabin, the first as we came off the causeway.

It was then late summer. With the school holidays over, we were able to settle in for a week of isolation, supplementing our survey work with some fishing and rabbit shooting.

On our last day, around noon, we set about barbequing flounder over a sluggish outdoor fire of driftwood. To get the fire revving, using petrol to hand, I dashed a sizable splash into the spluttering flames, some bouncing past onto dry pine needles. Moved along by a steady breeze, fire spread rapidly into nearby shrubs then up into the pines. The wind picked-up and forced the fire, my fire, through the island in an ever-widening 'V'. Within an hour, crib owners, arrived from the mainland in outboards. They flayed the edges of the dying blaze. Not one holiday crib had been lost.

Shameful, chagrined and fearful I had to front-up to the Best family. To my relief, the burnt-out gash was taken as a providential and protective firebreak. The matter was closed — but never forgotten.

## 22. EMBARRASSMENT



Staig and Smith were commissioned to lop off a large chunk of Richmond Brook, a vast sheep and cattle station in the Marlborough Province. This involved a fifteen mile boundary traverse, starting from the homestead end. The landscape was semi-arid, treeless and lumpy.

Horses were used for the daily trundle to the point reached the previous day. Some days the teenage girls from the homestead, clad in jodhpurs windcheaters and felt hats, would hack up with refreshments and check-up on our progress.

The fieldwork completed we spent the final week back at base, reducing the survey calculations. We had the use of an overseer's bungalow and took our meals with the station hands in their cookhouse. It was here, for me, that the f-word acquired adjectival and adverbial application beyond my previous ken.

\*

On our final day Freddy Staig came over from Nelson, and we were invited to join the station family for dinner.

Spruced-up we entered the homestead from the rear; through the scullery, then the kitchen, on into the dinning room, finally entering the magnificent lounge. The setting was grand, the view expansive. Most notable was the glamour of the girls, hair coiffured, lipstick on, dressed in perky floral outfits.

Our group included eighteen-year-old Gary from a strict Brethren family. For him the glitz and the girls amounted to a total swallow-me-up embarrassment.

Cook came in to call us into the dining room. Gary and I were seated opposite the girls because we were of a similar age. Cook entered with plates of soup. Soup finished and cleared away, Cook reappeared with the main course, served-up country style on plates in the kitchen; discreetly small portions for the likes of the girls, heaped high for the likes of myself and Gary. One end of Gary's napkin was on the table, and his plate of food was put down on it. When Gary sought to stuff the other end of the napkin into his shirt he avalanched the plate and its contents onto his lap. The girls convulsed. Cook came to Gary's rescue, leading him off to the pantry for a clean-up.

We departed for Nelson before dawn. None of us ever said a word about any of this again — to Gary!

## 23. LANCASTER PARK 1956

On my way back to the office after a Friday of fieldwork I called on Norma finishing-up at school, putting to her the suggestion that, with Keith, we travel overnight to Christchurch to attend the Third Test against the Springboks.

Our car, the second, was a 1938 Morris Eight, perfect in every way except heating! After seven hours driving we arrived at Lancaster Park, parked as close as we could, bought tickets, and settled down on the open Terrace. For a while Norma napped between Keith and I on the hard concrete.

There were curtain raisers. The big game was a ripper, with the All Blacks winning 17 to 10. After the final whistle we hung around the edge of the exultant crowd waiting for the home heroes to come out onto the Members Balcony.

Then we shuffled out of the ground, found the Morris and set off in the gathering dusk for home. By this stage we had been awake for 30 hours.

The night was clear and freezing. Keith was not then licensed to drive, so Norma and I drove the 300 miles home; at one stage hideously frightened by an approaching train curving tangential to the road. After dropping Keith and Norma off I clocked-in to my own bed at 7am Sunday — 48 hours after waking-up at 7am the previous Friday morning.

*Norma, Keith, Bob*



## 24. WELLINGTON & AUCKLAND

Francis, Bishop of Nelson, married Norma and I. Soon after, I qualified as a surveyor; leading us into a job-search, which in turn resulted in an appointment in the Planning Department at the Wellington City Corporation. Norma fitted easily into teaching at a Thorndon private school. We bought a composite plot in fashionable Khandallah, designed a house, and contemplated parenthood.

After Nelson, life in the capital was sophisticated; although we failed to key into the stimulus of Victoria University and the intrigue of central government. In my work I grew to admire a particular colleague and also recently qualified surveyor, Jim Dart. He had an astute worldly Englishness, was well read and left-leaning politically. Discerning and persuasive in argument, Jim encouraged me to enroll in the newly introduced planning programme for graduates at Auckland University. When I returned to my Wellington desk over the university summer break I in turn encouraged him to take the same course — each of us influencing the trajectory of each other's life.



*Harold—Les—Barry?—Prof Kennedy—Gerhart Rosenberg—Bob—Norman*

Twenty-five years later Jim and I were re-united as academic colleagues in the Planning Department at Auckland University.

Robert Kennedy, the first professor of planning was a top-drawer appointment from Britain. He was able to attract the best legal, design and engineering people to contribute to the planning course. Gerhard Rosenberg, exiled from Nazi Germany *via* Canada and Britain, was memorable for his philosophical insights, which lingered in my formative conscience forever.

The five students on that first intake each took the design lead in a field project, aided, in the gathering of data, by the other four colleagues. I had chosen to prepare a growth plan for Helensville — where Heather and I were to settle down on my 'retirement' in 2000.

\*

A significant operative lesson was learned from this project.

My four student colleagues, with the Professor, attended a meeting of the then Helensville Borough at which I presented and spoke to the plan. All went well. After the presentation, over tea and biscuits, the Mayor informed me that the Borough was obliged to draw-up a town plan, and might they use my study effort? Flattered, I of course accepted; and in due course a copy of the plan was made, delivered, and eventually endorsed with the Borough Seal.

It was a student effort; industry gracing the entry and exit to Helensville, with twice the shop frontage required (even today!). These faults live on in the current plan, without erasure. The lesson? A flawed plan, hastily endorsed, commits a community to the wrong path — pretty much forever.



## 25. NELSON LAKES TO LEWIS PASS



Over what came to be our last summer together in New Zealand (1959—1960) Norma and I undertook a trek from the Nelson Lakes through to Lewis pass in Canterbury. We allowed ten days. The available maps were sketchy, although we had the benefit of route and camping notes recorded by people who had made the trip previously.

Late on our first day Mr. Flowers took us to the wild far end of Lake Rotoroa with his outboard. Then it was twenty minutes in a southerly direction across a heavily bushed alluvial plain to the hut — the only hut before Lewis Pass ten days away. Half an hour later, no hut in sight and the light fading, I got out the compass and discovered we were going North, and had walked in a circle! Ten minutes later we found the hut, lit a fire, cooked a sausage supper (the last meat-meal and covered-shelter for the next eight days), and bedded down in our double sleeping bag.

Our first full day, packs laden with two-weeks food supply, was to the Sabine Fork; and on the second day we made it to Blue Lake on the tree line at 4000 feet. Then the weather closed-in and we spent a miserable two days bivouacked. When the weather cleared we clambered up-and-over

a terminal moraine to Lake Constance. At the southern end of Constance it was a tough pull to the divide pass. From there it was down long snow slopes into dry tussock country on the Canterbury side.

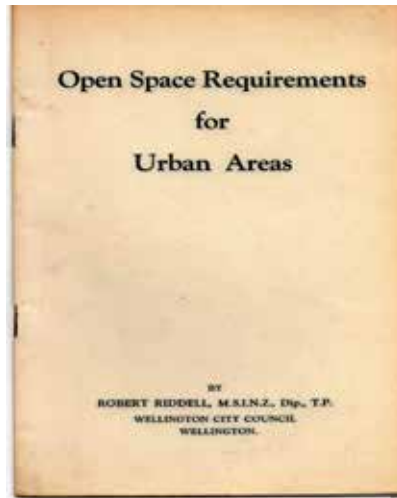
Two more days of easy open going had us in bush again at a hut set in a delightful glade just four hours from Lewis Pass, with two days in-hand before our family rendezvous. Coming up to the hut we disturbed some fledgling ducks, not yet able to fly, and were able to chase one down for the pot. The following day, refreshed and energized, we went back and chased down three more. Never, ever, was fowl so delicious or the setting so delightful.

*Martinborough-Masterton, Nelson-Marlborough, Wellington-Auckland, these were my early-life territorial settings. Later, came the relative exotica of Fiji, Newcastle-on-Tyne(!), Kumasi, Cambridge and widespread travel for my work and research in Oceania, Latin America, Southern Asia, and East Africa.*

*Of all those places and times, it is now clear that Nelson and the whole of growing up in Nelson, was the core to my lifelong disposition.*

*The compact city of those times was the locus for a school, college and work experience that set my spirit free. It was in Nelson's then unmapped territory that personal skills of adaptation and self-reliance were honed. And it was here that Norma and I began a lifelong reliance on each other.*

## 26. EXIT WELLINGTON 1960



Jim Dart and myself got ourselves pretty much offside with the Wellington Corporation of those times and we both sought to move on. My immediate challenge was the writing of a thesis. Jim helped me ensure that this shaped-up well enough; after which I wrote a paper, my first ‘academic styled’ publication.

Jim made the move to Auckland and eventually a teaching position at the University. Norma and I were keen to work and travel overseas, but were held back by draconian controls around the exchange of New Zealand money for foreign currency.

Bill Crommie, a fix-it avuncular older colleague in the Wellington City Council, returned from a family holiday in Auckland with a copy of the *NZ Herald*, in which he had ringed a job-opportunity for the post of Government Planning Officer in the British Crown Colony of Fiji. I applied and was invited for interview by Lord Cobham, the last (I think) of New Zealand’s British appointed Governor’s General. I took a tram to the gates of Government House, and then walked up the lengthy drive to a meeting room around back.

I felt confident at an interview threaded through with Cobham’s reference to British planning practice. The interview was greatly helped by the fawning awkwardness of the senior PWD engineer Lord Cobham had recruited as a specialist advisor. In due course, I landed the job, a major turning point in our lives.

\*

Two years later *circa* 1962 and well into my time in Fiji, everything going swimmingly, a well-placed colleague in the Secretariat, Carl Hughes, showed me Cobham’s letter-of-recommendation — “Riddell is young and inexperienced, yet I commend him as a lively, personable and energetic alternative should it not be possible to offer the post to a better qualified person from the United Kingdom”.



The friendship Norma and I developed with Carl and Rita Hughes blossomed into a working relationship. The Government of Fiji owned the copyright to a useful though dated and inaccurate compendium *The Fiji Islands* by R A Derrick. Carl, enthusiastic to expand on his doctoral work at Oxford, secured a commission for he and I to do an update and a re-write. It grew into a major publishing project, handset in hot-lead type, completed in 1965 after Norma and I had departed Fiji.

## 27. FIJI 1960-64 'PLACE'

While studying at Auckland University, and with Norma teaching, I fell in with a Californian, Scot McBeth. We shared a derelict Bell Road house in Remuera on a student-equal basis, with Scot sleeping on the verandah. We were to learn that while with us Scot was going-with-the-student-flow, he was actually quite well off and attuned to a more lavish lifestyle.

We all three attended a slide-show lecture by Edmund Hillary. Scot had trekking experience in the Himalaya, so in the post-lecture melee we approached Sir Ed. Interested to talk more with Scot he asked where we lived, and when told Bell Road, invited us all around to his nearby house for a chat the following morning.

