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IN SPENDING AT THE ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLE CENTRE  
... WITH A GROUP THEY WERE AND ARE A  
... TOGETHER BY A

PETER BLANCH ... WITH MODERN URBAN SOCIETY AND A PIECE  
... IN THE ... VALLEY, IN THE ...  
... OF NEW SOUTH WALES, THERE WERE ... IN ... BY THE  
P.T.O.F.C. ... ABILITY ...

... SETTLE THE COUNTRY AND DEVELOP A SELF  
... STYLE ...  
MARGARET HENRY ... THE ...

ESSAY: TOORUMBEE CREEK COMMUNITY ...

... IN THE LATTER YEARS OF  
... AND ...  
... CO-OPERATIVES ...  
... IN THE ...  
... IN THE LATE  
... FOR THE ...  
... DEVELOPMENTS, THEY WERE TO BE ...  
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... THE MURRAY RIVER IN  
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... FORMULATED BY  
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... AROUND JOHN'S IDEA AND

1) Interview with John ...

1) Margaret Munro-Clark — see Communes in Rural Australia

H.S.C. ... The movement since 1970

4) Interview with John ... Sydney, 1986 p. 51.

IN LOOKING AT THE ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE MOVEMENT IN NEWCASTLE, I AM DEALING SPECIFICALLY WITH A GROUP KNOWN AS TOORUMBEE CREEK COMMUNITY. AS A GROUP THEY WERE, AND ARE, A VARIED CONGLOMERATE OF PEOPLE, WHO ARE BOUND TOGETHER BY A GENERAL DISILLUSIONMENT WITH MODERN URBAN SOCIETY AND A PIECE OF BEAUTIFUL LAND IN THE MACLEAY VALLEY, ON THE MID-NORTH COAST OF NEW SOUTH WALES. THEIR MAIN AIM WAS TO LIVE BY THE MAXIM "FROM EACH ACCORDING TO ABILITY, TO EACH ACCORDING TO NEED.", AND TO "SETTLE THE COUNTRY AND DEVELOP A SELF SUFFICIENT LIFE-STYLE BASED ON APPROPRIATE, MAINLY SOE1 TECHNOLOGY." THEY SAW THE LAND AS A RESERVE FOR NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA AND AS A PLACE ON WHICH TO PROVIDE A LOVING, STABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

CO-OPERATIVE, RURAL INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES ARE NOT NECESSARILY A NEW IDEA IN AUSTRALIA. IN THE LATTER YEARS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, THERE WAS A WIDESPREAD AND VOCAL MOVEMENT OF WORKER CO-OPERATIVES AND SETTLEMENTS, BASED ON SIMILAR SOCIALIST IDEALS TO THOSE OF TOORUMBEE. ONE MAN IN PARTICULAR, WHO WAS VERY VOCAL, WAS WILLIAM LANE. IN THE LATE 1880 S, LANE PROPOSED A SCHEME FOR THE SETTING UP OF CO-OPERATIVE VILLAGE STYLE DEVELOPMENTS. THEY WERE TO BE BASED ON HOLDINGS OF UP TO 80 ACRES AND BE ASSISTED BY THE GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, DESPITE SOME RATHER INFLUENTIAL SUPPORT THE SCHEME NEVER SAW THE LIGHT OF DAY. THE SHEARERS STRIKE OF 1891, SAW A GROUP OF UNIONISTS FORM A CO-OPERATIVE SETTLEMENT IN QUEENSLAND, SUPPORTED BY UNION FUNDS; THE SUBSEQUENT DEPRESSION SAW SEVERAL GROUPS FORM ALONG THE MURRAY RIVER IN VICTORIA AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA. OVER THE SAME PERIOD ALL STATE GOVERNMENTS, EXCEPT TASMANIA AND WESTERN AUSTRALIA, INTRODUCED THEIR OWN FORMS OF CO-OPERATIVE LAND OWNERSHIP SCHEMES. VERY FEW OF THESE GROUPS LASTED LONG PAST THE END OF THE DEPRESSION AS JOBS ONCE AGAIN BECAME AVAILABLE. (1).

TOORUMBEE WAS ORIGINALLY AN IDEA THAT WAS FORMULATED BY JOHN BURNE, WHO WAS A STUDENT UNION ACTIVITIES OFFICER AT NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY. A GROUP BUILT UP AROUND JOHN'S IDEA AND

1) Margaret Munro-Clark Communes in Rural Australia  
The movement since 1970  
Sydney, 1986 p. 51.

SO TOORUMBEE CREEK COMMUNITY BEGAN. IT SEEMS THAT FOR MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ATTRACTED TO THIS IDEA, THEY FELT A GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT WITH MODERN INDUSTRIALIZED, URBAN SOCIETY.

"...I FOUND THAT THE TRADITIONAL SOCIETY, IN WHICH I HAD GROWN UP, AND THE VALUES THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO ME DIDN'T MEET A LOT OF MY SPIRITUAL COMMITMENTS AND MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT; IN AS MUCH AS I FELT A NEED TO BE CLOSER TO PEOPLE" (2)

THEY SEEM TO HAVE RECOGNISED A NEED FOR A TYPE OF CLOSE PERSONAL INTERACTION THAT THEY BELIEVED WAS LARGELY MISSING IN MAINSTREAM SOCIETY. ALIGNED WITH THESE DISAPPOINTMENTS WERE THE FEAR OF NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST, MISTRUST OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS, CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, DIFFERENT VIEWS OF WHAT CONSTITUTED PROGRESS AND A PERCEIVED LACK OF CARING FOR PEOPLE AND NATURE AS SHOWN BY THE CONTINUED CONSUMPTION, UNABATED, OF NON-RENEWABLE NATURAL RESOURCES. (3) IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE LAND WAS PURCHASED HOWEVER, THAT THE GROUP REALLY STARTED TO CONSOLIDATE.

THE SEARCH FOR LAND WAS BASED ON CRITERIA WHICH THE GROUP BELIEVED WOULD FACILITATE THE GROWTH OF THE COMMUNITY, BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MORALLY.

"THE LAND HAD TO BE FIRSTLY, WELL WATERED, SECONDLY, IT HAD TO BE FAIRLY PURE, PRISTINE AND IT TO SOME DEGREE HAD TO BE REMOTE. BECAUSE THE IDEA WAS THAT THE COMMUNITY HAD TO BE.....SEPARATE FROM THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY IN A WAY THAT...IT WOULD ESTABLISH ITS OWN VALUES AND LIFE-STYLE." (4)

SO AFTER LOOKING AT SOME LAND AT MUDGEES, WHICH PROVED TO BE UNSUITABLE, THE GROUP PURCHASED SOME FIVE TO SIX THOUSAND ACRES OF LAND AT TOORUMBEE CREEK, A TRIBUTARY OF THE MACLEAY RIVER. IT MIGHT BE SAID THAT THIS LAND MET THE REQUIREMENTS SET DOWN, PERFECTLY. IT WAS WELL WATERED, IT WAS FAIRLY PURE AND IT WAS CERTAINLY REMOTE. FROM THIS TIME THE COMMUNITY REALLY BEGAN TO GROW, AS THE LAND PROVIDED A FOCUS FOR PEOPLES ENERGY AND A COMMON LINK THAT THEY ALL SHARED. HENCE AN EXTENDED FAMILY HAS DEVELOPED, A GROUP IN WHICH THE MEMBERS

- 2) Interview with John Linehan
- 3) Robyn Fraser Toorumbree Creek Community: Success or Failure  
H.S.C. assignment, 1988.
- 4) Interview with John Linehan

HAVE THE SORT OF CLOSE PERSONAL INTERACTION THAT JOHN LINEHAN TALKED OF IN OUR INTERVIEW.

THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF TOORUMBEE, AS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, WAS, AT THE OUTSET, A SOCIALIST IDEAL OF "FROM ABILITY, TO NEED". COMMON OWNERSHIP, FIRSTLY, OF THE LAND AND SECONDLY, OF CAPITAL EQUIPMENT WERE SEEN AS BASIC TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY. HOWEVER THE DEGREE TO WHICH THIS IDEAL HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED, HAS BEEN A MATTER OF SOME VARIANCE OVER THE YEARS. COMMON OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND HAS NEVER BEEN CHALLENGED, IT IS THE MOST BASIC COMMON LINK BETWEEN THE PEOPLE INVOLVED. OWNERSHIP OF CAPITAL EQUIPMENT, FARM MACHINERY AND SUCH LIKE, IS STILL A MATTER OF SOME DISCUSSION. SO THE TOORUMBEE BRAND OF SOCIALISM HAS NEVER BEEN AS DOGMATIC AS THAT OF PEOPLE SUCH AS WILLIAM LANE.

