

BIOGRAVIEW

Perspectives from around the globe

Call to kōrero:

THE REVIVAL OF TE REO MĀORI AS
AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF

Aotearoa



INTERVIEWS / RESEARCH / LIFE

SEPTEMBER | 2021

defined

THE WORD 'BIOGRAVIEW' IS A COMBINATION OF **BIOGRAPHY** AND **VIEW**.

BIOGRAPHY

/baɪˈɒɡrəfi/

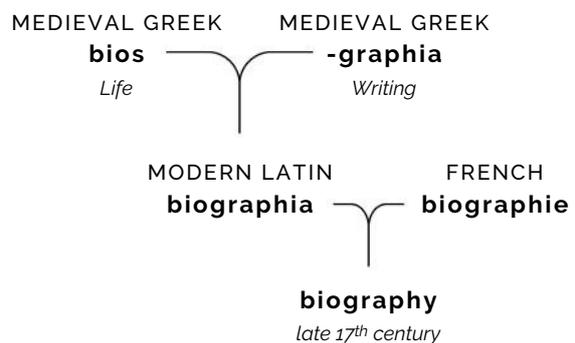
noun

noun: *biography*; plural noun: *biographies*

An account of someone's life written by someone else.

- **biographies considered as a literary genre.**
"the basic difference of approach to autobiography and biography"
- **the course of a person's life.**
"although their individual biographies are different, both are motivated by a similar ambition"

ORIGIN



Late 17th century: from French *biographie* or modern Latin *biographia*, from medieval Greek, from *bios* 'life' + *-graphia* 'writing'.

VIEW

/vjʊ/

noun

1. **the ability to see something or to be seen from a particular place.**

"the end of the tunnel came into view"

2. **a sight or prospect, typically of attractive natural scenery, that can be taken in by the eye from a particular place.**

"a fine view of the castle"

- **a work of art depicting a sight of natural scenery.**
"Matisse's view of Collioure"
- **the visual appearance or an image of something when looked at in a particular way.**

"an aerial view of the military earthworks"

verb

verb: *view*; 3rd person present: *views*; past tense: *viewed*; past

participle: *viewed*; gerund or present participle: *viewing*

1. **look at or inspect.**

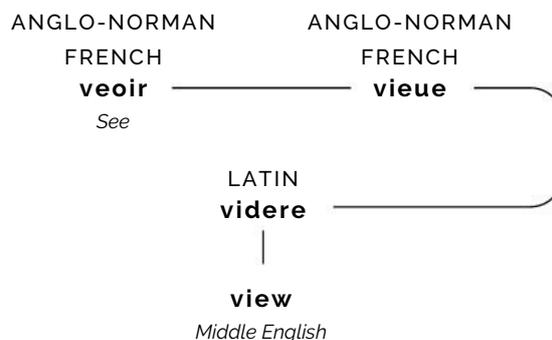
"the public can view the famous hall with its unique staircase"

- **inspect (a house or other property) with the intention of possibly buying or renting it**

"prospective buyers are requested to make an appointment to view the house"

- **watch (something) on television**
"some people record the programme and view it later on their VCR"
- 2. **regard in a particular light or with a particular attitude.**
"farmers are viewing the rise in rabbit numbers with concern"

ORIGIN



Middle English: from Anglo-Norman French *vue*, feminine past participle of *veoir* 'see', from Latin *videre*. The verb dates from the early 16th century.

Source: Oxford Languages

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in this issue

ON THE COVER

18

Call to kōrero: The revival of Te Reo Māori as an official language of Aotearoa

In the quest of reclaiming identity and promoting our native tongue, the introduction of Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori in 1975 has been refreshing. Hayley White welcomes the dynamics of this rich, rebounding language.



PEOPLE

08

Rina Capila, driving instructor at a little school with a big heart

KATIE STONE

10

Organics – a future for an Argentinian

ALINA SUCHANSKI

13

Arun Chaudhari: The Man behind the Chamber

PHILIPPA HADLOW

HERITAGE

16

Having Faith in Fiordland

ALINA SUCHANSKI



18

Call to kōrero: The revival of Te Reo Māori as an official language of Aotearoa

HAYLEY WHITE

22

Matariki - heralding in a new identity

AMOKURA PANOHO

YOUTH CULTURE

25

The "Big OE" in the age of Covid: Where do we go now?

HAYLEY WHITE

A GLOBAL SPECTRUM

27

Running around the world: spiritual, physical, and cultural

KATIE STONE

30

Gardens of Sense and Sensibility; Rational and Romantic

PHILIPPA HADLOW

34

Why is English so difficult to learn?

KATIE STONE

37

Vegan/Vegetarian

HAYLEY WHITE

LIFESTYLE

Fashion

41

Fashionably unique: How tattoos and piercings dominated the fashion landscape

HAYLEY WHITE

Outdoor Activities

43

The shock and delight of Lake Monowai

ALINA SUCHANSKI



Gardening Practices

48

Gardening by the Moon: How the Moon can make flora and fauna flourish

HAYLEY WHITE

Conservation

52

The miracle of Orokonui

ALINA SUCHANSKI

Animals and Culture

54

Capybara and Co. My life with Rodentia

PHILIPPA HADLOW

Ethnic Communities

56

Voices in the air – 40 years of community

JENNIFER LITTLE

Travel

60

The Wheely Good Life: Why
Kiwis Go Mobile

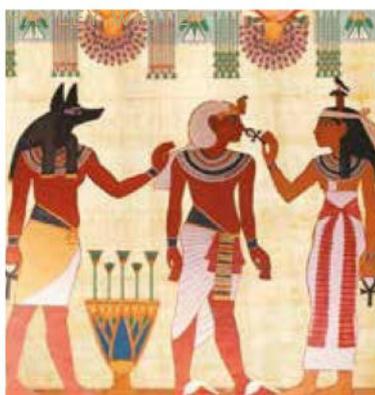
KATIE STONE

DIGESTIBLES

Astrology & Culture

63

The History and Importance
of Egyptian Astrology



Environment

65

Gorse – friend or foe?

ALINA SUCHANSKI



Music

67

Romantic music era

HAYLEY WHITE

Religion

69

Buddhism: Then, Now, How,
And Why

KATIE STONE

Theatre

72

Memories, masks, and
mortality – a theatrical
journey to Mumbai

JENNIFER LITTLE

*Migrants, Refugees &
Multiculturalism*

75

Global Journeys: New
Zealand's migrant culture

CHRIS PIDGEON

Art, Culture & Philosophy

77

The Lindy Effect

PHILIPPA HADLOW

Science & Technology

80

The World through Tech:
Know your Roots

CHRIS PIDGEON

Sexuality

82

'Lesbi' in culture

HAYLEY WHITE

Books

84

About trees, black
symbolism, cloning,
and wine

PHILIPPA HADLOW

ETCETERAS

05

Korero

From the Editor

06

The Team

Who We Are

59

Ad Rem

Our Monthly Cartoon

CHARLOTTE GIBLIN

40

Proverb of the month

SELECTED BY ASSOCIATE

PROFESSOR GINA SALAPATA,

MASSEY UNIVERSITY

86

Do you know?

Test your cultural knowledge



from the editor



I watched the Tokyo Olympics 2020. Not religiously, but every now and then, I have to admit. It's funny because I felt like an 'accomplice' watching it against knowing better; thinking it was a bad idea to hold the event, considering the risks that Covid brought with it. However, I found myself glued to the screen, getting excited, catching myself cheering on the men and women in what I thought was the most exciting sport to watch: hockey. I couldn't suppress my competitive nature, supporting both New Zealand and Dutch teams.

The Olympics has been a multicultural event for hundreds of years. As much as it divides nations competing to be the best in their respective sports, it also brings them together. And comradeship between competitors has been a lovely element, showing togetherness and support of one another in a foreign land.

A country's team may comprise people of different ethnicities. For us, participating from our seats in the living room, the Olympic Games have made it possible to see what the human body - or, for that matter, a horse in equestrian events - is capable of. While people from different countries performed, we got to have a glimpse of those cultures and languages, and the different physique each one of them has. Unable to travel and with mainly empty stadia, we have been able to enjoy it all from a safe distance.

New additions to the BiograView family, we are very excited to introduce our new (and yes - male!) writer Chris Pidgeon who will share with you our new topics on science and technology, migrant and refugee development in New Zealand and around the world, and mental health - one or more of the above, every month. Another contributor we are proud to have on board is Associate Professor Gina Salapata, adding a lovely touch with proverbs from around the world, connecting cultures.

September will give us another opportunity to learn more about our Māori heritage, promoting the use of the language during Māori language week, or *Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori*. For myself, I know I still have a long way to go. But, I do my best to pronounce *ngā kupu Māori* correctly and I am glad to know that the knowledge and use is becoming more and more common in our everyday life.

In light of Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori, I would like to conclude with the following *Kaikōhau* (an expression of hope, inviting and welcoming positive things into your life), tuning in to this month's article by Amokura Pahoho about *Matariki*, opening new windows of opportunity, and new beginnings:

*Nau mai ngā hua
Nau mai ngā pai
Nau mai kia nui
Kia hāwera ai*

*Welcome all things that have grown
Welcome all things that are good
May they be abundant and plentiful.*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ingrid". The script is cursive and elegant.

INGRID VAN AMSTERDAM

Ingrid arrived in New Zealand in 1988 from the Netherlands to attend her grandfather's funeral. Thinking she had nothing to lose but everything to gain, she's still here today. With a background in interviewing and auric magnetic energy healing, Ingrid has an interest in the arts, culture and humanity as a whole. She believes that with enough passion, anything is possible. The creation of BiograView is one of those passions. Ingrid has a vivid desire to work for the establishment of peace and harmony in society. Unwavering focus, drive and her belief in people keep Ingrid on her path, inspired to reach that goal.

who we are



PHILIPPA HADLOW

Philippa Hadlow loves the written word's ability to tell stories, relay history, and evoke images of a world many of us might never see. She delves into such diverse topics as indigenous peoples, animals and culture, global gardening practices, the stories of migrants and refugees as they cross unknown borders to embrace new lives. Philippa also loves reading so, keep an eye out for her book reviews. She has a knack for getting to the heart and soul and nitty-gritty of every story.



AMOKURA PANOHO

With maternal tribal links to Te Atiawa, Taranaki, Ngāruahine Amokura regularly commutes from Auckland to Taranaki as a board member of Te Kotahitanga o Te Atiawa Trust. Her background is in Māori business and enterprise. However, she was also the inaugural chairperson for Shakti Asian Women's Support Group, where she championed their registration to the National Women's Refuge Collective. Amokura is keen to share an indigenous view of Aotearoa for a broader audience.



JENNIFER LITTLE

Jennifer's writing career spans news journalism, and feature writing on arts, culture and travel – from Fiji to France. She has produced articles about humanitarian issues and humanities education as a media/communications professional in the tertiary sector. Jennifer also writes short fiction and has published a children's sci-fi novel. She's a passionate supporter of the arts, particularly in her hometown of New Plymouth, where she's part of a team which runs regular Latin dance workshops and social events.



CHRIS PIDGEON

Chris is a passionate young writer from Whangarei, now living and studying in Auckland. Music, language, and cinema are just some of his interests. His education in both computer science and English gives him the confidence and knowledge to tell stories of our culture and our history, backed up by solid research. With a thoughtful and crafted approach to writing, he is very excited to be working with Biograview.



KATIE STONE

Katie grew up in the Waikato and always thought she'd become the next Enid Blyton. Although yet to produce a novel, she has spent much of her life studying, travelling, and freelancing. Katie has traipsed through five continents and lived in Ireland, China, India, Vietnam, Thailand, and Taiwan. She is also a devoted runner and spends most of her spare time pounding the pavement around Auckland. We are delighted to have Katie - a qualified naturopath and journalist - bringing her passion for people and plants to Biograview.



ALINA SUCHANSKI

Alina Suchanski was born in Poland and came to New Zealand in 1982. She lives in Te Anau, Fiordland, dividing her time between growing blueberries, teaching yoga and writing. Passionate about protecting the environment, health and fitness, Alina loves music and has an interest in languages. Her hobbies include exploring the beautiful place she lives in on foot, by bike or in a kayak. Alina is excited to write about things she loves including conservation, nature, heritage, outdoor activities and most of all, people.



HAYLEY WHITE

Hayley White is a young Pākeha Māori woman from Auckland, New Zealand. Her dream to tell people's stories - the stories that need to be told and heard - grew into a passion for youth, Te Ao Māori, and sexuality: some of the topics Hayley has the pleasure of writing about for BiograView. We love her enthusiasm and look forward to sharing her stories with you!



CHARLOTTE GIBLIN

Charlotte Giblin is a full-time artist and art tutor living in New Plymouth. She has worked professionally in the visual arts for almost 25 years. Charlotte's rich tapestry of experience as business owner, gallery director and arts administrator, art tutor, author, potter, painter and illustrator has woven together her passions to become the full time contemporary fine artist, art tutor and creative mentor she is today. We are delighted to share with you Charlotte's monthly cartoons, especially created for BiograView!



ASSOC. PROF. GINA SALAPATA

Born and raised in Greece, and after having spent a decade in the US, Gina moved to New Zealand in 1995. Her interest in other cultures led her to explore the potential of proverbs to create cosmopolitan bridges and celebrate multiculturalism. The kitchen is one of Gina's happy places where she loves experimenting with flavours from around the world. She also runs a Greek dancing group to counteract nostalgia for her home country.

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OBJECTIVE

To produce a quality multicultural magazine with historical, social, and cultural content, distributed around New Zealand and beyond. BiograView strives to achieve a better and more sustainable future by • Elevating cultural equality within and amongst our nations • Encouraging sound, responsible and inclusive establishments; and promote • Good health and education • The reduction of climate change • Conservation of our natural assets • Peace, diversity and inclusive communities • Sustainable development of social and economic growth.

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BiograView is • A classy magazine • Filled with quality content • Exclusively written for BiograView by journalists around NZ • Which makes the magazine stand out • Limited advertising • Therefore those who do, will be SEEN

Advertising on BiograView will help us: • Produce more stories • Raise positive cultural awareness • Promote diversity and culture equality in education and the workplace • Give back to the community – 10% of all profits will be donated to charity.



Rina with a volunteer mentor and single mum who passed her restricted

Rina Capila, driving instructor at a little school with a big heart

BY KATIE STONE

Most of us do it every day, several times a day, without a second thought. We open a car door, get in, turn the key. We drive. It's almost second nature.

For the graduates of Puketapapa Community Driving School, however, that simple turn of the key is so much more. It's a proud reminder of what they've achieved: a license to drive.

And driving instructor Rina Capila is just as proud. "For some people, it's simple - you drive and you pass," she says. "But for these women, it's something that will change their life. A driver's license might be just this plastic thing, but if you have a license to drive you can go anywhere - you can go outside your home, you can be independent. It's a huge change in their lifestyles, to be free."

Rina is one of the eight qualified driving instructors for Puketapapa Driving School in Sandringham, Auckland. The community-owned social enterprise helps youth, women, migrants, and former refugees learn to drive and obtain each stage of their practical driver's license.

Rina explains that many of those who come to Puketapapa are from countries where they haven't had the opportunity to learn to drive. In many cases - especially with women - they are simply not allowed. Upon migrating to New Zealand, however, they find that life without

a car is very difficult. "They see other people driving and they want to drive, too," says Rina. "Winter comes and they hate seeing their kids walking to school in the cold each morning. And how can they go to the doctors if their kids are sick and their husband is away at work? They can't get out on their own."

The Puketapapa Driving School was started in 2017 by the PETER Collective, a group of local organisations working together to improve education, training, and employment outcomes.

Rina was one of the founding members of Puketapapa. While in her previous role at Migrant Action Trust, she and her colleagues were often inundated by migrant members of the community requesting rides. "That's when we saw the need," she says. "Migrants faced a huge obstacle in getting a job if they didn't have the means to get to the employers. They needed to be able to drive there just to have the interview. It's not a luxury - it's a need."

So, with the help of community volunteers, Puketapapa was born. The concept was simple: to provide a supportive environment in driver training with the help of local drivers' experience, knowledge, and kindness.

The school now provides a range of services to assist students at the learner, restricted, and full license levels. This includes driving lessons, assessments, mock tests, and road code tutorials. First-time drivers can ease into their practical driving lessons by starting with the school's driving simulator, which is installed in their Sandringham

headquarters. After getting used to the wheel, the instructors take them out to the quietest roads for a few careful laps.

For every \$60 worth of practical driving sessions, \$5-10 of the profits go towards a monthly revolving subsidy. Puketapapa depends on this small fund to teach students and to train mentors. With a wide diversity of migrants to cater for, language assistance is also necessary. They have a small but eager volunteer network to assist drivers with language translation during their practice sessions and on their practical driving test.

A former migrant herself, Rina knows what it's like to drive in a strange country.

She and her husband arrived in New Zealand in 2014 from the Philippines, where Rina worked as an HR manager. She started out as a student and later became a volunteer employment coordinator for Migrant Action Trust.

It was the social side of the role that appealed: she wanted to spend more time with people. "I wanted to get out and see what New Zealand is like. I wanted to get acquainted with people of different backgrounds," she says. "I thought it would help me become more flexible to different needs," and adds that she also hoped to lose her 'American English' accent and sound more like a Kiwi.

Rina says she has been driving since she was young and has had extensive driving experience in the Philippines and other countries. So, when her manager at Migrant Action Trust offered her a role as a driving instructor, she didn't hesitate to accept.

Now a qualified full-time instructor, she takes about six clients a day. She also tutors a group of Farsi-speaking students in the Road Code, most of whom require translation throughout the lesson.

Rina's driving students are mostly from the Middle Eastern countries, but also as far afield as Somalia, Ethiopia, and Burma. Many are single women with limited English who require translators to join in on the lessons. Her female Muslim students will often only drive with a female instructor.

For those who have never been in a car before - let alone tried to drive - the experience can be terrifying.

"The first day is always the hardest," Rina says. "It takes a lot of time for them to get used to the idea. They have different concepts about what driving is. Some women think driving is just for men; some are afraid to drive because they think cars kill people."

The women often need to be gently counselled before they can even get into the driver's seat. "As an instructor, you have to be very friendly and patient with them. You have to make sure they trust you," Rina explains. "They are very scared. I have to explain the basics of what a car is and what it does. Then when they calm themselves, we can talk about the purpose of driving and why there is a need for them to drive."



Hearing-impaired single mum who was able to pass the Restricted Practical Test. With Kevin, sign language interpreter.

Despite their initial fears, Rina is often blown away by her students' determination. She recently tutored a deaf woman from Afghanistan who required a sign language interpreter in the back seat during each lesson. The logistical challenge proved no barrier: the student passed her practical test with flying colours.

Rina recalls another student who struggled more than most, failing the practical driving test eight times. By that stage, she was ready to give up. "I explained to her that she had to keep trying; the test is about being safe. You have to be safe on the road. I told her, you still need more practice - driving comes from experience, you can't just learn it from the book or on social media."

With Rina's encouragement, she persevered - and was overwhelmed with joy when she did finally pass. "She felt very, very good. And she realised the mistakes she'd been making," Rina says.

The social impact of Puketapapa is no small feat. Now in its third year of operation, it has helped more than 900 students into the driver's seat. Its instructors have amassed more than 6000 hours of practical driving sessions. Rina explains that even after students have passed, many still need help with other aspects of road safety. The school provides regular Road Code tutorial sessions - free of charge - to those who struggle with the finer aspects of New Zealand road rules.

Community fundraising events have so far helped to keep Puketapapa going. They are determined to keep expanding and currently have plans to buy another driving simulator. If successful, the instructors will visit high schools in the area and provide much-needed driver training to Auckland's youth. The school hopes to raise the funds by holding a walkathon at Unitec at the end of winter, along with other efforts.

For Rina, working at Puketapapa is about making a difference in the community, and she hopes to see more members of the community come forward as volunteers, especially translators, to help with the increasing diversity of migrants. She says that for every student who passes, another five migrants are waiting to be trained. And to train those five, the school needs two or three more people - mentors, translators, instructors. The school is always in need of helpers: interpreters, support people, data encoders, and flyer distributors. Every little bit helps.

"The best part is hearing back from my students about how they have changed their lives, especially the ones who have work now," says Rina. "That's what makes it so worthwhile. Every testimonial from our passers boosts the initiative of every mentor, every volunteer."

She now knows that a driver's licence represents much more than the right to be on the road. "When my students pass the practical test, they're so thankful. The whole day they're crying and saying to us: 'You don't know how much you've changed our lives!'" Rina says. "They cry because it's an achievement. That's when I think, okay, there's something beyond the plastic card."

There are times when she, too, feels a little emotional. "I cry also! I cry because I feel how much they need this," she says. She is looking forward to a long future with Puketapapa.

"I will be here as long as the school is still here.

"As long as there are migrants, and as long as they want our help. It's never-ending help for them." *



Organics – a future for an Argentinian

BY ALINA SUCHANSKI

Nicolas and Denice with their daughter

12,000 years ago, the emergence of agriculture triggered a radical change in the way societies operated. It was dubbed the 'Neolithic Revolution'; a time when humans transitioned from a nomadic to a settled way of life. For millennia, people have been using animal manure to fertilise their fields and it wasn't until the 19th century that chemical fertilisers were invented. Today, as the organic movement is gaining momentum, an increasing number of farmers turn to natural methods of food production. Alina Suchanski visits a Southland family business, a pioneer in the field of organics, that was recently handed over from its Kiwi creator to an Argentinian entrepreneur.

On the Queenstown-Invercargill Highway, near the sleepy village of Winton, a large red building catches the eye. Up until earlier this year the building and the business it houses belonged to local farmer Greg Crowe and his family. Having run the venture for over 25 years Greg was ready to pass it on to a successor, but with his four children pursuing their own careers and his grandchildren too young to take over the business, he started casting his net further afield.

Young Argentinian migrant Nicolas Souto from Buenos Aires, Argentina, started his working life at the age of 19, joining his family business and gaining experience in hospitality services and commercial property management. After four years he decided it was time to see the world and in 2008 came to New Zealand on a 12-month working holiday visa. He fell in love with the country, but most of all he enjoyed Queenstown. When he returned five years later with his partner Denice, it was here that they chose to settle.

Moving from the 15-million people metropolis of Buenos Aires to a town with a population of 15,000 was a bit of a culture shock for the young couple. Buenos Aires is a multicultural city, home to multiple ethnic and religious groups and is believed to be one of the most diverse cities of the Americas. Several languages are spoken in addition to Spanish.

"It took us a while to slow down and adjust to the Kiwi rhythm, because we were experiencing a very stressful lifestyle in Buenos Aires before coming here. There are many differences between our two countries as our heritage is completely different. The way people express themselves - especially feelings. For example, Kiwis, in general, are more restrained; but we are used to kissing and hugging and we are very loud," Nicolas explains with a smile.

"In Argentina, there is a very strong tradition around the dinner table. It's not only about the food as much as getting together with family and friends, so a meal over the weekend may last for hours. It happens when you get together for a BBQ or *asado* as we call it, or when you eat fresh pasta on a Sunday."

Asked what he misses most from his country, he places family and friends at the top of the list. Like most migrants, he misses the food of his homeland, but adds that "since we have a fairly large Latin community in Queenstown, you can treat yourself with sausages from Zamora or pastries from Gipsy Oven. Then, you don't feel that far from home. We're fortunate enough to have found and built an amazing group of friends here in Queenstown, our safety net, so we don't miss Argentina much."

Nicolas thinks that if one works hard, one can succeed. He found a job as a concierge at a large hotel and later worked for a golf course resort near Arrowtown as a housekeeping manager. With 75 staff reporting to him, the job was demanding and stressful. After a few years he was ready for a change and a new challenge.

In 2016 their daughter was born and that altered his outlook on the world. "Over the past years, I've been more and more interested in nature. The more I learn about how Mother Nature works, the more I want to know. I watched a National Geographic documentary called *One strange rock*. That resonated with me. It helped me to realise how perfect our planet is - and how fragile at the same time. The fact that I have a daughter makes me think that we all have to play our part so her generation can live on a decent and healthy planet," Nicolas muses.

During the lockdown he started toying with the idea of a worm farm. While surfing the internet he saw the advertisement from Greg Crowe for a business making a natural liquid fertiliser. "I travelled to Winton to meet Greg, who charmed me. I liked the idea behind his 'compost tea'. The process of production is simple. Everything made sense to me," Nicolas remembers.



His partner, Denice, an accountant, was not keen to start with. "It was my lack of experience in this field that put her off, but once she realised I was determined to make it happen, she started to change her mind. Then, she met Greg and now she feels confident that we have the support we need," Nicolas says.

Greg Crowe and his late wife Noni were running the family sheep farm in Southland alongside Greg's two brothers. As well as farming, he has also pursued an interest in racehorses. Greg and Noni started breeding horses and at one stage had four stallions and 120 mares. The money from this venture helped to fund their new property in Otapiri, Southland. "Our neighbour noticed the pile of manure we pulled out of the shed. Being 'organic' she needed an organic-certified supply of fertiliser and suggested we seek BioGro certification," Greg says.

What started off as a hobby, ultimately came to be a business. Greg admits it was a steep learning-curve to move from farming to sales and marketing; dealing with pricing, production, promotion, and distribution. Becoming BioGro certified wasn't easy, but they managed to get the certification and keep it over the years. In 2008, Greg sold his farm and committed himself fully to the production of the liquid fertiliser.

Nicolas firmly believes that organics are the way of the future and officially purchased Greg's business in February 2021. Particularly attractive to the Argentinian was "the potential to use rainwater and solar power in the production process, making it a really sustainable business with very little environmental impact and very little waste."



Greg Crowe symbolically hands over the company to Nicolas Souto.

He is looking forward to growing the business and keeping it sustainable. Having sheep manure for raw material means they have enough compost stock for eight to ten years of production, so it's feasible. "I want to do good for the people of our community, help those who want to eat better, healthier food, and promote a healthy lifestyle. Being a father, you become aware of how important good nutrition is in the first five years of a child's life," he says.

Looking to the future he is hoping to introduce automation (filling bottles, labelling) and is working on a new design for the labels. Although he wants to put his own stamp on the company, he acknowledges and respects the foundation laid down by his predecessor. "I want to continue Greg's way of running the business with trust and honesty," he says. *



Sheep have provided natural fertiliser since the emergence of agriculture.

Photos by Alina Suchanski

Sources: 1. *The Development of Agriculture*, National Geographic Society, National Geographic Society 2. Buenos Aires, Wikipedia



Arun Chaudhari

Arun Chaudhari: The Man behind the Chamber

BY PHILIPPA HADLOW

Born in the port city of Mumbai, Arun Chaudhari grew up looking out at the harbour. He could see grand, steel forms sitting on the water; massive floating constructions, laden down with cargo piled sky-high. There were comings, goings, shouts, whistles, and cranes reaching towards heaven, groaning as they lifted and shifted goods, straining under the weight.

As a child, Arun was fascinated. These were merchant navy ships. The mystique and intrigue of those ships as they docked, unloaded, reloaded, then disappeared to a world unknown to Arun was intense. He determined that once of age, he would head for a life at sea.

Arun joined the National Maritime Academy in India, aged 17. He shone in his mandatory year-long training as an apprentice, then at the age of 18, flew to England to join his first merchant ship – one of a 100-strong fleet. There, he discovered his sea legs with India's largest shipping company and continued another three years of apprenticeship.

It was pretty tough onboard, but Arun was an exemplary student. His aptitude and attitude would stand him in good stead for a different kind of life awaiting him in years to come, but for now, it was all about watchkeeping, cargo stowage, ship maintenance, cleaning, and sitting exams.