In the Hillary living room, on the mantelpiece was a photograph of Fiji's impressive Joskes Thumb; a sheer sided volcanic plug, looming across Suva Bay. Before Everest, maybe on route to Nepal, Hillary had 'knocked the bastard off'.



Joske's Thumb, from Suva

When Norma and I arrived in Suva, there it was, lurching in a geological way!

I teamed up with a fanatically fit Englishman, Alwyn Jones, determined to have a go at following in Sir Ed's path. Joskes

proved even more difficult than expected. There was no jungle trail toward it, and there was no local knowledge of how best to tackle the ascent.

On our first attempt we made it to the base, then retreated when confronted by the overhang.

The weekend following we set out very early to get behind the plug. This approach was broken and rugged, but never impossible. Over the last hundred feet, the ascent was tricky on solid rock. The summit was a bedroom-sized flat overlooking Suva Bay. Alwyn was ecstatic, I was mightily chuffed, and we remained friends for life.

Weekends, Easters, and on Local Leave there was boating to the small outer islands, and trips inland to remote villages — embracing and enjoying the relaxed Fijian lifestyle.

### Malima

I worked out a way to spend two nights 'marooned' on a remote uninhabited atoll — Malima in the Explorer Group. While the *ss Andi Keva* idled outside the reef, Norma and I, with our gear, were taken ashore in the cutter on the understanding that we'd be picked up two days later.

An arresting feature of our island was its hillock; a rare vindication of Darwin's crafty explanation for ringed atolls; where reef-fringed land had slowly disappeared below the waves, leaving behind a coral circle.

With the *Andi Keva* hooting good-bye, we were isolated in a wondrous blue-green and golden world, almost out of sight from other land. We set up camp at the base of the hillock.

Around ten o'clock that night the clear sky to the north was suffused with a vast pink and orange glow. Fearing a volcanic eruption and tsunami we climbed to the safety of the hillock. An hour later the glow faded. What had happened? The explanation given to us later, when the *Andi Keva* returned, was that a nuclear device had been exploded in the van Allen Belt above Christmas island three thousand miles away.

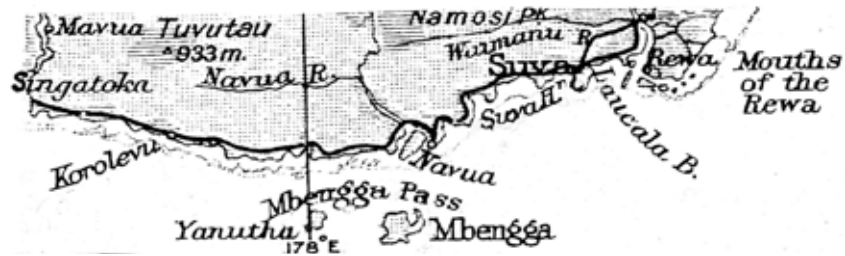
### Mbengga

Although our 6HP runabout was only ten feet long we became adept at skimming across Suva Bay to within-the-reef islets, visiting villages in the Rewa delta at high tide, and occasionally running the huge rollers outside the reef for an adrenalin rush.

Choosing the wrong tide time and wind to cross the 12 miles to Beqa (Mbengga) was a foolhardy pre-planned Easter adventure. Our technique involved angling-up each oncoming monster wave using a bit of throttle, and then throttling back to ease down the other side; and then onto the next. We came into the lee of the island at dusk, drawn to the lights of a village. Two children, Tavita and Filleni; were assigned to take us two



bays further around the island, away from the village, to camp; the first bay being, of course, the village toilet!



Our camp was a tarpaulin stretched between coconut palms. Around nine o'clock, in the light of a hurricane lamp, I was squatting down pumping a primus to make coffee, when I felt something moving across my feet. Sea snake! I was as frightened then as I have ever felt in my life.

### Rambi

The Commissioner Western asked me to accompany him on an official visit to Rambi, a large privately owned island; where the Rambian administrator wanted nothing to do with the Fiji Government.

I met the Commissioner's launch late in the day on Kioa. We had drinks aplenty, then after a late supper with wine, around midnight, the launch set off at a crawl to cover the twenty-odd miles of clear water to Rambi, with a view to pitching-up at daybreak. I went to bed; the Commissioner sat in the stern drinking heavily.



The night was clear and calm.

Around 3am the ship's bell signaling 'engine stop' had everybody up in a flash. The crew were panicking; the Commissioner had disappeared.

Slowly, as the boat stopped, the sodden and sozzled Commissioner came drifting up to the stern, clutching a rope that had been trailing in the water.

## 28. FIJI 1960–1964 'WORK'

My work as Government Planning Officer was dominated by 'development control' involving the day-by-day processing of projects and proposals. In the absence of approved town plans it was a necessary routine task. The preparation and approval of town plans would enable me to pass this control function over to the newly devolved Town Councils.

Within six months, the planning schemes already started for Lambasa and Lautoka were completed and approved, with some awkwardness around my defense of the plans while also providing selective support to objectors! Our small team then pushed on with the preparation, processing and approval of plans for Ba, Singatoka, Nandi and Nausori. All this generated a distinctive feeling of operational success, a rush.

\*

A few years earlier, at Auckland University, Gerhard Rosenberg had introduced my class to Patrick Geddes and the attempt to embody 'Place Work Folk' in town planning. Gerhard made a stopover in Fiji, and we visited several villages managed by *turangi ni koru* (village foreman) on a communitarian basis. We mulled over the prospect of adhering to the Geddesian concept; guiding a complete and equitable planning process which strove to provide environmental harmony, social satisfaction, and economic viability; sustainability?

Rory Scot, District Officer Nausori, was concerned about the future for a Fijian village, Natongandravu, an hour's drive from my office in Suva. During WWII the canny villagers saved enough from their work on the nearby Nausori Airport to build *valedelakava*, houses with tin walls and roofing; all erected together in 1946, and now (1962) all falling apart.

Over a two-year period Rory and I had fortnightly meetings about constructing a replacement village, around an enlarged *rara*. Thirty house positions were staked out and numbered. Meetings were then held with Rory who spoke Fijian fluently; and quite quickly names were

attached to every site. Rank, seniority, and personal preference were jostled and settled.

Rory then arranged a cane-cutting contract in the Western District; including transport, food, rough accommodation and payment in three tranches. The accumulation of cash was impressive.



My design for the replacement houses was fully detailed and, in plan, meticulously traditional. A structural engineer advised us on the mitigation of hurricane stress. A quantity surveyor prepared a fully itemised listing of every bag of cement, plank of timber, roof sheets and hardware; and the hardware supplier Morris Hedstrom coasted this out as a delivered package-price. When the construction team got into its stride they built a house a week.

External interventions skewed the outcome. Socially harmonious planning was achieved, although I proved to myself that this was beyond the delivery capacity of conventionally trained urban planners.

## 29. PRINCE PHILLIP II

Norma and I were befriended by the District Officer of Suva and his wife Janice. Jan, like most official's spouses, had her own job; in her case as the telex and cable traffic manager in the Governor's office.

Suva had one good tailor and dressmaker, so we heeded Jan's advice when she suggested we get in early to suit-up for a forthcoming 'big event' she knew we were in for. Two weeks later her news broke; the Queen and Prince Phillip were to extend an Australasian visit with a short stopover in Fiji as a bit of pre-independence diplomacy. Mr and Mrs Riddell received an invitation to attend a *meke* (Fijian-style celebration) to be held in a marquee on the rugby ground in front of Government Buildings.

My published Civil List (pecking order) rank was beyond one hundred. It wasn't changed, but for the purpose of this visit I was to usher a group of mainly Indo-Fijian town councilors, the people I worked with day-by-day

Her majesty came up to my cluster of councilor's, Prince Phillip in tow chatting to the Governor's *aide de camp*. I moved to the side of our group, and became embarrassed at the eagerness of the Town Councilor's to shake the hand of Her Majesty. From the rear of my group I made eye contact with Prince Phillip, beside and slightly behind Her Majesty, and gave a shrug in exasperation at the unseemliness of it all. Prince Phillip raised his eyebrows to me in tolerant acceptance and acknowledgement.

\*

This was the second of my eye-to-eye connection with Prince Phillip. Over the latter half of my life I was to make two further eyeball-to-eyeball contacts, making four in all.

\*

The third encounter was in 1983 at the Queen's opening of Wolfson, my Cambridge college, where again people in my charge (students this time)

scrum-rushed to shake her hand in front of an awkwardly placed Prince Phillip, the then University Chancellor, with Her Majesty as his guest visitor. Once again Phillip glanced my way with an expression of despair.

\*

Finally, at Lake Taupo in the late 1990s, each side of the road lined with spectators, a convoy of limousines came toward our car, now pulled-up to a stop. In the second black car, pennant flying, were seated Her Majesty with Prince Phillip on my side looking my way. I wound down my window, waved, and called out 'Giddy Mate'. On this fourth occasion of contact I truly believed there was, beyond mere acknowledgement, a flicker of recognition in the Prince's eye.

## 30. FIJI 1960-64 'FOLK'

Daily work brought me into contact with District Officers throughout Fiji. All but two were Oxbridge graduates, and half of them had attended the short Colonial Officers training course at Cambridge; which morphed later into the post-independence Development Studies programme I was to join, in the early 1970s, as a Deputy Director.

The verve and confidence of the District Officers, all about my own age, some married with children, others bachelors, was astounding. Their response to me, as the Government Town Planner, was enthusiastic. They were also welcoming to Norma when I was at work in their districts; and we in turn welcomed them when they came to Suva. In this way we connected with an engagingly different and stimulating community.

Norma had stage talent, and in the company of June Knox-Maw and Peter France (both later with BBC radio) she was selected for lead roles in Playhouse productions. Relative comfort, an easy lifestyle, liberal conversation (the *New Statesman* was my lodestone) and the newly available 'freedom' associated with the contraceptive pill swirled around in the social mix.

\*

Employment within the Colonial Service was coming to an end, the cold War and the Cuba crisis loomed, and Britain was seeking entry into the European Common Market. This set of circumstances set us on target for America then Canada; also maybe possibly Britain where I had applied for an academic job.

*Oriana*



We were the only Suva passengers to join the *Oriana* halfway through a round-the-world voyage. The vast pink fairy-cake ship had come from New Zealand; we boarded for America. *Now is the Hour* and *Isa Lei* were played over-and-over by the Fiji Military Band, haunting our departure. As the vessel heaved into the first Pacific rollers, the music stopped. We let go of the rail, wiped our tears, and entered the bedlam of cruise ship life over the next two weeks.

The first sighting of land was Christmas Island, casting our thoughts back to Malima the atoll, and that night with the sky, over Christmas island, glowing pink.

One shipboard friendship, Nickolas Armfelt, recent Cambridge (Kings College) graduate, was to be lifelong. Nicky got off in Vancouver. We sailed on to San Francisco where we were met by Scot Macbeth.



## 31. WILD WEST ROADTRIP



*Sea Level, Death Valley*

Scot took us to meet Sally his girlfriend, a post-doc social researcher at the University of California, Berkley. Spontaneous to us, but pre-planned by them, we set off on a road trip in a spacious Chevy.

Over the next two weeks we tooted through Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, Reno, Death Valley and the Grand Canyon. On alternate nights we slept under the stars and rented motel rooms. Every evening we dined on a steak and jacket potato with a bottle of red chosen by Scot. We made a great foursome, enjoying our friendship, good food and wine, taking-in the wonderment of the West — whatever wherever at a leisurely pace.