"EVERY MEMBER LIVING ON THE COMMUNITY PROPERTY SHALL BE AVAILABLE TO WORK FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS FOR THE NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK THAT ARE DECIDED AT WEEKLY MEETINGS.....

WORKLOADS SHOULD, WHENEVER POSSIBLE, BE KEPT TO AS FEW HOURS AS IS COMMENSURATE WITH PROGRESS. THIS IS TO ALLOW FULL PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR MEMBERS TO FOLLOW THEIR PRIVATE INCLINATIONS." (5)

THE ABILITY TO EXPLORE INTERESTS AND THE TIME FOR PERSONAL DISCOVERY, WERE, AND ARE, IMPORTANT TO THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS GROUP WORK TOWARDS COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE. HOWEVER, THE SOCIALIST UTOPIAN MODEL IS STILL, AS HAS ALWAYS BEEN, IMPORTANT TO THE GROUP IDENTITY OF TOORUMBEE AND WAS CERTAINLY AN INFLUENCE FOR A SUBSTANTIAL PROPORTION OF THE MEMBERS.

IN A PRACTICAL SENSE IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN DIFFICULT FOR PEOPLE TO MOVE ONTO THE LAND, ON A PERMANENT BASIS. SELLING UP ALL THAT ONE OWNS, IN THE CITY, IS THE FIRST, AND MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEM TO COME TO TERMS WITH. PEOPLE NEED AN IMMEDIATE INCOME IF THEY ARE TO SURVIVE THE INITIAL UPHEAVAL AND THE SUBSEQUENT SETTLING PERIOD. IT SEEMS THAT, ALTHOUGH IT WAS

5) Toorumbree Creek Community - rules and by-laws

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SO TOORUMBEE CREEK COMMUNITY BEGAN. IT SEEMS THAT FOR MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ATTRACTED TO THIS IDEA, THEY FELT A GROWING DISILLUSIONMENT WITH MODERN INDUSTRIALIZED, URBAN SOCIETY.

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INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY AS A MODEL FOR A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO  
MODERN INDUSTRIALISED, URBAN SOCIETY.

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PETER BLANCH

P.I.O.F.C.

MARGARET HENRY

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW WITH JOHN LINEHAN

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW WITH JOHN LINEHAN ABOUT TOORUMBEE CREEK  
COMMUNITY;

JOHN FIRSTLY TALKED OF HIS EARLY LIFE IN NEWCASTLE; HE WAS BORN AT MAYFIELD AND LIVED MOSTLY AT TORONTO. UPON LEAVING SCHOOL IN 1969, HE BECAME A SOLICITORS CLERK, FINISHING HIS LAW DEGREE IN 1974, AGED 22. IN 1977, AFTER A TIME WORKING ON THE CENTRAL COAST, HE BECAME A PARTNER WITH A LAW FIRM IN TORONTO WHERE HE STILL WORKS.

JOHN FIRST ENCOUNTERED ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE VIEWS WHEN HE MET JOHN BURNE AND CHRIS DAVIS WHO WERE FORMULATING PLANS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY. AT THIS STAGE JOHN LINEHAN MET OTHER PEOPLE, FRIENDS OF JOHN AND CHRIS, WHO HAD SIMILAR VIEWS AND ASPIRATIONS. A LOOSE DISCUSSION GROUP WAS FORMED AND THE SEEDS OF TOORUMBEE WERE SOWN.

THE GROUP DECIDED THAT A SEARCH FOR LAND WAS TO BE BASED ON CERTAIN CRITERIA. THE LAND WAS TO BE WELL WATERED, IT WAS TO BE RELATIVELY UNTOUCHED AND IT WAS TO BE REMOTE. SEVERAL PROPERTIES WERE INSPECTED BEFORE TOORUMBEE WAS CHOSEN.

I ASKED JOHN WHAT ATTRACTED HIMSELF AND THE GROUP TO AN ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE. HE TOLD ME THAT THE GROUP HAD A GENERAL DISILLUSIONMENT WITH MODERN SOCIETY AND THE VALUES IT REPRESENTED. HE HAD A NEED TO BE CLOSER TO PEOPLE AND FELT THAT THE COMMON PURPOSE THESE PEOPLE HAD WAS A STEP TOWARDS THIS.

I THEN ASKED JOHN IF HE THOUGHT THE GROUP WAS AN ISOLATED GROUP WITHIN THE LARGER COMMUNITY. HE THOUGHT IT WAS ISOLATED IN ITS VIEWS, BUT SAW THE VIEWS AS SUPERIOR AS THEY PROVIDED A MODEL FOR A BETTER SOCIETY.

WAS THE GROUP A PRODUCT OF EARLIER MOVEMENTS? JOHN SAW THE GROUP AS ARTICULATING THE SAME DISILLUSIONMENT AS THE ANTI-WAR AND "FLOWER POWER" MOVEMENTS OF THE 1960'S.

HAD JOHN EVER VISITED ANY OTHER ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES? HE HAD BEEN TO NIMBIN AND A COMMUNITY NEAR BELLINGEN; AND ALSO

JOHN FELT THAT FOR HIMSELF THERE WAS A "SPIRIT OF PLACE" IN TOORUMBEE, THERE WAS NOT AND NEVER HAS BEEN ANY PARTICULAR RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

I ASKED JOHN ABOUT CONFLICT AND IT EFFECTS ON THE COMMUNITY. THERE HAD BEEN TIMES OF CONFLICT, PARTICULARLY IN THE EARLY DAYS, BUT THAT ITS EFFECT WAS TO ULTIMATELY CONSOLIDATE THE GROUP.

THE FUTURE OF THE GROUP IS SEEN AS DEPENDING ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT HAS ALREADY BEEN ESTABLISHED AND THE USE OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS TO MAINTAIN BUSINESS CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD; AND BECAUSE OF THIS ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE COMMUNITIES WOULD BECOME A LARGER, MORE ACCEPTED GROUP, AS INTERDEPENDENCE WAS HARD TO AVOID.

FINALLY I ASKED JOHN TO SUMMARISE OUR CONVERSATION. FOR HIM THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF TOORUMBEE WAS THE INTERACTION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND THE COMMON LINK AND SENSE OF PURPOSE THE LAND AFFORDED THEM.

A COMMUNITY WHERE HIS SISTER WAS LIVING, NEAR MUDGEES.

I ASKED JOHN IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY PARTICULAR INFLUENCES FOR HIS SEEKING AN ALTERNATIVE? HE REPLIED THAT HE HAD READ A LOT CONCERNING ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLES AND WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN THE VIEWS OF DR. JIM CAIRNS, BUT THAT HIS EXPERIENCE WITH THE GROUP HE HAD MET THROUGH JOHN BURNE WAS THE MAJOR INFLUENCE FOR HIM.

JOHN IS THE LEGAL SECRETARY FO TOORUMBEE AND AS SUCH I ASKED HIM WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY CONCERN FOR LEGAL STRUCTURE. THE MAIN CONCERN WAS FOR A DEFINED YET SIMPLE STRUCTURE. TENANCY IN COMMON DID NOT FIT THE GROUP IDENTITY, A CO-OPERATIVE WAS SEEN TO BE OVER BUREAUCRATIC AND RESTRICTIVE, SO A COMPANY STRUCTURE WAS DECIDED UPON. EACH MEMBER WAS TO HAVE VOTING STOCK TO THE VALUE OF \$1 000, THERE ARE TWO DIRECTORS AND A COMPANY SECRETARY. THIS STRUCTURE SEEMS TO BE FAIRLY COMMON IN GROUPS ENTERING THIS TYPE OF VENTURE. JOHN SAW THAT THE COMMUNITY REQUIRED HIM TO DEVELOP A WORKABLE STRUCTURE.

I THEN ASKED JOHN WHY SUCH GROUPS HAD A HIGH TURNOVER OF MEMBERS? PEOPLE JOINING SUCH COMMUNITIES OFTEN DID SO WITH HIGH IDEALS AND VERY SPECIFIC GOALS WHICH COULD NOT ALWAYS BE MET, CERTAINLY NOT IMMEDIATELY.

JOHN ALSO SAW ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES AS VIABLE PLACES TO RELOCATE UNEMPLOYED<sup>0</sup> PEOPLE WHILE GIVING THEM A SENSE OF PURPOSE AND A CHANCE TO PROVIDE NECESSITIES FOR THEMSELVES.