Arun was in his element and proud to be part of one of the most cost-effective and efficient cargo-moving machinations on this planet. Cotton, oil, iron, grain, passengers, and containers that contained virtually anything were in his mandate to shift from port to port. He travelled the world, calling into some of New Zealand's major ports, but it would be 20 years before he settled on dry land again.

During those 20 years, Arun worked for three major merchant navy shipping lines: Indian, Norwegian, and Singaporean. The Norwegian Wilhelmsen line was amongst the most established of those lines, in business since the 1800s.



NZ Navy Warrant Officer Reece Golding, Lt Commander Janet Wrightson Lean, HNO and Capt. Arun Chaudhari, Merchant Navy.

After about ten years on ships, Arun met Sangeeta in Mumbai. It did not take them long to decide that they wanted to take on the voyage of life together. In time, Arun and Sangeeta's lives were blessed by two lovely daughters, and while Arun worked on ships, he was fortunate his family could join him.

One day while on leave in Mumbai, good friends mentioned a visiting immigration lawyer and their plans to emigrate to New Zealand. They suggested Arun consider a move as well, but Arun's family weren't ready. They had two young children, and what's more, a beautiful new home, decorated from top to toe with travelling treasures collected throughout their time sailing.

In a couple of years, they received a long letter from those friends whose immigration to New Zealand had gone without a hitch – and who loved it in their new country.

Arun and his family journeyed to New Zealand in 1995 to check the place out, then sat down in a quandary of indecision. They liked New Zealand, but the timing still wasn't right, so they applied for the maximum four-year extension on their visas and went back to their work routines until 1999.

Come October that year, they planned to give it a go in New Zealand but also keep a functioning house in Mumbai to return to, if things went belly up. They paid a year's worth of household bills in advance, packed about 240 kilos of their lives into baggage and landed at Auckland Airport.

It was a humorous arrival. Weighed down like pack horses, juggling at least six trolleys from the baggage collection area, and with Arun sweating profusely, the family caught the attention of a kind customs officer.

Arun was embarrassed. He tells me: "The customs officer takes one look at us and says, 'Let me help you.' That man - a government official – made sure he pushed most of those trolleys himself, got us into an airport shuttle and said: 'Welcome to New Zealand.' Nowhere else in the world would a uniformed government servant ever do that."

A very nice first impression of their new home! But even so, the next few months weren't easy. Although the family knew they'd be in for some hard work seeking employment, their bank balance was falling so rapidly, it seemed to defy the laws of gravity.

"We came to this country eyes wide open. We knew the job market was tough and that the maritime industry was offering few opportunities. But we had a nest egg to fall back on because we had prepared for these things to happen," says Arun.

The family had only been in New Zealand a month when Arun had the opportunity to apply for a job at Port Taranaki. It was right up his alley (and was, in fact, a precursor of good things to come). This time round, however, he wasn't successful.

It didn't matter. Things would pan out differently in due course, and in the meantime, Arun was geared for the long haul. He soon landed a part-time job with Turners Car Auctions in Penrose as "General Dogsbody". His pay was a princely \$10.50 per hour - 50 cents over the minimum wage of the late '90s; and wife Sangeeta found a job demonstrating Aunt Betty's Christmas Puddings outside Pak'nSave, Mt Albert.

To this day, Arun has a soft spot for Turners as the first company willing to employ a rookie immigrant, but he dearly needed extra hours. He moved on to Auckland

Airport's Whitcoulls stores and continued to work weekends at Turners. The ungodly schedule meant he didn't see his wife and kids much anymore, and as he'd also taken a massive drop in income since his seven years' captaining supertankers, Arun felt he had more to offer.

Sangeeta was educated in the Catholic faith and had worked in India as a qualified schoolteacher. Her familiarity with the Sisters of Mercy helped her find employment as a teacher aide at Baradene College of the Sacred Heart, in Remuera. She was able to fulfil her wish to return to India during the first school break, while Arun took on a full-time job with the Bank of New Zealand. Then, just twelve months since setting foot in New Zealand, another job came up at Port Taranaki.

Arun was thrilled to be working with ships again. He called his wife, who was in India visiting her mum and said: "I'll pick you up from Auckland airport, but we've got a new place now. I've moved to another city!"

The family rang in the new millennium celebrating Arun's Kiwi dream job at Port Taranaki and Sangeeta's at Sacred Heart Girls' College in New Plymouth. Port Taranaki's CEO, Roy Weaver, was a textbook leader. Arun thrived under his stewardship and described the working culture as one big hardworking happy family – many of whom remain in touch with each other today.



*Family celebrating daughter Vinati's graduation in 2017.
L to R: Vinati, Arun, Nikita, and Sangeeta Chaudhari*

"My family and I feel that we've got so much from Taranaki, and we cannot be thankful enough to all those who have helped us through our New Zealand journey," says Arun.

The feeling is mutual, it seems. Arun and Sangeeta's involvement with the community is enthusiastic and limitless. Sangeeta would host Indian cooking classes

through Adult Community Education, facilitate cooking for fundraising events at Sacred Heart Girls' College, and involve herself and others with Diwali and other Indian community celebrations.



Folk dancers Sangeeta and Arun - Diwali 2018, New Plymouth

Arun studied for an MBA via Massey University and spent six years on the Chamber of Commerce board while working as a senior manager at the port. In 2014, large-scale restructuring meant his position at Port Taranaki came to an end, and he took up an opportunity at Port Timaru, working there for around 20 months. Sangeeta joined him and taught at Geraldine High School until the couple returned to New Plymouth in 2017.

Arun had been successful in his application for the CEO role of the Taranaki Chamber of Commerce, one of the oldest business advocate groups in the world. Taranaki's branch has been in existence since 1936, but the original Chamber of Commerce office was founded in Marseille, France in 1599.

We see the Chamber's emblem solidly backing up so many affairs and affiliations, events, and awards, so what exactly does the Chamber of Commerce do for the business populace?

Arun tells me that looking back in time, the establishment of Chambers provided merchants, traders, craftspeople, and industrialists with a public forum to discuss issues facing them as a business community. This representation of common interests became, and remains, at the core of Chambers worldwide.

Such history deserves recognition, and the Chamber's current situation, no less so. The Taranaki branch has gone from strength to strength since its conception in 1936 and now has members totalling 735, including hubs in Bell Block and Hawera. The Chamber aims to present business opportunities; provide educational support; assist with marketing and promotional techniques; help source employment opportunities; and mentor young people into entrepreneurship.

The Petite Cha bubble tea company is one brilliant example. Petite Cha was the Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) regional winner for 2020, and its creator, Cambodian immigrant Tanya Haseltine, has now developed the business into a full-time industry.

This kind of positive outcome makes Arun's heart sing, and he'd love to expand his role into instigating a Migrant Business Owners Network with the support of the Ministry of Ethnic Communities. As an Indian immigrant himself, he understands the additional pressures and challenges faced by migrants and also their ethos of hard work and humility.

Arun is nothing if not humble himself. He feels honoured to be in a position that assists businesses to succeed and – after a Chamber involvement spanning almost two decades – to share his wisdom. Arun says the Chamber is all about setting up relationships and making connections – often with influential and well-networked people – and bringing those connections down to grassroots businesses in Taranaki.

"It's a position of absolute privilege to have that kind of overview. Building those connections means we can start opening doors for businesses here in Taranaki and create opportunities," he says.

Being aware of the impermanence of privilege and keeping grounded are key to conquering the dross that goes on inside our heads. Arun reckons that learning how to control the space between our ears makes life manageable, and that most of the activity that bothers us is surmountable once we understand ourselves. Wise words!

Arun leaves me with a few more: "Remember Simon Sinek's Ceramic and Styrofoam Cup story. It tells us that even though we might be in a position to move mountains just now, none of us actually deserves a ceramic cup, only a Styrofoam cup. It means that your time spent in a role of influence and deference will one day come to an end. Separate yourself from the position you hold and remain humble, because (as in another analogy: the Fused Bulb story), when the game is over, the king and the pawn go back in the same box." *



Having Faith in Fiordland

BY ALINA SUCHANSKI

Faith at the entrance to South Fiord on Lake Te Anau
Photo: Adam Butcher

With each of its three fiords bigger than Milford Sound and just as spectacular, Lake Te Anau, located on the edge of the Fiordland National Park, has a vast area of water to explore. Yet, despite all the surrounding beauty, this second largest of New Zealand lakes seems highly underutilised. Fiordland Historic Cruises has been operating on Lake Te Anau for five years. Their 66-foot motorsailer ketch, “Faith”, combines heritage with a touch of luxury. Alina Suchanski takes a trip down history lane and checks out the old girl.

Sitting on board a beautifully restored old vessel moored in a secluded bay in Lake Te Anau’s South Fiord, I feel part of something very special. The mighty Murchison Mountains shelter us from the nor-wester wind that ruffles the water of the main body of the lake, but here, its surface is glassy. We are surrounded by the primeval Fiordland forest with bird song the only audible sound. A crew member wearing a naval uniform from an era gone by offers me a cup of tea and a selection of tasty morsels. It’s as if time has stood still.

Faith’s beginnings are shrouded in some mystery. In 1935, Cuthbert Isaac Willan, the managing partner of Chapman and Sons Shipping Company, commissioned the construction of the Faith (named after a family member) from A M Dickie & Sons in Loch Fyne, Scotland, designed by Alfred Mylne, of Glasgow. Faith was built in Scotland on the River Clyde and registered in Falmouth, on the southwest coast of England, where she spent the first 30 years of her life as a pleasure craft for Willan and his family. She’s of solid wood construction, with her hull and decks made of Burmese teak, and featuring a mahogany interior.



Faith in front of A M Dickie & Sons ship building yards in Loch Fyne, Scotland, c. 1936.

In 1939 at the start of WWII, Faith was relocated to Scotland, thus avoiding the fate of many British ships that were requisitioned for the war effort.

Lord Shawcross, the British Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg war trials, was the second owner of Faith in the 1960s. He sold the boat in the '70s and a few years later she sailed from Falmouth to New Zealand via Venezuela and the Panama Canal. The voyage took nearly a year and was riddled with drama. In Panama, a bent shaft disabled her engines and the rest of the journey to Aotearoa was under sail (Yacht Faith, n.d.).

In New Zealand, Faith had four further owners. She has spent her time in Whangarei, the Bay of Islands, Wellington, and Marlborough Sounds. This beautiful boat has proved its seaworthiness numerous times. Since her arrival in New Zealand, Faith has been to Fiji and Tonga twice, visited Milford and Doubtful Sound, circumnavigated the South Island, and sailed to Australia, before making way to her new home in Fiordland.

With the deal signed and sealed in March 2014, the new owners expected to bring the boat to Te Anau within a few weeks. The plan was to sail it from Picton to Bluff (a journey expected to take 70 -80 hours), from where it was to be transported to Te Anau on a truck. However, they had a few surprises to contend with, as obstacles piled up causing delay after delay. Unexpected repair work, availability of the sailing crew and bad weather marred the progress. It wasn't until July 2014 that Faith was able to sail out of Picton. Yet more inclement weather meant it could only get as far as Port Chalmers, near Dunedin, where she was stuck for several weeks waiting for another spell of sunshine to resume her journey. When she finally arrived in Bluff, a new platform big enough to transport the large boat to Te Anau had to be purpose-built. The owners used this delay to strip the boat of its old coat of paint and repaint.

Transporting the 40-tonne ketch on a truck was an impressive feat. Her masts and sails had to be removed and arrived in Te Anau a day before the rest of the boat. But even with the masts off, power lines at a few places along the way had to be lifted or disconnected by a local power company to allow the vessel to pass under safely. As the boat made its way to Fiordland's capital, it dwarfed everything around it.



Faith entering Te Anau township
Photo: Alina Suchanski

The first few years of business with Faith were far from cruisy. "It took more than two years to obtain all the necessary permits and concessions from the Department of Conservation, Southland District Council and Ngai Tahu. We had to jump through some hoops to meet Maritime New Zealand Safeship Management requirements. In the meantime, we have put a lot of effort into restoration work," Faith's owner, George Garden laments.

By "we" he means himself and his right-hand-man, Adam Butcher. Adam is half George's age, but because both are tall and slim, and wear identical uniforms, many people assume they are father and son. These two men had such unwavering belief in this venture that they worked tirelessly until they turned their vision into reality. Like George, Adam has been with the business from the very beginning.

In Fiordland, Covid hit tourism and hospitality operators hard, with the international tourist market disappearing overnight. But despite that loss, Faith kept afloat, thanks to the continued support of locals and Kiwi tourists. Many a birthday party, anniversary and similar occasions have been celebrated aboard the Faith. "It's incredibly special to share the boat and its history with other people," Adam tells me.

Today, Fiordland Historic Cruises employs two more people: Maree, who earlier this year passed her skipper's ticket, and Michelle, who is helping on a casual basis with customer service and guiding.

I was privileged to experience one of their cruises. The adventure starts before you even board the vessel. As passengers walk down Te Anau's old Government Wharf, they are greeted by the crew lined up, and dressed in naval uniforms from the last century. Everything on the boat matches the period of its origin, from teak and mahogany joinery to red velvet upholstery and brass fittings. The attention to detail is meticulous.

Three bells and the horn announce our departure. We leave Te Anau at 9 am, and head for South Fiord across the choppy lake. Being prone to sea sickness I look at the waves with apprehension. But the skipper, Adam, handles the boat with expert ease, like a good rider handles a horse. To my great relief it's smooth sailing. The boat can take up to 22 passengers, but on this trip, there are only five of us plus the crew.



The bell on M.Y. Faith (M.Y. stands for Motor Yacht).
Photo: Marek Gronowski

At the entrance to the South Fiord, we pass two picturesque Dome Islands before arriving at the secluded Hidden Lakes wharf. We disembark onto a floating jetty for a guided walk along DOC's Hidden Lakes track. Our guide, George, impresses us with his knowledge of the bush and local history.

Ten minutes of hiking in beautiful Fiordland National Park beech forest takes us to one of the Hidden Lakes. This track is accessible from the water only, so there are no other hikers around. Upon our return, Adam has a scrumptious morning tea waiting for us with savoury and sweet treats.

Travelling back to Te Anau, George and Adam chat with the passengers and let some of us have go at driving the boat. They both have a lovely, relaxed way of engaging with their passengers and putting them at ease. The icing on the cake is when Adam brings his bagpipes and plays a medley of old Scottish tunes. This is such a perfect moment where all the Gaelic heritage pieces come together: a boat built in Scotland, on a 'loch' in the middle of Southland populated largely by the descendants of Scottish pioneers, while listening to music from this faraway country. "There's often not a dry eye on the boat when Adam finishes," George tells me.



Faith and her crew, George Garden and Adam Butcher.

We help them hoist up the sails and Faith suddenly picks up speed. She lists to one side under the pressure of the wind, but I'm not worried, comforted by the thought that this yacht sailed halfway around the world, sometimes in much stormier conditions than this.

As I leave the boat, I hear another passenger say, "That's the best thing I've done in Fiordland". I agree. *

Source: Yacht Faith A.M.Dickie & Sons, charterworld.com



Call to kōrero: The revival of Te Reo Māori as an official language of Aotearoa

BY HAYLEY WHITE

As Māori language week draws closer, I cannot help but reflect on the role that Te Reo Māori plays in our society here in Aotearoa. As a multicultural country, we are extremely privileged to have such a rich language woven into the very fabric of our nation. Unfortunately, our English ancestors may not have seen it the same way. For years now, Māori have worked to rebuild their language, but that effort did not happen suddenly. Since colonisation, Māori have pushed and fought to reclaim their identities and New Zealand has not made it easy.

In the Māori language Act of 1987, Te Reo Māori was deemed an official language of New Zealand in an effort towards its revitalisation. As an official language, it could be used in Court

of Law, and the Māori language commission was created to advise the government on how to promote and protect Te Reo. Since the legislation came into play, the availability of Te Reo Māori in primary and secondary schools improved immensely and hundreds of kōhanga reo (Māori language preschools) and Kura kaupapa Māori (Māori language immersion schools) sprang up all around the country. By 2013, 6.44% of total primary and secondary school enrolments were into kōhanga reo and Kura kaupapa Māori (Department of Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

One person who attended both kōhanga reo and Kura kaupapa Māori immersion schools is Tipene Douglas (Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Hīne). Like many Māori, Tipene's family has a harrowing story of how their ancestors were mistreated for just being Māori. Like many other Māori, this made it hard for his family to keep a hold on their language and culture. As the grandson to staunch Māori advocates, Tipene grew up not being allowed to speak English.

"In my family, my great-aunty particularly, they fought a lot for the culture and language to be revived through their struggles, and so that's why they growled us so much for speaking English," he tells me. As kids, he says, they did not realise how lucky they were to be immersed in the culture. They grew up with the Māori stories and histories of the 1900s, all the way back to their *whakapapa* (lineage) and *tīpuna* (ancestors). He says it was

quite a strict upbringing and when he turned sixteen, he began to really see the beauty in *Te Ao Māori* (the Māori world view).

"The plant was already there for it to flourish, as opposed to having to start from zero, from a *kākano* (seed). We already had that plant, that *tipu*, inside us," he tells me. Unfortunately, not all Māori were able to experience this total immersion growing up. Even worse, as a direct result of colonisation, not a lot of Māori grew up learning their language. It continues to be an obstacle for many people attempting to relearn their culture and whakapapa.

When European settlers came to New Zealand, they learned first how to speak Māori. Māori were accommodating to the European newcomers, and the Māori chiefs sponsored the missionary schools set up in the 1820s. Europeans were teaching Māori how to read and write Te Reo Māori, and they picked it up extremely fast. Half of Māori were able to read by the 1850s and a third could write it. At the same time, Europeans were teaching them English.

Māori were happy to be taught English because it meant that it would help them deal with the English government for land and missionary school purposes.

On the other hand, the English government were teaching Māori English because they wanted to replace the Māori culture and language and 'civilise' Māori into becoming colonial servants and manual labourers. Peace between Māori and the English disappeared in 1860 and war took place, leading to an almost irreparable loss of Te Reo and culture all the way through to the 1900s. Young Māori grew up in English schools and were forced to learn English – often to the detriment of their culture. As time went on, Māori continued to be treated poorly in school systems and everyday life.

In the 1970s, a survey was performed analysing the historical usage of Te Reo Māori. 6,925 households were asked how teachers reacted to Māori students speaking Te Reo in classrooms. The question was only asked in Māori so that people who could not understand Māori were unable to answer. In total, 40% of families said they had been personally punished for speaking Māori in schools. 29.5% were physically punished, 10.5% were punished in unspecified ways, and only 7% were encouraged to speak Māori at school. This attitude reached its peak in the 1930s and slowly started to decline until it reached a stalemate around the 60s. By then, it was just as likely someone would be encouraged for speaking Māori as discouraged (Benton, 1988).

Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu is the largest state school in New Zealand and offers free Te Reo Māori courses, under specific Ministry of Education criteria. Mike Hollings, chief executive of Te Kura, says: "The Ministry of Education has agreed that we can do it for free for people who meet certain criteria and it is part of our support of the revitalisation of Te Reo Māori. It's part of one

of the Treaty principals, which is the active protection [of Te Reo] and so our contribution is enabling that to happen," he says to me.

Over the past year, Te Kura has already seen a 12% rise in enrolments for Te Reo Māori between 2020 to 2021, which does not include enrolments for the second half of the year. Since 2016, when online learning was first implemented at Te Kura, they have seen a 77% increase in Te Reo Māori course enrolments. It is no wonder Te Reo Māori class enrolments are on the boom. Over the past few years, there has been an emphasis on Te Reo as a New Zealand language, but Mike says that these things cannot be forced.

"The best way is to make people want to learn it, and [make it] an attractive thing to do because it becomes a call to *kōrero*." Mike tells me that there are also big employment advantages to learning to speak Te Reo Māori.

"Certainly socially, it's a great advantage and I can say in New Zealand now, economically, people who can speak Te Reo Māori have greater job opportunities. There's a whole industry that is involved with Te Reo Māori in broadcast, in the media, through music, through the creative industries, through writing."

And he is right; many Māori industries have popped up in the last 20 years. Māori Television was created in 2004 and broadcasts programmes that make significant contributions to the revitalisation of Māori language and culture. It has given birth to TV shows like *Te Ao with Moana*, a current affairs show that tells national and worldwide news through the Māori lens; and *Ōpatiki*, a Māori language series hosted by Pānia Papa. There's also been the revival of Te Reo Māori in music, especially popular music like Benee's *Soaked (Kua Kore Ke Kupu)* and Six60's *Don't forget your Roots (Kia Mau Ki Tō Ūkaipō)*.

"Te Reo Māori is very popular in this day and age - and with the younger generation - because it's being promoted in so many different positive ways, Māori music especially. And so, the love for Te Reo is growing more and more, and it's spreading throughout the country beyond just Māori," says Tipene.

When discussing the differences between Te Reo Māori now and when our *tipuna* spoke it, both Tipene and Mike acknowledge the dialect variations between different *iwi* that still exist. While many theorists are on the fence about whether or not dialect is important, it is an essential part of the Māori language because it speaks to the diversity of our indigenous language. An interesting thing to note is that while older Māori generations tend to stick to their dialectal variations, younger generations of Māori are more likely to mix dialects. Tipene has experienced this very thing, saying that while he was growing up, he was taught how to speak in the dialect of his family. This in turn made it difficult for him in the *Kōhanga reo* and *Kura kaupapa Māori* because the difference in dialects made it harder to make friends and be understood.

"I was brought up in Christchurch but with my Ngāpuhi whanau - a Northern tribe. In our household, our language, our Reo, was dialectally Ngāti Hine o Ngāpuhi - Ngāti Hine is our hapū. We had our own Reo, our own *mita* - the word for dialect," he explains.



"As a kid, it was hard for me to really pick up the core of this Ngāti Hine Reo and it sounded very different to my peers at school who would pick me out because they would notice. And my Ngāti Hine Reo consisted of a lot of transliterated words, like for the word "no" they would simply use *Nō* , while generally all other tribes would say *Kāo* or *kāhore*. Or Ngāti Hine dialect would say *horekau* for "nothing", but the other iwis would say *karekau* or *kāhorekau*, so very much every tribe, or most tribes, have a unique dialect of their own."

In spite of the different variations, the version of the language that is taught in classes does not hinder people learning Te Reo, and both Tipene and Mark say that there are no limits to learning the language. When asked if he thinks learning Te Reo Māori is important, Mark gives me an enthusiastic 'Yes'. He tells me that the language was never lost, and that there have always been people who were able to speak Māori, but it is important to keep the language alive and growing.

"It's part of New Zealand fabric, it's part of our country, and it's part of what makes New Zealand, or Aotearoa, what we are, and so I think that people who learn Te Reo Māori are much more inclusive of the whole culture of Aotearoa," he says. Tipene agrees, saying that anyone can learn Te Reo. While his upbringing was harsh, he says that Te Reo needs to be respected and uplifted and it is never too late to learn: "For New Zealanders, just to respect the language and everything that comes with the culture. Just general respect for this beautiful language that we have only just retained," Tipene says.

"There are heaps of avenues in which you can learn Te Reo Māori. There are classes, there are waananga, the Kura Reo and, you know, you can just take your time step by step if you wish. But it's never too late to learn if you want to speak Te Reo."

This month during Māori language week, is never a better time to start learning Te Reo Māori as the official language of Aotearoa. I myself have started to incorporate Te Reo Māori into my everyday language, simple greetings like *kia ora* (hello, cheers, good luck, best wishes), *whanau* (family), and *mōrena* (good morning) keep the language alive in my mind.

Below is a little cheat sheet that can give you a stepping start into incorporating Māori into your everyday:

Kō _____ toku ingoa
My name is _____

Kō _____ ahau
I am _____

Kei te pehea koe? Kei te pai ahau (or) tino pai
How are you? I'm fine/ good (or) really good

Whakarongo mai
Listen to me

Whare
House, home

Haere mai
Come here, welcome - a greeting

Koa
Please - used with requests to make them more polite

Ata mārie
Good morning

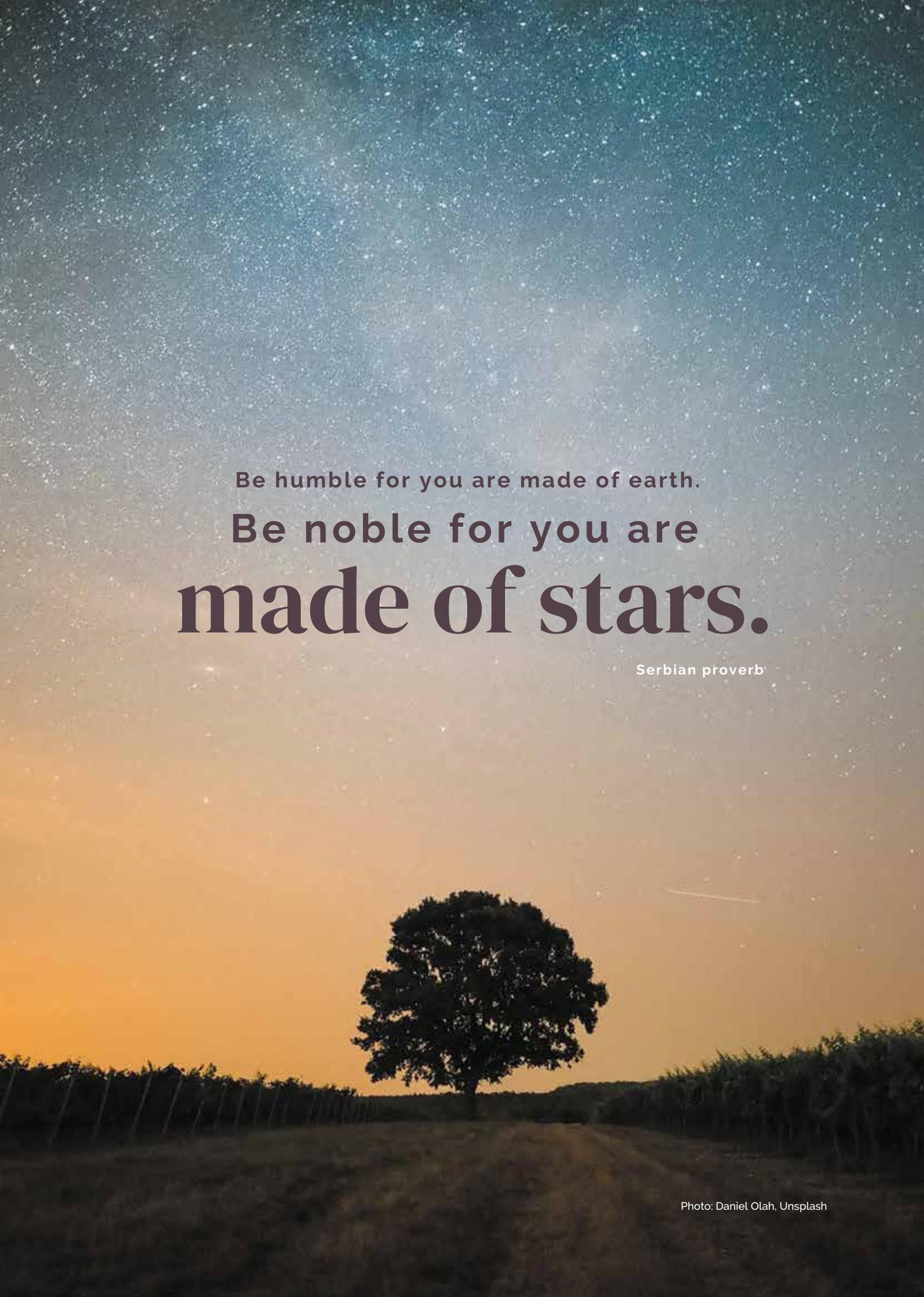
Pō mārie
Good night

Tau ke
Awesome, great, fantastic

Ngā mihi
Acknowledgements

Tēnā rawa atu koe
Thank you very much (singular)

Note: any words that have macrons (ā, ē, ī, ō, ū) are an extended sound i.e. Tēnā would sound similar to 'Tee-naa' and Mōrena would sound similar to 'moo-re-na'.