I was at the wheel backtracking from the Hoover Dam, with Norma, Scot and Sally all sprawled-out and dozing. We were on a desolate traffic-free road coming up to the main Las Vegas to Los Angeles four-laner. Knowing that the direction for Los Angeles was ‘left’ I wheeled left into the heavy oncoming traffic, waking everybody to screams and whoa with oncoming cars careening silently, it seemed, around us. So close, what a fright, such a hoot!

When we got back to the Pacific Coast Scot took off with his mother for a family wedding in Hawaii; so for another two weeks we were based at her house in Carmel, viewing Hearst’s Castle from a distance, visiting Big Sur and swimming the few public beaches used as coastline props in Hollywood movies time-and-time-again over the years.

## 32. THE USA & BEYOND

After two weeks in Carmel we travelled across and around the US by Greyhound Bus on an incredible '99 dollars 99 days' deal; ending up in a spacious flat in a lovely house in leafy North York, Toronto. Our plan was to get work and stay on for a while. On the second day in town a cable came in to the American Express office — "Newcastle University requests availability lectureship interview 10am Thurs 25 June. Hackett"

In an instant we cabled back, abandoned the flat, and took another Greyhound, this time to New York, where we booked a cheap Icelandic turboprop flight for Prestwick *via* Reykjavik.

Our plane landed in Prestwick (Scotland) at noon 24 hours before the interview. Although dead tired, we had 24 hours in hand, so hired a car and set off. I took the wheel at first while Norma slept. After an hour or so Norma woke and offered to take over the driving. I looked at the map and told her that in a few miles further along the A7 we would be in Longtown, from there take the A6071.



I awoke to Norma marveling at the sun setting across dreamy Galway Bay. At Longtown she had turned west (why ever not?) onto the A6071!

It was a long and weary haul back to Longtown and then on to Newcastle. Although dying for a drink, we ended up in a temperance hotel after midnight. I made it to the interview at ten o'clock.

I interviewed, went for a walk, came back, was offered lunch and a Lectureship.

## 33. LONDON 1964

Swinging London beckoned. With four summer months before the start-date at Newcastle, we travelled down the line by 'sleeper'. Our first call was New Zealand House in the Haymarket to collect mail and organize a bed-sit in Sussex Gardens, Paddington; the part of Central London we got to know best.

Every well-recognised place of worship, museum, landmark and city park was visited; along with town-and-country walks around Selbourne, Oxford and Cambridge. Nicky Armfelt took us on a picnic to Kew in the company of an excellent Chablis.

Satiated after four months of touring, Norma took on some relieving in North London schools, while I spent my days preparing lectures in the RICS library, plumb in the middle of Westminster — Parliament Square.

Early in September we drove North up the desolate A1, round-about after round-about, calling on the way to visit Nicky's mother who had a 'living' in Freckly Hall near Doncaster, a 'village and hall' setting then very much of the style filmed in the television drama *Downton Abbey*.

\*

In Jesmond, close by the University, we bought 16 Larkspur Terrace for 2000 pounds. Norma had a teaching job at Jesmond Primary ten minutes away in one direction, while I set off daily on foot to Magdalene House, a charming Victorian pile on the edge of the University campus and home to the Planning Department.

As down-under oddities we made good and lasting friends. I fell in with Cam Blackball who, like me, had been appointed to a planning lectureship that same summer.



## 34. SOLOMON'S BRIEFING

Toward the end of the first academic year at Newcastle I was approached by the Overseas Development Administration about the preparation of a plan for Honiara, the new post-war capital in the Solomon Islands. Briefing was to be at the Building Research Station near Watford, West London.

I took the Newcastle to London overnight sleeper (that is, totally, non-sleeper!) then the tube to Paddington, had breakfast, bought a ticket for Watford and set off with briefcase and overnight bag.

On the way, there was a tube-to-train change at Stonebridge.



The Solomon's briefing took-up the morning. After lunch I was given the standard visitor's tour, then taken back to Watford Station. It was a warm day, and by now I was very tired.

The train pulled in at Stonebridge and 'change for Paddington' came over the tannoy. Weary with tiredness, briefcase in hand, I crossed the twenty meters of intervening platform to the waiting tube, ticking away as they do.

Abruptly I realized that my overnight bag was still on the train!

I leapt out of the tube and ran across the platform. Too late: the empty train was under way with my bag in it. Despairing, I turned on my heels to get back on the tube and my briefcase. In that noiseless way with tube trains, the doors closed and with a swish it was gone; leaving me bereft and bagless.

In the middle of the wide platform a uniformed West Indian man saw it all from his glass box and was already on the telephone. Within an hour a returning train, and then a returning tube, had reunited me with both bag and briefcase.

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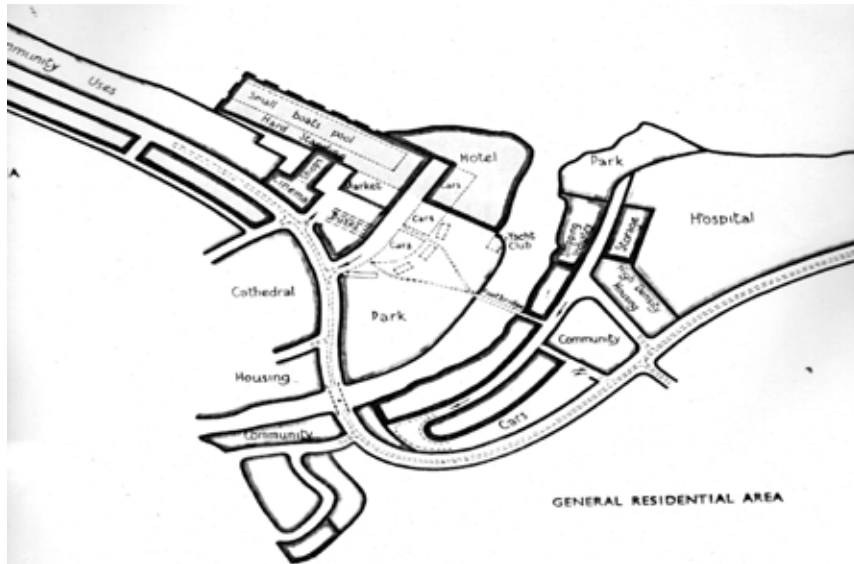
Jesmond, the suburb adjacent to Newcastle University and home to the Northern Symphonic, cemented friendships which introduced us to the Wansbeck, Holy Island, Warkworth and a long term rental of Walwick Fell, a former farm-worker's cottage isolated half a mile south of Hadrian's Wall on the North Tyne. Here, the site of tumult 2000 years earlier, we found peace and isolation, totally off-grid with no pipe and wire connection to the outside world. Wooded, sheltered, cosy, serene and inspirational.



*Walwick Fell*

## 35. HONIARA AND ON TO NELSON

During the Solomon's part of Pacific War first the Japanese and then the Americans had built up, and then left behind, all the paraphernalia of battle: airfield, wharf, hospital, ammunition and vehicles. The returning post-war British administration seized the opportunity to fashion a new capital centre from the residual cornucopia, and I was commissioned to re-arrange the jigsaw pieces into Honiara the new Solomon's capital and seat of Government.



My commission over, I began my return to England starting with a home-call to Nelson.

Re-kindling my love of the Nelson City backland I planned an 'all alone' day up-valley from the Brook Reservoir. Alan dropped me off at 7am on his way to work, and two hours later I was boiling the billy at Third House. Being a splendid winter's day I then walked the easy grade to the Dun Saddle where, around mid-day, I boiled the billy again.

I had no map but I realised it was the Maitai valley that lay beyond the Dun Saddle. Although unfamiliar territory the route ahead looked to be straightforward enough, down through scrub and bush. So it proved; and by the light of the dying day I arrived at the first Maitai Valley house connected to the outside world by telephone. Here I was given another cup of tea.

It took some persuading to convince Alan on the telephone to come and pick me up from the Maitai. No Alan, not the Brook, the Maitai. It was a day of wondrous solitude and satisfaction. The trip home included Delhi, Tashkent and Moscow.





## 36. TARAWA THEN ON TO BAMIIYAN



After Guadalcanal the next big push in the Pacific War Theatre was the capture of Japanese occupied Tarawa in the Gilbert Islands. That was in 1943. From three days of merciless fighting US troops took back the atoll; with 4,000 Japanese killed and just seventeen prisoners taken alive.

By 1963 the UK Colonial Office was ready to confer independence, and as a parting gift re-fashion South Tarawa as the capital for the new state of Kiribati, the Micronesian part of the former Gilbert and Ellice Islands crown colony.

The most interesting part of the exercise was the programming of the huge Newcastle University mainframe to do the thousands of computations which would establish beyond doubt (gravity modeling) that Tarawa was, indeed, the optimum island for the new nation's capital. The least exacting part of the exercise was facility-by-facility rearrangement. Least exacting because with the airfield fixed at the eastern end of a connected string bead of islets, and the Port fixed at the western end, utilities could either stay as they were, or be re-positioned only east or west along the string. It was, in effect, two dimensional planning.

The impediment to growth was a lack of potable water. Aside from collecting the runoff from the few iron-roofed houses water, brackish ground water, was traditionally bucketed up from the 'lens' of rainwater held below in the sand mass. It was calculated that at a few gallons of this water each day as many as 14,000 people could get by in the customary way. Today around

60,000 people live highly compromised lives on South Tarawa. They are endangered by sea level rise, excessive abstraction from the brackish water lens, and their sheer human mass. Never later, in work on the Sub Continent, was I to encounter danger to human continuity of this urgency.

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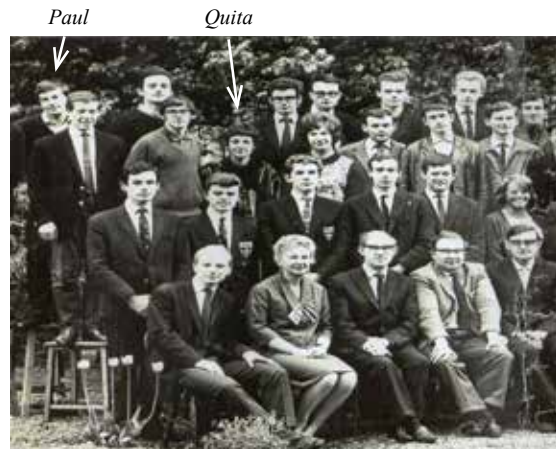
On the flight into Kabul I set next to an American schoolteacher, Sally, who's opening gambit was that I reminded her of Woody Alan. Sally wanted to make up the numbers, with two Belgian doctors, for an Afghan road trip.

Five-up plus the driver of a large old Ford we parked our gear at a city hotel and got out of town. We went first to the Khyber Pass which, ten years later, I would re-visit from the Pakistan side. The next day we took another pass at 12,000 feet then slowly on a very dark night drew-up at the Bamian rest-house.

Early next morning I drew back the curtain in my room to reveal the huge Buddha bathed in morning sunlight two hundred yards away. Rousing the others, we made our way to the base of the cliff where we fell in with a local teenager who guided us through the labyrinth of tunnels cut into the soft sandstone behind the statue. We eventually came out, one at a time, onto Buddha's Head. Above us on the ceiling was trace of a wash-coloured fresco, before us lay the lush Bamian Valley: all to become a war zone, and the statue dynamited to oblivion.



## 37. ANNA 1966 AND KATE 1967



From first meeting him in class Paul Steele remained a fixture in my life up until his passing in 2013. First as an enthusiastic student, as the biological father of our adopted daughter Anna, as a protégé planner sent off to work in Malaysia and Ghana, as an inspirational post-graduate student, as a trustworthy critic of my writings and commissions, and eventually as a co-grandpa to Anna and Steve's children. From mid-1965 on Paul and I were destined to play out a 'I know but do you know?' intrigue because his then girlfriend, Quita, gave birth to a girl-child whom Norma and I adopted — Joanna Felicity Emily Jane.