I ASKED JOHN WHETHER THERE WAS IGNORANCE ABOUT ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITIES, IN SOCIETY AT LARGE? HE FELT THAT THERE WAS INDEED IGNORANCE AND MISCONCEPTION ABOUT "COMMUNES". HE SAW THAT TOORUMBEE COULD HOLD ITSELF UP TO SOCIETY AS A MODEL, THROUGH THINGS SUCH AS SCHOOL EXCURSIONS TO TOORUMBEE. I ASKED JOHN ABOUT GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE IN SETTING SUCH COMMUNITIES FOR THE UNEMPLOYED? HE SAW THAT TOO MUCH GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY WOULD HINDER RATHER THAN HELP. GOVERNMENTS MAIN ROLE WAS TO ASSESS WHERE MONEY COULD BE MORE EFFECTIVELY SPENT.

PETER BLANCH

P. I. O. F. C.

MARGARET HENRY

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH JOHN LINEHAN

P.B:

MY NAME IS PETER BLANCH AND I AM INTERVIEWING JOHN LINEHAN ABOUT TOORUMBEE CREEK COMMUNITY, WITH REFERENCE TO THE ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE MOVEMENT IN THE NEWCASTLE AREA.

JOHN! MAYBE YOU COULD STARTOFF BY TELLING US A BIT ABOUT YOURSELF?

J.L:

WELL, I WAS BORN IN NEWCASTLE, AT MAYFIELD, AND LIVED FOR MOST OF MY LIFE IN NEWCASTLE AND MAITLAND, MOSTLY IN THE TORONTO AREA. I WENT TO BOORAGUL HIGH SCHOOL. I LEFT BOORAGUL HIGH SCHOOL IN 1969 AND BECAME ARTICLED AS A SOLICITOR'S CLERK WITH A FIRM IN NEWCASTLE. I FINISHED MY LAW DEGREE, AT THE AGE OF 22, IN 1974. I THEN BEGAN TO HAVE FRIENDSHIPS WITH PEOPLE IN THIS AREA AND I MET A NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAD ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE VIEWS, MOST IMPORTANTLY WHICH WAS JOHN BURNE AND CHRIS DAVIS, WHO I MET OUT AT ERARING. I THEN LEFT THE AREA AND WENT OVERSEAS FOR ABOUT TWELVE MONTHS, CAME BACK AND WORKED DOWN THE CENTRAL COAST. I CAME BACK FROM THE CENTRAL COAST IN 1977, AND JOINED A FIRM OF SOLICITORS, WHERE I AM A PARTNER. THE FIRM IS CALLED ARMSTRONG & PARTNERS OF TORONTO. I AM STILL IN THAT OCCUPATION AND AT THIS STAGE HAVE NO PRESENT PLANS TO LIVE AT TOORUMBEE, AT THIS STAGE. HOWEVER I INTEND TO RETIRE EARLY, CERTAINLY RETIRE IN MY FORTIES SO THAT I CAN GET AWAY INTO THE BUSH AND LIVE A QUIETER LIFE-STYLE.

I FIRST BECAME INVOLVED WITH THE CONCEPT OF TOORUMBEE, WHEN JOHN BURNE AND CHRIS DAVIS WERE FORMULATING PLANS FOR AN ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE COMMUNITY THEY THOUGHT THEY COULD ESTABLISH. AT THAT TIME THEY WERE LIVING IN A RESIDENCE AT ERARING, NEAR THE PROPOSED POWER STATION, AND THE HOUSE THAT THEY WERE RENTING WAS TO BE RESUMED BY THE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION. SO THERE WERE A NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT THAT STAGE, THAT I HAD MET, WHO WERE FRIENDS OF JOHN AND CHRIS, FOR EXAMPLE SUE GROCE, PETER RICKARD AND A COUPLE OF PEOPLE

FROM THE UNIVERSITY, THAT WERE INTERESTED IN THIS CONCEPT. WE OFTEN USED TO GO OUT TO JOHN'S PLACE AND HAVE DINNER AND SIT DOWN, HAVE A FEW DRINKS AND TALK ABOUT LOTS OF CONCEPTS OF LIFE THAT WE WERE ON ABOUT AND I FOUND THE PHILOSOPHIES THAT PEOPLE WERE TALKING ABOUT VERY EXCITING, BECAUSE THEY WERE DIFFERENT TO WHAT I HAD TRADITIONALLY BEEN BROUGHT UP TO BELIEVE. WE THEN DECIDED THAT WE WOULD LOOK FOR SOME LAND TO BUY. WE HAD A NUMBER OF THOUGHTS ABOUT THE LAND; THE LAND HAD TO BE FIRSTLY, WELL WATERED, SECONDLY IT HAD TO BE FAIRLY PURE, PRISINE AND IT TO SOME DEGREE HAD TO BE REMOTE. BECAUSE THE IDEA WAS THAT THE COMMUNITY HAD TO BE BUILT; TO SOME DEGREE HAD TO BE SEPARATE FROM THE REST OF THE COMMUNITY IN A WAY THAT IT WAS... IT WOULD ESTABLISH ITS OWN VALUES AND LIFE-STYLE.

WE LOOKED AT SOME LAND AT MUDGEES; I REMEMBER GOING THERE IN 1976, IT MAY HAVE BEEN SOMETIME IN EARLY... SORRY, 77, I'M SORRY; AUGUST 77 WE HAD A LOOK AT SOME LAND AT MUDGEES, ON THE UPPER MERU RIVER. THERE WAS ABOUT 230 ACRES OF LAND, BUT IT HAD BEEN OVER GRAZED WITH SHEEP, EROSION, THE WATER SUPPLY WAS A RIVER, BUT IT COULD DRY UP IN TIMES OF DROUGHT; IT WAS HOT, IT WAS DRY, IT WAS DUSTY AND IT REALLY WASN'T THE SOUGHT OF LAND WE WERE LOOKING FOR. THEN THE NEXT THING THAT I CAN REMEMBER IS THAT JOHN BURNE CAME BACK AND SAID THAT HE AND PETER RICKARD HAD BEEN SEARCHING UP THE NORTH COAST AND HAD FOUND SOME LAND OUTSIDE OF KEMPSEY. THEY HAD GONE AND SEEN THIS LAND, AND THOUGHT IT WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL AND VERY STUNNING AND HAD ALL THE QUALITIES THAT WE NEEDED. IT WAS ONLY VERY CHEAP, IT WAS ONLY \$25 000 FOR AN AREA THAT WAS ABOUT BETWEEN 5 000 AND 6 000 ACRES, DEPENDING ON CROWN LEASES, PERMISSIVE OCCUPANCIES, ETCETERA. I THEN WENT UP TO SEE THIS LAND AND THAT STAGE MET A NUMBER OF NEW PEOPLE; I WAS AT THAT STAGE.. I WAS FRIENDS WITH A LOT OF PEOPLE IN NEWCASTLE, ESPECIALLY WITH THE LABOR PARTY, PEOPLE LIKE HELEN WYNTER AND ... PEOPLE INVOLVED WITH THE LABOR PARTY AND.. AND I MET GODFREY TANNER WHEN I WAS

LIVING AT WOLFE STREET,NEWCASTLE.GODFREY OF COURSE IS A MEMBER OF TOORUMBEE,HAS BEEN FOR A LONG TIME,HE'S SOUGHT OF ALWAYS SUPPORTED THE COMMUNITY.I REMEMBER GOING UP TO THIS BEAUTIFUL PLACE,THAT'S THE ONLY WAY I CAN DESCRIBE IT..IT'S STUNNING.THE CREEKS THAT RAN THROUGH IT WERE SO CLEAN AND PURE,AND THE LAND WAS RELATIVELY UNTOUCHED,IT WAS FERTILE OBVIOUSLY...RIVER FLATS AND ...IT WAS AN AREA WERE YOU COULD BE SELF SUFFICIENT,A LOT OF RESOURCES IN TERMS OF TIMBER AND STONE AND WATER AND IT WAS FAIRLY REMOTE.

P.B:

JOHN!WHY DO YOU THINK AN ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE WAS ATTRACTIVE TO YOU AND THE GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH WHICH YOU WERE INVOLVED?