Be humble for you are made of earth.
Be noble for you are
made of stars.

Serbian proverb

Matariki – heralding in a new identity

BY AMOKURA PANOHO

On 24 June 2022, Aotearoa New Zealand will officially acknowledge Matariki as an annual holiday. Amokura Panoho explains the symbolism behind this acknowledgement and why it bodes well for Aotearoa/New Zealand nationhood.

Across the world there are many examples where the new year is celebrated at different times to the Gregorian calendar - the global standard calendar that has been in use since the 1500s.

Most commonly known is the Chinese New Year or Spring Festival, normally celebrated when the new moon appears between 21 January and 20 February. There is also Muharram that marks the start of the Islamic New Year, traditionally occurring from late August and throughout September, after the sighting of the new moon. The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah which in Hebrew means “head of the year” generally occurs between early September and early October.

In this part of the world pre-colonisation, to mark seasons and time, Māori followed the movement of the moon rather than the sun, developing their own calendar known as a

maramataka which means “the moon turning”. Māori also identified the star cluster known in other parts of the world as Pleiades, calling it *Matariki*.

Matariki is normally visible for eleven months of the year, disappearing in the lunar month of May/June. The stars rise again in the north-eastern skies in late June or early July signalling to Māori that their new year has begun.

Like the other new year ceremonies and their genealogies, the name Matariki has its origins in a mixture of *pūrākau* (myth) and *tikanga* (tradition).

In Māori *pūrākau*, Tāwhirimātea is known as the god of wind and weather, the second eldest of seven sons to Ranginui the sky father, and Papatūānuku the earth mother. While his parents continued their embrace the world was in darkness. The siblings of Tāwhirimātea decided to separate their parents and when this occurred Tāwhirimātea became very upset. Devastated, he went to live with his father, and in his sadness, plucked out and crushed his eyes, throwing them to the sky to spread all over his father's chest, thus becoming Matariki. The name Matariki is short for *Ngā Mata o te Ariki Tāwhirimātea*, “the eyes of the god Tāwhirimātea”.

Over centuries, Māori rituals evolved to commemorate and celebrate Matariki, whereby those that passed during the year were acknowledged by releasing their spirits to become stars. It was also a time to reflect, pay homage to the *atua* (gods) to ensure a bountiful harvest, and to share



Pleiades

Image: Courtesy NASA/JPL-Caltech

the fruits of their labour with their whānau. All of these rituals involved kārakia (prayers) and pūrākau. They were rich in metaphors and the symbolism of what was happening in their physical world.

However, as history has demonstrated in Aotearoa/New Zealand over the last 150 plus years, many Māori traditional practices have been devalued, denounced, marginalised and even legislated against (e.g. the Tohunga Suppression Act 1907).

Eldson Best's book *The Astronomical Knowledge of the Māori* published in 1922, was until recently the most comprehensive printed record of Māori star lore and cosmology. Unfortunately, authors and ethnographers of the time reinforced the negative stereotyping of Māori knowledge, deeming the contributors as witch doctors. They were in fact Māori *tōhunga* (specialists) predominantly from the iwi of Ngai Tūhoe. This kind of assimilationist attitude essentially meant that by the end of World War II, Māori astronomical knowledge had almost disappeared.

Thankfully, the fifth generation descendant of those *tōhunga*, Dr Rangīānehu Mātāmua has been able to demonstrate the validity of their knowledge, and in 2017, published the critically acclaimed book *Matariki - the star of the year*. His research into his ancestors' records dating back nearly 120 years has helped contribute to what has



become a renaissance of the practices associated with Matariki.

Acknowledging Matariki as an annual event is now normalised across schools, businesses, and communities throughout the country. These events have ranged from gatherings around the preparation of *kai* (food), fireworks celebrations, to music and movie festivals, where the focus is on bringing families and communities together. This renaissance has even led to a better understanding about how Māori cultural values can be integrated into wider Aotearoa/New Zealand society.

More importantly, Matariki is helping make the connection around the health and wellbeing - not just of people - but also the environment and ecology of the world. It is a timely reminder that the way humans have treated planet Earth to date cannot continue.

There are nine stars in the Greek tradition of the constellation; seven children and two parents. Māori tradition recognises nine stars as follows:

1. Matariki (Alcyone) – the mother of the other stars in the constellation. Rehua (Antares) is the father but is not considered part of Matariki.

2. Pōhutukawa – connects Matariki to the dead and is the star that carries our dead across the year (Sterope/Asterope).
3. Tupuānuku – is tied to food that grows in the ground (Pleione).
4. Tupuārangi – is tied to food that comes from above your head such as birds and fruit (Atlas).
5. Waitī – is tied to food that comes from fresh water (Maia).
6. Waitā – is tied to food that comes from salt water (Taygeta).
7. Waipunarangi – is tied to the rain (Electra).
8. Ururangi – is tied to the winds (Merope).
9. Hiwaiterangi/Hiwa – is the youngest star in the cluster; the star you send your wishes to (Celaeno).

One of the rituals associated with Matariki is called the *Hautapu* ceremony. This involves the cooking of foods associated with the different constellations and where the steam from the cooked food is then lifted up and fed or gifted towards the night sky.

This year, many social media posts showcased *whānau* (families) who utilised Matariki as a time to come together to remember and acknowledge their departed loved ones and to talk amongst themselves about their hopes and wishes for the year to come. As this practice becomes more normalised and mainstream it can only be good for Aotearoa/New Zealand society.

While Matariki is becoming widely accepted as the marker of the Māori new year, if you are physically located in the far north, Taranaki or the South Island, then it is Puanga (Rigel) that becomes the more prominent star. As a result, iwi Māori in those regions honour Puanga as their new year star.

Understanding and explaining the differences around how Māori acknowledge, commemorate and celebrate star lore will be the role of the Matariki Advisory Group established by the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment.

Early in 2021, the government established the group bringing together recognised experts with deep knowledge and understanding on both *Te Ao Māori* (Māori world) and *mātauranga Māori* (Māori knowledge) associated with Matariki and the Maramataka, to advise them on how to integrate Matariki into Aotearoa/New Zealand society.

Dr Rangīānehu Matamua has been appointed as the Chair, alongside members Hoturoa Barclay-Kerr, Rereata Makiha, Victoria Campbell, Dr Pauline Harris, Dr Ruakere Hond and Jack Thatcher.

Their job is to provide advice to Ministers on:

- A date for a Matariki public holiday over the next 30 years

- How best to celebrate Matariki
- What education and community resources are needed to improve understanding and knowledge of Matariki across Aotearoa.

So far, the public announcement of the date for Matariki next year has been met with general enthusiasm. With Aotearoa/New Zealand history being brought into the school curriculum, there will be, in decades to come, little debate as to why this national celebration is happening and what it signifies.

Instead, our country will have become a unique and truly independent nation from its British colonial roots. Hopefully, our values will be more aligned and tuned into our relationship with the whenua (land), moana (sea), ngahere (forest), awa (rivers), the sky (rangi) and ngā whetu (the stars). Our future here on Earth depends on it. *

Sources: 1. Matariki Advisory Group appointed, mbie.govt.nz



The “Big OE” in the age of Covid: Where do we go now?

BY HAYLEY WHITE

Photo: Glenn Carstens-Peters, Unsplash

For many young New Zealanders, the concept of embarking on the “Big OE” seems almost like a religious pilgrimage. “OE” stands for “overseas experience” and is a rite of passage where young, middle class, Pākehā New Zealanders take an extended journey overseas, working and travelling between various countries.

I have wanted to travel my entire life. The idea of traipsing all over the world was mightily appealing to me, especially when I dipped my toes into the travelling pool with a trip to England with my grandma. While my trip was not quite an overseas experience in the traditional sense, it was enough for me to realise that I would never be happy with only staying in my home country. That is one of the biggest reasons young adults take an OE, of course.



The author at The Sweet Shop is a traditional English sweet shop in Kirkby Lonsdale, Cumbria. Trading since 1902 it is the oldest sweet shop in England.:

New Zealand is an incredibly isolated and very small country, so it is quite common to want to venture away from the homeland and explore the other side of the globe. Because of its isolation

and distance from other countries outside of Australia and the Pacific, the OE is more likely to be a major journey and is considered a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The typical age for a young New Zealander to go on an OE is either around the end of their university study or as long as it takes them to save up money once they had entered the workforce after high school. Some people even go so far as to consider an OE to be a valid alternative to higher education, oftentimes because an OE is a spiritual discovery of the world and of the self. This kind of discovery brings about a sense of self-awareness and worldliness that goes hand-in-hand with the myriad experiences people have when in a new, exotic, and foreign country. Many people who go on an OE mention that using common sense and local resources rather than relying on guided tours gives them a sense that they can conquer anything. It is a pilgrimage, so to speak. The "Big OE" has become such a big part of New Zealand culture that young adults – me included – often get asked why we have not yet left the country in search of wider horizons.

The term OE was coined in the 1970s once the more common use of OT (Overseas Trip) fell out of popularity. The institution itself has been well documented, with most biographies and autobiographies featuring an OE and coming-of-age sequence. In the 1920s and '30s, the OE quickly became a cultural necessity, because artists and writers often made the 'journey home' (to Britain). Once commercial air travel became popular and opened up the world in the 1950s, young New Zealanders travelled to Europe and Britain either to explore their heritage or to escape from the "stifling narrowness of New Zealand" (ELL, 1994: 132 as cited in Bell, 2002).

As a part of the "Big OE", many used the opportunities of various working holiday schemes to take the leap into travelling abroad. Working holidays allow young people the opportunity to stay in other countries with a certain level of immersion in the economic, social, and cultural aspects of the host locations. Because of this, people who partake in an OE end up staying longer than expected. A 2-year OE can extend to a 3 or even 5-year stay while working and building a life. Some people do not even know if they will ever come home, until the moment arises when they miss their family or the familiarity of their home country. No matter when they do eventually arrive, travellers always return feeling like they have changed.



Backpacker looking at store fronts
Photo: Steven Lewis, Unsplash

True to form, I dreamed of travelling all over Europe – especially around the Mediterranean. I had a deep love of Ancient Greece throughout high school and dreamed of visiting the Acropolis.

I even wanted to travel to Rome, Italy, and Turkey. But before I could finish my university studies and even dream of setting foot outside the country, the metaphorical prison doors slammed shut. The gates of heaven closed. With Covid came the indefinite end to the travelling dream.

So where does that leave the kids who never got to do their travelling?

The short answer is: it leaves us stuck. The opportunity for a "Big OE" was taken away from us, and even worse was the fact that everyone who was away on their overseas experience was forced to come home. With international borders closing, it was a mad dash for many New Zealanders to get home in time.

42,800 New Zealand citizens returned home ending the year March 2020. Almost half of those people arrived between December 2019 and March 2020. As for departures, the same year saw a provisional estimate of 35,700 New Zealand citizens leave, which was well below average migrant departures of 52,800 per year. Statistics New Zealand estimated that as many as 7,200 New Zealanders never travelled away from New Zealand, creating a massive rift in the long-standing tradition of more New Zealanders being abroad than returning home (Stats NZ, 2020). Aside from the OE, any kind of overseas travel is important to middle class New Zealand culture. In October 2018, over 3 million New Zealand residents arrived back after overseas trips, in contrast to 10 years earlier when there were fewer than 2 million trips a year (Stats NZ, 2018).

Now that the New Zealand international borders have been closed for over a year, internal travel and domestic tourism has spiked to fill the void that not being able to travel overseas has left behind. With the closed borders, many New Zealanders took it as an opportunity to explore their own backyard without the hubbub of usual tourist congestion.

Before Covid, domestic tourism was worth roughly \$23 billion to the New Zealand economy. I only recently took the time to travel to Rotorua to see all the tourist attractions there, and visited the Luge, the Gondola, and Whakarewarewa Forest (or Redwoods as it is also known by). More than 60% of New Zealanders have visited somewhere new or experienced a new tourist activity this year, and research shows 66% of New Zealanders plan to take a domestic holiday in the next year.

At the end of the day, there is not much us young travellers can do other than explore our own back yard – and this is not a bad thing. New Zealand was labelled the third most beautiful country in the world in 2017, and it is no wonder with our rolling hills, majestic mountains, and amazingly diverse landscapes. There is no limit to what you can do and see in this country, and there's no other place quite like New Zealand that could quell the travel bug quite so well. *

Sources: 1. The big 'OE'. *Tourist Studies* 2. & 3. New Zealanders take more overseas trips than ever before; NZ citizens migrating home in record numbers, Stats NZ



Running around the world: spiritual, physical, and cultural

BY KATIE STONE

I reach the first checkpoint at 8 km. The run so far has been fairly challenging: undulating trail, a stream crossing, some gravel road. But now, the route markers are directing us to turn right. Right is dense native bush. The bush goes uphill. And not just any uphill, but a thigh-burning, ankle-twisting battle against tree roots, soft earth, and gravity. This section continues for about 400 metres. The surroundings are very pretty, but I'm absorbed in the climb. I'm part-walking, part-running, hauling every muscle into action.

Reaching the peak is a false relief: the downhill is even tougher. One misplaced toe, and you'll be tumbling through the undergrowth. And you'll likely stay there for some time: a rescue team would take hours to get to this remote stretch of the Coromandel bush.

I find out afterwards that one runner met this very fate, busting her shoulder and ultimately being stretched off the course. I, on the other hand, somehow direct my graceless feet through the 20k course within two hours and 26 minutes, crossing the finish line with bruises, gorse scratches, and tortured quads.

This particular race - the Kauri Trail run - is just one of the dozens on New Zealand's running calendar. We Kiwis love to run, both on the road and on the trails. And, with COVID still keeping us home, there are more of us lacing up our running shoes than ever before.

Kiwis aren't the only ones. Humans as a species, it has been argued, are designed to run. We're the only mammals that can take more than one breath for each step, and - if we have the will - we're physically capable of running for long hours at a time.

For most of us, running is a means of keeping fit, managing stress, and burning a few extra calories. Anyone who's ever done a marathon will know the bliss of a 'runner's high' (and the bragging rights that come with it).

But in other cultures, running is so much more than that. It's a tradition. It's part of a physiology, a psyche. Park Runs and treadmills are unheard of: for these cultures, running is a way of life.

RUNNING IN JAPAN: THE MARATHON MONKS

The term 'endurance athlete' is usually synonymous with lean-limbed, Nike-clad sports stars of major international events. But even the most famous endurance athletes don't compare to the "marathon monks" of Mount Hiei, Japan.

High in the mountains of Kyoto, these monks endure what is known as *sennichi kaiho gyo*, which translates to "one thousand days go around the peaks training". As part of their quest to attain enlightenment, the monks must complete the ultimate test of physical and mental strength: running 1,000 marathons in 1,000 days.

In their first year, they run 40 km per day for 100 consecutive days. In their fourth and fifth years, it's 40 km per day for 200 days. Their sixth year ups the distance to 60 km a day for 100 consecutive days. If they ever reach their seventh year, their reward is 84 km each day for 100 consecutive days.

Clearly, this is no ordinary running programme. The monks start at night, wearing only straw sandals on their feet and picking their way over rocky mountain paths. They're required to stop at various shrines at temples along the way.

Those who successfully complete the 1000 marathons - and many don't - must then undergo *doiri*. This translates to "entrance to the hall", which involves spending nine days in a darkened room without food, water, or sleep. The idea of *doiri* is to bring the body as close to death as possible so the monk can gain insight into life. Those who succeed become Buddhas, or living saints.

Just 46 men have completed the 'marathon' challenge since it was introduced in 1885. But that hasn't stopped later generations from trying.

It's not just Japan's monks who run. This is a nation obsessed with running. The Hakone Ekiden, a televised two-day distance relay, is one of the country's biggest sporting events. The Tokyo Marathon is the largest marathon race in all of Asia, and one of the six World Marathon Majors. Since its establishment in 2007, Japan has seen a running boom. Government officials estimate that the number of adult runners has increased by

hundreds of thousands, along with a huge increase in the number of other running races throughout Japan.

RUNNING IN MEXICO - TARAHUMARA

If it weren't for Christopher McDougall's book *Born to Run*, the Western world might never have heard of the Tarahumara. The book, published in 2009 sparked a fascination for this otherwise hidden tribe of so-called 'super athletes'.

The Tarahumara (pronounced taramara) are a group of indigenous American people who live in the Copper Canyons of northwestern Mexico. They call themselves *Rarámuri* - "the lightning-footed people". And they run like no one else in the world.

Traditionally, the Tarahumara have employed long-distance running during persistence hunting. This involves chasing animals on foot over long distances until the prey is driven into traps, off cliffs, or simply collapse from exhaustion. According to some reports, these hunters would run up to 200 miles (320-odd kms) in one session, over two days, through rough canyon country. They wear not shoes but *huaraches*: sandals made from plant fibres, animal hides, or rubber tyres.

To maintain their fitness for these hunting expeditions, the Tarahumara also engage in regular footraces: *rarajipare* for men, and *ariwete* for women. Distances range from around 25, up to 150 km.

The races are held two to eight times a year in terrain ranging from relatively flat courses to steep and hilly routes through mountainous valleys. Sports scientists have since theorised that these surroundings probably contribute to their endurance capabilities. Along the way, teams of runners must kick a small wooden ball called a *komakali* between them.

While most races are run by men in their 20s to 50s - sometimes older - some Tarahumara might begin racing at the age of 10 or 12.

Besides hunting and sport, running is an important part of the Tarahumara community and spirituality. It's also a traditional route to gain social status, with many champion runners becoming leaders in their community.

RUNNING IN AFRICA: THE KALENJINS

For the last 25 years or so, the world's greatest marathoners have all come from Kenya and Ethiopia. Kenyan men have earned the largest share of major honours in international athletics, running distances from 800 meters to the 42 km marathon. Incredibly, most of these Olympic medal-winners hail from a single tribe: the Kalenjin.

Since 1980, it's estimated that 40% of Olympic medals, World Championships medals, and World Cross Country Championships have been won by Kalenjin people. Unsurprisingly, they're known as "the running tribe".

Kenya's population of Kalenjin is only about 6 million, making them the third-largest ethnic group in Kenya after the Kikuyu and the Luhya. And yet they are known for consistently breaking running records around the world.

The Kalenjin people are indigenous to East Africa, with most residing in what was formerly known as the Rift Valley Province in Kenya. Traditionally, they are pastoralists, farming grains such as maize and wheat. Meat and milk make up much of their daily fare, providing high levels of carbohydrates, protein, and calcium: a diet that may explain their superior running ability. The Kalenjin also spend many hours on foot climbing mountains in search of grass for their animals, supporting the theory that they have extraordinary lung capacity and fitness.

But it's not just lifestyle factors that make the Kalenjin run the way they do. Recent research from the Danish Sports Science Institute revealed that Kalenjins may possess physical characteristics with exceptional genetic traits that support running ability. The scientists found that young Kalenjin males had a higher number of red blood cells, suggesting that living at high altitude had made their bodies more efficient in using oxygen. They also noted that the men had "bird-like legs" that made running less energy-intensive and their stride even more powerful.

RUNNING IN SAUDI ARABIA: THE JEDDAH RUNNING COMMUNITY

Physical gifts and spiritual quests aside, the determination to run is perhaps most inspiring when discouraged - or even forbidden.

Until recently, Saudi Arabia has been one of the most gender-segregated countries in the world. Women were banned from participating in sport or exercise in public and subjected to strict customs for dress and behaviour. Physical education was unavailable to girls at school, and women couldn't join sports teams or events.

But over the past decade, a gradual loosening of the restrictions has seen the rise of a running revolution. In 2012, Saudi Arabia included two women in its Olympic team for the first time. Despite finishing the 800 m event more than half a minute behind her nearest competitor, Saudi athlete Sarah Attar received a standing ovation from hundreds of spectators.

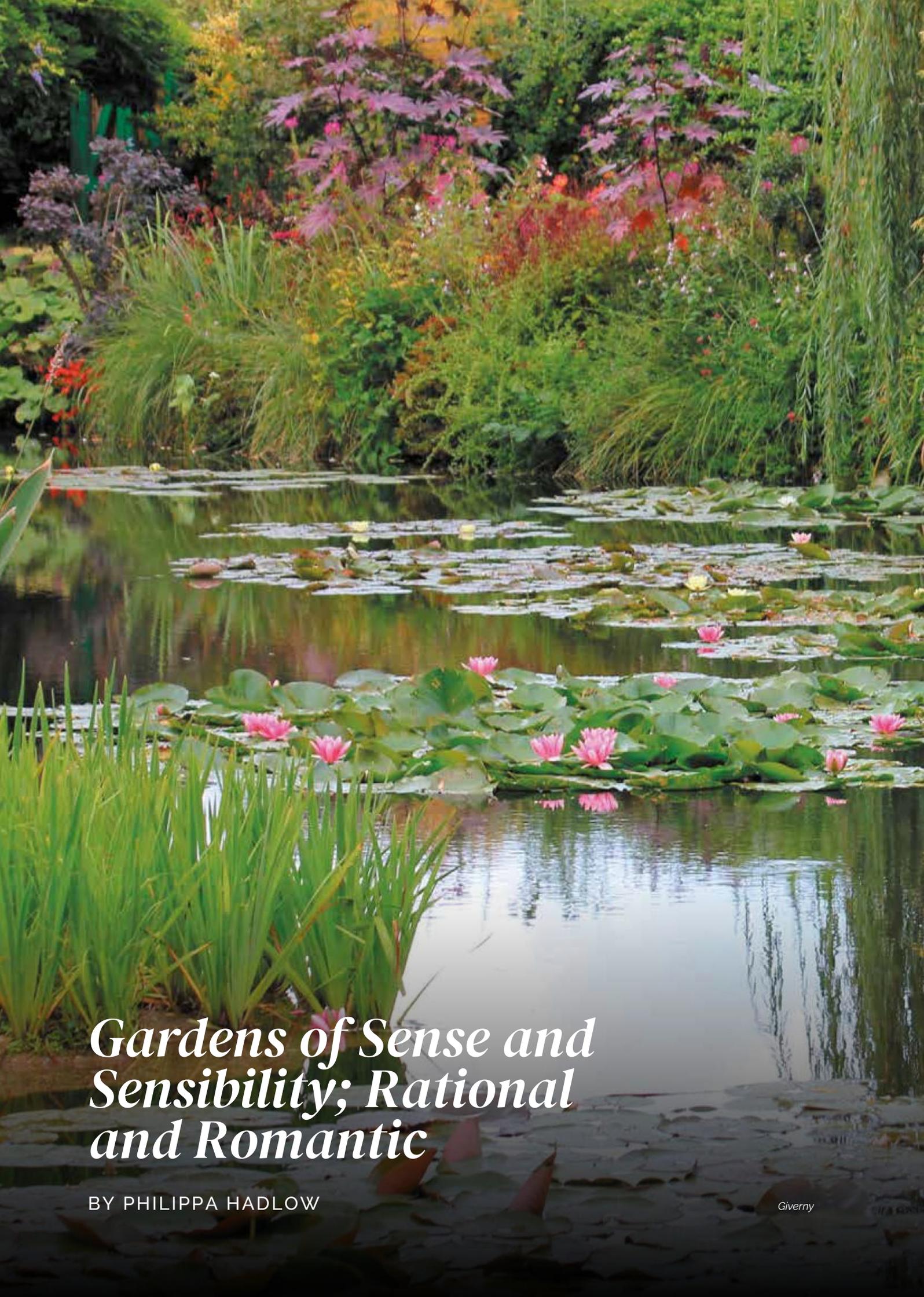
The following year, the Jeddah Running Community established the kingdom's first mixed-gender running group. The group now regularly run in the streets of Jeddah and have expanded to at least three other cities. As per Saudi law, the women run in long black dresses or *abayas*. Runs are usually held in the evenings when the temperatures are cooler.

March 2018 brought another victory: Saudi Arabia hosted its first-ever female road race. Over 1500 women took part in the 3.2 km race, marking a new era of women's running.

Further policy changes have seen attitudes towards women's running continue to change. Saudi multi-sports club Al-Hilal recently announced the creation of a new women's sporting academy, and sports classes are now mandatory for girls in public schools. Women's running clubs continue to flourish, inspiring younger generations to fight back against gender segregation – and in doing so, perhaps, are one step closer to running their own lives. *



Many of the world's best runners are from Kenya

A lush garden pond with water lilies and irises. The pond is filled with large green lily pads and several bright pink water lilies in bloom. In the foreground, tall green irises stand prominently. The background is a dense wall of various plants, including purple and red flowers, and a weeping willow tree on the right. The water reflects the surrounding greenery and flowers.

*Gardens of Sense and
Sensibility; Rational
and Romantic*

BY PHILIPPA HADLOW

Giverny

Gardens are purposeful, and the evolution of any garden always begins with a plan. This ego-centric composition comes from the thought processes of its creator, and the design itself is a rational action. The designer works towards achieving personal ideals, fulfilling user requirements, or satisfying the societal norms popular for the time.

In gardens of the 17th to 19th-centuries, great contrast existed. Garden styles waxed and waned from excessively austere formality to ridiculously beautiful romanticism.

As individuals, we will always feel a stronger pull towards one style, shape, or form, and an instinctive withdrawal from its polar opposite.

And not just gardens! Think about literature; which character would you connect with in Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811): the 'sense' of Elinor or the 'sensitivity' of her sister Marianne? In Austen's time, sensibility was closer to what we'd call 'sensitivity' or 'romanticism', but the sense demonstrated by Elinor retains its practical, intellectual, and logical connotations seen today.

Throughout time, literature, linguistics, art, philosophy, theatre, architecture, and music have entwined to share an intrinsically common theme. These subjects are collectively known as 'the arts': "documented expressions of a sentient being through or on an accessible medium so that anyone can view, hear or experience it" (Wikipedia). If arts can be viewed subjectively or created deliberately to provide aesthetic pleasure or otherwise, then I'll add a sub-group of architecture to that group: garden architecture.

'Landscape (or garden) architecture' is identified as an art form in Ian Thompson's *Ecology, Community and Delight* (1999), wherein he contemplates the concepts of 27 B.C. Roman author and engineer Vitruvius:

"Is landscape architecture one of the great arts? In this chapter, we must turn our attention to the even thornier questions that surround the aesthetics of art. In particular, we will examine the contention that landscape architecture is, or should be, a form of art. As with our discussion of beauty, our inquiry will lead us into some difficult areas of philosophical aesthetics, but first, let us see where this notion of landscape architecture as art has come from."

Vitruvius' *Ten Books on Architecture* explored design, landscape, engineering, the environment, water, and the importance of public gardens. He introduced ideas such as beauty, convenience, and utility in garden design, and conceptualised Vitruvian beauty or the perfect symmetry of the Golden Ratio.

Chapter 1 of Book 3 contains the famous advice on ratios and proportion that inspired Leonardo da Vinci's even more famous Vitruvian Man drawing. The ideas it illustrates are related to Plato's Theory of Forms, or 'sacred geometry'

- a mathematical process using circles and squares in renaissance architecture and garden design.

In 306 B.C., Athenian philosopher Epicurus created a famous garden specifically for philosophical meditation and study. He built it not far from Plato's academy (believed to stir competition between the two philosophers), and scholars wrote about a new topic: botany.