The formal part of the adoption was managed by Cam Blackball (my colleague and Quita's tutor) under a mentoring facility available at the time in Britain. No direct contact between us and Quita was allowed, and this tacit subject-avoidance between us remained in place until Anna was about eighteen, after which normal contact and friendship with Paul and Quita, and between Paul and Quita's subsequent children, half brothers and sisters to Anna, flourished.

\*

With one, of course we hoped for two — doubling the joy. This time we worked with an adoption service which meant, under their rules, that Norma and I had no knowledge of the birth mother until the adoption was formalised. As we already had a daughter, we asked for a girl, a sister, and by mid-summer 1967 Kate was passed into our care: Katherine Mary Alice Grace.



Kate came into our lives a well nourished six week old. As we had no time with her as a newly arrived baby, we decided to nurse her in our arms or carry her in a body sling all her waking hours for the first couple of months. Every weekday I was home by three o'clock to take over — an everlasting and treasured memory.

## 38. KUMASI CAMPUS



In 1966 President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana was deposed and his Russian and Polish advisors sent packing, leaving behind a spectacular array of administrative confusion. Cambridge University (Land Economy), and Newcastle (Planning), responded with staff attachments to the University of Science and Technology at Kumasi. Paul (now partnered with Freya) went out to Ghana under a Study and Serve scheme for his Newcastle master's degree. We followed in 1968, seconded from Newcastle to revive and refocus a planning course following a decade of interesting command-economy influence.

Housing was on campus with no distinctions between academic rank, or expatriate and local. Our immediate neighbours were Ghanaian families with North American's and others further away. The dwellings were carefully designed, their sites unfenced with edible tree species inserted into the spacious landscape; it was like living on a pleasantly sculptured golf course. Here at last I got to grips with some doctoral research.

The daily routine involved my getting up first, at daybreak, to put in two uninterrupted hours at my desk. We had family breakfast together; then Norma (as teacher) and Anna (as pupil) would motor off to school in town; and Kate and I would be away on the Honda to her kindy and for my teaching time in the Planning Department. After a late lunch we had a family siesta; often spending the early evening at the campus pool and cafe with other families. This relaxed lifestyle was enabled through the help of a cook, nurse-girl, and gardener-washboy. It worked well, but was isolated from 'Real Africa' which Norma and I looked forward to experiencing.

## 39. BEYOND ASHANTI



Abidjan on the Ivory Coast was easily accessed over long weekends. We rented a beach house, dined well, took the girls ice-skating(!) and, keeping to routine, I spend the first two hours after daybreak proofing my typescript. One morning, early with nobody around, I stripped off everything and had a swim. I drifted fifty yards before coming out of the water. On my way back there was a French woman, youngish, sitting on a log near to my clothes smoking a cigarette, ensuring that my clothes were not nicked "Merci beaucoup mademoiselle."

On another trip to Wa in Ghana's northwest we rounded a dusty bend to find a man, a French Priest, sitting on the tank of his downed Harley Davidson, smoking a gauloise. He greeted us with "Is too 'evy to lift up." After mass at his church on Sunday he joined our Peace Corps friends for an outdoor lunch accompanied by his gift of a fine bordeaux.

On another cool break in Ghana's only highland, the Eastern Plateaux — again with young Americans Phil and Dorothy — we daily 'dashed' the nearby border guards to let us into French Togoland for long-into-the-afternoon restaurant lunches in the town of Atakpame.

## 40. WEST AFRICAN SAFARI

We lived four years in Ghana; arriving in anguish, departing in sorrow. Our greatest family adventure took in all of Ghana's neighbour — Togo, Benin, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Cote D'Ivoire. The station wagon, with roof-rack, enabled us to camp off-road under the stars in the savannah north. Here, in sparsely settled immense flat tree-dotted landscapes, we would trundle off over the grassland to set up camp both out of sight and well away from the road dust. But, always, within an hour of stopping by a rock or under a tree, people would emerge; usually including somebody who spoke French. At dusk we asked for privacy while we slept under an awning. Within minutes of waking we had the same onlooker's onlooking! In the main towns — Niamey, Ougadougou, Bobo, and Bamoko — we dusted off in hotel comfort.

At Dandi in northern Benin we crossed the Niger River, at that time of the year (during *harmattan*) little more than 100yards wide. The Niger begins life in Sierra Leone 150 miles from the Atlantic; from there it flows north then east in a vast clockwise ark before discharging, now moving south, into the Nigerian Gulf almost 3,000 miles later.

After crossing the Niger River at Niamey a startling once-in-a-century hailstone storm caused a herd of camels to run amok.



## 41. GRAND TOUR — 1970

All the major airlines belong to IATA the International Airlines Trade Association. Every airline leg has an assigned 'mileage'. A go-anywhere round-the-world ticket costs plenty, but allows one-way travel on any IATA route up to a huge mileage maximum. I spent hours holed-up in the Ghana Airways office on campus working out the optimum mileage extraction that could be wrung out of an Accra-to-Accra circum-global trip. Luggage was four numbered bags all four of which, if necessary, I could carry on my own.

We had stop-overs at Monrovia and Freetown en-route to Dakar. Then across the Atlantic to Rio de Janeiro on our longest leg. Lay-over at Sao Paulo where Kate got herself lost in an airport spoke. Stop-overs at Iguazu Falls, Concepcion, La Paz and Santiago Chile. On to Easter Island (six hours look-around), then Tahiti. A family month in NZ — then Hong Kong, Calcutta, Nepal and Delhi. Beirut Airport was bombed out; so on to Istanbul, Rome (a bonus) then Accra.

The photographs background some of our three-month family adventure.



*Hong Kong*



*Istanbul*



*Rome*

All the flying behind us, driving from Accra back to Kumasi we spun off the road narrowly missing a jack-knifed truck coming our way with a burst tyre.



## 42. OUR RETURN TO NEWCASTLE

By 1972 my experience included urban planning in Fiji; and spin-off consultancies on Tarawa and Gaudalcanal. I had exposure to orthodox British planning while at Newcastle, advisory experience with regional development in Ghana, and a PhD. On the eve of our farewell from Kumasi, Donald Denman asked if I would like to join the Development Studies programme at Cambridge — if he could swing it! At the time it was only a post-doc research job prospect, but eventually he did indeed swing it.

Meanwhile (1973 and 1974) we returned to Newcastle where I was put in charge of the 2-year post-grad course: twelve carefully-chosen fully-funded graduates from all over Britain. They taught me a lot! My theory course was a muddle; and was politely hijacked by a Cambridge graduate in the class, becoming a study group of weekly four-hour blocks interspersed with food and coffee. Papers were prepared by myself and pairs of students; delivered (but not read out) then discussed and summarised. Toward the end of academic 1972-3 I began teaching part of the Land Planning option fortnightly in Cambridge, where I was delighted to encounter a same-sized group (twelve graduates) with essays prepared under the rigorous Cambridge Supervision (tutorial) system.

In the Autumn of 1974 I moved to 50 Abbey Road, Cambridge — with Cathy.

\*

A few years later Norma was appointed Headmistress at Hughenden Valley School near High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. Anna finished her secondary education on a scholarship at St Edmunds, Surrey; and Kate fitted in well at a lively girls school in Wycombe.

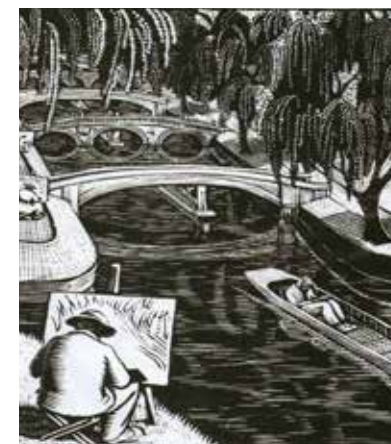
## 43. CAMBRIDGE TOWN & GOWN

Two new and exciting World Views opened: Cambridge through academic engagement and France through domestic connection.

From my Silver Street eerie, courtesy of Land Economy, I operated as a generously funded post-doc researcher: and from Wolfson College as a Research Fellow I also taught part of the Cambridge Development Studies programme.



Cathy and I moved into Abbey Road which gave easy access across Midsummer Common and Jesus Green to the centre of town. We arrived without a car; settling for five fixed-spaced bicycles — the three extra being for visitor use. From the medieval Abbey, Abbey Road led down to the river in two late 19<sup>th</sup> Century terraced housing rows, all the houses looking much the same, but arranged differently. Number 50 had a generous rear garden, accessed through a tunnel shared with our neighbour.

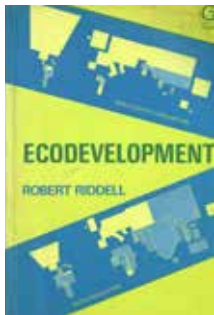


## 44. WOLFSON



University life in Cambridge became all-enveloping; a way of being, cohering around University rules and College values. College, with its multi-disciplinary grouping supported and encouraged scholarship through fellowship; the University offered courses and managed research.

Development Studies, headquartered at Wolfson, emerged from British Colonial times. By 1973 when I took-up with the programme, the course focus was development, and the students were now from the former colonies. My colleagues — all with doctorates, mostly Oxbridge — were hard to win around to appreciating the virtues of resource planning, which they viewed as a mere accessory to socio-economic policy. Practical experience with delivered plans and implemented change helped to consolidate my position.



A further problem was that I had not yet published a polemic. Following the production of a slew of Country Reports and Position Papers derived from experience, the situation improved. This business around 'the Cambridge mind' — about the accessibility of an academic's socio-political point of view — introduced an edge to acceptability. With *Ecodevelopment: An Alternative to Growth Imperative Models* the glass ceiling was broken.

## 45. ESSEX IN SUMMER

The lovely gently rounded countryside viewed from the train on the way to London via Royston to Kings Cross, and through Saffron Waldon en route to Liverpool Street, led to a cross-country excursion.

Armed with an Ordnance Survey map we took an early train to Royston in the south, then struck east out of the station. Within a mile sharp eyed Cathy picked up a medieval-period sheep bell lying on top of freshly ploughed land at the edge of a medieval-period footpath.

Avoiding roads, sticking to footpaths, having a pub lunch, catching a nap under a sprawling oak, sneaking a swim in a pond, we finished-up after fifteen glorious miles at Audrey End. Here we bought return tickets on the late train back to Cambridge.

\*

A fortnight later we used the other half of our return ticket, taking the train back to Audrey End. This time we struck north-east over even more delightful countryside to the gaunt post-war overspill town of Haverhill. This time a bus got us home.

A month later we returned to Royston, where we stuck north-west passing three abandoned airfields; then up the three mile long elm tree avenue to Old Wimpole Hall. The avenue, since decimated by dutch elm disease, was used by WW2 pilots to line-up their airfield on returning from sorties.

Over these three long walks we traced an arc at a radial distance of some twenty miles from Cambridge, traversing around sixty miles.

## 46. FENLAND IN WINTER

Next came the long Northern Sector beginning with Haverhill to Newmarket over two consecutive weekends. The pre-Roman ‘Devils Ditch’ and the horsey galloping on Newmarket Heath gave way to pure flat Fenland.