J.L:

BECAUSE I FOUND THAT THE TRADITIONAL SOCIETY,IN WHICH I HAD GROWN UP AND THE VALUES THAT HAD BEEN GIVEN TO ME DIDN'T MEET A LOT OF MY SPIRITUAL COMMITMENTS AND MY PERSONAL COMMITMENTS IN AS MUCH AS I FELT A NEED TO BE CLOSER TO PEOPLE ,I FELT A NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN PEOPLES LIVES,NOT JUST IN A WORK SENSE ,BUT ALSO IN A PERSONAL SENSE.I THINK NEEDED A FRIENDSHIP,I NEEDED A COMPANIONSHIP.....THAT'S...THE GROUP PROVIDED THAT FOR ME AND I NEEDED AT THAT STAGE SOME GOALS IN MY LIFE,AND I DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO SIT BACK AND BECOME THE AVERAGE SUBURBAN SOLICITOR AND JUST SORT OF DEGENERATE INTO A LUMP OF PETRIFIED FLESH AND DESK.AND FOR THAT REASON I WANTED TO HAVE A FREEDOM TO MY LIFE-STYLE WHICH I HAVEN'T GOT YET BUT I'M WORKING TOWARDS.I THINK THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY WERE UNIQUE IN MANY WAYS,THEY HAD A LOT TO COMMUNICATE TO EACH OTHER;A LOT OF THEM HAVE LEFT,A LOT HAVE STAYED,I THINK THAT WE....YOU KNOW WE HAD SOME GREAT TIMES TOGETHER,WE HAD SOME GREAT EXPERIENCES,THESE ARE THINGS THROUGH LIFE THAT YOU ...THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WHEN YOU LOOK BACK ON YOUR LIFE ,THESE EXPERIENCES AND THATS .....THATS THE MAIN REASONS WHY I .....LIFE-STYLE,WAS THE COMMUNICATION WITH THE PEOPLE.I



ALSO BELIEVE THAT AS TIME GOES ON THE VALUES OF A PRISTINE ENVIRONMENT LIKE TOORUMBEE AND THE ABILITY TO GET BACK THERE AND TO OPERATE,WHICH WILL BE ENHANCED BY MODERN TECHNOLOGY,WHICH MEANS THAT I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN I CAN WORK THERE BY USING MODERN TECHNOLOGY;LIKE FAX MACHINES,TELEPHONES AND COMPUTERS.I BELIEVE THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE,IF THEY ALL HAD THAT COMMITMENT COULD SET THEMSELVES UP THERE AND WORK IN A BRAIN SENSE AND MAKE MONEY THAT WAY.

P.B:

JOHN:WAS IT AN ISOLATED GROUP WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE?

J.L:

YES!AND A SPECIAL GROUP IN THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.THERE WERE NETWORKS IN NEWCASTLE WHICH;SOME OF WHICH I KNEW,SOME OF WHICH I DIDN'T,PEOPLE KNEW OTHER PEOPLE WHO TALKED TO THEM ABOUT TOORUMBEE AND I THINK IT WAS ....WASN'T ISOLATED IN AS MUCH AS I MET A LOT OF PEOPLE THAT I HADN'T MET BEFORE;PEOPLE THAT WEREN'T MIXING IN GROUPS I WAS MIXING IN ....THEY WEREN'T PART OF THE LEGAL FRATERNITY,OR THE RUGBY UNION CROWD,OR THE CRICKET CROWD,TEHY WERE DIFFERENT PEOPLE THAT I HADN'T MET BEFORE AND I FOUND THEM INVIGORATING.THEY ISOLATED IN THE EXTENT THAT THEY HAD VIEWS THAT WERE DIFFERENT FROM MOST OF THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TAHT I HAD MET,BUT THEIR VIEWS IN MY OPINION WERE BETTER.BUT I SUPPOSE TO SOME DEGREE ELITIST BUT....I SUPPOSE BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD THE WAY TO GO.TO SOME DEGREE TOORUMBEE BECAME,TO SOME PEOPLE A PASSION,FOR SOME OF US IT STILL IS,BUT I THINK IT WAS JUST MORE A SPECIAL GROUP,THAN ISOLATED BUT THEY CAME FROM ALL WALKSOF THE COMMUNITY;FROM PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE TO PEOPLE WHO WORKED IN THE INDUSTRIES,PEOPLE WHO WERE UNEMPLOYED .....THEY CAME FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE SO IT AWS TO SOME DEGREE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE COMMUNITY,BUT SPECIAL RATHER THAN ISOLATED.

P.B:

WAS IT PRODUCT OF EARLIER MOVEMENTS?

J.L:

IT CERTAINLY WAS, IT WAS A PRODUCT OF THE MOVEMENTS OF THE '60'S THE SOCIAL AWARENESS THAT GREW OUT OF THE MOVEMENTS OF THE '60'S, THE PROTEST MOVEMENT AND THE BACK TO THE EARTH MOVEMENTS AND THE PEOPLE WHO FORMED THE ORIGINAL COMMUNITY WERE VERY MUCH INFLUENCED BY THOSE IDEAS IT CAME OUT IN THEIR THOUGHTS, THEIR PHILOSOPHIES THEIR COMMITMENT TO ESTABLISHING AN ALTERNATE LIFE-STYLE AND I HAVE NO DOUBT IT WAS FROM THOSE SOURCES THAT THE IDEA CAME.

P.B:

JOHN! HAD YOU EVER VISITED ANY OTHER COMMUNITIES PRIOR TO BECOMING INVOLVED WITH TOORUMBEE?

J.L:

I HAD VISITED COMMUNITIES UP THE NORTH COAST, AT BELLINGEN, I'D ALSO BEEN TO NIMBIN. MY SISTER AND HER HUSBAND WERE INVOLVED IN A MUCH SMALLER COMMUNITY OUT NEAR MUDGEES AT A PLACE CALLED HEPRIN'S HOLE AN OLD BUSHRANGERS HIDEOUT IN THE GREAT DIVIDING RANGE WEST OF HERE, NEAR RYLSTON. SO I HAD SOME EXPERIENCE OF THEIR COMMUNITY OUT THERE AND ... BUT I HAD NEVER LIVED ON A COMMUNITY AS SUCH, EXCEPT THAT I HAD LIVED A FEW DAYS AT HER PROPERTY WITH HER HUSBAND AND GONE WALKING IN THE BUSH AND ... THAT WAS MY ONLY EXPERIENCE MYSELF OF A PREVIOUS ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE COMMUNITY.

P.B:

WERE THERE ANY PARTICULAR PEOPLE OR IDEAS THAT INFLUENCED YOU AND THE GROUP YOU WERE INVOLVED WITH?

J.L:

I THINK A LOT OF THE MOVEMENTS OF THE '60'S LIKE THE VIETNAM ANTI-WAR MOVEMENT AND THE ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE MOVEMENT THAT FOLLOWED THAT DID INFLUENCE ME... I HAD READ A LOT OF BOOKS ON ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE COMMUNITY. AND THERE WERE BOOKS PUBLISHED DURING THE WHITLAM GOVERNMENT WHEN JIM CAIRNS WAS INVOLVED WHICH GAVE DETAILS OF ALTERNATE LIFE-STYLE COMMUNITIES AND THE EXPERIMENTS THAT HAPPENED

THERE, THEY INFLUENCED ME THEN TOO. THOSE... BUT IN FAIRNESS THE IDEAS THAT I MET WITH THE GROUP OF PEOPLE I MET IN ERARING. THAT SOUGHT OF GROUNDSWELL OF PEOPLE WAS THE THING THAT INFLUENCED ME THE MOST, MORE THAN ANY IDEAS. IT WAS A GROUP OF PEOPLE THAT WERE LIVING AND WERE THERE AND THAT WERE COMMUNICATING, WANTED TO DO SOMETHING AND HAD A COMMON PURPOSE, AND WERE PREPARED TO PUT THEIR TIME AND MONEY INTO IT THAT WERE... THAT WAS VERY, VERY... THE THING THAT PERSUADED... I THINK IT WAS MORE THE GROUP OF PEOPLE THAN THE IDEA ITSELF

P.B:

SO THE REALITY GREW OUT OF THE DISCUSSION?

J.L:

YEAH! THE REALITY GREW OUT OF... OUR CONSENSUS TO SEEK A BETTER WAY OF LIVING FOR OURSELVES IN THE FUTURE. MAYBE SOME OF US THOUGHT THE FUTURE WAS A YEAR AHEAD, MAYBE SOME OF US THOUGHT THE FUTURE WAS TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AHEAD. WE ALL HAVE DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF THE FUTURE AND WHAT IT'S GOING TO INVOLVE, BUT WE ALL HAD A COMMON GOAL.

P.B:

AS LEGAL SECRETARY, WAS THERE ANY PARTICULAR CONCERN AT THE TIME FOR LEGAL STRUCTURE?