Around A.D. 63, Roman philosopher Seneca sent a series of moral letters to his friend Lucilius, advising him to become a better stoic. Stoicism was an alternative school of thought dealing with the universe, matter and the soul that embodied courage, temperance, justice, and wisdom. Its concepts are still relevant today. Seneca tells Lucilius to go to Epicurus' Garden:

“Go to his Garden some time and read the motto carved there: ‘Dear Guest, here you will do well to tarry; here our highest good is pleasure.’ This garden does not whet your appetite; but quenches it. Nor does it make you more thirsty with every drink; it slakes the thirst with a natural cure – a cure that requires no fee. It is with this type of pleasure that I have grown old.”

During this time, it became custom that every head of school important enough should have his own garden in which to teach. The philosophies of Theophrastus, Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato were all taught from these tranquil spaces.

From the teachings held within the walls of those famous gardens came the precursors to grand horticultural landscapes, both symmetrical and geometric.

From meditating to meeting friends to making meals, all gardens fulfil a purpose and provoke a reaction. Their designs reflect the pondering of the philosophers and educated folk and present the social mores and fashions of the time.

And when well designed, the composition effectively appeals to most of our senses: smell, touch, sight, and hearing and, if referring to an edible garden, taste.

Let's focus on gardens made for man's pleasure. The rational Renaissance of the 17th century, inspired by the ancient Greeks, and the classical Romantic of the 19th century were two periods of history that brought about revolutionary opposites in garden design.

In the 1600s, it was all about order: formal ornamental gardens featuring columns, water fountains, courtyards, statues, paths, sculptures, topiary, low box hedging, and potted plants in systematic and strategic layouts were in demand.

During this time, André Le Nôtre, perhaps the most famous and influential landscape architect in French history, planned the Gardens of Versailles. King Louis XIV commandeered Le Nôtre to design the palace gardens drawing on the symbolism of the king dominating Nature. His designers drew from mathematics and science, cartesian geometry - horizontal and vertical - and Vitruvian concepts of symmetry and decorum.



The Palace de Versailles Gardens, by landscape architect André Le Nôtre.

Le Nôtre was one of the first designers in Europe to consider the concept of space as a whole and the role of 'garden plus architecture' as guides to creating a unified, complementary landscape. He was impassioned by the relation between sky and earth and the effect of reflections on water.

Le Nôtre incorporated gradients, measured out to suit the topography of the area. He created a garden 'rhythm' marked by basins, optical illusions, stairs and balustrades, topiary hedges, and furniture. Sculptures - which nodded

at the Greek God of Peace and Arts, Apollo - were included as a metaphor for King Louis XIV. Apollo was associated with the sun, the heavenly body that gave life to all things, regulating everything as it rose and set. Like Apollo, the warrior-king Louis XIV brought peace, was a patron of the arts, and dispensed his bounty.



The castle gate of King Louis XIV 'Apollo'

André Le Nôtre bowed to the king's power by creating avenues that drew in the surrounding landscape and instilled a sense of insignificance in the viewer when looking up at the expansive palace. And when the king looked out from the palace to the garden and vista beyond, he felt very mighty indeed. Every aspect of the design had a purpose, and nothing was left to follow its natural path. With the impact placed at the apex of the axis, the Palace of Versailles gardens clearly represented the rational 'sense' design.

When fans tired of stiff order and symmetry, grandeur, austerity, nobility, and idealisation, the creatives of the time turned their energies to the evolving concepts of 18th-century romanticism. This time was a period of heightened awareness that encouraged emotional engagement with nature. French philosopher Rene Descartes' famous cogitation, "I think, therefore I am" was replaced with "I feel, therefore I am", and nature was taken on as a new spirituality, thus allowing an alternative to Christianity.

Understanding God through nature meant the 'natural' garden was allowed to develop more naturally to provoke emotional and subjective responses. The natural garden was inspired by the idealised romantic paintings of Hubert Robert, Claude Lorrain, and Nicolas Poussin, and by European ideas about Chinese gardens, as well as the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

Rousseau's studies embodied socio-political change, belief in the innate nobility of man and botany. His great love of nature and the natural garden inspired him to imagine a perfect landscape where people could be true to themselves. He visited England in 1761 to see the style personified and was so inspired he wrote a novel: *Julie ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (Julie, or the New Heloise). His book in turn inspired one of his pupils to create Parc Jean-Jacques Rousseau Garden, designed and named in his honour. It was the first romantic or picturesque garden in France, and here, Rousseau spent the last few weeks of his life in bliss.

The picturesque garden movement was well underway as early as 1720. One mover and shaker of the style was English landscape theorist William Gilpin, an accomplished artist known for his realistic depictions of nature. He preferred the unrefined landscape over the manicured and urged designers to respond to the topography of a given site. He also noted that while classical beauty was associated with the smooth and neat, picturesque beauty had a wilder, untamed quality. He described it as: "that peculiar kind of beauty which is agreeable in a picture". Later in life, Gilpin was successful in designing hundreds of such sites, including the gardens at Scotney Castle in Kent, Harcourt Arboretum in Oxford, and Shaw Hill in Lancashire.



Stourhead Estate - an English romantic garden.

The English picturesque or romantic landscape garden spread to France from 1740 onward and exemplified the artistic movement known as romanticism. This new emphasis partly reflected the tastes of the growing middle class, who found the refined and elegant art forms patronised by aristocratic society to be artificial and overly sophisticated. They came to favour more realistic artistic gardens that were emotionally accessible and easy on the eye. In the late 18th and early 19th century, gardens of 'sensitivity' gradually replaced the symmetrical French formal garden.

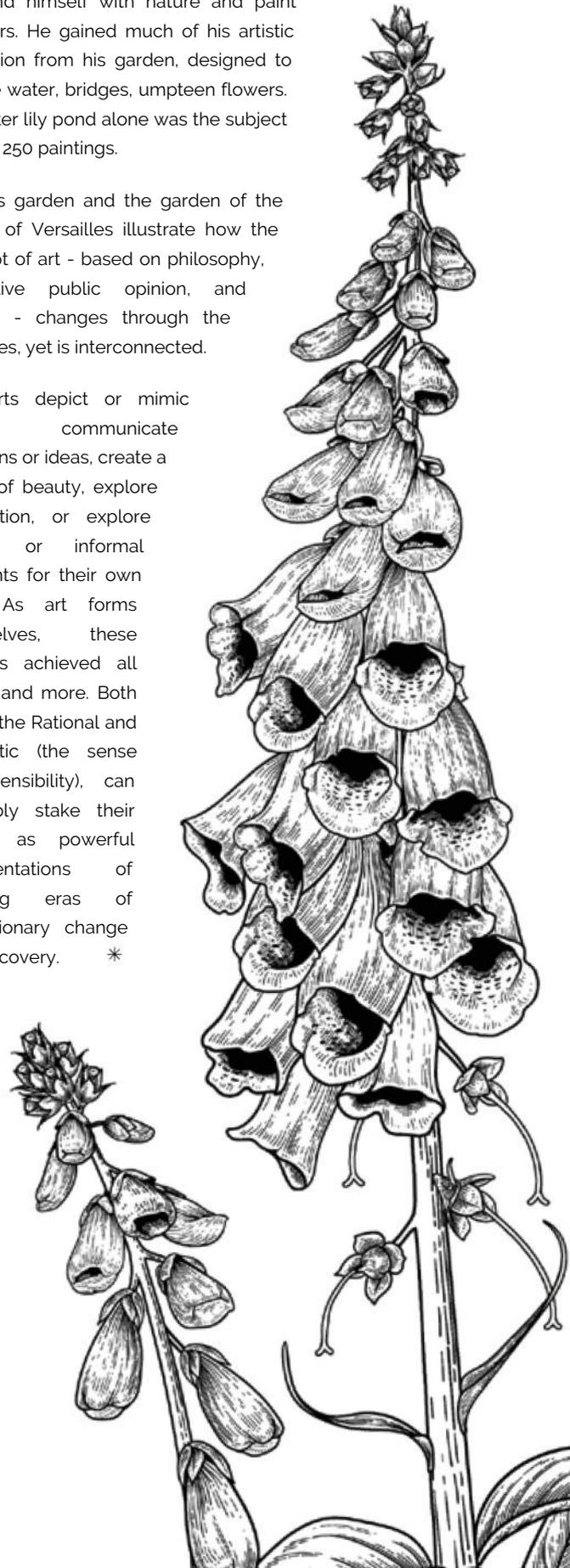
No less carefully constructed, the picturesque style also incorporated architectural follies - castles, Gothic ruins, rustic cottages - built to add interest and depth to the landscape. These gardens were designed to lead the walker on a journey uphill and down dale, into groves and

down meandering pathways, to pools reflecting trees and flowers, all the while enhancing an emotional connection to nature. The fluidity of these layouts is apparent in Claude Monet's Garden at Giverny. Monet's garden mirrored the relation between garden, emotion, and art because it was created by the painter himself.

Monet believed it was important to surround himself with nature and paint outdoors. He gained much of his artistic inspiration from his garden, designed to include water, bridges, umpteen flowers. His water lily pond alone was the subject of over 250 paintings.

Monet's garden and the garden of the Palace of Versailles illustrate how the concept of art - based on philosophy, subjective public opinion, and fashion - changes through the centuries, yet is interconnected.

The arts depict or mimic reality, communicate emotions or ideas, create a sense of beauty, explore perception, or explore formal or informal elements for their own sake. As art forms themselves, these gardens achieved all of this and more. Both styles, the Rational and Romantic (the sense and sensibility), can justifiably stake their claims as powerful representations of amazing eras of revolutionary change and discovery. *





Why is English so difficult to learn?

BY KATIE STONE

Anyone who has had to learn English as a second language should be commended. With more words than any other language - including hundreds of 'root' words from Latin and ancient Greek - English is often cited as one of the most difficult languages to learn.

Today, almost 400 million people speak English as their first language, but a billion more learn it as a secondary language. It's the official language of at least 59 countries. English has been used by more people and spanned a greater portion of the world than any other language in history.

Having evolved over 1,600 or so years, English has picked up bits and pieces of other languages as it crossed borders and faced invasions. The English we speak today has absorbed vocabulary from Latin, Greek, French, Japanese, Hindi, and many others. A quarter of English is Germanic in origin, nearly a third originates from French, and another third from Latin.

Unsurprisingly, it's not easy to learn.

Native speakers rarely consider the many quirks and idiosyncrasies of the English language - simply because we don't have to. English is easier to learn if you already speak a European language, such as French or German. But for those whose mother language is entirely removed from English colonisation - such as Mandarin or Arabic - the challenge is just that much greater.

HOW ENGLISH DEVELOPED: A BRIEF HISTORY

The roots of the English language can be traced back to the invasion of Britain during the 5th century. The Jutes, Saxons, and Angles - all Germanic tribes - crossed the North Sea in search of new lands to conquer. Before then, Britain's earliest inhabitants spoke various dialects of the Celtic language.

The invasion saw native Britons driven north and west into what later became Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The word England actually originated from the word Engla-land, which translates as "the land of the Angles" and where they spoke 'Englisc'.

By 1400 AD, subsequent invasions from the Vikings and Normans had shaped English even further. The addition of Latin and French words made the language more sophisticated.

Then in the 1500-1600s, along came William Shakespeare, who alone created at least 1,700 words that are still used in English today.

It wasn't until Britain became a dominant superpower in the early 20th century that the spread of English really gained traction. In establishing imperial control from Asia to Africa - more than a quarter of the world - Britain gained more than 400 million British subjects. At the same time, the English language acquired thousands more words - and many different rules.

THE LOGISTICAL HEADACHE OF LEARNING ENGLISH

Grammatical rules - and their exceptions

Learning English isn't just about learning the rules - it's about learning the many exceptions to the rules. English language learners are often frustrated to learn a particular grammatical rule only to find that an 'exception' renders it obsolete.

One example is 'I before E except after C'. This rule is often taught to learners as a means of remembering how to spell correctly. But whoever created this rule apparently forgot about words such as 'forfeit', 'weird', 'glacier', and 'seize'.

There's a formidable list of irregular verbs. For example, the past tense of 'fight' is 'fought', and yet the past tense of 'light' is 'lit'. Then there's 'bring' and 'brought' versus 'fling' and 'flung'.

Double consonants add to the confusion. When adding -ed or -ing to a verb, sometimes the final consonant is doubled (refer becomes referring) and sometimes it isn't (enter becomes entering).

Now for phrasal verbs: verbs whose meaning is changed when a small word is added, such as 'in' or 'over'. The verb 'run', for example, can be changed in many ways: you can 'have a run in', or 'run over the road', 'run somebody down', 'run up a hill', or even 'run a workshop'.

The problem is that there is no literal explanation for most phrasal verbs: to 'put up' means to provide temporary

accommodation for someone, while 'to put down' means to offend someone by making them feel small.

This can be particularly confusing for native French and Spanish speakers, who don't have phrasal verbs.

SPELLING VS PRONUNCIATION

In the Middle Ages, the English language underwent The Great Vowel Shift. This major phonetic change took place over the course of several centuries, effectively changing how the long vowels of many words were pronounced. These changes led to the way modern English is spoken and used today. However, the spelling remained much the same, which has proved a headache for learners and speakers alike. Even native speakers struggle with spelling.

Words ending in '-ough' reflect Middle English spelling and have now morphed into six different pronunciations. 'Tough', 'cough', 'dough', and 'bough' are spelt using the same letters, but each word is pronounced completely differently.

Then there are words that contain silent letters. In fact, about 60 percent of English words contain a silent letter - well beyond 'knife', 'knee', 'scissors', and 'tomb' as just a few examples.

Some words owe their silent letters to other languages. 'Psychology' is from the Greek word "*psyche*", while "*tsunami*" is Japanese.

To complicate things further, many of the Europeans who operated printing presses had the habit of adding extra letters to certain words to make them similar to their own native languages.

THE IDIOCY OF IDIOMS

Idioms are present in all languages, but English idioms are notorious for their variety and irregularity - and can be exasperating for foreign language learners.

An idiom is an expression or phrase that has a figurative (non-literal) meaning attached to it. Although most idioms once had a literal meaning, these rarely apply in modern English. In other words - they don't make sense.

To "beat around the bush" means to avoid saying what you mean. "Hitting the sack" means going to sleep, while "speak of the devil" means that the person you've just been talking about has shown up.

Idioms are everywhere: we pop them into our everyday conversation dozens of times a day, often without realising. This can be baffling for an English learner who may not know that "a piece of cake!" may actually not refer to food at all.

WORDS, SENTENCES, AND ORDER

While it's possible to bend or break most rules of grammar and syntax and still be understood, there's one rule that can't be flouted: the order of words in a sentence. You simply can't say "I handbag brown bought" or "today school going I am". Your reader or listener will be thoroughly confused.

English is strict about its sentence structure. The subject almost always comes before the predicate. This gets more technical when a number of adjectives are used together, and the order depends on the function of the adjective. The usual order is quantity, value/opinion, size, temperature, age, shape, colour, origin, material. For example, 'the room has six large round glass tables.'

As native speakers, we don't even think about this when we create a sentence. But for speakers of other languages, sentence structure might be completely different. The order of words in Japanese is subject-object-verb, while Arabic is verb-subject-object.

EMPHASIS AND MEANING

Changing the pitch, tone, or volume of spoken words can completely change their meaning. This helps us to communicate emotions when speaking to one another.

In English, a rising inflection at the end of a sentence will usually indicate that we're asking a question. A falling inflection generally indicates a statement.

The words we emphasise through tone or volume can also change the meaning of a sentence, even just slightly. In this sentence, emphasis can produce seven different interpretations.

He said he did not take her money. It was not someone else who said it.

He **said** he did not take her money. So I believe him.

He said **he** did not take her money. But someone else did.

He said he did not **take** her money. But he won it gambling.

He said he did not take **her** money. But he took someone else's.

He said he did not take her **money**. But he did take something else of hers.

This phonological system can cause difficulties for those whose native language is tonal, such as Mandarin or Vietnamese. While English uses changes in pitch to emphasise or express emotion, tonal languages use pitch to distinguish the meaning of a word. Mandarin, for example, has four tones. Each syllable spoken can be pronounced in several ways to communicate one of four different meanings of the word. But this pronunciation has nothing to do with emotion - it's just the way the word is pronounced.

FORMAL VS INFORMAL

Formal or informal English dictates the tone, the choice of words and the way the words are put together. Formal English is generally used by mass media and for professional or academic purposes, including education, medical, and business environments. Formal language is less personal, does not use colloquialisms, slang, contractions, or first-person pronouns such as 'I' or 'we'.

Informal English, however, is used for conversation between friends or family, social media, or other everyday situations. It includes slang, colloquial, and local dialects. It's generally more casual, natural, and fluid.

For a learner, though, the unpredictable nature of informal English can make it more difficult to master than formal. Consider 'want and 'wanna', and "Good morning! How are you?" vs "Yo! Howzit?"

While there are many languages that are even more difficult to learn than English - Mandarin and Polish are particularly gruelling - English is no walk in the park.

It's said that learning English is like learning to drive: you can study the theory and the rules (and exceptions to rules), but it won't make sense until you're actually practising it every day. *



Eat your greens

Photo: Thomas Marthinsen, Unsplash

Vegan/ Vegetarian

BY HAYLEY WHITE

Being a vegetarian is hard. I say that because I have eaten and enjoyed meat all my life and I never really imagined my life without it. But I've now been vegetarian for two years this October and it is still a conscious effort for me to continue this lifestyle. I always have to think about what I eat, especially when eating out or getting takeaways.

The hardest thing about being vegetarian is being surrounded by a society that focuses so heavily on eating meat. At the moment, the world produces over three times the amount of meat than it did fifty years ago, sitting at around 340 million tonnes per year, in 2018. In 2014, the average person consumed around 43 kilograms of meat per year with over 80 billion animals being slaughtered to fuel that hunger in 2018 (Ritchie and Roser, 2019).

It is also no secret that the meat industry has a negatively perceived environmental impact, with livestock and agriculture among the worst polluters in the world. Food production accounts for a quarter (26%) of global greenhouse gas emissions and about half of the world's habitable land is used for agriculture. And we're only talking about meat here - not including the effect that egg and dairy production has on the environment. So, there are a few legitimate reasons why people decide to 'go vegan'.

I went vegetarian for all the above plus one more: I did not think it was fair that an animal had to die for me to eat. This reasoning applies to a lot of cultures and religions as well.

Ajay Vora has been vegetarian his whole life. He comes from a strictly vegetarian Indian family who subscribe to the Jainism culture. Jainism is one of the strictest religions when it comes to food.



Ajay Vora

“My religion does not allow anything from a plant that can regrow,” says Ajay. His philosophy refers to the avoidance of violence (known as himsa). “Anything that grows under the ground, I have to unearth it and kill the plant to get the fruit. I can’t kill. And anything that gives fruit multiple times throughout its life, I’m taking its children or harming the tree, I cannot eat that, but that’s really strict. For example, chillies are off limits as chilli trees can produce multiple chillies throughout their lifetime. And I just stay away from meat or eggs. I eat anything else.”

Jainism outlaws many foods, and there are extreme limits to what followers of the religion can eat. Ajay tells me that some people restrict their diets so much that they can only eat mung beans, grains of rice, and other food that he does not know the English word for.

He explains that there is a week in September that dictates this restricted diet. Called *Paryushana*, it is the most holy

annual event, and many Jains increase their level of spiritual intensity by fasting and prayer/meditation.

India is home to more religious vegetarians than any other country, with about 30% of India's 1.2 billion population practising lacto-vegetarianism. Followers of Jainism practise vegetarianism because of their non-violent principles towards life and any living thing, be it plant, animal, or human. This is also extended to lacto-vegetarian or vegan diets. Many people practising Jain do not eat eggs and dairy, depending on the extent of violence against animals during production.

Vegetarianism is also an integral part of Hinduism. Like Jainism, Hinduism follows the same vein of anti-violence towards animals, though it does not go so far as outlawing all living things. In certain Hindu scriptures, such as the *Mahabharata*, it is said that nonviolence is the highest duty and teaching. The Hindu principle of nonviolence (known as *ahimsa*) is connected to the negative karmic (*himsa*) influences that are a result of violence. The aim of *ahimsa* is to avoid this karma at all costs. These religions believe that killing animals for food arises from craving and desire and it is said to enslave humans to suffering. Hinduism believes that people who kill or eat an animal aid in this suffering and therefore are considered the slayers of the animal.

Buddhism is also considered a mostly vegetarian religion, but historically, vegetarianism faced a lot of debate. The first precept of the five rules of training, prohibits Buddhists from killing animals and humans, but does not necessarily extend to whether they should be vegetarian. The first monks and nuns were forbidden from growing, storing, cooking, and preparing their own food. They relied on the generosity of others because they were not allowed to receive money for food. Because of this, they were also not allowed to make special dietary requests. According to a Buddhist scripture, when the monk Devadatta asked the Buddha to stop eating meat, the Buddha refused and said monks must accept whatever people gave them, including meat, as long as they had no concept of the animal being killed for their food.

As for the modern Buddhist world, the choice to be vegetarian varies wherever you go. In China and Vietnam, monks generally do not eat meat. Likewise, a few Japanese and Korean schools. All Buddhists are allowed to be vegetarian if they wish to do so, and rough guesses place about half of all Buddhists to be so.

It is not mainstream to be vegetarian if you are Jewish but some still follow the practice. Influences include the Jewish principles or laws like *Bal tashkhit* that prohibit waste. *Tza'ar ba'alei hayyim* is a command to not cause pain to any living creatures. Because of these principles, many Jewish vegetarians are concerned about animal welfare in the meat industry, and environmental ethics. Some Jewish vegetarians claim that God intended people to be vegan.

Genesis 1:29 states: "And God said: Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree that has seed-yielding fruit—to you it shall be for food."

In Christianity, vegetarianism and sometimes veganism is practised as a part of fasting during the Great Lent. Veganism during this time is pretty common in Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches. Other Christian churches such as Seventh-day Adventists take a literal interpretation from biblical prophecies and push vegetarianism as a preferred lifestyle.

There are varying degrees of vegetarianism in all religions and cultures around the world. And for others, vegetarianism stems from a completely separate place of ethics and morals.

Despite vegetarianism being a strict part of Jainism, Ajay and his family are vegetarians for moral reasons, too. He says that his mother and father have given him permission to eat meat, but he says that he does not feel comfortable doing so. After moving to New Zealand in 2017, Ajay says he could not find any vegetarian food. "It was pretty hard when I first came here to find and eat vegetarian stuff because, at that time, I didn't even know where to find Indian groceries, all the spices I needed, all the vegetables and everything," he says.

As more and more people become vegetarian, it will become easier for people like Ajay and myself to find good vegetarian food. Apart from a few specialised places that deal with only vegan or vegetarian foods, there aren't many fast food places that offer vegetarian alternatives – and even then, it is not something Ajay can eat. Asian cuisine, however, is extremely inclusive of vegetarian diets, especially Thai, Indian, and Chinese food where tofu is widely used. "My religion and the values my parents have taught me throughout my life heavily affects the personality I have now, where I can't harm any living beings or can't harm anyone. Just the fact that I have to kill an animal and then eat it to fill my stomach doesn't sit right with me," he tells me, and I echo those sentiments. As someone who is becoming more and more environmentally aware and seeing value in all animal life, I also find it increasingly difficult to even imagine eating meat ever again.

"I've never eaten meat; I don't know how it tastes, I've never felt the texture so at this point I really don't care," Ajay says to me. "Being vegetarian just comes naturally, you know? Like I never had that second thought where I want to eat meat, that thought has never crossed my mind." *

Source: Meat and dairy production, Our World in Data

RECIPE

For those who wish to dip their toes into the vegetarian lifestyle, below is a favourite recipe of mine that I only recently started making in the last year or so.

Because I quit eating meat 'cold-turkey' – no pun intended! – I sometimes crave the savoury flavours that many think only a meat-based meal can cure but I've recently found that mixing vegetarian stock into my food gives that rich flavour that veggies alone sometimes cannot replicate. I usually eat this stew on its own, but rice would be the perfect addition to help fill in any gaps!

Hayley's Vegetarian Winter Stew

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons oil
1 small carrot, diced
1 stalk celery, chopped
2 small potatoes, chopped
kumara, chopped
¼ leek, chopped
½ Onion, diced
5 button mushrooms, chopped
¼ capsicum, diced
1 tomato, chopped
2 cloves of garlic, minced
2 cups vegetable stock
2 teaspoons mixed herbs
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

In a medium-sized pot, heat oil over medium heat. Once oil starts to shimmer, add mushrooms and cook until the juices are released

Add onion, celery, carrot, capsicum and cook for 4-5 minutes, or until the onions are translucent

Add mixed herbs and garlic, cook for another 2 minutes until the herbs are fragrant

Add potatoes, kumara, tomato, and vegetable stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to around medium-low and let simmer for around 30 minutes, or until the stew has reduced and thickened

Salt and pepper to taste and serve!

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Fashion

Fashionably unique: How tattoos and piercings dominate the fashion landscape

BY HAYLEY WHITE

I got my first body piercing in 2014. I was 15 at the time, and desperately wanted to get my navel pierced. Of course, I already had my ear lobes pierced like most young girls, but I really wanted this one. Not only because I thought it would make me feel cool and confident, but because I wanted to strike out and be different. What I did not realise at the time, however, was that this piercing was a steppingstone, a gateway. It was the first step towards forming my identity via body modifications - tattoos and piercings - of which I now have many.

Tattoos and piercings are at the heart of many cultural traditions across the globe. They have also become central to popular culture and fashion in pretty much every Western country. Things that constitute fashion come and go every 20 years – known as the 20-year rule. The 20-year rule is a cyclical movement with 5 stages: introduction, increase, peak, decline, and obsolescence. Akin to any other style of fashion, piercings and tattoos are just as likely to run through this cycle, falling in and out of popularity as time goes on.

Shane Johnston, owner of Streetwise Fine Piercing in Newmarket, opened his studio in 1995. He tells me that piercings have come in and out of popularity for a while, and some have even fallen out completely. "Can you believe that it's gone round the full cycle and people are getting nose rings again?" he says and adds: "But they go back a long way. We were doing nose rings back in the '90s. So, they're always a cool one and we do a few of those. Some come and go, and some just kind of stay. Eyebrows: we hardly ever do them now, but they were huge. 'Septums' have always been around; we've done those from a long way back."



Ear piercings, facial piercings, and tattoos (both tribal and Western) have a mixed history. Depending on where in the ancient world, piercings and tattoos could mean wealth, high status, and beauty; or they could be the mark of slaves and the lower class. In Ancient Greece, Rome, and Egypt, both men and women would wear decorative ear piercings to display wealth. Similarly, in Northwest America, only wealthy Tlingit peoples wore ear piercings because the procedure was so expensive. The ancient Hebrews bore ear and nose piercings to mark the wealthy and the enslaved.

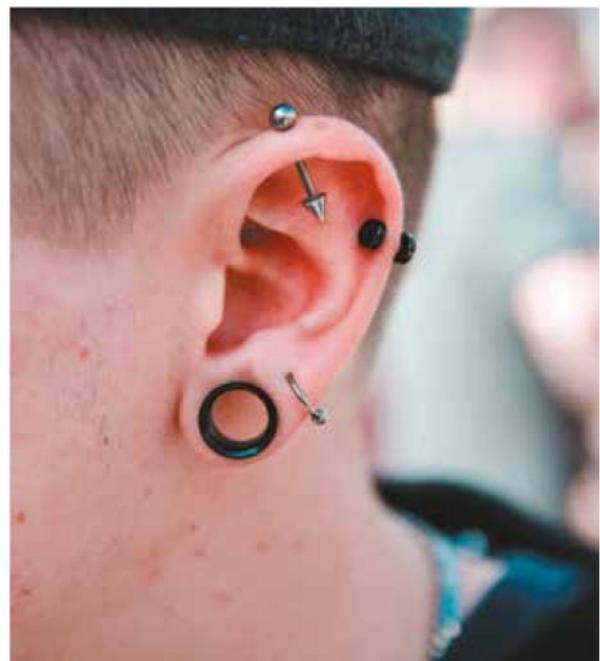


Photo: Kilian Seiler, Unsplash

Septum piercings hold incredible cultural significance and have very much come back in fashion recently. Many cultures around the world are known for putting bones, tusks, scarab beetle horns and even sweet potatoes in their septum - in the case of the Kanji of highland Papua New Guinea. For most of these cultures, their warriors used septum piercings to appear more fearsome.