Here the going was often moody, bordering on dreary when shrouded in cold mist. However we never got wet. East Anglia’s 10-to-12 inches of rainfall often seemed incredulously low over the cold winter months; and especially so for students from Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The fenland mystique centres on the startling verticality of anything tall — trees windmills churches. In the far north glimpses of Ely Cathedral soaring out of and above the Fens; a truly awesome Glory to God edifice to a medieval pilgrim, also for us as a glory to mankind as we trudged mile-after-mile with it in view.



Through the surrounding countryside Cathy and I assimilated Cambridge in its hierarchical setting during long days of delight and solitude over 150 miles of purposeful circum-city summer and winter walking.

## 47. VIVE LA FRANCE

Although Norma and I had visited France as tourists, enjoying the chic and cuisine, we never got behind the polite *merci bonjour, monsieur madame* to gain an insight into French family life.

In Cambridge, Marie Claire the Land Economy librarian was French, and through her and two other French-American and French-British families I was fast-tracked into Gallic domestic ways and gastronomic socializing. Cathy’s English was excellent. And although I had good understanding, my spoken French was execrable. I got by with a confident blaze of *franglais* and hand signals that sent even polite French listeners into hysterics.

Cathy’s family was centered on Le Puy in the Massive Central. Her quite elderly parents, Vichy adherents during the war, were a bit frosty — mainly around my slipping recklessly from *vous* to *tu*. Her sister, brother and cousins accepted me, along with Anna and Kate, with warmth.



Jacques, a cousin, was the Mayor for a small commune North of Le Puy which included Bedenet a tiny medieval hamlet now reduced to six houses. Through Jacques, Cathy and I purchased an *ancient bergerie* (sheep fold) we converted into a *mason du vacance*.

\*

Cathy and I got along swimmingly: but disparate obligations meant that we spent a lot of time apart. I had a commitment to field research, involving lengthy fieldwork, mainly during the long vacation, to various parts of ‘developing’ Asia, Amazonian South America and East Africa.



Cathy's obligation was to her children, Anaya and David, when they needed her at their side. This arose from the situation whereby her former husband, a Basque Spaniard, had legal custody in Spain.

These circumstances of absence meant, through tacit understanding, we were each and separately apart from each other; 'free' for around three months each year. Cathy mentioned an occasional independent liason, and I also spent time, and one of my research trips, with Linda, student Registrar at Addenbrookes Hospital. Such 'arrangements' when we were apart, were not an impediment to our commitment to each other when we could be together. The main complication in our lives was *la Manche*!

## 48. EAST AFRICAN SAFARI

To catalogue my research during the Cambridge years would be as boring as showing slides of a campervan trip around Australia. A smidgen of spice arose from my 'big three' visits to East Africa, the Philippines and the Amazon.

It was pre-arranged that at the national universities of the three capitals I was to visit on my 1975 East Africa trip — Lusaka Nairobi Khartoum — I would lecture and conduct seminars. On arrival in all three countries all three universities were locked-down due to unrelated student revolts in all three capitals!

My research centered on squatter policy for a Lusaka settlement known as 'George' (named after an absentee Greek landowner), and Mithari Valley in Nairobi. At Mithari the solution to the 'illegal' squatter situation was bulldozing! At George an 'improving' approach was taken. Most of the shelters were identified for upgrading, some were spotted for clearance and relocation, access was fitted-in, metered services were hooked-up, and a security-watch programmed. From days and evenings of mapping and cataloging, the re-furbishing approach at George became my advisory template for squatter situations in similarly burdened settlements elsewhere.

The flight out of Lusaka for Mombasa was *via* Dar es Salaam. I was seated next to a mid-twenties woman, part of an all-German tour group. We got to chat, and I was able to help by handing over a roll of otherwise unobtainable fast film for her camera. She got off in Dar es Salam and I carried on to Mombasa to report on the sites of three coastal hotels, part-funded through British Aid. At one location, while lining-up for lunch my sleeve was pulled "Hello" — it was Christiane. We spent our remaining time in Kenya together; and had short breaks over the next year in Munich and London. Twenty years later her adult children, Monika and Christof, long-stayed separately with Heather and I in New Zealand.

Memorably, the Sudan leg of this trip included a hook-up with Hunting Surveys who flew me from Khartoum south to Malakal on the White Nile, then by desert tracks to Nyala in the then peaceful Darfur Region.

## 49. DECISIONS, DECISIONS



I was based for a week in Manila with Willie Leon's family, visiting projects all over Luzon, ending-up at Aparri in the far north. The slow minibus return journey was punctuated with rest stops, at which vendors were shouting 'balut balut'. I asked Willie about this. "Duck egg delicacy" he replied: "Would you like to try?" I decided for both of us 'yes'! At the next rest stop a bowl with two eggs was set before us. Willie punctured a hole in both eggs and showed me how to suck out the

fishy tasting syrup. He then cracked open his egg and munched away on the well formed embryo inside; leaving me to follow his example. Just that once, a wary 'yes'!

Back in Manila my last week included timetabled visits to Ministries and senior officials. This concluded with a final celebratory dinner in the second floor VIP restaurant of an 'entertainment hotel'. There were fifteen of us, all men, seated at a large round table. At each left shoulder stood a high school girl dressed full-length in white, making polite small-talk and fiddling with the cutlery and napkins while we ate and conversed. Speeches were made; and to my surprise and delight I was presented with a Troughton and Simms theodolite, one of two used by British Engineers laying out the Luzon rail system late in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.



Around 9:30 it was announced that with the 10:30 curfew coming-up it was time for the girls to leave, which they did. The most senior official present then asked Willie to ask me if we should all go home, *or* all stay the night upstairs in the entertainment parlors? I decided to decline, a polite 'no'!

## 50. LOWER AMAZON

From the beginning of June to the end of September the Cambridge summer of 1976 was the longest and most glorious ever. I spent all of those three months 'up the Amazon' on a field trip!

I was guided by British Council people in Recife and Fortalesa, the sticky-out bit of Brazil, and taken to a number of far-flung co-operative farming enterprises known as '*colonia*'. Here a constant guiding ethic was Liberation Theology; former Catholic priests and nuns leaving the church to live and organize cooperative farms. Most of the priests and nuns were now married into the general community, a few being nun-with-priest couples.

Inland from Fortalesa (known as pre-Amazonia) a single engine plane took me to *Colonia Treise* a huge tract cleared of jungle a decade earlier. As with much of pre-Amazonia (when jungle) the annual rainfall was around 58 inches, the lower limit for rainforest support. Now with a reduced annual rainfall (around 55 inches) the first flush of grass feed for cattle (hamburger!) ranching had faded, and *Treise* was reverting to scrubby savannah.

The southern and narrower split of the Amazon at Belem City, 100 miles from the mouth, is wider than the Cam is long! In Belem I met students



who'd graduated earlier that year from my Land and Planning option. Anna and her elder academic-anthropologist brother had Amazonian Indian ancestry; and it was with their guidance that the up-river phase of my journey was mapped out.

Half that fortnight in Belem was spent trying to get into the two-million acre Ludwig 'empire' on the Jara River, where Nasa had reported a million acre fire! Every avenue was tried and stonewalled. Frustration! The other half of that fortnight was spent at RADAM headquarters. This agency was tasked to map the whole of Amazonia with high level infrared photography. Experts, including people from Hunting's Aerial Survey near Cambridge, selected anomalous sites for detailed inspection. At the time of my visit field parties were checking-out sites on the Rio Negro and Amazon about 300 miles up-river from Manaus. It was arranged that I would link-up with this group when I got to Manaus.

Half way up-river to Manaus I flew in and stopped-over at Santarem the first edge-of-river terminus for the now extensive Trans-Amazon road network, allowing hordes of poor landless Brazilians from the south to land-grab and squat. Squatters were restrained by the military at Fordlandia, Henry Ford's aborted rubber plantation venture. Two hundred miles further inland was Ruropolis, a raw lawless gun-toting frontier. I returned overnight in a jam-packed mini-bus with a driver who had already driven 500 miles that day; eventually taking over the wheel and letting myself off around 4am at the door to Santarem's new airport hotel. I entered the foyer got in the lift, pushed the button, and got stuck half way up when the power failed! Exhausted I simply curled-up on the floor for a little-lie-down.



## 51. MIDDLE AMAZON

I joined the RADAM coordinator in Manaus and was briefed on the up-river field bases; landing strips with transport provided by the Brazilian Airforce. As my arrival was on a weekend I went to the famous Opera House (kids rehearsing a pantomime), and was taken out to witness the merging of the yellow silted Amazon and the peaty black Rio Negro. After signing a responsibility waiver I took off in an old DC3 for Tefe where I was allocated a pup tent and shown the shower tent and dinning tent. Excellent: the only complication being that at this grade of operative in the RADAM pecking order all communication was in Portuguese — nobody spoke even a smattering of English.



*Manaus Opera House*

Three ex-Vietnam helicopters were on the airfield waiting for perfect flying conditions to the sites of interest. To while my days I spent time in town and on the wharf watching the river traffic. One mid-afternoon, passing the Catholic School I heard "This is Mr Green's hat" intoned to a class in a broad Irish accent. I entered the building and caught up with the senior Sister who was from a Gallic Order which opened-up conversation on the French front; and she took me to the Irish novice, Catherine Halvey, which in turn opened-up conversation in English.

We took afternoon tea; and the Sisters invited me back for dinner every evening I had remaining in Tefe; my place at the table graced with a bottle of beer!

Over three perfect consecutive days helicopters flew field parties into landing sites adjacent to the 'anomalies' detected from the macro-mapping. At first I was interested in the botanical, soil and other routine data gathering. The next day, on the final decent, I took in the surrounds.



Then with one of the bushmen I took off on a sidebar exploration ending up on the edge of an unnamed rushing torrent. On our way back to the chopper we came across a native rubber tree showing signs of latex gathering, this was at a spot 30 miles remote from human habitation.

\*

Part of the field party, myself included, were jungle-hopped north by helicopter to an airfield on the Rio Negro. Here I slung my hammock in an unoccupied prison cell. Visits to other field anomalies, including a landing in savannah country, continued. We also explored up-river in a dugout running an outboard motor with the river slow, quiet, dark, unchanging with very little aquatic life; all the time taking care to avoid direct contact with people in the indigenous settlements. Waving to those villagers as we motored by in the dugout, I was aware that in the perception of their government these 'indigenous' people were not 'eligible' to vote in their own country!



## 52. IQUITOS & LOS ANDES

The RADAM DC3 took me back to Manaus where I joined the once-a-week flight to Iquitos in Upper Amazonian Peru.

A first surprise on landing was that my checked luggage wasn't on the plane, the suspicion being that it was detained by officials in Manaus for a security search; and sure enough when it came in on the next flight a week later my film cassettes and some of my notes were gone. The second surprise was the presence of two small Peruvian naval vessels, bristling with guns, tied up at the Iquitos waterfront 2000 miles upstream from the river mouth in Brazil.



Although the stopover was enforced the frontier hustle was fascinating. Using a hired scooter I explored the limited road system. At the entrance to the Amazonian Fish Research Centre I came upon ten men holding a gigantic anaconda they'd found in a ditch!

In holiday mode, I made it to Machu Picchu where, I feared the swarm of entry crowds, but found the far edges people free. In the company of two Frenchmen, not at first realizing we were at a considerable altitude, we laboured up stairs cut in rock to the summit of the high peak overlooking the site.





## 53. ANGEL FALLS

In 1977 a commission came my way from the Venezuelan Ministry of Natural Resources, to report on natural resource conservancy. My brief artfully excluded the management of hydrocarbon resources. This time Cathy was able to be with me; in fact she was crucial as the report was to be tabled in Spanish.