J.L:

YES WELL I HAD ALSO LOOKED AT LEGAL STRUCTURES INVOLVING COMMUNITIES, AND... IN THE EARLY DAYS THERE'D BEEN A LOT OF HAPHAZARD LEGAL STRUCTURES THAT HAD... RISEN UP. THERE WERE FIRSTLY PEOPLE BUYING LAND TOGETHER, PUTTING ALL THEIR NAMES ON THE DEEDS AS TENANTS IN COMMON AND THE PROBLEM THAT OCCURED WAS THAT, IN DUE COURSE CERTAIN PEOPLE FELL OUT FROM THE COMMUNITIES AND THEN YOU HAD THE SITUATIONS WHERE PEOPLE OWNED PARCELS OF LAND, WHERE THEY WERE IN DISPUTE WITH THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE NAD THEY WERE OWNERS OF PROPERTY AND THEY COULD FORCE CERTAIN LEGAL REMEDIES ON THE REST OF THE PEOPLE.

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THE OTHER THING WAS, TO INSURE THAT THERE WAS DEMOCRACY IN THE COMMUNITY, THAT THERE WAS ... THE RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL. THAT THE COMMUNITY HAD TO BE LEGALLY PROTECTED AGAINST WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTS BY OTHER PEOPLE WHO WEREN'T IN FAVOUR OF WHAT WE WERE DOING TO ... TO SOUGHT OF HARASS, AND ALSO WE HAD TO MAKE SURE THAT ... THERE WAS NOT ANY HASTY DECISIONS ABOUT STRUCTURES THAT LATER ON WOULD LEAVE US ... OPEN TO A LOT OF EXPENSE AND HASSLE ... SO THE LEGAL STRUCTURE THAT WAS FIRST ENTERED INTO WAS THAT JOHN BURNE TOOK TITLE OF THE LAND AS TRUSTEE FOR A NUMBER OF PEOPLE, AT THAT STAGE UNINCORPORATED. JOHN WAS THE TRUSTEE, I HELD THE DEEDS, THE DEEDS WERE SUBJECT TO MORTGAGE BY THE BANK, THAT THE COMMUNITY WAS PAYING OFF; WHICH EVENTUALLY THEY DID. WHAT SORT OF LEGAL STRUCTURE TO EVOLVE? WELL, CERTAINLY TENANCY IN COMMON WASN'T FEASIBLE, FOR LOTS OF REASONS. WE LOOKED AT CO-OPERATIVE STRUCTURES AND THAT WAS VERY BUREAUCRATIC, AND SECONDLY, ... DIDN'T GIVE THE COMMUNITY SCOPE FOR WHAT IT WANTED TO DO. I ALWAYS THOUGHT WAS GOING TO BE A COMMERCIAL STRUCTURE, AND I ALWAYS THOUGHT A COMPANY STRUCTURE WAS THE BEST, BECAUSE IT WAS SIMPLEST. SO IN DUE COURSE A COMPANY WAS FORMED. I WASN'T UNHAPPY ABOUT THAT, BECAUSE IT GAVE TIME FOR THE WEEDING OUT PROCESS TO OCCUR WITH THE COMMUNITY, WHERE CERTAIN PERSONS DROPPED OUT, IF THEY DIDN'T HAVE SHARES, OR SOME OTHER SOUGHT OF LEGAL ENTITLEMENT, PROVIDED THEY GOT THEIR MONEY BACK, WHICH THEY DID, THEN THERE WAS NO PROBLEM, NEVER HAS BEEN IN RELATION TO THAT. EVERYONE GOT REFUNDED MONIES THEY'D PUT INTO THE COMPANY AND THAT WAS THE END OF IT. BUT IN THE END THE LANDS WERE TAKEN OUT OF CROWN LAND CONTROL, THAT'S THE FREEHOLD SECTIONS OF THE LAND TRANSFERRED TO THE NAME OF THE COMPANY. SOME OF THE CROWN LAND PORTIONS WERE CONVERTED FROM CONDITIONAL PURCHASES, INTO FREEHOLD, THERE ARE THREE REMAINING SECTIONS OF LAND LEFT ON THE COMMUNITY. .... ONE OF WHICH RESUMED BECAUSE OF STATE FOREST, THAT'S PORTION 31. OF THE COUNTY OF DUDLEY, THE PARISH OF DUDLEY. THE LEGAL STRUCTURES ARE THAT

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THERE ARE FOUR PERSONS WHO HOLD THE CROWN LEASES TO THOSE THREE PORTIONS OF LAND. THEY ARE THE OWNERS OF THOSE PROPERTIES, BUT THEY HOLD THEM AS JOINT TENANTS, AND IF ONE WERE TO DIE IT WOULD GO TO THE SURVIVING PERSONS. THAT CONSTITUTES ABOUT, 2 000 ACRES. THERE IS AN AMOUNT, ABOUT 2 200 ACRES, WHICH IS HELD AS FREEHOLD LAND AND IS OWNED BY THE COMPANY. I WOULD SUGGEST THAT THAT LAND AT THIS STAGE WOULD BE WORTH APPROXIMATELY A QUARTER OF A MILLION DOLLARS; WITH THE LAND VALUE AND THE PRISTINE VALUE OF THE PROPERTY. THE LAND IS OWNED BY THE COMPANY AND EACH PERSON WHO IS A MEMBER OF THE COMPANY, HOLDS FIVE SHARES IN THE COMPANY. THE SHARES ARE \$200 EACH AND THOSE SHARES GIVE THE MEMBERS A RIGHT IN RELATION TO THE COMPANIES, THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY A SHARE IN THE VALUE OF THE COMPANY. THE COMPANY ALSO REQUIRES THAT MEMBERS PAY TO THE COMPANY, AN AMOUNT OF \$5 PER WEEK, FOR CHARGES TO THE COMPANY TO KEEP THE COMMUNITY GOING. THE COMMUNITY ITSELF IS NOW EARNING MONIES FROM SALE OF LIVESTOCK, GARLIC CROP, SALE OF NUT TREES AND AGISTMENT IT IS EARNING SOME INCOME; CERTAINLY ENOUGH TO PAY THE RATES AND OUR CROWN LAND DUES. THE LEGAL STRUCTURE OF THE COMPANY IS THAT THERE ARE TWO DIRECTORS OF THE COMPANY .... AT THIS STAGE THERE ARE BRIAN ENGLAND AND PETER RICKARD. I AM THE SECRETARY OF THE COMPANY AND ALL MEMBERS HOLD THE EQUAL AMOUNT OF SHARES. IF THE COMMUNITY OR THE THE COMPANY DECIDE TO APPOINT EXTRA DIRECTORS THATS ENTIRLY UP TO THEM TO DO THAT. BUT I BELIEVE THAT A SMALL NUMBER OF DIRECTORS AND A SECRETARY MAKES FOR EASE IN THE SIGNING OF DOCUMENTS AND ADMINISTERING COMPANY AFFAIRS. THE COMPANY IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT TO THE CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION EVERY YEAR A RETURN WHICH IS AUDITED BY ACCOUNANTS AND ALSO REQUIRED TO SUBMIT TAXATION RETURNS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ALL THOSE THINGS ARE DONE SO THATFULLY COMPLIES WITH THE LEGAL REQUIREMENTS OF THIS SYSTEM AND CANNOT BE OPEN TO ATTACK. THE COMPANY HAS ACCUMULATED LOSSES AND THEREFORE .... IN THE FUTURE IT MAY MAKE A PROFIT THEN THOSE CAN BE

BROUGHT FORWARD FOR THE COMPANY'S BENEFIT. THERE ARE PRESENTLY I THINK AROUND ABOUT 25 OR 26 MEMBERS OF THE COMPANY EACH OF WHOM HOLD 5 SHARES. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF VACANT SHARES WHICH ARE HELD BECAUSE THE TRANSFER OUT OF A NUMBER OF MEMBERS AND THE DEATH OF ONE MEMBER. THEY ARE HELD BY A TRUSTEE, MR. GEOFFREY BADGER, AS TRUSTEE FOR THE COMPANY AND AS NEW MEMBERS JOIN THOSE SHARES ARE TRANSFERRED INTO THE NAMES OF THOSE MEMBERS OF THE COMPANY.

P.B:

IS THIS A UNIQUE STRUCTURE?