In some Western cultures throughout history, tattoos have been frowned upon. Other cultures have shunned tattoos for racist and stereotypical reasons. Nowadays, however, tattooing is a big part of popular Western culture.

Indigenous peoples have been tattooing men and women a lot longer than people of the Western world. Māori men and women might sport *ta moko*, facial *moko*, and *moko kauae*. The facial *moko* and *moko kauae* for women have recently been reclaimed. Both are now worn proudly by many Māori men and women. They are not the only culture with facial tattoos, either. North American Inuit women receive facial tattoos on their chin at first menstruation, and the indigenous Japanese Ainu tattoo a woman's lips and hands when they are married.

Discoveries of ancient tattooing instruments date back to the Upper Palaeolithic period, 40,000–10,000 years ago. Tattoos from 4,000 years ago have been identified on the remains of mummified Egyptian Priestesses who worshipped the fertility god, Hathor of Thebes. Tattooed mummies dating back 3,300 years ago have also been identified in Libya. Britons, Goths, Picts, Iberians, Gauls, and Scots – all considered by the Romans to be barbarians – were reported as having tattoos as well (Davies, 2020).

So, while tattoos and piercings have always existed in cultures across the world, there is still a stigma around them that young people these days seem to be trying to get rid of. Interestingly, Shane says that in the first few years of opening Streetwise, it was mainly older men who would come in and get pierced. He tells me that there were a lot of piercings 'below the belt' as well as nipples and such - which were very taboo. Piercings in general were not really talked about.

“In the very early days, everybody knew that if you talked about it, you’d be persecuted. It wasn’t the thing that it is now. Things like nipple piercings, nose rings, and especially septum piercings have come back around and have had a massive revival,” he says.

One of the biggest things about tattoos and piercings in fashion is that we use them to redefine who we are and how we present ourselves to others. Just like clothes and accessories, the tattoos and piercings we wear are

some of our strongest forms of self-expression. For some, tattoos are super important and meaningful, telling us a story of people's lives.

Also, much like clothing, the style, placement, subject, and meaning of tattoos have been proven to be highly gendered. Sanders (1988, as cited in Watson, 1998) found that men tended to wear tattoos on their arms and other places that were very exposed, as opposed to women, who would get tattoos on their hips, legs, back, and lower abdomen. Possibly, tattoos were more stigmatising for women, so they tended towards private placement to avoid copping too much judgement. The stigma around tattoos and piercings still exists today, especially in the employment industry.

It is common knowledge that people with visible tattoos can have limited job opportunities and are less likely to get hired. In 2019, there was a big uproar around Air New Zealand insisting their flight attendants cover up their traditional Māori ta moko.

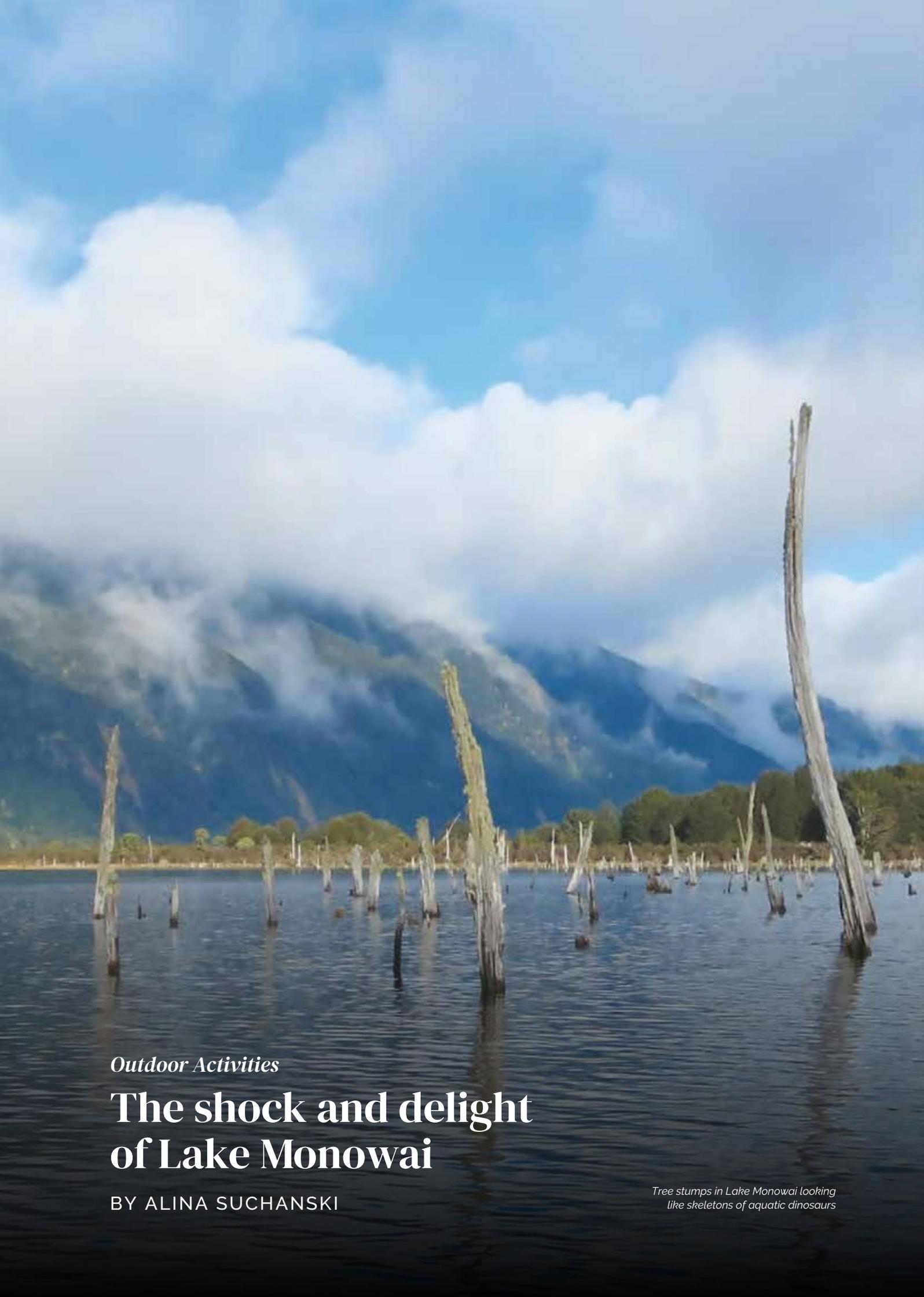
Flight attendants are not the only ones who struggle to have their tattoos accepted in the workplace. Healthcare professionals, teachers, office workers, and bankers, to name a few, all have to deal with restrictions. Piercings are similarly considered just as unprofessional, with workplaces limiting the piercings employees are allowed to have. Facial piercings sometimes lead employers to make negative assumptions about their potential employee.

Thankfully, these kinds of judgements seem to be taking a backburner. As more and more people choose to get piercings and tattoos, it becomes harder for employers to discriminate how potential employees adorn themselves. It has also made it easier for people to get them without worrying what others think. Shane agrees, saying that piercings are becoming more accepted. "It needed to happen," he admits. "Somebody being persecuted for a ring in their ear or two rings in their ear - whatever it is - and others having a go at them over that, that's a bit ridiculous anyway. I'm glad that it's now in fashion and it's okay. People can just be how they want to be. And people always should've been able to do that." He says that when people get piercings, it is a self-esteem boost that can get crushed when people judge them.

It is the same thing for tattoos. "You feel good about it, and that's been a motivating thing forever," Shane says. "It just makes people feel cool when they've got them. And just so many other people never understood that." *

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Outdoor Activities

The shock and delight of Lake Monowai

BY ALINA SUCHANSKI

*Tree stumps in Lake Monowai looking
like skeletons of aquatic dinosaurs*

Ninety-five years have passed since the level of Lake Monowai in Fiordland was raised by 2.13 m (7 ft) after the Monowai Power Station began its operation. Alina Suchanski gets into her kayak for a three-day trip to check if the effects of damming the lake are still present today.

The soft rhythmic splashing of the paddle breaks the glassy surface of the lake and, apart from the occasional bird song, is the only sound that disturbs the silence. Floating amongst the clouds I feel weightless. I see double, as all the beauty around is duplicated by its own reflection in the water: the snow-capped mountains, the Fiordland bush and the sky.



Floating in the sky on Lake Monowai

I am on a mission to circumnavigate Lake Monowai in a sea kayak. My destination on day one is Rodger Inlet Hut, almost halfway down this long and narrow, U-shaped lake. It's mid-afternoon and overcast when I launch my kayak, but soon the sky clears and the gentle breeze comes to a halt. Sulphur-coloured beech tree pollen bob on the lake, gathering in sheltered spots. A motor boat with some men in it passes me in the opposite direction. We wave to each other.

Set in spectacular mountainous country and part of Fiordland National Park since 1952, Lake Monowai would've once been a jewel of the South. If it once had beautiful sandy beaches, similar to those on lakes Manapouri and Te Anau, there are hardly any left now. Almost the entire shoreline is lined with stumps of dead trees.

The Monowai Power Station was one of the earliest hydroelectric power plants in New Zealand. It was officially opened by the Southland Electric Power Board (now Pioneer Energy) on 1 May 1925. But it wasn't until 1926 that the level of Lake Monowai was raised to ensure greater

output of electric energy generation. The decision makers at the time surely did not foresee the extent of the damage and its long-lasting nature.

Guarding the shore, skeletons of tall trees and sharp branches stick out from the water like the bones of long-extinct aquatic dinosaurs. Kayakers and boaties are best to keep a safe distance from the lake's edge for fear of impaling their vessels on something lurking just below the surface. This is of a particular concern to me because my kayak is collapsible – an aluminium frame with tough, waterproof fabric stretched around it.

After two hours' paddling, I reach Rodger Inlet, and soon the lovely new hut comes into view. I carefully navigate between the drowned tree stumps and branches and land on the muddy shore. The 6-bunk hut seems full, though there's no-one around. On closer inspection, I count four beds, each with two mattresses stacked on top of one another with woollen blankets and pillows as well as sleeping bags. On the bench are two cast iron gas cookers with two burners each, powered by two 10 kg gas bottles standing underneath. Outside the hut a large chilly bin accompanies bags of coal, potatoes and onions. It looks like my hut companions have ensconced themselves here for a while.

I consider moving to the historic 2-bunk hut a little further in the bush, but its rough interior puts me off. Returning to the new hut, I grab one of the mattresses and set myself up on the top bunk in the corner. After dinner I try to read a book, but sleepiness forces me to turn my head torch off.

The sound of a boat motor wakes me up. Soon seven men come in one by one, each surprised to see me on the top

bunk. They are a bunch of friends from Invercargill on a six-day fishing and hunting trip. It was them waving to me from their motorboat earlier on.

They kick into action cooking up a storm. All four burners on. Spuds, meatballs, carrots, and red cabbage. While the food is cooking we talk. They are concerned about me kayaking alone and warn me about falling into the lake. "Do you know how cold the water is in this lake? If you fall in 70 feet from the shore, you'll be dead before you can swim to safety. Hypothermia will get you. You be careful out there, girl," says one.

I promise I will and ask them to check on me when they go fishing.

They are very friendly, offering me food and drink, but I politely decline. Suddenly, the thought of sharing a small hut with seven beer-guzzling boaties and the anticipation of a chainsaw concert at night (snoring!), makes the old little cabin a lot more alluring. I pick up my stuff and move, to the loud protests of my companions.

Next morning, heading for the Monowai Hut at the western tip of the lake. I paddle past a large shallow area with the remains of a whole dead forest protruding from the water. For the first hour the whole lake is like a mill pond, but soon a light breeze ruffles the water. Luckily, it's a tail wind and by the time I'm on the home straight, my kayak is surfing on waves a foot high. A few boats are moored around the lake. Others are moving slowly, dragging their fishing lines behind. My friendly boaties are out too, and they come closer to check on me. I wave and smile gratefully.

The Monowai Hut is visible from way out. It's in a small, man-made clearing with steps leading out of the water onto a steep bank. A tiny beach full of rocks and tree branches is my harbour. I tie my kayak to one of the branches and follow a track that leads to the hut.

Inside, I find two 2-seater sofas, one armchair and four padded chairs instead of the usual DOC wooden benches. One wall is taken up by 12 bunks on two platforms. A large wood burner could heat space twice the size. The place is neat and tidy. A lovely view of the lake can be enjoyed from the window above the cooking bench. There is no sign of any occupancy.

It's an early night for me tonight. I sleep for 10 hours and wake up at 6.30am. The sky is overcast, but the lake is flat.

Once in my kayak, I have to make a decision whether to return the same way I came or take the longer, unknown route along the southern edge of the lake. My feeling of apprehension of kayaking solo in an unfamiliar territory is quickly dispelled by perfect kayaking weather. I turn the nose of my kayak south and take off on a journey of discovery.

The sun comes out revealing amazing views of the mountains. Gliding through their mirror images in the water is an elating experience. An hour later I come to a secluded bay with a lovely sandy beach, the only one on this lake. A babbling creek drains its clear water into the lake. A gun mounted on two posts points to a path through the bush that leads to a picturesque clearing with Eel Creek Hut in its centre. I check it out and am glad I didn't spend the night here – it's rough. The place is dirty and neglected. The remains of an outside fire are full of empty beer bottles.



The charming location of Eel Creek Hut

I continue my journey keeping close to the lake's edge for safety, but also because it's more interesting. Observing the vegetation on the shore, hearing the birds and seeing the bottom of the lake through crystal-clear water all adds to the experience. After another couple of hours I start to feel peckish and begin to look for a nice lunch spot. This proves difficult, as the shore on the south side of the lake is steeper. I find a tiny beach and negotiate low-hanging tree branches and submerged logs to get to it. Twenty minutes later, refreshed and refuelled I carry on. It takes a total of seven hours to reach the boat ramp and the carpark.

I'm tired, but happy, although the dead forest stumps around the lake's edges fill me with sombre reflections on the impact of humans on the environment.

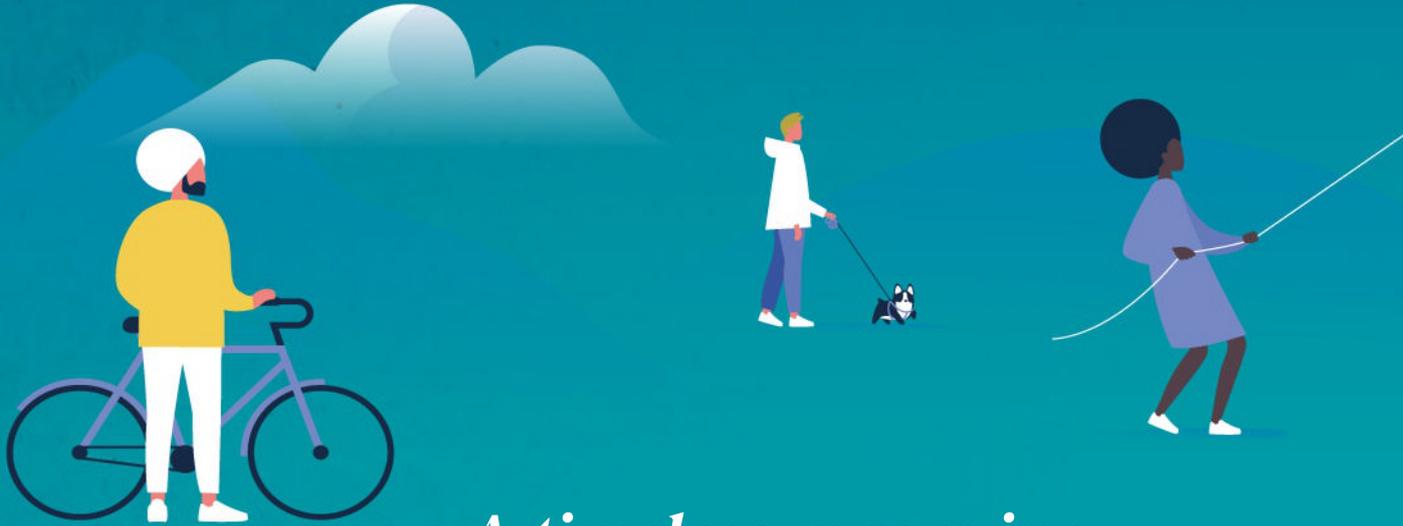
Les Hutchins is founder of the Real Journeys company and instigator of the Save Manapouri campaign of the 1960s and '70s which prevented a similar environmental crime to be committed on lakes Manapouri and Te Anau. He visited Lake Monowai in the early 1970s and in his book, *Making Waves*, he wrote: "I was appalled at the total destruction of the shoreline of this once beautiful Fiordland lake."

Almost a century later, while the destruction of the shoreline continues to shock, thankfully the beauty of the lake still delights. *

Photos: Alina Suchanski

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Gardening Practices

Gardening by the Moon: How the Moon can make flora and fauna flourish

BY HAYLEY WHITE

Photo: Zoltan Tasi Unsplash

The Feat of Gardening

*How so well a gardener be,
Here he may both hear & see
Every time of the year & of the month
And how the craft shall be done
In what manner he shall delve & set
Both in drought and in wet
How he shall his seeds sow
Of every month he most know
Both of worts and of leek
Onions and of garlic
Parsley, clary and also sage
And all other herbage*

- John Gardener (c. 1440)

The above poem is the earliest record of gardening techniques used in the Medieval era. It paints a picture of using the Moon at certain times of the month to ascertain when to plant crops.

In ancient times, people had to understand a lot about the world in order to survive, especially, when to plant their crops. We all know that plants need sunlight to grow. But what some people do not know – and this included me – is that the Moon is also essential to the growing process.

'Gardening by the Moon' is a concept that has been around for millennia, and it is argued that the lunar cycle used as

a calendar in the sky was the first thing human observed which helped them understand and connect with the natural world. Astrological agriculture, as it is sometimes called, takes centre stage in many ancient cultures.

Ancient Babylonian people were said to use the Moon as a marker of when to when to sow seed, plant new crops, and when to fertilise them. The same can be said for Ancient Mediterranean and Mesopotamian people who also used the Moon's phases to keep track of how their crops were progressing. Ancient Greek sources show their agricultural lunar cycle was divided into three phases: the waxing Moon, the mid-month, and the waning Moon. Roman authors paid particular attention to the waxing and waning Moon. Iwaniszewski (2006) states that these societies were completely different and created distinct planting rules to follow their separate lunar systems.

It was common practice in Polynesian cultures to have monthly calendars, called *Maramataka*, based on the phases of the Moon. They formed the pillars on which Polynesian cultural life and community stood. The *Maramataka* worked as a marker of appropriate times for certain activities, the most important one being food gathering and preparation like plant harvesting and catching fish. When the Polynesian *Maramataka* came to Aotearoa, our ancestors had to adapt to the Southern hemisphere's sky, climate, and seasons (Clarke, Roberts, Weko, 2006).



Photo: Marcus Dall Col, Unsplash

For many folk cultures, the idea that the Moon affects plants comes from its association with the human body. Almost all ancient and modern societies associate the Moon with fertility, believing her to be closely linked to the biological function of a woman. They believe the Moon determines the length of menstrual cycles and the average length of pregnancy in terms of the lunar count (Iwaniszewski, 2006). Because of this, it seems natural that if the Moon has such a strong influence with human fertility, then it must also have the same with plants.

Scientists today are a bit sceptical about gardening by the Moon; but there has been a myriad of studies to show that it works. Kolisko (1935) proved that the phase of the Moon at the time of sowing influences the period and percentage of germination, and the growth of the plant (Beeson, 1946).

It all comes down to the way in which the Moon controls the flow of water. The Moon has a gravitational pull that generates something called tidal force. The Moon's tidal force pulls our oceans towards it, creating a high tide. This translates into how the Moon influences water movement in soils and plants, too. Scientists have hypothesised how the Moon's gravitational pull affects the soil's moisture levels and the movement of sap within the plants themselves. The four different phases of the Moon – new Moon, waxing Moon, full Moon, and waning Moon – all affect the way plants grow.

The waxing Moon is where she is moving towards being full. This phase generally lasts 10 days and has many meanings attached. For the French and the Americans, it is a time when energy starts increasing and plant sap is drawn upwards. This means that stem and leaf growth is improved as the sap flows up the plant. Classical Roman metaphors describe the waxing Moon as hot and humid, good for planting, sowing, and woodcutting.

Below is a list of tasks to do during the waxing Moon to help ensure the success of your garden (alongside plenty of watering, of course!):

- Plant short-lived plants from which you would typically harvest the leaves, seeds, flowers, or fruits
- Foliar fertilise. This means use fertiliser that is designed to be applied to the leaves of a plant

- Tip-prune or pinch-prune (cut or pull off the tips) of each plant to encourage new shoots and a bushier plant with more stems
- Plant or move flowering annuals that require replanting every year (like petunias, begonias, and marigolds), biennials that complete their life cycle every two seasons, using the first season to produce stems, roots, and leaves, and the second season to produce fruits, seeds, and flowers (like carrots, brussels sprouts, grains, grasses, melons, and green manure crops such as clover and mustard)
- Apply liquid fertilisers that are taken up into the plant quickly
- Graft new plants (by putting two plants together to create a new plant) because higher sap flow will increase growth
- Plant seeds while moisture is closer to the soil surface.

The full Moon has been praised as the most beautiful celestial body and has inspired many a story and song . During a full Moon, we see it at its maximum light, with Earth being directly between the Sun and Moon. This phase lasts 4 days and is when the Moon pulls in the highest tides, pulls moisture to the surface of the soil, and starts to push plant sap downwards to direct energy to the roots. A lot of plants and other living things reach peak energy now, and this is possibly why some people tend to go a bit 'crazy' on a full Moon.

The Municipality of Ginatilan of Cebu, Philippines has many different planting beliefs based around the full Moon – most importantly for coconuts and bananas. Coconuts are planted on the December full Moon because it is believed that in the last month of the year, the coconut tree will not grow very tall and the coconuts will grow large, plentiful, and round – like the Moon. The banana tree is planted then, too, because, likewise, it is believed that the tree will not grow too tall, and fruit will be "fat and full" like the Moon. To plant a banana tree in a waning or waxing Moon will cause "thin" and "flat" fruit (Trosdal, 1975).



Photo: Neven Krcmarek, Unsplash

To get the most out of the full Moon, you can do these things to make sure your plants prosper:

- Plant or sow root crops like beetroots, onions, and potatoes
- Plant microgreens and edible sprouts as the seeds absorb the most water now
- Plant perennials (evergreen plants that survive winter and grow back year-round like apple and lemon trees, shrubs, vines, bulbs, strawberries, asparagus, and lawn grasses)
- Take cuttings, divide plants, and conduct plant transplants as it is an excellent time for root growth
- Prune dormant plants
- Harvest.

The waning Moon is the lunar phase where the moonlight, energy, and gravitational pull of the Moon decreases. It is the polar opposite of the waxing Moon. This phase lasts 9 days and is considered a fairly dormant period of the plant cycle. If it's believed that plants prosper and grow in the waxing Moon, then plants in the waning Moon will wither and die. French and American farmers believed that the sap descends during the waning Moon, and ancient Romans believed that the waning Moon was cold and damp, good for harvesting and woodcutting (Iwaniszewski, 2006). Though this is the time when the garden is resting, gardeners are not. Soil improvement is important during this lunar phase, so that when the energy is refreshed there is nutrition for the plants to grow again. It is considered the most opportune time for cutting hard wood trees for construction, as the wood is thought to be resistant to fungi and insects (Zürcher, 2011).



Photo: Francesco Gallarotti, Unsplash

As this is a low-energy time for your plants, this is what you can focus on:

- Avoid above-ground crops
- Add microbial solution to your soil
- Add soil fertiliser
- Harvest your crops for longest shelf life; the longer you leave your crops during this time the more likely they are to rot (this is a direct result of the sap flowing down into the roots of the plant)
- Take cuttings and divide plants
- Improve soil – weed, mulch, and make compost and manure teas
- Prune shrubs and vines
- Root crops and bulbs can be planted because sap flow is still drawn to the roots.

As the new Moon comes around, this is when her energy is at its lowest. During the 4 days of the new Moon, it is perfectly aligned between the Sun and the Earth, and the Moon is lit up on its far side so we cannot see the reflection. This is also a good time to focus on preparing the soil. Gravity pulls up both tides and water, and this causes moisture to rise to the surface of the soil. The new Moon is a static phase; not much is happening, but root and leaf growth are good, and seeds are given a healthier start because the moisture is better absorbed.

Because plant growth is at somewhat of a standstill during the new Moon, this is what can be done:

- Apply liquid fertilisers
- Plant vegetables that crop above ground but that do not have seeds, like broccoli and cabbage
- Plant crops where we eat the stems and leaves, like lettuce, celery, and spinach
- Plant grains and flowering annuals, and sow annual grasses
- Prune your plants.

One of the biggest things to keep in mind if you are thinking of gardening by the Moon is that you should not water or tamper with your plants for 12 hours before the next Moon phase. This gives your plants enough time to differentiate between phases and move through the stages mentioned above.

Gardening by the Moon was essential for ancient and medieval civilisations. These civilisations needed their crops to survive, so following traditions that stemmed from their ancestor's dependence on the stars was second nature. Scientists still debate whether gardening by the Moon is relevant because of its links to ancient astrology. While it is always useful to take things with a grain of salt, I think thousands of years' worth of successful crops planted by these ancient people speaks for itself. If you want to try gardening by the Moon, lunar calendars can be found everywhere – even on calendars themselves! But what is even better is taking a step outside, breathing in the fresh air, and looking at the sky as you connect with nature. No matter what, the Moon is smiling down on you and on your budding garden. *

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Conservation

The miracle of Orokonui

BY ALINA SUCHANSKI

Orokonui guide Hannah on the deck in front of the Orokonui Ecosanctuary Visitor Centre

The Orokonui Ecosanctuary, located 20 km north of Dunedin is an ecological island wildlife reserve, and a testament to what can be achieved by a group of ordinary citizens with passion and dedication to a cause. That cause is environmental protection, and their mission is no less than "to restore the Orokonui Valley to what it was like before humans arrived". Alina Suchanski tells the story.

On State Highway 1, just a few kilometres north of Ōtepoti/ Dunedin, lies a small seaside settlement of Waitati inhabited by artists, alternative lifestylers, activists and greenies. To the east of the village lies Orokonui Valley. The primeval forest that would've once covered this area was cleared for farming at the beginning of last century. Dissected by a creek that meanders into the Orokonui Lagoon, the valley - home to the Orokonui Ecosanctuary - is now covered in regenerating native bush.

The idea was germinated in 1982 by a group of people passionate about conservation who in 1983, formed the Otago Natural History Trust (ONHT). The original four members of the group were businessman Les Cleveland, zoologist John Darby, reporter Neil Harraway, and plant ecologist Dr Ralph Allen.