Again I met and worked with former Wolfson Study Fellows, including the wealth-bound Vollmer's with whom Cathy and I had often enjoyed the walk from College to Grantchester for pub lunches. On the outskirts of Caracas their lives were lived within the razor-wired family estate in the constant presence of gun-totting guards.



The consultancy over, with the report written and submitted, we had a recreational gift. Courtesy of the Vollmer's we were flown south deep into the Bolivar uplands and the family ranch. At a target-shooting event — bottles on fence posts at 100 yards — I surprised all and sundry as the best shot; although maybe they were just letting me win? The following day, in clear weather, we were flown across the face of the World's greatest single-leap waterfall, the Angel Falls.

Our return journey to England included brief interludes in Puerto Rico and Jamaica, to Cathy's enduring delight.

## 54. THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER

The NWFP (province) of Pakistan intrigued me from my childhood reading of daring-do stories in the *Champion*.

My 'travelling companion' (her expression) was Linda, for whom previous touring exotica was a camping holiday in Iceland with a man who was not her lover! After some lecturing in the company of officials the academics invited us to meet later for tea at the Lahore Hilton. Against my advice to always resist local cream and cheese, Linda succumbed to the Hilton Sweet Trolly, adding a whole new dimension to the concept of holiday intimacy!



With some difficulty I obtained approval for a military escort up the Khyber Pass on the Old Silk Road taken by Alexander the Great and Ghenghis Khan. The Landis Kotal market at the pass was bustling with fake firearm sales. I tried a Clock but declined purchase. Lunch with the District Officer was a tranquil delight.

The next excursion was to Swat Valley. It was early spring (Easter 1978) and we travelled up-valley with the first military-led convoy after winter. Our vehicles made good progress shrouded in mist, suddenly broached by the glimpse of an unidentified snow peak.





## 55. ENDING THAT SUMMER...

Over July and August Cathy and I worked hard to finish the conversion of the Ancien Bergerie at Bedenet.

During that period of time Cathy's father, unknown to us, had purchased in her name a delightful atelier in the medieval quarter of Bordeaux city; an hour's drive from Amaya and David (her children) living with their Spanish father in San Sebastian, Spain.

I returned to Cambridge with Anna and Kate expecting Cathy to follow. Then, although it was not our wish to separate, our fate was cast differently. Both Cathy and I sought to make fresh starts.

At the beginning of Michaelmas I met Pam, admitted to Kings as a postgraduate. She was in the throes of unburdening herself from a frayed, but not yet done, research-connected relationship. Close, yet not fully committed, we spent hour-upon-hour together, walking talking confiding.

Not sure of how things were with Pam, yet recalling Linda's warmth and worth, I set about trying to be in touch with her — Linda. At that time, over those days, if Linda would have had me back, I was ready to commit. Linda made no response, being rightly fed-up. All the while Pam and I grew closer, yet not obligated, on account of those threads of loyalty still binding her to a previous, now ailing, partnership.

\*

One memorably warm autumnal afternoon there came a quiet knock on my office door. It was Pam. I was invited to cycle away with her to a quiet room at the back of her shared house in Halifax Road. My life, our lives, turned in a new direction.

## 56. ALL CHANGE AT ABBEY ROAD

Resty Roxas from the Philippines, following a year of monastic life at Wolfson, secured a Master's study option at UCL under a British Council programme which would enable his wife and toddler child to join him *provided* he first secured accommodation. In order to clear the way for Vita and daughter Jing Jing (Janice) to join him, we wrote down 50 Abbey Road, Cambridge, as the accommodation address. When Vita and Jing Jing landed they came to stay, and that arrangement became permanent.

Pam and I warmed to the Roxas's with delight, and we pretty much lived as an extended family; Resty commuting to London when necessary.

Their bedroom was of course private. One day I needed to enter with an electrician. We were struck by the double bed turned sideways to the wall for the three of them to sleep side-by-side!

We all got along famously well. So much so that on their departure at Heathrow the four adults, Pam Vita Resty and myself, were openly crying. Only Jing Jing and womb-bound baby Katherine were silent and dry eyed.

\*

The other home-based delight in those Cambridge times was that when Kate and Anna were with Pam I felt like the outsider to a fun-seeking teenage trio.

## 57. CANTAB PEOPLE

The University and College association derived from distant precedents beyond replication. The exuberance of fellowship support at Wolfson, the democratic governance of the College and, above all else the reduction of important university decisions of principal to voting ‘placet’ or ‘non placet’ in the Senate House was exquisite.



Donald Denman, Professor of Land Economy, got me into Cambridge. He set me up with an office in Silver Street, logistic support, and ‘half’ a secretary. It was a larger than life gesture, pretty much in Denman’s style. On one occasion, emerging from a visit to our sponsors at the ODA near Waterloo Station, we found his car, an oldish Jaguar, gone — stolen. He hailed a taxi which took us to a back street dealer where Denman paid over a couple of hundred quid cash for a another old wreck and away we went!

Paul Howell, Director of Development Studies had me foisted onto his programme by Denman and probably resented that at first. Paul and I got along well after my ‘exhibition’ lecture (notes to the left) as this aligned with his pragmatic experience in the elite Sudan Service.

David Williams, Wolfson President and later the first installed Vice Chancellor was extraordinarily supportive, and always in jocular good humour. His wife Sally was supportive to Pam.

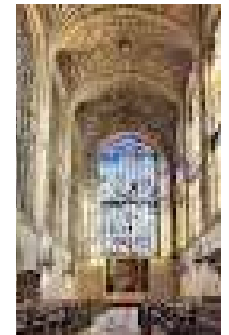
## 58. CAMBRIDGE PLACES

The sluggish Cam was a stone’s throw from Abbey Road. My Silver Street office was two miles upstream, right by the Mathematical Bridge. At all times of the year we would walk or cycle to Grantchester; with summer punting picnicking and swimming.



The most visited and photographed modern building in Cambridge was James Stirling’s History Building. Looking down from the top floor into the library core, was exciting. My small classes were allocated a seminar room up in the top flange, with the roof and two walls all-glass. If the sun shone we cooked; if a snow flurry came we froze.

The most visited and photographed building was King’s College Chapel; often chaotic outside, always serene within. Inside, back to the South Wall above the choristers, winter sun streaming through the North Wall windows, choir practicing — bliss. Looking-up one could comprehend hearts being coerced into divine devotion!



One summer’s afternoon, passing through the Main Gate to Kings with Nicky, a porter called out: “Hello Armfelt, you well? How’s Julian (Nicky’s brother) these days?”— this twenty years after Nicky, the younger, graduated!

## 59. OCEANIA

1980. Pam and I spent three sabbatical months on the preparation of State-of-the-Environment reports for American Samoa, Independent Samoa, Niue and the Cooks. At the same time *Ecodevelopment* was being tweaked for publication (1981). This set of influences and experiences skewed my thinking toward 'conservation *with* development'.



### NIUE

On my first day I called on the Admin Secretary while Pam went off to see the inter-village netball. The netball over, a pleasant elderly couple offered her a lift back to the hotel, and during the ride it became apparent that they knew who she was, and all about my whereabouts that afternoon!

At the hotel Pam invited them

in for some tea, and to meet me; however I was still with the Administrative Secretary. When they stirred to depart Pam asked for their names. Straight faced the man said "Tell Robert you've spent the afternoon with the Premier." And, said Mrs Rex "We'll see you tomorrow night for dinner; my husband, who's also Robert, is going fishing first thing in the morning".

### COOKS

Sunday on Aututaki atoll at church, politely attentive to the service and the harmonies sung in Maori, absorbed by the view out across the pale green shallows to the dark blue rollers curling, smashing and booming into brilliant white foam on the fringing coral reef. After church, we set off on our hired scooter. With the tide going out, the plan was to travel to the uninhabited southern tip of the atoll, Lands End. We had shop food — ships biscuits (Fiji), canned tuna (Canada), coke (Australia) — in the scooter's pannier. For quite a long way, maybe two miles, our

course followed the lonely shore around point after point. Rounding the tip of the island we came upon a family.

The father and his son were wading ashore with fish they had speared. A young girl was tending a fire and boiling a pot of yams. Mother was sitting cross-legged in the shade nursing her youngest. A tethered horse, was grazing nearby. We chatted. The man cleaned the fish and put them over the embers, the boy climbed a coconut tree to knock down some green drinking nuts. There was much talking and fussing. We produced our shop food. Grace given, we tucked in. The children fell on the shop-food delights; we revelled in the excellence of just-caught grilled fish, boiled yam and the drinking coconuts.



After a rest we returned to the settlement along an inland route; kids on the back of the scooter, Pam and the baby riding the horse, the man leading. Our hosts were seen by us to be both happy yet poor. Without doubt they wished for lives richer in technological texture, with more of the complex baubles we had in our lives. We, satiated with comfort travel and goods, envied the simple satisfactions they shared with us; each yearning for more of what was in the lives of the other.

## 60. KASHMIR



In the 1980s the Dal Lake attractions, beyond the novelty of living on a houseboat, included the floating gardens, the distant Himalayan Wall, and the ancient Mogul Pleasure Gardens. The Dal Lakes region amounted to a cultural and environmental heritage, with the conservancy of both sets of heritage in disarray. There was the pragmatic issue of water clean-up, and the wider challenge of husbanding the Kashmiri cultural heritage.



Some of these matters — most of these matters — were beyond my brief, but they were addressed and reported anyway. The physical clean-up involved flushing away the lake's putrescence through outlet controls and infilling. Regional incorporation was a matter

of political will; and management involved education.

Of course not all of this came to reality in this volatile region, but taken as a whole my experience was part of an epiphany that began with the Country Reporting commissions in Oceania; making recommendations which were useful and wanted, clean and efficient, self sufficient and fair, conserving and sustaining, and above all else good for business.

## 61. 700 MILES — AND BEYOND

The day before we (Pam, Anna, Kate and myself) had to abandon a perfect holiday in the Dordogne, Anna and I were zipping along a country lane, with me driving, forgetfully hugging the left-hand-side of the narrow sealing. Coming to an up-and-over road hump, Anna said quietly 'crash'. The local driver coming toward us held his course, thereby saving quite a few lives, for I swerved off the road — to the left!

Back at the cottage there was disrupting news. Pam's father had died of a heart attack at one of his spec London properties, and of course this news was disturbing and sad.

We resolved to leave early the next morning, dropping Pam off at Bordeaux airport to catch a flight for London, leaving Anna and Kate with me to drive back to Cambridge. After that initial 100 miles I drove 500 more miles to Calais, crossed to Dover, then pushed on the last 100 miles to Cambridge. On the empty two-lane M11 we straddled the centre dividing line, with alternate girls urging me to stay awake.

\*

Pam and sister Liz inherited from their father's estate, giving both an opportunity to re-set their lives, which they both did! In my case, up until the moment Pam told me she was leaving, I was unaware. Of course signs would have been there; but subtle perception was never my strong point! Pam made no accusation; I conjured self-doubt and self-accusation. An oddity in all this was that following our break-up all manner of marital discord run through the Wolfson fellowship, including one poor chap who'd long-suffered physical assaults from his wife!

The next few months of friendship with Alison morphed into a new beginning. It wasn't destined to last; but it was good to move on from the anguish of my split with Pam and be back in the real world.



## 62. SWALEDALE



Paul and Freya Steele moved into Trellis Cottage in Low Row, Swaledale on their return from Ghana. By the mid- to late 1970s they had their own children, Beck and Ailie (Anna being their half-sister). We had regular family contact. Low Row became a constant in my life after Ghana (1972).