J.L:

NO, IT'S NOT UNIQUE IN AS MUCH AS A LOT OF PEOPLE GOING INTO THIS SORT OF VENTURE DO CHOOSE COMPANY STRUCTURES. MOST ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE COMMUNITIES THAT I'VE EVER COME ACROSS ARE NOT AS WELL STRUCTURED AS TOORRUMBEE AND WHAT HAS HAPPENED BECAUSE OF THAT IS THERE HAS BEEN EXCESSIVE LITIGATION AND FALL-OUT - I THINK YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT THAT, PETER, HAVEN'T YOU, ABOUT LITIGATION IN COMMUNITIES AND PEOPLE SUING OTHER PEOPLE - AND ... AND WE'VE AVOIDED THIS SO FAR. WE'VE HAD A COUPLE OF SITUATIONS WHERE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ASKED TO LEAVE, FOR VARIOUS REASONS, AND THAT'S BEEN HANDLED REASONABLY SUCCESSFULLY AND THEY'VE LEFT, THEY'VE GOT THEIR MONEY BACK AND THEY HAVE LEFT THE COMMUNITY. BUT ... A LOT OF THE STRUCTURES I'VE COME ACROSS ARE MUCH LOOSER THAN TOORRUMBEE'S AND THAT LEADS TO DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS. I THINK IT IS REASONABLY WELL STRUCTURED, IT CERTAINLY HAS COPEDED WITH THE PROBLEMS THAT HAVE OCCURRED IN THE COMMUNITY

P.B:

DO YOU THINK THE WAY IN WHICH THE STRUCTURE WORKS IS ... DO YOU THINK YOUR OWN INPUT HAS HELPED THAT?

J.L:

OH YES! IT HAS THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT IT ... I ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT I WAS ... REQUIRED BY THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY TO DEVELOP A PROPER LEGAL STRUCTURE. AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED



THE STRUCTURE HAS TO HAVE THREE REQUIREMENTS, FIRSTLY IT HAS TO BE DEMOCRATIC, EVERY PERSON HAS AN EQUAL VOTE, WHICH IS THE WAY IT IS, IF IT DOES COME TO THE VOTE. THAT NO MAJOR DECISION IS MADE, WITH RELATION TO THE COMMUNITY, UNLESS IT IS HELD AT A MEETING, WHERE A QUORUM IS PRESENT AND IF NECESSARY A MAJORITY VOTE IS TAKEN. SO FIRSTLY IT HAS TO BE DEMOCRATIC, SECONDLY, IT HAS TO BE, AS FAR AS THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS CONCERNED, IT HAS TO BE SOLID, IT HAS TO BE PRESENTABLE, IT HAS TO BE COMPLIANT WITH THE LAWS, IN RELATION TO TAXATION, CORPORATE AFFAIRS AUDITING AND COMPANIES. OUR COMMUNITY HAS ALWAYS DONE THAT .... SO I THINK THE COMPANY ALSO HAS TO BE ABLE TO RESOLVE... THE THIRD THING IS TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS THAT IT HAS ..... WHEN THERE ARE DISPUTES BETWEEN MEMBERS..... WHEN SOMEBODY DOES SOMETHING WRONG HOW TO DISCIPLINE SOMEONE, OR TO TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT THE COMMUNITY. WE HAVE HAD A COUPLE OF OCCASSIONS DURING THE HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE PERIOD I CAN REMEMBER, WHERE TWO MEMBERS HAVE BEEN ASKED TO LEAVE, FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, REASONS THAT ARE NOT PARTICULARLY RELEVANT. BUT THOSE HAVE BEEN EFFECTED WITH CONSIDERATION, I BELIEVE, OF THE FEELINGS OF THE MEMBERS INVOLVED WHO WERE ASKED TO LEAVE. THE REASONS WERE VALID, THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THAT.

F.B:

WHY DO YOU THINK THERE IS SUCH A HIGH TURNOVER OF PEOPLE, WITHIN COMMUNITIES LIKE THIS?

J.L:

I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE COME INTO THE COMMUNITY WITH CERTAIN IDEALS AND GOALS THAT THE COMMUNITY CAN'T MEET FOR THEM. I THINK THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT IS PERFECT AND UNFORTUNATELY, WITH A COMMUNITY LIKE IDORUNBEE, IT IS NOT PERFECT. THERE ARE GOING TO BE DISPUTES BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS, THERE ARE GOING TO BE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION ON CERTAIN THINGS, THERE ARE CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO GIVE OTHER PEOPLE THE SHITS. WHEN YOU ARE FORCED TO COMMUNICATE AND LIVE

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TOGETHER LIKE TOORUMBEE FORCES YOU TO WHEN YOU GO THERE, THERE IS GOING TO BE CERTAIN PEOPLE,WHO FOR PERSONAL REASONS CAN'T HANDLE THAT AND SECONDLY ,THERE ARE CERTAIN PEOPLE WHOSE IDEALS CAN'T BE MET.THE PHILOSOPHY I'VE ALWAYS HAD IS THAT EVERYBODY HAS JUST GOT TO GET ALONG WITH EVERYBODY ELSE, I SUPPOSE TOLERANCE IS IT.I'VE NEVER EXPECTED TOO MUCH FROM OTHER PEOPLE,I EXPECT THAT THEY WILL LEAVE ME ALONE AND LET ME GET ON WITH WHAT I'M DOING ,PROVIDED I DON'T INTERFERE WITH THEM OR IN ANY WAY HURT OR HARM THEM.BUT IN THE EARLY PART OF TOORUMBEE THERE WAS A HIGH TURNOVER OF MEMBERS,IN THE LAST 3 OR 4 YEARS THERE HASN'T BEEN SUCH A HIGH TURNOVER OF MEMBERS.THE COMMUNITY HAS STABLIZED,THE MEMBERSHIP HAS STABLIZED BETWEEN 25 AND 30,IT HAS BEEN THAT WAY FOR QUITE A NUMBER OF YEARS.THERE ARE CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN THERE FROM TEH BEGINNING,WHO ARE STILL THERE AND THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE QUITTING. THERE ARE CERTAIN PEOPLE WHO ARE THERE FOR THE LONG HAUL AND BY THE LONG HAUL I MEAN,FOR THE NEXT 50 YEARS AND I WANT TO PART OF THAT.BECAUSE I THINK THAT IN THE LONG TERM IT GOING TO BE SUCCESSFUL.

P.B:

THAT LEADS ME ON TO ANOTHER THOUGHT.IN THE LARGER COMMUNITY,DO YOU SEE THIS TYPE OF COMMUNITY AS BEING A REALLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE FOR ,SAY THE LARGE NUMBERS OF UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE?

J.L:

YES I DO,I THINK THESE TYPE OF COMMUNITIES ARE VERY IMPORTANT.WE HAVE,ESPECIALLY IN THE HUNTER VALLEY,LARGE AREAS OF UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE,ESPECIALLY IN THE YOUTH.THERE ARE PEOPLE,WHO FRANKLY,WILL NEVER GET JOBS,THEY ARE SIMPLY NOT CAPABLE OF DOING THEM OR THEY ARE NOT SKILLED ENOUGH OR THEY HAVE SOME PROBLEM AND THEY CAN'T GET EMPLOYMENT.THOSE PEOPLE HAVE SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE AND BEARING IN MIND,IN THIS AREA THAT WE HAVE A LARGE AMOUNT OF UNEMPLOYMENT,IF THESE AREAS COULD BE OPENED UP,ON THE NORTH COAST,WHERE PEOPLE WERE GIVEN



MONEY, NOT A LARGE AMOUNT, TO SET THEMSELVES UP AND TO BECOME MORE SELF SUFFICIENT. I THINK THAT THAT IS A MUCH BETTER ALTERNATIVE THAN SAY HAVING TO PROVIDE HOUSING COMMISSION UNITS FOR PEOPLE AND HOUSES, OR PEOPLE GO ON HOUSING COMMISSION LISTS, WHERE HOUSES COST 50 OR 60 000 DOLLARS TO BUILD. WHERE THEY HAVE TO MAINTAINED BY THE STATE AND I THINK IF PEOPLE WERE HOUSED IN THIS WAY, GIVEN THIS ALTERNATIVE A LOT MORE PEOPLE WOULD TAKE IT. AND... BUT THERE ARE NOT ... ON THE OTHER HAND THERE ARE NOT A LOT OF THE AREAS LIKE TOORUMBEE LEFT. AND... MAYBE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE TO SETTLE FOR SECOND BEST, THERE ARE MANY AREAS NOW ALONG THE TOORUMBEE VALLEY WHICH CAN BE ... WHICH ARE STILL LARGE ACREAGES WHICH COULD BE DEVELOPED FOR THIS REASON, IT IS ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE AREAS LEFT IN THAT REGARD. ESPECIALLY.. AS FAR AS NEWCASTLE IS CONCERNED, IT IS STILL A REASONABLE DISTANCE, IT IS ONLY.. KEMPSEY IS ONLY THREE AND A BIT HOURS FROM NEWCASTLE AND THE HIGHWAY IS BEING IMPROVED AND TOORUMBEE FROM KEMPSEY, TOORUMBEE VALLEY, IS ONLY AN HOUR. AND WITH MODERN COMMUNICATIONS OPENING UP THE AREA, ELECTRICITY GOING IN AND THE REMOTE AREA POWER SUBSIDY, I'M SURE THAT THESE ARE THE WAY OF THE FUTURE. BUT A LOT OF PEOPLE, THEY DON'T SEEM TO REALISE THAT THEY ARE BROUGHT UP IN CERTAIN ENVIRONMENTS AND LIVE IN THE CLOSE INDUSTRIAL SUBURBS OF NEWCASTLE AND THATS WHERE THEY WANT TO LIVE, I SUPPOSE THATS THEIR CHOICE BUT I THINK IF A LOT OF THEM WERE ENLIGHTENED A BIT MORE THEY WOULD TAKE THE OTHER ALTERNATIVE AND MOVE INTO THE BUSH.