The group wanted to save New Zealand native birds from extinction but couldn't find a suitable site near Dunedin on which to establish a huge forest-enclosing aviary. Their initial proposal for a sanctuary at Orokonui lapsed, and the group disbanded. In 1995, the trust's only remaining member, Dr Ralph Allen revived the proposal. His perseverance was pivotal in protecting thousands of hectares of native forest, shrublands, and coastal vegetation throughout Otago, Southland and the Kapiti Coast, and he was the driving force behind the efforts of the ONHT to establish Orokonui Ecosanctuary. In 2011, he received the Queen's Service Medal for services to conservation.

Also instrumental in the creation of the Orokonui Ecosanctuary was leading ecologist, botanist, and author Diane Campbell-Hunt, a specialist in sustainability issues in community biodiversity initiatives.

However, that the sanctuary exists in its present form is nothing short of a miracle.

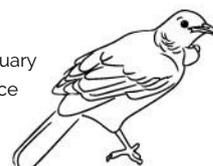
The starting point was obtaining a concession from the Department of Conservation (DOC) to use 230 hectares of regenerating native bush at the Orokonui Conservation Area. "I negotiated primarily with the Otago Conservator, Jeff Connell," Dr Allen tells me. "Initially sceptical, after several rounds of negotiation Mr Connell agreed to lease the land to ONHT if we could show that we'd raised money for the predator fence. Once that had been achieved, the process was very straightforward."

The fundraising for the 9 km predator resistant fence, and later a state-of-the-art visitor centre, were incredible achievements, primarily driven by the inaugural general manager of the sanctuary, Chris Baillie. Funding for the \$1.74 million fence came from three main sources: the Southern Trust, the Community Trust of Otago, and the Lottery Grants Board, with a number of smaller donations making up the total. In addition, the Otago Regional Council had allocated \$1 million for ecosanctuary development including pest eradication, building tracks, aviaries, planting of native species and other restoration costs.

An appeal was launched in November 2005, followed by two public fundraising campaigns in 2006-2007 in which the public was urged to donate New Zealand 5-cent coins (about to be withdrawn at the time), while a "Sponsor a fencepost" campaign was run in conjunction with the Otago Daily Times (ODT) newspaper.

Of the 307 hectares allocated for the ecosanctuary, 230 ha was DOC stewardship land, 18 ha was part of a pine plantation purchased by the ONHT, and the rest was gifted by neighbouring farmers, Graeme and Marie Bennett.

The fence was completed, and the sanctuary officially 'closed' on Sunday, 1 July 2007. Once the land was fully enclosed, pest eradication began during which 4000 wilding pines

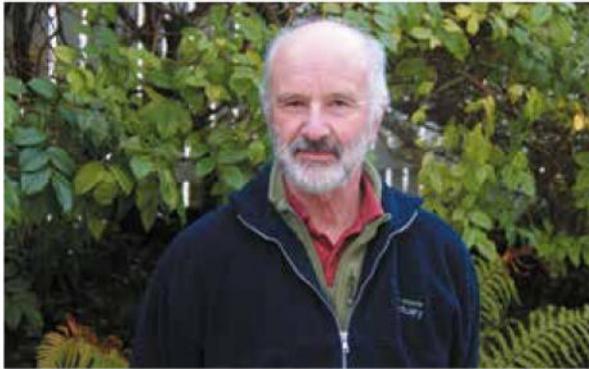


were removed from the top area, 800 possums were trapped, as were all stoats, weasels, ferrets, cats, mice, and rats.

The local Māori *rūnaka* (Southern Maori dialect for tribal council), Kāti Huirapa Rūnaka ki Puketeraki became supporters of the trust and gave the sanctuary a Māori name '*Te korowai o Mihiwaka*' (the cloak of Mihiwaka), referring to the location of the ecosanctuary at the foot of the Mihiwaka hill (561 m).

The next step was to build a carpark and visitor centre, which required another huge fundraising effort. Donations came from the public, some from local businesses, and a large grant from what was then the Prime Minister's Fund.

October 23rd, 2009 was a proud day for the ONHT when the trust's chairman, Dr Ralph Allen officially opened the Orokonui Ecosanctuary's visitor and education centre.



Dr Ralph Allen – the driving force behind the Orokonui Sanctuary.

The \$2.2 million environmentally sustainable centre was designed pro bono by Dunedin architect Tim Heath. It was constructed from shipping containers linked by a glass atrium, featuring double glazing, a concrete slab for thermal mass, solar hot water, natural ventilation, and its own rainwater and wastewater treatment systems (ODT, 2009).

On a sunny winter's day, as I enter the impressive modern building housing the visitor centre and café, Amanda Symon, the General Manager of the Orokonui Ecosanctuary meets me at the information counter and gives me a brief introduction into its operation.

She tells me that once the 9 km fence was completed and all the predators eliminated, nature began to regenerate and Orokonui became a safe haven for New Zealand's endangered native species.

Several of those species were translocated to the safety of the ecosanctuary, including the South Island kākā, saddlebacks (*tīeke*), tuatara, Otago skink, jewelled gecko, robins, kiwi and tākahe. "Most of the species are doing well and breeding successfully, particularly kiwi and robins," Symon assures me.

"The ecosanctuary includes a 15 ha kiwi creche area at the top of the sanctuary," she explains. "The species of kiwi that we work with is the Haast Tokoeka - one of New Zealand's most threatened. We work with DOC as part of Operation Nest Egg, where DOC staff take kiwi eggs from the wild and incubate them. We raise them to a point where they are large enough to fend off a stoat, and then return them to DOC to be released on predator free islands."

In May 2015, the Orokonui tuatara made the news when three young ones hatched after an astonishing 24-month incubation period. This was believed to be the first time in 500 years that tuatara have hatched in the wild, in the South Island.

But there have also been heart-breaking setbacks. In June 2015, a stoat incursion completely annihilated the population of about 50-60 saddlebacks.

The establishment and operation of the sanctuary would not have been possible without the many hours of volunteers' work and community support. According to Symon, the volunteer programme contributes around 1000 hours of work per month. "It takes a lot of work to keep the sanctuary predator free, regularly checking the fence and maintaining a significant monitoring and trapping network.

"Orokonui employs 25 staff, most of them part-time. Our volunteers are working alongside a small skilled staff of rangers, and our conservation manager, Elton Smith. The sanctuary is used as a research base for Otago University students and has a conservation education programme catering for 6000 school kids a year," she says.

I booked a 1-hour guided tour of the ecosanctuary where waterways are protected by screened culverts nicknamed 'watergates', while pedestrian access is through the double-gated predator exclusion fence, reducing the risk of predator incursion. My guide, Hannah, tells me that Orokonui in Māori means a "great place of great well-being", and it also refers to the name for the 28th night of the moon cycle, or Maramataka.

She takes me to the jewelled gecko enclosure where several bright green lizards are sunning themselves amongst the rocks. Next, we stop at the Otago skink home, also nestled amongst a pile of rocks.

We stroll over a grassy patch, where I'm surprised to see a takahē walking around like a domesticated chicken. These wild birds were thought to be extinct until rediscovered in 1948, in Fiordland's Murchison Mountains. The two pairs of tākahe resident at Orokonui came from the Takahē Breeding Centre at Burwood near Te Anau.



A tākahe at the Orokonui Ecosanctuary

Finally, my guide takes me to a kākā viewing platform, where we watch a couple of these large parrots compete with opportunistic blackbirds for access to the feeder.

The one-hour tour ends too quickly, and we only just touched the surface of this amazing place. I leave with a solemn resolution to come back soon and spend more time exploring it.

The ambitious goal of restoring the Orokonui Valley to the way it was before humans arrived won't happen overnight. It's an intergenerational project and it may take a hundred years or more to reach that goal. However, the Orokonui Ecosanctuary is a valuable asset for Dunedin that will bring back lost natural heritage, while providing wonderful opportunities for education, recreation, and research now, and for future generations. *

Photos: Alina Suchanski

Sources: 1. Orokonui Ecosanctuary, Wikipedia 2. & 3. Dunedin ecologist swept to her death; Proud event for ecosanctuary, Otago Daily Times 4. orokonui.org.nz



Capybara

Animals and Culture

Capybara and Co. My life with Rodentia

BY PHILIPPA HADLOW

My life is happily peppered with rodents. From teenhood to adulthood, a rodent in some shape or form has wrangled its way into my heart – a series of relationships that fed my nurturing nature beautifully.

Although as a youngster, I held my nose and endured my elder sister's penchant for keeping mice - relegated to the garage for their whiffy ways - my own forays into the realm of Rodentia didn't begin until I was a 15-year-old living in the city. No room for the coveted pony my parents allowed me to size down to a couple of guinea pigs. Napoléon and Joséphine they were called, and much like their antiquated namesakes of 225 years ago, the royal pair ruled the roost briefly, but with empirical aplomb.

The neighbour's cat dealt to both Napoléon and Joséphine with almost the same savagery as the wars Napoléon Bonaparte led his soldiers to fight (incidentally, the first purpose-built (1850) 90-gun steam battleship shared its name with that first dear guinea pig), but not before they had spawned many litters of perfectly-formed baby guinea pigs.

Guinea pigs join the ranks of much larger mammals; giraffes, zebras, horses, camels, and pigs in that they are precocial (from the word precocious), meaning capable of being independent at an early age and able to walk and eat grass immediately. They do suckle and once weaned at a month old, can mate and bear babies or 'pups' themselves.

So you can imagine how quickly I accumulated a fair posse of these promiscuous wee hussies, all utterly adorable and deserving of their wide appeal. I competed proactively with the cat next door to commandeer enough 'pinny gigs' to make some swift financial deals with unsuspecting friends and family. Then, when the last squeak waned, I decided that both bank and cat were fat enough and abandoned my small-animal husbandry for the duration.

Life intervened most annoyingly, and it was years before I could explore my love of the gentle guinea again after several

iterations of the mandatory tropical fish, cats, dogs, rabbits, budgies, ducks, goats, and chickens came and went – the more recent embodiments are still with me.

Living in the country brought me in close cahoots with the wild rat community. These friendly neighbours didn't take long to introduce themselves and were very willing to share my personal space. The saying "There's no free lunch" meant nothing to those rats, and they were quick to rear their curious heads when the food supplied to my hardworking chickens made life a little bit too easy for *Rattus norvegicus*. Things went from bad to worse when they decided that my bedroom windowsill was prime position to boldly gather, sit and wait in hope of said free lunch/breakfast/dinner and snacks. So pleased were they with the largesse, that they also wooed and won each other over, furiously, and noisily and I tired of their frisky antics until Pest Free Services provided the only fair solution.

Mice re-entered my life via my children, who loved them to bits. They were housed in the upstairs office for the sake of our olfactory senses and though well-caged, still managed to escape at frequent intervals. Some of the babies (of whom, naturally, there were many), got stuck down the back of an heirloom, antique leather armchair. There was only one way to rescue them: cut away the leather. The kids were unwittingly sold a brother and sister (mice are tricky to sex) and, though we had two cages: one pink, one blue, it all got rather mixed up. Mishaps caused by interbreeding led to mutants Clueso, Bear, and Houston ("... we have a problem") who departed this mortal coil leaving their grief-stricken owners to deal with the dilemmas of dodgy DNA.



Harry mouse

We had a good side-line in guinea pigs going at the time as well. Enter Caramello, Benny, Tufty and Albert, Pearl, Teddy, Treasure, Molly the Beautiful and Toffee the Ratslayer – true! Finally, I could again indulge my affection for these little pets – albeit vicariously through my equally enamoured children. Our guinea pigs won prizes at school pet days and were spoilt rotten. Brushed, washed, fed treats and adored, they also bred fruitfully - and lucratively. The local pet store provided an appreciated top up to our bank accounts, even though we lost the odd one to stoats. The viciousness of those attacks made me loathe the mustelid family with a vengeance.



Molly's beautiful babies

Guinea pigs have chortled their way into the cockles of many a heart worldwide. The Andean states of Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Columbia are connected by the Andes Mountain range. Inhabitants speak a mix of Spanish, Quechua, Aymara, and 34 other indigenous languages, and the guinea pig is commonly called a 'cuy'. Although Andean people accept that cuy are small and sweet, their sweetness is valued more in Incan cuisine than as part of their pet appeal and general cuteness.

Bear in mind that animals have unique values across all cultures and what is anathema from one perspective makes good commercial and survival sense from another.

Suffice to say that the Andean Community in South America is where folk culture lets the guinea pig take centre stage as a justifiably excellent consumable, agriculturally farmed to help alleviate subsistence poverty. Growing demand for quality meat has allowed Andean governments and charities to provide rural women with training on sustainable guinea pig farming and help with poverty, malnutrition, and equality.

Organically farmed giant guinea pigs, bred for meat and twice the size of the creatures used as pets, are being marketed as an alternative source of protein to poultry and a healthier alternative to red meat. Cuy is a popular option in traditional kebab-style street food and fine dining, and is a culinary meat staple. It apparently also makes for a very nice ice cream!

It's thought that our domestic guinea pig *Cavia porcellus* (also known as the cavy) originated from the Andean area and not, as its name suggests, from Guinea at all. How it came to be called 'guinea' or even 'pig' is a mystery, as it's not related to the pig one iota. Some suppositions maintain that the name derived from the South American area of Guiana and if you Google a map of the place, you'll see that the outline is uncannily guinea pig-like! I have to admit the cavy does behave a little like a pig; snorting, squealing and snuffling, and they certainly do spend a lot of time eating.

Their diet needs plenty of owner intervention. Like humans, guinea pigs require a supplementary intake of vitamin C (ascorbic acid) because they can't metabolize that vitamin themselves. Without added vitamin C, they are affected fairly rapidly by scurvy: a potentially fatal disease commonly suffered by buccaneering sailors during the mid-16th to mid-19th centuries' 'Age of sail'.

These previously hale and hearty merchants and warmongers often lost fifty per cent or more of their crew to scurvy – over two million sailors all told – until in 1747, Royal Navy surgeon James Lind confirmed Portuguese explorer Pedro Álvares Cabral's and surgeon John Woodall's earlier (16th and 17th-century) claims of the curative effects of citrus fruit. In collaboration with other eminent physicians, it was proved without a doubt that scurvy could be successfully treated simply by eating the odd lemon or orange. From 1795 onward, three-quarters of an ounce of lemon juice preserved in alcohol per day was mandated to be given to every sailor serving throughout the Royal Navy, nearly banishing scurvy at a stroke.

You might now understand why your parents harped on about eating your greens – and heaven knows there are plenty to choose from as virtually all veges contain some if not heaps of vitamin C: broccoli, brussels sprouts (ewww), cabbage, potatoes, spinach, parsley, chilli peppers; and of course, the historically famous lemons, limes, oranges as well as capsicums, blackcurrants, guava, kiwifruit, papaya, and strawberries. Don't take my word for it; just ask the nearest healthy-looking guinea pig.

History tells us that domestic guinea pigs played a big part in aiding scientific explorations into the reasons and cures for scurvy, and in many other human medical conditions such as juvenile diabetes, tuberculosis, and pregnancy complications.

"Holst and Frolich of Copenhagen in 1907, working on guinea pigs, produced the first systematic and convincing demonstration of experimental scurvy in animals. The finding of the exact counterpart of the human condition in the experimental animal has given impetus to carefully controlled scientific investigation of scurvy. The prophylaxis and cure being perfectly clear and evident, most of the study has centred on attempts to determine the actual changes which occur in the animal organism in absence or deficiency of vitamin C." (American Physiological Society, 1927).

Being used for biological experimentation is a practice guinea pigs have endured for centuries. The animals were employed so frequently as experimental models that the epithet 'guinea pig' became used to describe a human test subject. Nowadays, guinea pigs have been largely replaced by other rodents, such as mice and rats, due to their anatomical, physiological, and genetic similarity to humans. Though a subject in their own right, these animals provide incredibly vital assistance in helping facilitate the transition of research from 'bench to bedside' to improve human health.

I'm positive that keeping any breed of rodent as a pet helps human health in far more prosaic – yet emotional ways, too – but guinea pigs are just next level. The emotional bond created from engaging with its personality – like the utterly gorgeous 'popcorning' and purring – its perfect prettiness, and its reliance on your kindness is something to be experienced.

So you can imagine how excited I was to hear that our local small-animal zoo recently acquired two more relatives of this delightful creature. I hightailed it down there and gazed enraptured at rock cavies perched, yes, on a rock, and South American capybara couple Luis Suarez and Fernando softly snoozing in the sun.

Capybaras are socially gregarious animals and usually live in groups of 10-20 individuals. Close relatives as the case may be, though guinea pigs quite enjoy a quick bath but won't beg for one, capybaras seek out water, and in fact, their scientific name *Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris* comes from the Greek *hydro* (water).

The capybaras at the zoo were living their name when I visited and bathing luxuriously in their fancy pool. They're semiaquatic and can hold their breaths for up to five minutes at a time and so prefer a watery environment – which is what the kind folk at Brooklands Zoo have supplied.

The image of a capybara features on the 2-peso coin of Uruguay. To me, that value should be much higher because, like guinea pigs, these members of the Rodentia order are brilliant examples of a blend of practical utility in their countries of origin and show-stopping pet appeal in the west.

They are also the world's largest rodent, growing up to 67kg – and wouldn't I just love to have a few free-ranging in my backyard! I've got just the right spot. *



Access Radio 40 years, Parliament.

Ethnic Communities

Voices in the air: 40 years of community radio

BY JENNIFER LITTLE

Most Kiwis probably haven't heard of – or heard spoken – Gujarati, Khmer, Konkani, Tagalog, or Telugu. But they are among the 49 languages you can tune into on Aotearoa's 12 community Access Radio stations that span the length and breadth of the country from Auckland to Invercargill.

And for those who listen to these stations – whether in English, Te Reo Māori, or any of the foreign languages spoken in our increasingly diverse society – the experience is a powerful way to feel connected to the places, people, ideas, and customs they identify with.

Community radio menus are alluring – and not only the programmes in other languages, but personal and poignant stories and issues in English too. You can gain revealing insights into the hidden lives of prisoners or prostitutes, or discover garage punk, or Parisienne jazz. You might learn about gardening, golf, books, magazines, Buddhism, finance, farming, philosophy, or film. The range of topics is eclectic and abundant.

Access Radio is by definition low-budget, niche, grassroots, hyperlocal and superdiverse. It allows people – particularly

L I F E S T Y L E

minority and marginalised groups – to produce and broadcast programmes for their own communities. By doing so, community radio stations fulfil a mandate to cater to audiences whose interests are under the radar of mainstream broadcast media.

As its tagline states, the station is "broadcasting by, for, and about the community." That means programmes and podcasts are made by and for women, children, people living with disabilities, ethnic communities, and all Kiwis with stories, experiences, and voices to share that aren't traditionally catered for in mainstream media.

Community Access Media Association (CAMA) – the national coordinating body for the network – celebrated 40 years of community radio this year. Programmers and supporters marked the occasion at Parliament with the launch of *Sharing the Mic: Community Access Radio in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Freerange Press), written by Brian Pauling and Bronwyn Beatty who trace the history of community radio, its people, its challenges and its increasingly vital role in a rapidly changing media landscape.

Each station gets a chapter, with interviews and stories from those behind the scenes and behind the mic. Co-author Bronwyn Beatty told Stuff in an interview that something which struck her about the sector was the passion and "incredible effort" put in by the people involved. During the last year, New Zealand's Access stations produced more than 25,000 hours of content in almost 50 languages.

Sasha Borissenko, CAMA's national coordinator, is a passionate champion of community radio. The daughter of migrants from Russia and Ireland, she's grown up here, is educated in law, performing arts and journalism, and has worked in mainstream media. She put together CAMA's recent nationwide awareness campaign, *Find Your Station. Find Your People* to mark the 40-year milestone.



Sasha Borissenko, national coordinator CAMA.

In her work, she gets to travel the *motu* (country) to meet people running the stations and delivering content to find out what support they need. She also explores funding and infrastructure as well as being an advocate and promoter – for example: to government agencies who want to provide multi-lingual information on important issues, like COVID-19 and civil defence emergencies.

"Coming from mainstream media, I now think 'this is where it's at'," she says. "The principle, the integrity and the authenticity behind it is something I certainly was craving. Community radio is something that's actually really genuine and beautiful at a time and in a climate that's really hard.

"Community radio is also about diversity of thought as much as it is a platform for diverse cultures to share news and information," she emphasises. "And if this means ideas that are controversial or confronting, that's fine, as long as it doesn't breach broadcasting standards and meets the criteria under Section 36c of the Broadcasting Act, which says it must "ensure that a range of broadcasts is available to provide for the interests of women, youth, children, persons with disabilities, minorities in the community including ethnic minorities and refugees, and to encourage a range of broadcasts that reflects the diverse religious and ethical beliefs of New Zealanders". "No hate speech, and the content must fit our *kaupapa* (values) and obligations under section 36c," Borissenko adds.

Since starting her role last September, she's marvelled at the talent and quality of programming, including the likes of award-winning podcast for Best Documentary at the New Zealand Radio Awards this year: *Widows of Shuhada*. It tells the stories of four Muslim women widowed by the 2019 Christchurch mosque attacks and what they found themselves facing afterwards.

The series was broadcast on Radio New Zealand earlier this year and was made by student broadcaster Asha Abde at Christchurch-based Plains FM. It's not the first time Plains FM has had national recognition, according to a RNZ report. "The lead producer of *Widows of Shuhada* - Lana Hart - won a New Zealand Radio Award in 2015 for a series on Filipinos living and working in Canterbury."

Borissenko points to other stand-out podcasts, including one about the lives of sex workers – again, on Plains FM – which she says helps to break down stigma about that sector, while a Wellington Access Radio programme on the daily lives of people with disabilities was "subversive and well-crafted."

Community radio offers numerous opportunities for youth programming, as well as education and training in broadcasting through links with schools – an area Borissenko sees plenty of potential for further development.

"It would be amazing if every household in New Zealand knew what community radio was," Borissenko muses.

ACCESS RADIO ORIGINS

Funded by NZ On Air since 1989, community radio predates government support with Wellington Access Radio first going to air in 1981, followed by stations in Wairarapa, Christchurch and Auckland, writes Karen Neill in the introduction to *Sharing the Mic*: "Each station is," she says, "a reflection of its community. Population density and diversity vary between these stations' communities – from the pastoral backdrop of the rural Wairarapa to the big city melting pot of Auckland's multicultural urban ecology."

LISTEN UP

The variety of material is mind-blowing – there's something for everyone, with the bulk of content in English.

Along with appointment listening, there's more content available via streaming and podcasts as community radio finds its place in the digital and on-demand era.

Consider Auckland's Planet FM, which caters to the largest, most ethnically diverse audiences. In a one night snapshot, Wednesday's scheduling has programmes by Tamils, Tongans, Samoans and Korean Catholics, a slot on Chinese Buddhism, as well as content about Niue, Ireland, Sri Lanka, and Kiribati.

There's *Two Sugars* – entertainment and musings on hobbies, travel, golf, food and wine and living off the land hosted by four women with backgrounds in communications, marketing, psychology, business, and education.

As well as *AA Meeting on Air* to support people dealing with alcohol addiction, you'll find *Youth Voices*, *Garden Planet*, *This Way Out* – an international gay bulletin – and *Utu For Workers*, which "raises awareness of workplace injustices and exposes inequities in our systems of redress for mistreated workers".

If you're awake in the wee hours on a Friday there's *Blue Moon Music*, and if you're from Nepal or Romania, you can catch news from home later in the day. On *The C Word*, host Helen King speaks to people whose lives are affected by cancer.

Along with Christian and gospel slots, music geeks with substantial collections share their eclectic or eccentric tastes on shows like *Stone Cold Sober*, *Mike's Soul Music* and *Vinyl Revival* while three Auckland librarians host a book club on air.

Elsewhere, on Taranaki's Access Radio you'll find enlightenment by the listening to *CAB Time* (Citizens Advice Bureau), or *The Law Lady* (Angela Solomons manages to de-mystify the legal issues around buying into a retirement village, noisy neighbours, immigration, divorce, buying a house, surviving a zombie apocalypse, and just

about any other situation you can think of) or learn about politics, property, or the world of art in *Arty Farty Hour* (from Otago Access Radio (OAR)). One of the most popular spots is Cheryl Nomvula Mudawarima's Friday music show, *Cool African Grooves*.

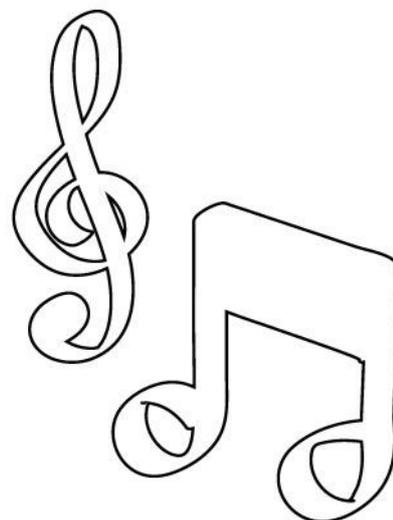
Manawatū People's Radio offers *Blockbuster Backrooms* to take you behind the scenes of horror movies, as well as specialist topics from speedway and wrestling to flatting and fat-friendly discourse, along with every musical genre invented – gospel, garage punk, metal, and disco to country and Brazilian jazz.

A mere fragment of the choices available are mentioned here; CAMA also hosts links to hundreds of richly diverse podcasts available globally and provides tips and training for aspiring broadcasters and podcasters on its website.

Speakers of Gujarati, Khmer, Konkani, Tagalog or Telugu (languages from the Indian state of Gujarati, Cambodia, the western coastal region of India, the Philippines and the Indian states of Andhara Pradesh and Telangana respectively) may be among your neighbours or colleagues. *

Access Community Radio stations:

Auckland – Planet FM
 Waikato – Free FM
 Taranaki – Access Radio Taranaki
 Manawatū – Manawatū People's Radio
 Hawke's Bay – Radio Kidnappers
 Wairarapa – Arrow FM
 Wellington – Wellington Access Radio
 Kapiti – Coast Access Radio
 Nelson/Marlborough – Fresh FM
 Canterbury – Plains FM
 Otago – Otago Access Radio/OAR
 Southland – Radio Southland



Ad Rem

BY CHARLOTTE GIBLIN



charlottегiblin.com



Travel

The Wheely Good Life: Why Kiwis Go Mobile

BY KATIE STONE

Camping, caravanning, and motorhoming have long been a tradition in New Zealand. Many of us have spent summers pitching tents near the beach or bumping over gravel roads in the family caravan.

Now, with overseas travel still looking doubtful - and house prices continuing to climb - the concept of a 'home on wheels' is no longer limited to holidays. COVID restrictions may have spurred us to get out into our own backyards, but others have been living the mobile life for much longer. New

Zealand's community of 'nomads' - those who live full-time in motorhomes, buses, and caravans - are a quirky bunch. A veritable mix of ages, stages, and personalities, they each have their reasons for upping sticks and hitting the road.

Jean and Wally Mills picked up their brand-new motorhome in June 2021, just after Wally turned 65. Rather than wait another six years for Jean to hit retirement age, they decided to start early. They now live full-time in their 8.3 m ACM Platinum, returning to their small Inglewood flat when they need to catch up on maintenance, medical appointments, and family birthdays.

Jean had already spent 2014 travelling in a fifth-wheeler in the US with her sister, so she had some experience of life on the road.

After deciding a fifth-wheeler would be too big for New Zealand roads, Jean and Wally began checking out caravans and various tow vehicles. At some point - neither can recall exactly when or why - the motorhome won out. "We had spent some time checking out motorhomes, visiting a few factories along the way. We figured no matter what we opted for, each one would come with its own positives and negatives," Jean says. "Over dinner and wine, we made a list of all the things we wanted in a motorhome. In the end, we were both surprised how one stood out over the other, so that's what we went with. It was the one I wanted so I was pleasantly surprised."