To me Swaledale is a serene part of Britain, my judgement rosied-up through friendship. And something else, like Bedenet in France, this has been a working landscape, much more densely settled than it is today; indeed from around the time of Able Tasmans 17<sup>th</sup> Century European discovery of New Zealand!

In her late teens Anna was involved in a work experience scheme in the nearby Lake District.

I made an early run up the M4 and persuaded her to get the day off. Without telling her what I had in mind, we drove around to Wasdale, parked the car, and started to trudge up a step and little used path. Only when we reached the top, covered in small boys shrouded in mist, did I disclose that we were on the highest peak in England — Scarfell Pike.

Next day we drove over to Swaledale expecting somebody to be home at Trellis Cottage. Although nobody was about we let ourselves in to warm-up by the AGA, and write a note. I was touched by how attentative and pensive Anna was in this surrounding, sensing surely that it had poignant meaning in her life.



## 63. ONE DOOR CLOSSES — ANOTHER OPENS

In the early 1980s during Thatcher's decline (and following a rebuff from her *alma mater* Oxford) British Universities came under attack. Academics 55 years or older were made offers to retire they could hardly refuse, no bad thing for many a rusty has-been. Clip-on units like our Course on Development were assessed for close down. Initially the feeling was that we were so historically relevant we were flame proof. Even so, our turn for examination came. We invited the Tory MP, Rhodes Boyson to lunch at Wolfson. What a jolly group! Of course our champion, one of our kind, would ensure that the 'right thing' was done.

At a follow-up meeting called by Rhodes Boyson he confronted us with 'no way' pointing out that as half our group were disciplined Marxists, and the rest of us left-wing travelers, we were done for all money!

\*

I lined up a move to the School of Planning at Oxford Brookes and was about to commit when I got a call from Ivan Boileau, ex Trinity Hall and current Professor of Planning at the University of Auckland. Life at Auckland had become trying for Ivan, so he was taking early retirement, and there would be a search for his replacement. I applied, was interviewed, and got the job.

After three decades of wider world experience (most of my working lifetime up to that date) I was to return 'home' and rejoin my *alma mater*.





## 64. NINETEEN EIGHTY FOUR



Two of my new colleagues at Auckland University had applied for the Chair, although they understood that an inside appointment was unlikely. On my arrival everybody was warmly welcoming. Something else that impressed me was the second-to-none quality of the Department's accommodation, not least my new office with its large oval kauri table. Course changes were needed, agreement was easy, implementation steady. My colleagues were supportive, and shared an institutional loyalty to Ivan Boileau, my predecessor.

Sitting around the oval table at Staff Meetings left me acutely aware that all twelve of my colleagues were male, all had reached the Senior Lecturer grade, and all but two were older than myself. Seven of the nine permanent staff appointments made over the next ten years were women!

The age and gender skew was overshadowed by disciplinary diversity and conflict; planners with background degrees in engineering, architecture, surveying, sociology, law, economics, biology, statistical mathematics, and geography this and geography that.

The range and level of staff competency was an asset within a studio-centered school; yet it induced a critical rivalry which inhibited the output of published work. Recognising and admiring our disparate competencies led me to work-up guidelines for a book-length output, co-edited by us collectively, with no highlighting. Sadly, my colleagues decided they could not agree to such a collaborative enterprise.

## 65. BACK HOME IN AOTEAROA

Maori and Polynesian influences permeated mid-1980s Auckland; not so much Remuera which I knew and where I rented a flat; definitely so out west in Massey. Here, a mere ten miles from the city, I bought a bush, boat and beehive property looking out onto hundreds of acres of leafy waterscape. It was my boyhood image of New Zealand, refreshed.



Alison flew out during her summer break from London University, and I returned to be with her in Cambridge over Christmas. She planned to finish that academic year at London, negotiate a gap-year, then move out to New Zealand with her mother, Laura. Laura and I got on well and she was encouraging about 'Alison and Bob' as an item. Anna and Kate also visited, and they appealed to Laura as a ready-made family. Sadly, Laura became ill and died. Poor Alison: in a country of raw (to her) values housed in an unhumanised landscape, mother dead, relationship-bound. On her return to London for the final year of her degree, neither of us believed there would be a return to New Zealand.

\*

As easy as pie, I fell in with Heather who lived with her two young children, Belinda and Rhys, at the top of my drive.

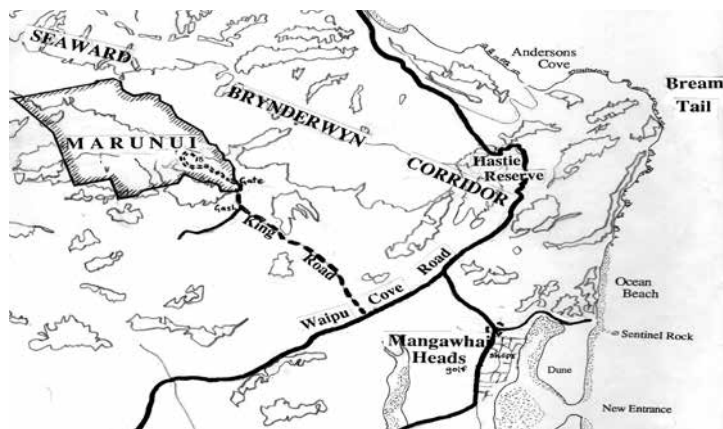
A month later I knocked on her door after a long day Up North, and asked if she had any dosh readily to hand "Yes. Ten thousand". "Gimme" I said — then explained why.

## 66. MANGAWHAI FOREST PROTECTION

During my time at Cambridge I lent member-of-staff support to the Green Society. It was in this capacity that I first met Teddy Goldsmith, already known to me as editor of *The Ecologist*. Teddy, now married to a New Zealander, had worked with some of my new Auckland University colleagues, and was welcomed each summer as a visitor to the Planning Department.

Around 1987 Teddy and Cathy Goldsmith bought at auction a 1500 acre rump of steep pillaged bush and brushland near Mangawhai in Northland; their intention was to prevent the area from being made-over as a pine forest. Teddy asked me what I thought he and Cathy might do with their purchase. "Anything you like!" I said. "Repossessing nuclear rods perhaps? You're now part of the most gung-ho administrative district in the country!" With a colleague of mine Teddy worked-up a scheme to allow thirty (later pared down to eighteen) carefully chosen shareholder cabin sites on the land he and Cathy had purchased.

On the day my erstwhile (early retirement) colleague withdrew from Mangawhai Forest Preservation the Goldsmith's showed me around. I was captivated, and straight away sought out a site toward the end of the yet-to-be-built access road. It was later that same day I asked Heather for all the cash she could muster to clinch a great deal!



## 67. MARUNUI: THE EARLY DAYS

MFP became known as Marunui the local name for our highest trig.

Teddy and Cathy's starter group included John and Pat Morton (John known to me as a 'Senior' Professor at Auckland); and Bill and Tricia Lees (Bill a retired Air NZ administrator). My initial concern was around how Marunui would be managed. Bill assured me on this. He'd 'sold the boat' and bought into Marunui ( John Morton's wife was Bill's sister) in order to "Put some practical constraints on these woolly-minded academics." Bill didn't seem inclined to include me in the woolly-minded category. We became firm friends; and early on he guided the company masterfully.

Along with Heather and I these two families were the first to build.



## 68. FURTHER OCEANIA PROJECTS

During the early 1990s I attended a brief workshop in Papua New Guinea, accepted a two week re-planning job on Niue, and took on an extensive five visit commission on Rarotonga in the Cooks. Success, in inverse proportion to each assignment's duration!

The PNG visits to Port Moresby and Lae were about slum clearance policy, there being a belief that squatters would and could return 'home' up country. For some that was impractical: anyway these shanty neighbourhoods were now an important part of the labour force. As proven elsewhere the answer lay with clean-up and improvement along with some selective clearance and resiting. Success!

The Niue exercise was about re-ordering the location of administrative agencies 'musical chairs with buildings' — using local tools and labour, but no aid money. In these terms it was impossible to resite the hospital; that event awaited the next hurricane. Partial success!

The UNDP contracts on Rarotonga in the Cooks drew in two of my colleagues — James Lunday as urban designer and Dan Barry as legal draughtsman. Both did an excellent job. Of the two the greater disappointment was setting aside our proposal for a Polynesian styled administration complex (shown below) at an estimated cost of \$10m (probably forthcoming from the NZ and Australian governments). This was passed over for a 'free' (*sic*) offer from China (maybe Taiwan) to construct an in-your-face wedding cake edifice on the edge of the island's main roundabout. Failure!



## 69. RETIREMENT LOOMING

The very last second of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was my *emeritus* moment.

Although the underlying faults of my student planning effort for Helensville prevailed, Heather and I were drawn to live there when I retired. H'vile remains an Auckland satellite, mercifully constrained from being a 'growth centre' by the limitation of its sewage treatment plant.



Heather now had a pre-school teaching degree and a Montessori Diploma, and was looking to set up a pre-school. The quarter acre original settler property we bought for my retirement had enough room to fit a purpose built classroom into the back yard.

\*

Over the same period of time (the late 1990s) Tom Fooks, who had taken over as head of the planning department at the university, became seriously ill, and I was obliged to stand in until another arrangement could be made. These were uncertain times of difficulty for all concerned in the planning school; leaving me thwarted in my desire to get on with my textbook project; and colleagues were undoubtedly frustrated to have me back *obligataire* in the role of HOD.



## 70. SADNESS ALSO POSITIVITY

The sadness was Norma's terminal ill-health prior to her retirement and send-off in a hot air balloon. The home support from the Buckinghamshire NHS over her last weeks was faultless, and I was pleased to be at her side with Kate, Anna and her sister Helen. At the end, a trio of po-faced funeral people came in all dreary droopy and dressed in black, took Norma away, with the funeral taking place a few days later with the same parlour-people in attendance, this time wearing black stovepipe hats. The day after the funeral I realized I'd written out a cheque from an underfunded account, so visited the undertaker's to intercept the cheque and settle-up with cash. Behind the Funeral Parlour, in a back shed, I found the pick-up guys in tee's and shorts, belting out Radio One, singing away lusterly while knocking-out more coffins!

\*

Positivity came through from the Helensville pre-school project. The outer shell of a kitset home was erected and infilled with the necessary kitchen, bathroom and office. Dividing the space into cells was a theme. Helensville Montessori opened in 1998 with six children and Fale the lead teacher. Over the next decade the school grew to ten times that number of children in three buildings on half an acre of land.



## 71. UNITEC

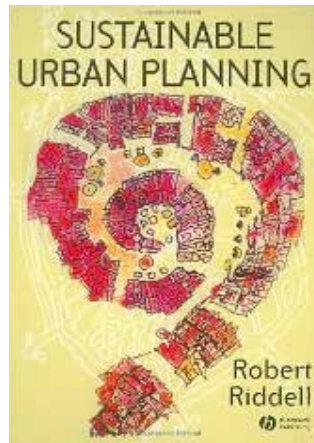
Jacqueline Margetts and Rod Barnett from Auckland's Unitec got to know me over the last few years at Auckland University. We got along, and it was a pleasant surprise to be offered an adjunct Professorship, a desk, and the run of Unitec's excellent library service 'in retirement'. The atmosphere was right to draft the textbook I had in mind over my last few years at Auckland, now sans an administrative load.



Even better, my desire to not only teach a Pacific Studies course, but to run a field trip as part of the study option, was accepted. With Jaqueline in charge we set off over the next ten years on a succession of field ventures; revisiting earlier work in Niue, Tonga, Samoa, Fiji and the Cook Islands. Every visit had its moment of student folly, drunkenness, injury and romance; eclipsed by a student willingness to co-operate and help.