P. B:

I WAS JUST GOING TO SAY, DO YOU THINK THERE IS A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF IGNORANCE ABOUT THIS SORT OF LIFE-STYLE?

J. L:

THAT IS WHERE TOORUMBEE IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE WHAT IT HAS DONE

FOR THE PEOPLE OF NEWCASTLE, A SMALL AMOUNT I SUPPOSE, IS SHOWN A NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NEWCASTLE A DIFFERENT WAY OF LIVING. IT HASN'T BEEN UNIVERSALLY PROFOUND IN NEWCASTLE, A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW ABOUT IT, BUT .. IT'S ..... AN INFLUENCE AND I THINK IF IT IS PUBLICISED, THE MORE PEOPLE GO THERE, THE MORE PEOPLE BECOME INFLUENCED AND WANT TO LIVE THAT LIFE-STYLE. IT IS A QUESTION OF IGNORANCE THEIR NOT SHOWN A BETTER WAY.

P.B:

SO THEREFORE MAYBE GOVERNMENTS COULD DO MORE IN THIS AREA?

J.L:

I THINK THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHAT GOVERNMENTS CAN DO. I'M A LITTLE BIT SUSPICIOUS OF GOVERNMENTS BECAUSE WHERE YOU HAVE GOVERNMENTS INVOLVED, YOU HAVE BUREAUCRACY AND CONTROLS AND PAPER-WORK AND ALL THE REST OF IT. I THINK THAT GOVERNMENTS ROLE, IN THE LONG TERM, IS SORT OF LOOKING AT THE SITUATION AND SAYING IT IS GOING TO COST THIS AMOUNT OF MONEY TO HOUSE PEOPLE. HOUSING COMMISSION ESTATES AND ALL THE PROBLEMS THEY BRING, IT IS A CHEAPER ALTERNATIVE TO PUT PEOPLE OUT IN THE BUSH, IF THEY WANT LIVE THAT WAY. AND ... I THINK IF A LOT OF PEOPLE WERE OFFERED THE OPORTUNITY TO GO INTO THE BUSH, A LOT WOULD TAKE IT. PROVIDED IF THEY WEREN'T EMPLOYED, AND THERE IS NO WAY OF GETTING EMPLOYMENT, THEY COULD AT LEAST CONTINUE RECEIVING THE DOLE. AND.... THEN THEY COULD AT LEAST GET A SUBSIDY TO BUILD THEIR OWN HOUSE. I THINK IN THE LONG TERM THEY BECOME SELF SUFFICIENT, THEY SORT OF HAVE THEIR OWN GARDENS AND LIVESTOCK ETCETERA, GRADUALLY THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO BECOME MORE THAN JUST SOCIAL SECURITY RECIPIENTS, THE MIGHT BE ABLE TO BECOME CONTRIBUTORS AND PRODUCERS. SO I THINK GOVERNMENTS CAN HELP, PROVIDING A LIMITED AMOUNT OF MONEY OR SAVE THEMSELVES MONEY IN THE FUTURE, BUT SECONDLY, TO THROUGH THE SCHOOLS, PROVIDE, YOU KNOW, EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATE

LIFE-STYLE LIVING SO THAT KIDS IN SCHOOLS GET AN IDEA WHAT IS GOING ON AND SPONSOR TRIPS TO ALTERNATE LIFE-STYLE COMMUNITIES BY SCHOOLS.I KNOW WE'VE HAD KEMPSEY SCHOOL COME TO OUR PROPERTY.THAT IS A GOOD WAY OF PROMOTING IT, YOU KNOW.

P.B:

WAS THERE ANY SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS AT THE OUT SET?

J.L:

YEAH!IT WAS A SPIRITUAL THING,NOT SO MUCH RELIGIOUS...I'D LONG ABANDONED MY ROMAN CATHOLIC FAITH WHICH I FOUND WASN'T RELEVANT TO WHAT I WAS LIVING AT THE TIME.I WAS LOOKING FOR SOME SORT OF COMMON WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH PEOPLE THAT I COULD GET A COMMON GOAL WITH SOME OTHER PEOPLE AND WORK TOWARDS IT AND KNOWING THAT BY MY WORK AND THEIR WORK TOGETHER WE WOULD ACHIEVE SOMETHING.THAT WHAT WE TRIED TO ACHIEVE WAS GOOD AND PROPER.IT WAS SPIRITUAL TO THE EXTENT THAT IT INVOLVED PUTTING MY OWN IDENTITY ABOVE,BELOW I MEAN ,THE GROUP IDENTITY AND THE GROUP IDENTITY WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR TOORUMBEE.THAT WAS SPIRITUAL IN ITSELF,IT WAS A VERY SPIRITUAL HAPPENING.THAT OUR MINDS,WITHOUT HAVING ACTUALLY TO SAY TO EACH OTHER,WE WERE WORKING TOWARDS THE SAME OBJECTIVE. THERE WAS NEVER ANY RELIGION INVOLVED IN TOORUMBEE,IT WASN'T EVER CONSIDERED TO BE A RELIGIOUS FAITH,CHRISTIAN,BUDDHIST,HINDU OR WHATEVER.THERE WERE A NUMBER OF RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES INTO THE PROPERTY AND THE COMMUNITY,BUT UP TO THIS STAGE THE COMMUNITY IS BASICALLY AGNOSTIC.THERE IS NO RELIGIOUS ELEMENT AT ALL IN TOORUMBEE BUT A VERY SPIRITUAL ONE.THE SPIRITUALITY ALSO EXTENDS TO THE LAND ITSELF,MOST OF US REALISE THAT WE OWN,BETWEEN OURSELVES A VERY IMPORTANT AND PROFOUND BIT OF LAND.THAT IS ITSELF FULL OF SPIRITUALITY,ESPECIALLY FOR THE ABORIGINES.THERE IS A CONECTION,A SPIRITUAL CONECTION BETWEEN ME AND THAT LAND IN

AS MUCH AS THAT ITS BEAUTY AND ITS POWER IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME AND I COMMUNICATE WITH THAT LAND BETTER THAN ANY OTHER BIT OF LAND IN THE ENTIRE WORLD.SO IT IS A SPIRIT OF PLACE TO BE THERE,A SPIRIT OF PLACE WHERE YOU .....YOU KNOW WHEN YOU LIVE THERE THAT THERE IS SOMETHING VERY,VERY MYSTICAL ABOUT THE WHOLE PROPERTY,ABOUT YOUR EXISTANCE THERE.

P.B:

HAVE THERE EVER BEEN ANY TIMES WHEN YOU THOUGHT CONFLICT WITHIN THE GROUP,REALLY THREATENED THE GROUP AT ALL?

J.L:

YEAH,ON A COUPLE OF OCCASSIONS WHEN THAT OCCURRED,THEY WERE MORE IN THE EARLY TIMES IN THE COMMUNITY,BUT IT HAS NEVER BEEN TO MY EXPERIENCE, TO THAT DEGREE THAT IT HAS THREATENED THE ACTUAL UNITY OF THE GROUP.I THINK THAT FROM WHAT HAS HAPPENED WITH PEOPLE BREAKING AWAY WHEN THERE HAS BEEN DISPUTES,THAT THE MAIN BODY OF PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN COMMITTED TO THE PROPERTY AND HAVE HAD COMMON IDEALS AND HAVE BEEN ABLE BETWEEN THEMSELVES TO RESOLVE THEIR OWN DIFFERENCES.I THINK THAT THE CORE OF PEOPLE WHOM HAVE REMAINED AT TOORUMBEE,HAVE REMAINED BECAUSE BETWEEN THAT CORE OF PEOPLE THEMSELVES THEY HAVE RESOLVED THE CONFLICTS THAT THEY HAD AND THEY UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT EACH OTHER,THAT HAS BEEN THE STRENGTH OF IT .....BUT I HAVE NEVER FELT,AT ANY TIME ,THERE HAS BEEN SUFFICIENT CONFLICT FOR THE WHOLE THJING TO DISSOLVE,NO.