They've already toured the central North Island and Taranaki and now plan to travel through the East Cape, back to Napier for Christmas, then the Wairarapa for the rest of summer.

They're still on a learning curve, Jean says, but they love it. Cooking is a breeze: they have a full gas oven with four hobs as well as a full motorhome size fridge/freezer. "So far, there haven't been any issues, although we need a window open at all times when the gas oven/hobs are operating, which can be a little cold at times! But we can just turn up the heating to compensate."



Jean and Wally's breakfast view

It took some time to get used to their new sleeping quarters, especially during the colder seasons. "We underestimated how cool it would be at night, so we keep the heating on. We had stabilisers installed at the time of build which has made an amazing difference, especially on uneven ground."

They are also mindful of parking etiquette. Where possible, they will park a few blocks away from their destination and walk. "We recognise we are the ones with the cumbersome vehicle rather than the norm, so it is up to us to sort it out in an amicable manner," Jean says.

Vivienne and Mark have a similar story. Both 61, they had already travelled extensively when they met in England at Ceroc dancing. Vivienne is Kiwi and Mark is English but grew up in South Africa. The pair came to New Zealand in 2002 and have been travelling in their four-berth Mercedes Alpha 4 ex-rental for five years. Mark's parents have always been motorhomers, so it felt like a natural transition. "We love getting off the beaten track and exploring our awesome country - hence all the cracks and dents on the bodywork!" Vivienne says. "We also love meeting new friends."

The pair regularly seek out steampunk and Christian festivals around the country, as well as visiting friends and family. They've now covered most of New Zealand, from Bluff to Cape Reinga, the East Cape, Taranaki, and almost everywhere in between. There have been plenty of favourites along the way. "Exploring the East Cape and Far North was amazing - they're almost like different countries. Coromandel or Nelson beaches are the best for chilling out on the water," Vivienne says. They now have plans to travel around the UK, central Europe, Australia, and Canada.

Living in a smaller space keeps expenses down, says Vivienne - "we can't fit a lot of stuff" - but there are some disadvantages: "When it's wet, we start getting ratty with each other. Also, packing and unpacking is a challenge, and things we need are often at the other end of the country."

Freedom camping is their habit, but they will stay at NZCMA camps to meet with friends.

"We love being spontaneous and not planning too much ahead. We set off in a general direction and see what or who



Vivienne and Mark with their motorhome

we find along the way. We always seem to find somewhere new to stop and explore, every journey," says Vivienne.

While retirement appears to be one of the main incentives for the 'typical' motorhomers, there are many other reasons that Kiwis have chosen to switch their bricks-and-mortar for something more nomadic.

Sandra is 63 and has been travelling full-time for 13 years. "When I turned 50, I shouted myself a dog, a divorce, and an empty shell school bus," she says. "I loaded my bed and a dresser, sorted a sink unit cooker and a fridge, and joined the Gypsy Fair circuit."

Gypsy fairs have also been a childhood dream for Sandra. She longed to have a stall and travel with others all over New Zealand. "I love the freedom to travel. I enjoy driving and I have my license. I can see well out my windscreen as the seat is higher than a normal car. I enjoy our beautiful 'backyard' and love parking at rivers or lakes, on the grass among the trees," she enthuses.



Sandra's truck

Sandra upgraded from a bus to a truck about five years ago. She says that high rent prices will keep her on the road - and besides, she doesn't want to put down roots.

There are challenges, of course - like finding user-friendly water and dump stations. Parking is also an issue, especially with driving a large vehicle in an unfamiliar town or city. It can be hard to know where you are allowed to be and where you're not. Her truck's solar panels make it easy to freedom camp in the summer, but most areas only allow stays of one to two nights. "It gets to be hard work moving all the time and finding places that are not already full," she admits. "Sometimes I want to park for four days or so but can only do that at an NZCMA park or at motor camps."

Despite having roamed the length and breadth of New Zealand, Sandra still has moments that take her breath away. "You'll turn a corner and the lakes or valleys or mountains are before you. My dog thinks I am nuts when I

shout 'whoohoo!' in my seat while driving, but for me, that's what it's all about. It amazes me how different we all can be, and how towns feel different also. It gets into your soul after a while; you need to travel to feed the soul."

But travel isn't the only motivator. For some, it's enough just to be on wheels.

When Jane's partner died suddenly of a heart attack in 2018, she had what she calls "a bit of a midlife crisis". Determined not to die on the job, she decided to quit the rat race and enjoy life. Within weeks, she'd handed in her notice at work, sold her house and farm, and bought two acres in Hawkes Bay. She began researching every last detail about motorhome life - right down to the amount of water she'd need each day. "This was a big decision - I hadn't actually been inside a motorhome before. I wasn't even a camper!" she tells me.

Now 52, Jane has been living in her ex-Intercity coach for three and a half years. The original plan was to travel/live on the road full time, returning to her two acres in Hawkes Bay any time she needed to. However, family commitments (and two god-children to care for) have so far kept her stationary. And that suits Jane just fine.

The 12.5 m bus is no ordinary camper. It features a queen bed in the main bedroom, a three-bed bunk room for the kids, and "more storage than you can imagine". There's a washing machine, and a kitchen that Jane says is bigger than most apartments. The entire bus is fully insulated and can run on solar power for off-grid living. Water is supplied and stored by three 1000L water tanks (fresh, grey, and black).

"I didn't want a minimalist life, so I don't spare the pennies," Jane says. "I drink champagne - the bus has a huge fridge freezer - and I cook what I want. I live just like I would if I was in a house, only it's smaller."

Having become something of an expert on motorhoming, Jane runs the Motorhome Friends New Zealand page on Facebook - now 16.4 k strong - and is always happy to help out anyone looking to join the motorhoming life. Her main advice is to do your homework and take your time. "Choosing a motorhome is worse than having a baby," she laughs. "Everyone has a view, and they love to share it. But their view is based on their experiences, which may have absolutely no bearing on you and yours." *

Astrology and Culture

The History and Importance of Egyptian Astrology

BY HAYLEY WHITE

Egyptian temple

Photo: Jeremy Zero, Unsplash

Whether you believe in it or not, astrology has been central to pretty much every culture in history. The ancient Greeks used astrology with astronomy dating all the way back to Mesopotamia and Babylon around the 19th century B.C, and Vedic astrology comes from the Bronze Age Vedas. The Vedas are ancient Sanskrit texts written by sages during deep meditative states. They decipher the idea that the cosmos can affect our individual lives. Eastern Chinese astrology's mythological zodiac is symbolised by animals, and looks deeper into what is known as people's *Ming*, or destiny, and how that is affected by the universe.

At the centre of these astrological theories are the stars and planets in the greater cosmos. The stars have been our guides for many years, way before we started using them for divination. Even then, predictions were essential to helping civilisations run smoothly. Astronomy was central in foreseeing whether there would be floods or famine, or whether harvests would be bountiful.

It was known by Egyptians that whenever the star Sirius (associated with the deity Sepdet) annually appears in the sky at dawn, the Nile would flood. The appearance of Sirius heralded the New Year. Because of this, Sepdet became central to celebrations for the Egyptian New Year, *Wep Renpet*, and was the goddess of fertile soil.

The Egyptians believed that their Gods and Goddesses showed themselves at their most opportune moment; their maximum point of force or power – their moment of *At*. The Egyptians understood that Gods manifested in different forms depending on the time, and each God was associated with a planet or star. The main example of this is the rise of the star Sirius.

So, astronomy quickly linked into astrology - especially in ancient Egypt.

Historians traced back ancient Egyptian astrology to a specific point of time in the Hellenistic period (323 B.C. to 32 B.C.) where people believed that the God Thoth (known as Hermes Trismegistus)

taught magic, science, writing and astrology to disciples and priests. Others believed that Thoth carved the magical teachings of the heavenly bodies on the walls and columns of holy temples. There are believed to be forty-two books written by Thoth, four of which were devoted to astrology (Schoener, translated by Denson, 2002). The pharaoh of the 26th dynasty (677-672 B.C.) described one of his revelations: "It appeared to me, as I prayed the whole night and looked up to the heavens, that the sky opened up and out of the heavens sounded a voice. Then a sky-blue robe, which depicted the night sky, wrapped itself around my body. And thus I experienced the whole immortal order in the movements of the universe," (Schoener, translated by Denson, 2002, p. 36).



Stone tableau

Photo: Reno Laithienne, Unsplash

One of the more important aspects of Egyptian astrology, even more so than assigning Gods to certain planets, was the implementation of *decans* (each of three equal ten-degree divisions of a sign of the zodiac). The decans were used as a system of time measurement for the Egyptians and consisted of 36 groups of stars that would appear right before the sunrise at dawn to mark the beginning of a 10-day week. The groups of 36 were multiplied by 10 to make up a 360-day year, with an added 5 days for the solar year. The sequence of these stars would always start with Sirius, and each had a corresponding God or Goddess exerting different influences and playing different roles.

The first evidence of the decan system was found on the lid of a 2100 B.C. coffin lid. These decans would later go on to be an essential part of Western astrology, and Greek astrologers would adopt the decans into their new system.

Egyptian zodiac dates, Greek zodiac sign equivalents and planet rulers:

- Osiris (Aries, planet rulers Pluto and Sun): 1st – 10th March and 27th November – 18th December
- Amun-Ra (Taurus, planet rulers Saturn and Sun): 8th – 21st January and 1st – 11th February
- Seth (Gemini, planet ruler Mars): 28th May – 18th June and 28th September – 2nd October
- Bastet (Cancer, planet rulers Sun and Moon): 14th – 28th July; 23rd – 27th September and 3rd – 17th October
- Anubis (Leo, planet ruler Mercury): 9th – 27th May and 29th June – 13th July
- Thoth (Virgo, planet rulers Moon and Mercury): 1st – 19th April and 8th – 17th November
- Geb (Libra, planet ruler Earth): 12th – 29th February and 20th – 31st August
- Mut (Scorpio, planet ruler Sun): 22nd – 31st January and 8th – 22nd September
- Hapi (Sagittarius, planet rulers Moon, Earth, and Uranus): 1st – 7th January; 19th – 28th June; 1st – 7th September and 18th – 26th November
- Horus (Capricorn, planet rulers Sun and Moon): 20th April – 8th May and 12th – 19th August
- Sekhmet (Aquarius, planet ruler Sun): 29th July – 11th August and 30th October – 7th November
- Isis (Pisces, planet rulers Moon, Earth, and Uranus): 11th – 31st March; 18th – 29th October and 19th – 31st December

One of the most interesting things about Hellenistic astrology is that the ancient Egyptians used it to form an advanced system of medicine called *Iatromathematics*. They were so important and became so central that some astrological writings even included this term in their titles. Everything on earth - rocks, plants, or animals - was assigned a God. This meant that in any stone or organism, there was a God at work (Schoener, translated by Denson, 2002).

It was the same for humans. Anything in the human body, including individual organs and body parts, was assigned a God.

This meant that if a particular body part became ill, it was assumed that the assigned God was causing issues. From this, the Egyptians believed that particular organ or person could be healed by the plant or animal that was inhabited or ruled by the same God.

This was important because the Egyptians believed that each person was influenced by the cosmos (as above, so below). This went hand in hand with every other form of astrology that followed the influence of the macrocosm (cosmos, universe) on the microcosm (individual). This, as well as the decan system, was inherited by hybrid Greek-Egyptian astrology.

When Alexander the Great conquered Egypt at around 330 B.C., he created Alexandria – a city that produced some of the most prolific writers. It was there that Greek-Babylonian astrology mixed with Decanic astrology to create the Egyptian zodiac as we know it. Not too long after Alexander the Great died came Claudius Ptolemy. Ptolemy (A.D. 90 to A.D. 168) was an Egyptian mathematician, astronomer, and astrologer who was born in Alexandria, Egypt. Ptolemy wrote several scientific works, one of which was the *Tetrabiblos*. It was a radical thing to write considering the Romans did not believe in astrology at the time. It was a work written extensively on the relevance of horoscopic astrology but mostly in the medicinal sense, especially in the second book of the *Tetrabiblos*. Ptolemy explained the different factors that could predict both good and bad events based on the positioning of the stars and planets in contrast to their geographical location. It held a lot of similar concepts to previous Egyptian astrology, especially in how planets could determine illnesses or successes.

For example, Ptolemy says that Saturn can cause destruction by cold, particularly when the event in question concerns men, and can also cause illness, withering, poverty, exile, imprisonment, and deaths, among other unpleasant occurrences. One of the interesting things he has said about a dominant Saturn is that it brings about scarcity of certain animals and that when man use that certain animal, men perish.

He also mentions good outcomes where some planets are concerned, for instance, when Venus is dominant in a particular event, fame, honour, happiness, marriage, abundance, and profit are all that Saturn can bring. But even Ptolemy says these should all be taken with a grain of salt as there are many other factors outside of the actual horoscopes that can affect people and events (*Tetrabiblos*, Ptolemy).

It is quite disappointing that critics dismiss astrology as nothing more than a funny thing to read out of the back of a newspaper or magazine. Without astronomy, the Egyptians would have had no way to predict when the Nile would flood, or when would be the best time to plant their crops in a fertile soil. Likewise, they also relied heavily on astrology for medicine, making sure their people were treated with the appropriate remedies for their ailments. Obviously for the ancient Egyptians and many other ancient civilisations, astrology was a sacred and powerful form of divination that was given to them directly from their Gods. Who are we to spit on what the Gods have given us? *

Sources: 1. Oxford languages 2. Egyptian astrology: What is my Egyptian zodiac sign? astrofame.com 3. Origins of astrology: The Egyptian legacy, keplercollege.org 4. History of astrology, faust.com 5. *Tetrabiblos*, hermetics.org 6. Astrology: Between religion and the empirical. *Esoterica IV*, 29-60.



Environment

Gorse – friend or foe?

BY ALINA SUCHANSKI

Farmland on Te Anau – Milford Highway overrun by gorse, Photo: Tom King, Unsplash

Conservationists hate it, beekeepers love it and farmers just put up with it. Gorse evokes strong feelings amongst its supporters as well as opponents.

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) first arrived in New Zealand in the early 1800s. Seed was brought in by English settlers to grow plants for hedging and it was recorded by Charles Darwin during his voyage through New Zealand waters in 1835 to be growing in hedges in the Bay of Islands.

This spiny shrub (<2-3 m tall) has woody, erect or spreading stems which are many-branched in younger plants but become bare at the base as the plant gets older. Its leaves are reduced to spines, which are deeply furrowed. Pea-like yellow flowers are followed by hairy seed pods which turn black when mature and explode to release seeds.



Gorse flowers all year round. This photo was taken in July.
Photo: Alina Suchanski

Gorse quickly established itself and soon spread out of control, taking over vast areas cleared for agricultural use, but Worsley

(1999) says that "settlers failed to recognise the threat, and gorse seed continued to be imported and plantings deliberately established into the 1900s".

ORIGINS AND SPREAD

A member of the pea family, gorse is an extremely hardy plant. It tolerates hot to cold temperatures, high to low rainfall, wind, salt damage, grazing, and poor soil. The plant produces massive numbers of long-lived seeds that explode out of their pods, spreading up to 5 m from the parent plant. Seed is also spread by soil movement, road graders, contaminated machinery, animals, boots, and stock food; invading roadsides, waste land, farms, quarries, forest tracks, metal dumps, fire breaks, exotic forests, landslides, and riverbeds.

The seed can lie dormant on the ground for up to 50 years, germinating quickly after the mature plants have been removed. Unfortunately, most methods of removing adult gorse plants, such as burning or bulldozing them, create ideal conditions for gorse seeds to germinate.

In addition, gorse does so well in New Zealand's mild climate that it flowers both in summer and in winter, producing seed twice a year, unlike in Europe from where it originates.

Gorse is not a fast grower (15-30 cm per year) but will grow to 2.5 m and has been popular for intruder-proof hedging because its spines are so vicious. It's also very good for windy, exposed, coastal sites and historically was used as a windbreak which could be cut to provide animal feed. Gorse hedges and windbreaks established on the Canterbury Plains since the 1850s have a combined length of 300,000 kilometres.

There is an opinion that the real problem with the plant's out-of-control spread began during WWI when thousands of Kiwis, many of them farmers, joined the army and were sent to Europe as part of the

ANZAC corps. Unattended gorse hedges were allowed to self-seed, with young seedlings 'marching' up hills and out to riverbanks, colonising any ground previously cleared for farming. This happened again during WW2, leading to a situation where total eradication of the species became virtually impossible.

After WW2, New Zealand entered a period of vigorous land development with the aim of increasing exports. The campaign against gorse intensified, particularly in North Island hill country.

Today, gorse is one of the most recognised aggressive invasive species in New Zealand.

OPINIONS ABOUT GORSE

Despite its ubiquitous presence, the opinions about gorse are divided and the prickly plant has its supporters as well as opponents.

Gorse advocates the claim that as a legume, it fixes nitrogen providing valuable nutrients to other plants, and its dense root structure helps combat erosion. Its enemies point out that overproduction of nitrogen can lead to waterway pollution, and its dense habitat outcompetes native plants and hinders plantation forests.

Beekeepers see gorse as a valuable source of pollen for their bees, especially in early spring when few other natural pollen sources are available. The goat farming industry also perceives gorse as a valuable forage plant for their animals.

A somewhat unexpected endorsement comes from the 'green' camp. Many conservationists believe gorse to be a useful nursery for native bush regeneration, as older gorse bushes provide ideal conditions for seeds of native, shade-tolerant species to germinate and grow. Because it needs full light to germinate, gorse cannot regenerate significantly under its own shade. Native species such as fuchsia, wineberry, lemonwood and five-finger, together with taller trees such as totara, matai, kahikatea or beech, grow up through the ageing gorse canopy, overtop it, shade it, and eventually replace it. A deliberate policy of disturbing gorse as little as possible will rapidly lead to its demise. This technique is working successfully at Hinewai Reserve on Banks Peninsula.

PROBLEMS

Gorse now occupies large areas of hill-country, considerably reducing pastureland available for grazing by livestock. It also causes severe competition with young forest trees and makes access to forests difficult for pruning and thinning operations. Over summer, the foliage of gorse can become quite dry, making the plant susceptible to fire. This creates risks of damage to forests and houses situated close to stands of gorse. Gorse is able to re-establish quickly once a fire has been through a stand as the species carries large quantities of seeds with tough outer coats.

CONTROL

The attempt to control gorse biologically in New Zealand was one of the earliest undertaken worldwide. Insects were seen as a low-cost alternative to poison, lessening the economic impact on landowners.

The gorse seed weevil was imported from England in 1928, and widely released between 1931 and 1947. But in response to the New Zealand climate, gorse adapted to form seeds in both spring and

autumn. The gorse weevil was only active in spring, leaving the autumn seeds untouched.

Manual controls of grubbing, cutting, and bulldozing were time-consuming and expensive. Fire, grazing, and the use of herbicides were considered the best solutions. While carefully managed burn-offs can result in near-total destruction of an infestation, more often than not a thick cover of gorse seedlings appears soon after burning, as fire helps to break the dormancy of the seeds and provides nutrients for growth. The cost of clearance was also prohibitive, especially on marginal land or extreme terrain.

As with many scrub weeds, gorse soon regrows from dormant buds on stumps if shrubs are cut with chain saws or slashers without prior herbicide treatment. Regrowth from buds can also occur after fires. Although gorse can be killed using herbicides, many of these sprays are not very effective, because the shape of the leaves (thorns) and the thick cuticles on the spines help prevent absorption of herbicides.

The failure of these control methods led to a review in the 1960s of the role of biological agents in European gorse control. Yet, it was not until the early 1980s, that the introduction of further biological control organisms was reconsidered.

The variety of attitudes held towards gorse has affected the direction of research into its elimination. Approval to introduce biological controls was finally given in 1989. DSIR (now AgResearch Limited) imported the gorse pod moth, which is now established in the North and South Islands. In Canterbury, observation suggests that the gorse pod moth and gorse weevil are jointly destroying between 90-100% of spring/summer seed crop, and the gorse pod moth is destroying about 15-20% of the autumn/winter crop.

In addition to this, between 1989 and 2001, five foliage feeding control agents were introduced: the gorse spider mite, gorse thrips, gorse soft and hard shoot moths, and the gorse colonial hard shoot moth. Foliage feeders suppress growth by damaging the gorse plant, lowering its ability to photosynthesise, flower and produce seeds.

Results have been mixed, but in general neither the seed-feeding nor foliage-feeding insects are doing enough damage to be viable as a stand-alone control agent.

The concept of biological control of gorse using fungi was raised in 1995, with several species identified as potential mycoherbicides. One of these – *Fusarium tumidum*, a naturally occurring gorse pathogen – was selected for development.

THE SOLUTION

The very nature of gorse as a pioneering, fast-growing, short-lived shrub means that it can only survive where the land is constantly open and disturbed. Undisturbed, it grows vigorously for the first few years, but then slows to a relative standstill.

The Department of Conservation recommends the 'Method Of Least Disturbance' (or MOLD), followed by succession - letting native plants take their course. Succession can result in the natural replacement of weeds by native plants. A long-term solution, this might be a great option for those who have the patience. *

Sources: 1. New Zealand Plants and their Story: Proceedings of a conference held in Wellington, RNZIH 2. Gorse, The Hedge Cutter 3. Gorse in New Zealand, Wikipedia 4. Weedbusters 5. Gorse, Massey University 6. Weed control methods, DOC



Photo: Rajesh Kavasseri, Unsplash

Music

Romantic music era

BY HAYLEY WHITE

"Where words fail, music speaks" – Hans Christian Andersen

The Romantic era brought forth some of the most beloved music from the most prevalent classical composers. European Romanticism was a stylistic movement that related to literature, music, and art, but Romantic era music was said to be mostly German. The Romanticism movement began in the late 1700s and was a response to the rationalism that the Age of Enlightenment brought around.

The first recognised musical era, the Medieval era, saw the Gregorian Chant as the earliest form of music on record. It was a predominantly sacred form of music used in church services and ceremonies. After this came the Renaissance era during which the motet and German hymns became very popular.

The motet was sometimes sung completely a cappella and was a very important form of music during the Renaissance. German hymns were also made popular during this time because of the simplicity of the songs made it easier for worshippers to sing along with. Oratorios and cantatas were developed in the Baroque era. Oratorios were the main source of sacred music for the church along with various other compositions, sung either as a solo or choir. The cantata was an Italian genre of secular music that could be sung in a choir with instrumental accompaniment, or as a solo cantata, very similar to opera. The sacred cantata sung in church services was much like the oratorio.

Opera was also created in the Baroque period, by a group called the *Camerata*. Fashioned after the music found from ancient Greece, the opera continued to be popular through the Classical era, too. The Classical era was one of the only music periods that prioritised instrumental music over vocal music.

The Age of Enlightenment was something that took place during the Classical era and greatly influenced music because it meant the separation of church and state. The most influential composers of that time - notably Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, and Schubert - all contributed to the way classical music took form - mostly because they defined various forms of orchestra.

The Romantic era of music was especially sweet. If the Renaissance was a time of artistic and creative expression, the Romantic era was a time for individual and emotional expression. Though the Baroque

also explored different forms of expression, it was considered ugly and exaggerated compared to the lovely music of the Romantic period. At that time, European Romanticism considered music to be the top art form to fully express human emotion and so music was expected to communicate to the audience, mostly by narrative.

It is hard to say when the Romantic era of music began and ended because some of the Classical era composers - Beethoven, Mozart, and Haydn - were all said to breathe "one in the same romantic spirit," (Hoffmann, 1810). It was Hoffman's essays and reviews that really separated the emotional Romantic period from the Classical period, which upheld restraint and formality. The characteristics attributed to Romanticism, including musical Romanticism, were 'a preoccupation with and surrender to nature, fascination with the past, longing for the infinite, a focus on the nocturnal and terrifying, national identity, emphasis on extreme subjectivism, discontent with musical formulas and conventions, and the development of programmatic music designed to evoke specific ideas and atmospheres.' (Kravitt, 1992).

The Romantic period was less formal than earlier music periods. It did not particularly develop any of the musical composition styles from the Classical era, but it was a lot freer flowing. Because of this, composers created a variety of new genres of classical music. In addition to the sonata and symphony, Romantic composers created forms such as the rhapsody, nocturne, overture, prelude, Polish mazurkas that were re-stylised by Chopin, and the intermezzo.

The rhapsody is defined as an enthusiastic or ecstatic expression of feeling, and this is definitely conveyed in the Romantic era rhapsodies. Within music, it is a single-movement piece that is sporadic, yet integrated, free-flowing in structure, and features a range of contrasting emotions, moods, and tonality. It is a piece of music that holds true to the Romantic period ideals of emotional connectivity. Undoubtedly, a modern song that would spring to mind is Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*. Described as symphonic rock, Freddie Mercury called it a 'mock opera' and many musicologists have mused over whether it is a rhapsody. Personally, I think it is, because it has all the tell-tale signs of a rhapsody with one difference: it is not a classical piece - but it all comes down to interpretation.

The nocturne was a musical composition inspired by the moods and feelings of the night. Irish composer John Field is viewed as the father of Romantic period nocturnes, but Chopin is the more famous composer, with Nocturne Op. 9 No. 2 being his most well-known. The nocturne is typically a piano piece that features a songlike melody with arpeggiated accompaniment. Arpeggiated means the chords of the songs are split into sequences of notes similar to a guitar. Nocturnes are generally considered quite tranquil, expressive, and lyrical, though sometimes they are regarded as gloomy, too.



John Field

An overture is what is generally played before a ballet or opera. 'Overture' is French for 'opening' because it opens a show. It usually has a similar tune to what people will hear during the show, so it prepares the audience for what is to come. Likewise, a prelude in the Baroque period was a piece of music played as an introduction to another larger musical piece. But in the Romantic period, a prelude is a short piece of standalone music that has a varying form.

Polish composer Frédéric Chopin (1810 – 1849) wrote 59 piano *mazurka* pieces that built on from the already established Polish *mazurka*. The *mazurka* is a lively musical composition made for folk dancing that usually has a lot of repetition, whether that means repetition of a single measure, a group of measures, repetition of a theme, or repetition of an entire section (Kallberg, 1988). Though Chopin did not compose his *mazurkas* so they could be danced to, he still kept true to most of the traditional conventions of the Polish *mazurka*. Because of this, he ended up creating more stylised and self-contained dance pieces (Samson, 1985). Through this, he created an entirely new genre called the 'Chopin genre'.



Frederic Chopin

Chopin's work was a prime example of the nationalistic music created during the late Romantic period. Chopin was one of the first composers to incorporate nationalistic ideals into his compositions - mostly because he escaped from Poland a month before the November Uprising of 1830 where Poland fought against Russia to gain independence. There were a few other composers, such as Bedřich Smetana from the modern-day Czech Republic, who followed along the same lines with nationalistic works that musically described their homelands.

Intermezzos were musical pieces that sat between acts or scenes of opera or other dramatic works during an interlude or break. An intermezzo usually has two different meanings in music: the operatic and the instrumental.



Bedřich Smetana

The operatic intermezzo sometimes used characters from the opera or *commedia dell'arte*, an early form of professional theatre originating from Italy. The intermezzo was quite often burlesque in style and characterised by slapstick comedy, disguises, dialect, and ribaldry or blue comedy.

The intermezzo spread quickly throughout Europe in the 1730s, and sometimes even became more popular than opera itself - not only because people found it so enjoyable, but it was also very easy to produce and stage. Cities like Moscow recorded visits by troupes performing intermezzo years before any *opera seria* (a serious style of opera that developed during the high Baroque period) were shown. They were usually complete works within themselves, but provided comic or dramatic relief from the bigger opera seria around them.