It took four years to write-up *Sustainable Urban Planning* derived in the main from my lectures at Auckland University over the 1990s. Blackwell,

my publisher, in effect dictated the title, but otherwise guided rather than interfered. I acknowledged connections to erstwhile colleagues; most fulsomely the working-up of line drawings by Bruce Weir. The quiet effective way Bruce delivered drawing-after-drawing kept me going and uplifted the first output and reprint.



## 72. SISTER CLAIRE

As part of a visit to the Southern Lakes and Milford Sound, Heather and I called on Claire in lonely Bluff. Over the years she had moved from Wakefield (near Nelson), to Kaipoi (near Christchurch), to Oamaru, Palmerston then Bluff. With each move she parted with a third of her cash-up for an animal welfare cause, and a lesser and colder house closer to the South Pole.

As we drove away from Bluff, Heather said we must move her, Claire, to be near us in Hellensville. So, a month later, Claire, Harley (her dog) and Suzuki (her tiny car) were waiting for Heather and I to come into Invercargill Airport. Clair and Harley got on the same plane and made their way to Auckland; Heather and I and Suzuki started the long northerly haul back to Helensville. Suzuki was loaded to the gunnals with Claire's ya-ya, so unless the going was downhill or there was a strong following wind we rarely broke 90kph. The sensation was one of being on a long road trip riding a motor mower.

The move was a great success. Claire made friends in Helensville, had a good understanding with Rhys (Heather's son), and lived independently on a half acre property we'd bought for development. Moving her to live near to us was a life affirming decision. Argumentative lively and innovative, Claire ended her life at peace with the rest of the World.

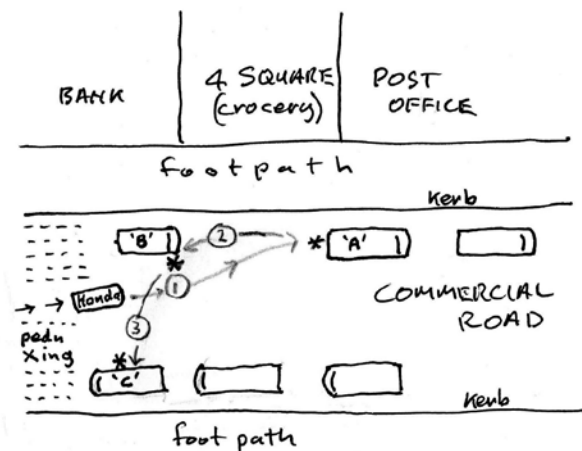




## 73. TRAIN-SMASHING WITH CARS

On a dark and damp winter's night up at Marunui I stepped outside to bring in firewood: 'whoops' arse-over-elbow and my right ankle snapped. I sat at the cabin table, swallowed a Voltarin, phoned Heather, dialled 111, and waited. Two hours later an ambulance arrived at the same time as Heather and got stuck (the ambulance, not Heather).

Back home in Helensville a week later I worked out that I could drive the family Honda (an automatic) with one foot (my left foot). I set off for the Post Office in Helensville's shopping street. Swinging into a parking space my foot slipped off the brake onto the accelerator and the Honda smashed into the rear of car 'A'. I then managed to jerk the shift from D (forward drive) to R (backward reverse) causing the Honda to graze car 'B' on a backward traverse which also broadsided car 'C'. Two damaged, two written off.



Travelling in the direction Wellsford-Helensville on a Friday afternoon I was wary of heavy on-coming traffic escaping the city for the weekend. Coming up to one of the few stretches where overtaking was possible, a logging truck coming my way had been overtaken by several cars before

it got to the corner we were both approaching. Suddenly, on the corner, passing the truck, was a speeding car coming straight at me. We crashed; but in the second prior to impact I managed to almost flick away. Two lives saved, two more cars for the knackers!



## 74. WEDDING BELLS & GRANDCHILDREN



Kate and Louis (Taylor) married before the Millenium Date. Anna and Steve (Brown) in the New Century. Here are all five London-based grandchildren in the order Grace, Phoebe, Olly, Bonny, Danny. Sadly neither Louis' mother or father (Peter whom I got to know well around

the time of their wedding) nor Norma, had the experience and delight of their grandchildren. The Brown children have a whole heap of Grandparents — sadly now (2013) without Paul!

Belinda (Heather's daughter) married Lincoln toward the end of the first decade this Century; their two children, David and Andrew, are probably my most reliable pals in Helensville.



Consolidating the blending, Heather and I also tied the knot.



## 75. ALWAYS FUN: NO GUILT

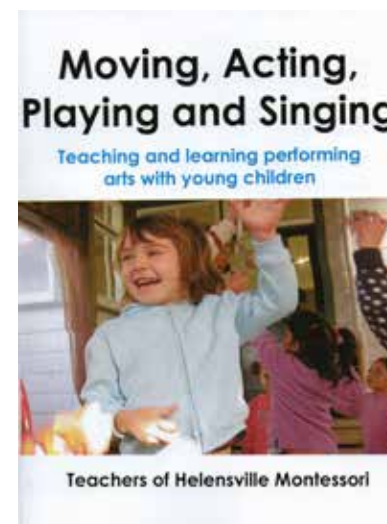
The opportunity, at a granfatherly age, of being able to spend time within earshot of Montessori pre-schooler's is a privledge and a delight.

\*

Gareth has missionary grandparents, so knew his Old Testament. He and Dion are looking at a Noah's Ark puzzle they have completed. Gareth explains Noah's intention to get a female and a male of each animal on board the Ark— pairs of elephants giraffs monkeys and so on. Dion asks "Who's that?" pointing to Noah. 'Noah' replies Gareth. Dion points to the cabin window in Noah's cabin "What's this?". Long pause. "The wife's in there."

Then when Dion got Gareth's attention. "My Mum and Tania and I are Maori. Dad's Not. *And* we have ancestors!"

Then "There was this Hitler family and Adolf, their little boy, wanted all the land. He even wanted this land."  
"His mother and father were nice people: but Adolf ate yuckily."



Leon's family was colourful — several 'uncles' around Mum and plenty of 'blue' language. Heather overheard him swearing in the play ground... "I never want to hear that F-word again!"

Later, when teaching the form of letters, Heather got to 'R', Leon piped-up and said "I know a swearword beginning with 'R'?"

Heather raised the use of the F-word with Leon's Mum, lightening the chat with her intrigue about a swearword beginning with 'R'.

Next day Leon's mother handed Heather a note "R is for arse!"

"Chloe, is there anything you want to change at Montessori?" "No!"

"Tell me Chloe, is there anything you don't like about Montessori?"

From Chloe "Yes: I don't like going home."

## 76. AFRICAN FAREWELL

From the 1970s and 80s, in West and East Africa, I fondly remembered the limitless savannah— an 'ocean' of landscape. Another cherished recollection was awakening to the clamour of dawn, and the hum and drums of dusk. Up country, the 'miles and miles and miles of Africa'. I grew to accept that Africa was to be remembered, but not revisited.

Then Steve and Anna, with Grace a toddler, moved to Kampala in Uganda — Steve to manage a project, Anna to work *pro bono* in a general hospital, balanced with some private consultancy. Heather and I flew in from faraway Helensville! To Heather it was a fascinating 'other world' experience — to me I was 'coming home'.

Exiting Entebbe Airport in the mist of early morning we encountered a cyclist cranking along, a child's coffin strapped to the pannier. That was Kampala. Later at Muchison Falls we were 500 miles from Malakal (30 years earlier I was there in the Sudan). We also had a weekend on a remote island an hour's boatride out on Lake Victoria.



## 77. THE OZ CONNECTION



Claire had a daughter, Rachel, with such sad memories of her childhood that she, Rachel, moved to Australia and cut herself off. Contact with Rachel became sparse now Claire had moved to live close-by to me in Helensville. Looking-out for Claire did not impress Rachel!

The Taylor family met up with us in Bali, occupying a sumptuous villa and swimming pool on the North Coast. One day walking down to the pool, fully dressed, I was taunted by Olly “Can’t catch me Grandpa” with which I stepped into the pool, boots and all, and grabbed him.

On our way home via Sydney, Heather and I stopped over to attend the wedding of Resty and Vita’s daughter Kate, conceived at 50 Abbey Road over twenty years previously! The reception was at an impressive 5-star hotel; where we were upgraded from a room to a suite — not the Clinton Suite, but one floor down and very impressive indeed.

Sadly, for the first time in all my visits to Sydney, I didn’t contact Rachel.

Resty, Vita, and I relived the close good times of Cambridge. Now both he and Vita, worthy Aussies, held managerial positions of significance and trust. Resty’s ‘father-of-the-bride speech was replete with wisdom, exuded humility, and was unoffensively jokey. Masterly.

A year later we were back in Sydney for a christening — again I did not contact Rachel or her now also married daughter, my great niece Laura.

## 78. RUGBY WORLD CUP FINAL



Early on the Saturday set down for the 2011 Rugby World Cup final Kate was due to fly in from Vietnam with Phoebe Bonny and Olly.

Our local electrician, Tony Cooper, had been to the All Black-Australia semi-final and raved about the experience. Unfortunately getting to the final – All Blacks v France – was a cost too far he said. Rhys, Heather’s son, got onto the official ticketing site for me and found that two tickets were still available. I snapped them up and let Tony know we’d made it.

Landing at the airport on the morning of the final Kate got the surprise news that on that same evening we’d be off to the RWC final! An hour before the game we parked our car on the front yard of a house in an Eden Park side street. At the ground we fortified ourselves with a nice sauvignon blanc and savoury, visited the loos, then made our way up-up-up to seats six rows below the top of the temporary stands. There, in seats right next to us, were Tony and Lara Cooper!

The view of the crowd and the action was superb. Tony pointed out that he, like every other Gen-y bloke in Helensville, had once trained our local All Black, Tony Woodcock, so all was well. Obliging, Woodcock scored the only All Black try, at our end of the ground, right in front of us. It was time, effort, and money well spent.



## 79. RESTORATION REEF



With all my talk about the delight and charm of Oceanic life and places Heather was spoilt for choice. My approach was “You select a holiday option, and we’ll do it!” It was in this way — after Samoa, Tonga and Rarotonga — that she eventually lit on Niue, ‘The Rock’. I booked the flights, then phoned Stafford Guest at Coral Gardens to reserve the same cabin I had previously worked from, only to be told “Sorry Mate, booked out.” We were referred elsewhere, ending up at Restoration Reef.

I had worked previously on Niue. This was my first holiday visit. Everything was perfect: Restoration Reef being an isolated studio-room cabin with an exquisite boardwalk out to a cliff-top eyrie overlooking the ocean; a place of delight to whale-watch with a cold drink while the evening sun sunk below the horizon.

What is special about Niue is its precious isolation: geographically because it lies 500 miles away from the nearest island neighbour, and also in terms of access because there is only one flight in-and-out each week. Isolation means ocean purity. Also, because there are only about a thousand people around, there’s a landmass cleanliness (except the rubbish-tip!). Add in the little cove beaches, church on Sunday, 20mph speed limit, public honesty. The obligation to slow down and relax when on-island seems to be working — we are organising our fourth return visit in four years.

## 80. RESILIENCE

In the first of these Salient Happenings I searched a long way back in my imagination to the place and time of human beginning — that rediscovered stone-age grindery in Central Africa. I now look a short way forward to an e-Book and paperback publication of *Resilience Adaptation Sustainability* — replying to a worrying itch in the back of my mind about the health and quality of the habitat our children’s children will inherit.