P.B:

YOU TALKED EARLIER OF THE FUTURE.YOU TALKED OF YOUSELF BEING INVOLVED,POSSIBLY FOR THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS.WHAT SORT OF THINGS DO YOU SEE IN THE FUTURE OF TOORUMBEE?

J.L:

I THINK THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT FUTURE IS THAT COMMUNICATIONS

BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD, IN TERMS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS, WHATEVER. I THINK THAT...  
...TELECOMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY WILL CATCH UP TO TOORUMBEE, IN OTHER WORDS IT WILL BECOME PROGRESSIVELY CHEAPER FOR THE COMMUNITY AND MAYBE A NUMBER OF MEMBERS TO INVEST IN TELECOMMUNICATIONS. WHEREUPON THE COMMUNITY CAN THEN BE CONNECTED TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD. ONCE THAT IS DONE, THEN THE COMMUNITY HAS UNLIMITED FUTURE. I BELIEVE THAT IN THE FUTURE, SOMEONE LIKE ZEL SMYTHE'S LAND WILL COME UP FOR SALE AND FOR SOME REASON IF THIS TAPE RECORDING IS HEARD THIRTY YEARS HENCE AND I'M NO LONGER HERE, I WOULD CERTAINLY SAY THAT THE COMMUNITY SHOULD LOOK AT BUYING PORTIONS OF THAT LAND, ESPECIALLY THAT PORTION THAT WOULD GIVE US THE LAND AT THE JUNCTION OF THE TWO CREEKS, THAT IS PORTION 11. I THINK THE COMMUNITY WILL GROW IN TERMS OF LAND AND WILL GROW IN TERMS OF NUMBERS. IT IS STABILIZED AT THE MOMENT, IT OWNS A SIGNIFICANT ASSET OF LAND, IT IS SATBILIZED AND IT IS JUST SIMPLY WAITING FOR THE CONDITIONS TO CHANGE SO THAT THESE TYPE OF LIFE-STYLES AGAIN BECOME MORE POPULAR, AND THAT WILL HAPPEN IN THE FUTURE. ESPECIALLY WHEN PEOPLE, LIKE MYSELF, AND PEOPLE MAYBE A BIT OLDER THAN ME RETIRE. MAYBE PEOPLE WILL RETIRE IN THEIR FIFTIES, WHERE DO THEY GO, THEY STAY IN THE CITIES AND LIVE A PRETTY MUNDANE EXISTANCE. I THINK THAT IN THE FUTURE, AND I'M TALKING FIFTY YEARS HENCE, THIS PROPERTY WILL BE UNIQUE, IT WILL HAVE A FUTURE, THERE WILL BE PEOPLE LIVING THERE AND IT WILL BE A VIABLE COMMUNITY. BECAUSE WE HAVE THE MAJOR ASSET, THAT IS THE LAND, WE'VE INVESTED IN BUILDINGS, EQUIPMENT, FENCES, ORCHARDS, STOCK AND GARDENS. IT WILL PAYOFF, IN THE LONG TERM.

EXTENT ON THAT OUTSIDE COMMUNITY AND THE CONTACT.DO YOU THIS

P.B:

IT SEEMS THAT AT THE BEGINNING THERE WAS A NEED TO, SORT OF, MOVE OUTSIDE OF THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.YET, FROM WHAT YOU ARE SAYING, THE COMMUNITY REALLY IS DEPENDENT ON...TO A LARGE EXTENT ON THAT OUTSIDE COMMUNITY AND THE CONTACT.DO YOU THINK THAT THIS APPLIES GENERALLY TO THE ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE MOVEMENT?DO YOU THINK IT MAY REACH A STAGE WHERE IT NO LONGER IS NECESSARILY AN ALTERNATIVE.....?

J.L:

IT IS JUST A DIFFERENT MAINSTREAM?

P.B:

MMMM..!

J.L:

YEAH!.....I THINK IT IS GOING TO BE THE WAY IT IS GOING TO BE.THE EXPONENTIAL INCREASE IN THE USE OF ELECTRONICS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS IS GOING TO GET A SYSTEM WHERE ...IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO EARN A LIVING QUITE COMFORTABLY AT TOORUMBEE, USING THOSE TECHNOLOGY AND IT WILL BECOME..IT MAY NOT BE THE ALTERNATIVE LIFE-STYLE, IT MAY BE A VERY TREASURED LIFE-STYLE, THAT A FEW PEOPLE ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE, COMPARED TO THOSE LIVING ON THEIR SMALL BLOCKS OF LAND IN THE CITIES.I THINK THE COMMUNITY IS DEPENDENT ON THE OUTSIDE COMMUNITY, IN AS MUCH AS THAT IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PRODUCE EVERYTHING YOU NEED ON A COMMUNITY LIKE THAT TO LIVE. YOU NEED THINGS LIKE PETROLEUM AND DIESEL PRODUCTS, SOME MANUFACTURED GOODS ,SO EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO BARTER WITH THE OUTSIDE COMMUNITY, YOU STILL NEED THE OUTSIDE COMMUNITY.I DON'T THINK IT IS POSSIBLE IN THIS DAY AND AGE TO BE SELF



SUFFICIENT, WHERE YOU DON'T NEED THE OUTSIDE COMMUNITY AT ALL . I JUST THINK THE RELEVANT QUESTION IS HOW MUCH ARE YOU DEPENDENT. SAY IF SOMEONE PULLS THE PLUG ON YOU COULD YOU GET BY, AND THIS IS WHY TOORUMBEE, AS FAR AS I'M AWARE, WE'VE ADOPTED A POLICY OF STORING FOODSTUFFS, SO IF SOMETHING DOES HAPPEN AT LEAST THE COMMUNITY IS SELF SUFFICIENT IN SOME SORT OF GRAINS AND RICE AND WHEAT AND THAT SORT OF THING FOR SOME PERIOD OF TIME. SO THERE HAS BEEN SELF SUFFICIENT WORK DONE. THE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY IS NOT DEPENDENT ON THE OUTSIDE WORLD NOR IS THE WATER SUPPLY. THE WHOLE STRUCTURE OUTSIDE WERE TO COLLAPSE, TOORUMBEE COULD KEEP GOING FOR A LOT LONGER THAN THE OUTSIDE WORLD COULD.

F.B:

WELL, THANK YOU VERY MUCH, JOHN. BEFORE I GO IS THERE ANY WAY YOU CAN BRIEFLY SUMMARISE WHAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT?

J.L:

I THINK IN THE ULTIMATE IT IS A UNIQUE HUMAN EXPERIENCE THAT I'VE GONE THROUGH. IT IS SOMETHING THAT IS VERY IMPORTANT IN MY LIFE. TOORUMBEE IS A SMALL MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE A SPIRITUAL BOND WITH THE LAND, WHERE THE PROPERTY IS LOCATED. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT IT CONTINUE, IT WILL CONTINUE. I THINK THE STRUCTURES THAT HAVE BEEN SET UP ARE GOOD, AND WILL HOLD. I THINK THAT THE GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE NOW INVOLVED, ARE SINCERE AND BELIEVE IN IT AND BELIEVE IN EACH OTHER. I THINK IN THE LONG RUN IT WILL SUCCEED, IT WILL TAKE A LONG TIME, IT WILL TAKE A LOT OF EFFORT, BUT IT WILL HAPPEN. IT WILL HAPPEN BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WANT IT TO HAPPEN. IT IS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE THAT MANY PEOPLE IN THEIR LIVES HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN. I THINK THREE UNIQUE EXPERIENCES, FIRSTLY, EXPERIENCING A GROUP OF OTHER PEOPLE AND BECOMING INVOLVED WITH THEM, SECONDLY, WORKING TOGETHER AND

THIRDLY, TO HAVE SUCH A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE WITH SUCH BEAUTIFUL  
LAND, SUCH BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY, IT IS SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL  
COUNTRY I'VE EVER SEEN.... THAT IS IT.

P.B:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH JOHN.