In the 19th century, the instrumental intermezzo became a stand-alone piece that had different functions. In some instances, it served as background action music for Shakespearean plays and in others, it was used as a small connecting piece of music between larger compositions. Both the instrumental and operatic intermezzos were usually melodic and lyrical.

From opera seria emerged the *opera buffa*. While intermezzos were short, one-act interludes, the opera buffa or 'comic opera' was a genre that grew popular in the Romantic era. It was characterised by everyday settings, local dialects, and simple vocal writing. It was essentially done in a way that the common man could relate to more easily. Opera buffa faded as the Romantic era advanced, even though opera itself held significant cultural importance throughout most of the following musical eras.

In all, the Romantic era was less of an advancement of technique and more an advancement of ideas. It is pretty rare nowadays where a song does not bring up the topic of love, or hate, or happiness, or betrayal or any range of human emotion. This emotional exploration was something created and perfected in the Romantic period. It paved the way for today's musicians and songwriters to create the kind of emotional music that makes us sing along at the top of our lungs. *

Sources: 1. Recension: Sinfonie pour 2 Violons, 2 Violes, Violoncelle e Contre-Violon, 2 Flûtes, petite Flûte, 2 Hautbois, 2 Clarinettes, 2 Bassons, Contrabasson, 2 Cors, 2 Trompettes, Timbales et 3 Trompes, composée et dédiée etc. par Louis van Beethoven. à Leipsic, chez Breitkopf et Härtel, Oeuvre 67, No. 5, des Sinfonies. *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* [Leipzig] 2. Romanticism today. The Musical Quarterly 3. The music of Chopin



Religion

Buddhism: Then, Now, How, And Why

BY KATIE STONE

Angkor Wat, Cambodia.

As the sun rises over the small southeast Asian city of Luang Prabang, a silent procession of saffron moves down the street. Heads bowed, feet bare, wooden bowls clasped at their hips, these reverent figures walk calmly in long lines. Each pauses - briefly - to collect a small serving of rice from the villagers, who are perched on stools on the side of the street. Then they move on. It is the collecting of alms: a sacred Buddhist tradition that dates back to the 14th century. The monks make their slow, orderly amble through the streets every morning at dawn to receive gifts of food from local villagers.

Tourists, of course, are intrigued. Although the local marketing bureaus of these areas try to advise foreigners of observation etiquette, snap-happy voyeurists crowd the street, eager to catch a prize shot. Some even walk alongside the monks and push cameras into their faces.

The monks, for the most part, simply keep moving. After all, this is just a normal part of their routine.

In countries practising Theravada Buddhism - Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, and Laos - the monks rely on these daily offerings of food. And in return, the almsgivers receive spiritual merit: providing sustenance to the monks generates 'good' in their lives. The practice is similar to tithes and other offerings recognised in Catholicism, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism.

To our Western minds, these spiritual traditions seem archaic, antiquated. And yet research suggests that we are deeply fascinated by Buddhism: many to the point of incorporating Buddhist practices and beliefs into our own lives. Or even becoming Buddhists ourselves.

So what is it about Buddhism - which is described not as a religion but a 'way of life' - that we respond to so easily? Perhaps it's the fact that, in a world that is becoming progressively non-religious, this ancient set of beliefs offers the mindfulness we crave, the inner peace we lack, and the flexibility to use it how we choose.

A SHORT HISTORY OF BUDDHISM

Around 9-10% of the world's population identify as Buddhists. Buddhism is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who achieved enlightenment under a fig tree in Bodhi Gaya, India between 600-400 BCE. Upon becoming the Buddha (meaning "the awakened one"), he spent the rest of his life teaching how to end suffering (*dukkha*) through eliminating ignorance and craving (*tahā*) and thereby attaining the highest form of happiness, *nirvāṇa*.

To understand the complex movement of Buddhist belief and practice, it's important to first understand its foundations.

CORE BELIEFS OF BUDDHISM

The central tenet of Buddhism is to avoid suffering and be released from the cycle of rebirth. Buddha discovered Three Universal Truths and Four Noble Truths, which he then taught to his followers for the remaining 45 years of his life.

The Three Universal Truths

- Everything in life is impermanent and always changing.
- Because nothing is permanent, a life based on possessing things or persons doesn't make you happy.
- There is no eternal, unchanging soul. The concept of 'self' is just a collection of changing characteristics or attributes.



The Four Noble Truths

- All existence is dukkha (suffering).
- The cause of dukkha is craving.
- The cessation of dukkha comes with the cessation of craving
- There is a path that leads from dukkha (The Noble Eightfold Path).

The Noble Eightfold Path (also called the Middle Way, or the Threefold Way) is the path which Buddhists can follow to end suffering. This is a progressive path based on ethics, meditation, and wisdom.

THE MOVEMENT OF BUDDHISM

As Buddhism swept throughout Asia, monuments were built to honour the life and words of the Buddha. Some of the most famous Buddhist temples include Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Borobudur in Java, Indonesia. Sri Lanka and Thailand are both home to dozens of Buddhist structures, while Burma is famous for its stunning Buddhist pagodas.

Over the centuries, Buddhism underwent profound change. As the teachings spread through different civilisations, Buddha's ideas were gently adapted to meet local customs, shaping the practices in different ways.



Bronze statue of Buddha, Lantau Island, Hong Kong.

A broader and more accessible doctrine emerged, followed by an explosion of sacred texts, commentaries, sculptures, and art, based not only on the Buddha but also on many figures representing various aspects of the Buddha's nature.

By the 5th century, Buddhism reached Japan, culminating in a number of different sects that included Zen.

Buddhism is now a minority in its birthplace of India, but it reigns throughout much of the rest of Asia.

In Tibet, the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism is the Dalai Lama, a reincarnation of the revered Bodhisattva of Compassion, Chenrezig (Avalokitesvara). Tibetan Buddhism emphasises meditation (taking the form of repetitive chanting, the use of prayer wheels, and circumambulations) and has produced fertile art forms and elaborate rituals.

THE SCHOOLS OF BUDDHISM

Today, the two main branches of Buddhism include *Theravada* ("The School of the Elders") and *Mahayana* ("The Great Vehicle"). Theravada and Mahayana both share the common basic Buddhist teachings of the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-fold Path, and follow devotion to the life of Buddha.

Around half of Buddhists live in China, practising Mahayana Buddhism. Mahayana is also the main religion of Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Theravada is practised mainly in Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos. Tibetan Buddhism is practised in India and also in many Western countries.

Each school differs somewhat in their means of achieving enlightenment or liberation from *samsara*: defined as "the indefinitely repeated cycles of birth, misery, and death caused by karma".

THERAVADA

Theravada is thought to be the most traditional form of Buddhism and closest to Buddha's original teachings. It is the only one of the three schools that have kept up the alms-gathering tradition.



Theravada encourages the use of meditation for awakening (or enlightenment). It emphasises attaining personal liberation through one's own efforts. Meditation and self-reflection are key elements of this journey to enlightenment. The ideal road is to dedicate oneself to full-time monastic life. The follower is expected to "abstain from all kinds of evil, to accumulate all that is good and to purify their mind". By meditating daily, students are expected to develop insight into the workings of the mind, how suffering is created, and how to let go of the habits that perpetuate it.

Chanting from the Paritta texts is also central to Theravada practice as a means of reinforcing the Buddha's teaching.

MAHAYANA

Mahayana is strongest in Tibet, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Mongolia. Rather than a single group, Mahayana represents a collection of Buddhist traditions including Zen, Pure Land Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism. Vajrayana, a form of Tantric Buddhism practised mainly in Tibet and Mongolia is sometimes recognized as part of Mahayana. The spread of Mahayana through Tibet and China has allowed it to take on more local customs.

Mahayana differs from Theravada in that its scriptures are somewhat more open and dynamic. While Theravada adheres strictly to the *Tripitaka* (the earliest surviving Buddhist scriptures), Mahayana also accepts the Tripitaka alongside new doctrines and revelations attributed to the Buddha. Mahayanas say that they try to look beyond the Buddha's literal teachings as they appear in the original scriptures and instead try to find deeper fundamental truths within the Buddha's words.

THE CONCEPT OF THE BODHISATTVA

All schools of Buddhism recognise the *Bodhisattva*: "the one whose goal is awakening". Or, in other words, someone who is on the path to becoming a buddha. Bodhisattvas are common figures in Buddhist literature and art.

The concept of the Bodhisattva is most prominent in Mahayana Buddhism, which encourages followers to stay in samsara and

help other struggling humans. Mahayana Buddhists also believe that the bodhisattva path is universal: that anyone can undertake the journey to becoming a buddha. This journey is described as a way of life, of selflessness; a deep wish for all beings - no matter who they are - to be liberated from suffering.

Theravada, on the other hand, encourages followers to attain enlightenment first so they are better able to help others trapped in samsara. Theravada also holds that becoming a bodhisattva is "reserved for and appropriated by certain exceptional people" - in other words, not just anyone can become a Bodhisattva, and nor is it practical to insist on this.

THE FUTURE OF BUDDHISM

Unlike most other major religions of the world, and despite dominating much of north and southeast Asia, the global Buddhist population is expected to decline to 5% over the next few decades.

This is partly due to the global trend towards non-religion, and also partly due to the low fertility rate of Buddhist women. At present, Buddhist women produce only 1-2 children, which is fewer than most other religions. Demographics suggest that this may be because Buddhists tend to be older than followers of most other major religious groups around the world: the median age of Buddhists is 36. The median age of Muslims, on the other hand, is 24, and the Muslim population is expected to increase by 70% over the next three decades.

The small global decline of Buddhists will not reflect the prominence of Buddhism in the Asia-Pacific region. In fact, the Buddhist population in the Middle East and North Africa is expected to grow by up to 137% by 2050. Buddhism is also growing rapidly in Europe and North America, with the number of people identifying as Buddhists expected to increase by 85% and 58% respectively.

And we should be glad. This non-theistic religion - with its encouragement of mindfulness and self-cultivation - is about us, our minds, and our suffering. It's been referred to as "spirituality for the non-religious" - and we are free to take from it what we wish. *



Jacob Rajan in 'Paradise or The Impermanence of Ice Cream'
Photo: John McDermott

Theatre Memories, masks, and mortality – a theatrical journey to Mumbai

BY JENNIFER LITTLE

What do ice cream and vanishing vultures have in common? Plenty, it turns out, if you are a playwright/actor looking for an original story with an intriguing theme.

These seemingly incongruous subjects – frozen confectionery and scavenging birds – are at the core of Indian Ink Theatre Company's newest production, *Paradise or The Impermanence of Ice Cream*; a one-man show of seven characters plus a gangly-legged vulture on strings.

It's the tenth production by the multiple award-winning company co-created by actor Jacob Rajan. He and collaborator Justin Lewis teamed up to form Indian Ink two decades ago, following Rajan's first ground-breaking, one-man show, *Krishnan's Dairy* in 1997. The pair have gone on to earn numerous accolades for subsequent productions by combining their love of masterful puppetry and masks to augment powerful storytelling.

With the support of a full-scale production team, their latest script comes to life – even though it is about death, existential angst, and regret – through Rajan's mesmerising

movement and his impeccably executed craft of inhabiting a diverse panoply of characters. He swivels between them in a split-second, instantly acquiring a new set of mannerisms and vocal expressions while interacting with an impressive vulture puppet visibly manipulated to clever effect by puppeteer Jon Coddington.

As the boundaries between memory, time and place shift with the aid of evocative backdrop visuals and a blast of Bollywood, a bizarre tale of love, happiness, and the afterlife unfolds in modern-day Mumbai – a city famous for its colour and chaos.

The lights come up on ageing protagonist Kutistar, aka Rajan as a Harvey Norman salesman. The fellow is sprawled across a rock as his journey into the past begins. In a reverie/delirium he revisits his youthful love story set in Mumbai, where he was once embroiled with an alluring Parsi ice cream seller. Not only is she preoccupied with keeping her business going, she's in a fraught state about the fate of her dead grandfather's body. Their friendship never reaches romantic fruition. Is the lurking vulture to blame? Bittersweet humour permeates the reflections of the hapless youth.

The genesis for this latest production was a trip in 2019 to Mumbai where Rajan and Lewis stumbled on an intriguing story about disappearing vultures. It was the role the birds play in the Parsi community's time-honoured ritual for disposing of corpses by exposing them to the scavenging birds within the walls of a sacred, hilltop tower that captured their imaginations.

This ritual, ecologically sound, however macabre by Western standards, came under threat when Mumbai's vulture population came close to extinction in the late 1990s as a result of ingesting the livestock version of the drug Diclofenac. It proved toxic for the vultures feeding on cattle carcasses. The drug was banned in 2006, but by then it had already wiped out 95 per cent of these birds.

Back in Aotearoa, the writers did more research and forged their own story, which takes the audience into uncharted and strange territory.

But the ghostly 'Towers of Silence' alluded to in the script are not a fantasy of the playwright's imagination. They are real – Rajan and Lewis visited the site on Malabar Hill before departing Mumbai and learned about the significance of the location for Parsi corpses and the endangered vultures.

LAUGHTER IN THE FACE OF MORTALITY

Indian Ink's philosophy is the idea of the 'serious laugh' achieved theatrically by "opening mouths with laughter to slip serious ideas in". This was especially important for *Paradise*, which Rajan refers to as "a meditation on death".

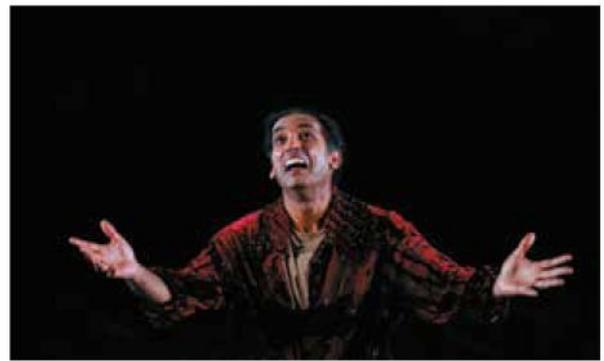
"It's not a great marketing thing, a meditation on death, because we are, as a species, so resistant to it," Rajan says. Thus, *'Impermanence'* is a necessary euphemism for death.

A key influence for the production is a book that Lewis read around the time of the Mumbai trip; Pulitzer Prize-winning *Denial of Death*, by Ernest Becker. "It's an incredible book," says Rajan. "It's a unifying theory of psychology. In a nutshell, we are the only species on the planet that knows we are going to die."

The book examines the lengths we go to avoid and deny the reality of death, whether through having families (perpetuating ourselves through our children), or material wealth or religious beliefs that promise a glorious afterlife – all the ways we buffer and protect ourselves from fear of death. He acknowledges it is "quite hard to explain, but we found it really compelling. And we embedded it in all our characters."

Although the characters and setting are Indian, the Western theatrical style of the company is generally an 'alien space' for Indian audiences, says Rajan, who is notably the first Indian actor to graduate from Toi Whakaari – The New Zealand Drama School.

Company co-director, writer, and performer, he is an Arts Foundation Laureate and founding partner of Indian Ink Theatre Company. He collaborated to create *Krishnan's Dairy*, *The Candlestickmaker*, *The Pickle King*, *The Dentist's Chair*, *The Guru of Chai*, and *Kiss the Fish* and has performed them throughout New Zealand and internationally.



Rajan won Best Actor in the 2010 Chapman Tripp Theatre Awards for *The Guru of Chai* and was nominated for the Stage Award for Best Actor at the Edinburgh Fringe. He has also featured in New Zealand television series *Outrageous Fortune* and *Shortland Street*. In 2013 he was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in the New Year's Honours List.

Rajan's family originates in Kerala, Southern India. He was born in Malaysia and immigrated to New Zealand at the age of four with his parents who came together in an arranged marriage – a subject he explored in *Krishnan's Dairy*.

He has a degree in microbiology and a teacher's diploma but discovered his love of drama while studying science and tells me: "I really love theatre. Often people can confuse theatre actors as just waiting to get into a film. It's not true."

THEATRE FOR THE SOUL

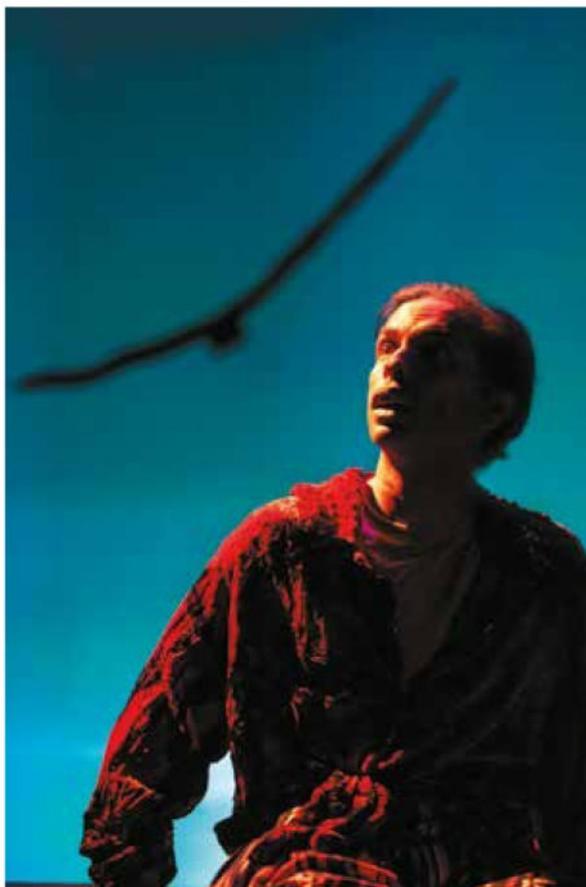
One of his favourite quotes is from actor Terence Mann: "Film will make you famous, television will make you rich, theatre will make you good."

The use of masks is a hallmark of all Indian Ink productions – an art Rajan has studied through workshops with theatre legend John Bolton. Justin Lewis is a graduate of the Melbourne-based John Bolton Theatre School and Rajan describes Bolton as his guru. It was from him that he learned about the power of being 'possessed' by the mask and channelling a character via a mask rather than acting.

The kind of theatre he likes the most is when the audience is doing some of the work. "They really have to enter into that childlike sense of make-believe, which you don't do in film. I try to engage the audience's imagination because I'm convinced that when you engage their imagination, you enrich the soul," he says.

"The aim is to leave an indelible imprint on your heart: that's why we're called Indian Ink." Indian Ink's productions have toured Australia, the UK, US, Germany and Singapore and Paradise has already been snapped up for North American touring in early 2022.

For Rajan, doing theatre is "a semi-religious communal experience where audiences come in as strangers, but leave having experienced something together." *



Photos: Ankita Singh



Photo: Dan Freeman, Unsplash

Migrants, Refugees & Multiculturalism

Global Journeys: New Zealand's migrant culture

BY CHRIS PIDGEON

New Zealand has forever been thought of as a bicultural society. Despite the difficulties and wrongdoings surrounding Te Tiriti o Waitangi, it is commonly regarded that we have adapted as a country. Our "team of five million" is starting to embrace Māori culture and heritage and Te Reo in everyday life. Post-COVID, we will likely witness an influx of migrants seeking a new home after our government's response to the global pandemic. Are we ready to welcome and accept multiculturalism more than what we have to date?

Immigration began in New Zealand earlier than most are led to believe. Māori are descendants of Eastern Polynesian travellers who arrived on the shores of Aotearoa during the thirteenth century. These travellers likely hailed from Southeast Asia, having settled Polynesia nearly two thousand years before – around 1100 BCE.

After the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the first organised group of English settlers arrived with the New Zealand Company in 1840 and by 1852, approximately 28,000 Europeans had immigrated into the country. The rest of the nineteenth century saw the introduction of several government-legislated acts as more cultures began to arrive in the newly colonised country. The Chinese Immigrants Act 1881, the Immigration Restriction Act 1899, and the bizarrely dubbed Imbecile Passengers Act 1882 were all conceived to regulate the intake of migrants, as well as ensuring settlers of New Zealand would not become a "charge on public or charitable institutions" (Parliamentary Library, 2008).

From 1923, applications for naturalisation were made available for non-Britons of "good character" who had "an adequate knowledge of the English language". These changes to legislation were what became known as the unofficial "White New Zealand" policies that made it increasingly difficult for non-Europeans to immigrate and attain permanent residencies. Ward & Masgoret (2008) state

that these policies made New Zealand "one of the most ethnically homogenous societies of European settlement" in the world.

New Zealand's systems of migration were developed further in 1948, with the introduction of New Zealand citizenship. Migrants were now able to obtain New Zealand passports. 1945 – 1955 welcomed British ex-servicemen, their families, as well as many refugees (Opara, 2018), which were followed by nearly 10,600 Dutch migrants and 1300 Hungarian refugees by 1956 (Parliamentary Library, 2008).

In the mid 1800s, the country saw an influx of Pasifika temporary workers, as cheap labourers. This led to the infamous Dawn Raids in the 70s in which hundreds of Pasifika men, women, and children were racially targeted and forcibly deported back to their countries of origin. The introduction of a government register in 1976 allowing illegal immigrants to renew their residency in New Zealand whilst remaining in the country without penalty, hardly compensated for the suffering and trauma caused. Finally, one month ago on the 1st of August, the New Zealand government has formally apologised to Pacific communities impacted by these unjustified and discriminatory actions.

Migration to New Zealand has continued to grow. In 2021, we find ourselves living in a more progressive, multicultural society. 27.4 percent of those counted in the 2018 Census declared they were born overseas, with almost every country in the world accounted for (Seatter-Dunbar, 2019). In a study on the social attitudes towards immigrants and multiculturalism, eighty-nine percent of interviewees agreed that a society built from many different races, cultures, and religions was beneficial (Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Eighty percent also agreed that migrant integration was essential.



Photo: Sulthan Auliya, Unsplash

New Zealanders of European descent generally regard that the bicultural aspects of New Zealand – those being the current state of Māori inclusion and participation in national culture – are positive and support a move towards further multiculturalism (Ward & Lin, 2005). Although this may sound positive, the statement in itself is complex and is reflective of a colonialist narrative.

Not every aspect of our culture is supportive of our substantial immigrant population, however. Guanyu Ran and Liangni Liu of Auckland's Massey University recently documented a case study on Chinese families living in New Zealand. Immigrants can 'sponsor' their parents back in China, providing them with a reliable source of income once they have retired. This sounds like a positive system, allowing younger generations to travel to New Zealand, start a new life and raise children that will likely remain a part of our culture and communities.

The required income to sponsor parents does not easily make that dream a reality. Sponsors must earn anywhere between NZD\$101,046 and NZD\$265,200 (Immigration New Zealand, n.d.) to qualify to retain their Visas and lawfully provide for foreign parents. Interviewees of Ran and Liu revealed that the societal pressures of living in New Zealand make their family lives difficult. Speaking a new language in a country that has yet to provide as much support for Mandarin or Cantonese speakers as it has for Te Reo, means they are often judged. Secondly, the stresses of providing for parents or grandparents on the other side of the world, as well as a family here in New Zealand, is a strain that not many Kiwis can understand. Although simply being required to maintain such a wealthy income – one that is intentionally over double the New Zealand median income (New Zealand Immigration, n.d.) – is enough; the dynamics of an international, inter-generational migrant family can be too much.

Hagyun Kim, also of Massey University, reports on a similar topic from the perspective of Korean families in New Zealand. Most participants of Kim's study reported that immigrating to their new home required major shifts in their daily routines, for which they were largely unprepared. Some of the stories shared included financial hardship, anxiety, depression, unemployment, and a lack of close friends or networking opportunities. A great deal of their negative experiences come from the sizeable language barrier.

South Korea has one of the lowest scores of linguistic diversity (a measure of how many individuals speak more than one language fluently) in the world. Thus, a great deal of South Korean migrants will suffer from a great deal of difficulty learning and communicating in English. One such interviewee said their partner had been a successful businessman in Korea, but in New Zealand had been forced to work as a butcher as he lacked quality knowledge of English. This changed their spending habits to be more frugal, feeling as if they had to "start from scratch".

What most immigrants seek is total acceptance into New Zealand society. Most would state that New Zealand is known for its "clean and green environment" and a low occurrence of racism, crime, and bigotry but accordingly, what they discover may differ from their expectations. They may grow to feel isolated or disconnected from the rest of their community as barriers continue to appear. Many migrants are encouraged to live outside of major cities, where established communities of their respective countries' citizens already exist.

New Zealand's 'bonus points' system awards immigration applicants a higher chance of success if they elect to live outside of, for instance, the Auckland region. In exchange for a better chance at reaching New Zealand shores in the first place, they are often signing away a community to represent and support them.

A commonality between many experts is a recommendation that New Zealand continues to pursue better means of integrating immigrants into our society. We are a country that has thrived off immigrants, who stimulate our economy, culture, communities and workplaces with diverse new perspectives and motivations.

Moving forward from COVID-19 will begin an interesting chapter for New Zealand's immigration. Akbari and Macdonald, two

researchers reporting on trends in immigration policies across the globe, documented several years ago that New Zealand could be exposed to higher rates of illegal immigration surprisingly quickly, stating that if legal immigration policies, regional conflicts, and economic instability continues to rise, more people will be driven from their countries in search of a safer haven.

We can only imagine how much this prediction has been exacerbated by the rise of COVID-19 and the stresses that millions around the world have experienced. Many now look to New Zealand as a shining beacon of hope and security, an example of a quality government, and a place where cultures can co-exist. Are we really prepared for more immigrants than ever to grace our shores? Or are we forcing people out of the country, due to the extensive period it takes to adjust to our culture, as well as gain citizenship or permanent residency?

Researchers of global migration have proven that for most immigrants, New Zealand is simply a 'stepping stone'; a country that does not encourage long-term residency, instead utilising the gravitas of an extended stay to leverage a more permanent relocation elsewhere.

What then needs to be done to continue development of multiculturalism in a positive way? It remains to be seen whether this may happen through a cultural shift, a reform of our immigration and residency policies, or some combination of both. Migrants are expected to adjust their ways of living to better fit our local culture, and for some that is too great of an economic, socio-cultural, or personal strain to bear.

We like to think that we have a well-documented, rich history of immigration here in New Zealand. Over eight hundred years have passed since the first journey to Aotearoa was completed, and we still show a thriving, diverse community of migrants and refugees. But these newcomers are subjected to matters not yet addressed, experiencing language barriers and crippling societal pressure imposed by multi-generational, familial expectations.

Although we seem to have a solid foundation of biculturalism to build upon, it appears we have not yet been able to open up and embrace true multiculturalism.

If we want to continue to represent what the world can be post-COVID, we must take responsibility and look at ourselves, our culture, and our laws – each of which govern how migrants experience their time in New Zealand. It can be done. We are a team of five million, after all. *

Sources: 1. Immigration policy in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States 2. 'Forced' family separation and inter-generational dynamics 3. "Knocking on the door to immigration 4. Pacific migrations 5. Calculating your sponsor's income for the Parent Resident Visa 6. Skilled migrant category: Expression of Interest guide 7. Examining trans-Tasman migration of New Zealand's new immigrants from the People's Republic of China 8. From settler society to working holiday heaven? Patterns and issues of temporary labour migration to New Zealand 9. Immigration chronology 10. New Zealand's population reflects growing diversity 11. *Welcome to our world? Immigration and the reshaping of New Zealand* 12. Investing in cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, UNESCO 13. Immigration, acculturation and national identity in New Zealand 14. Attitudes toward immigrants, immigration, and multiculturalism in New Zealand



Art, Culture & Philosophy

The Lindy Effect

BY PHILIPPA HADLOW

"Old is gold but gold never gets old." – Ayush Singh

The longer something has been around, the better it will last. My nanna's antique sideboard has been in the family a fair while - and it's as solid and serviceable as ever. So is that purple velvet opera coat Mum's grandmother passed down to me.

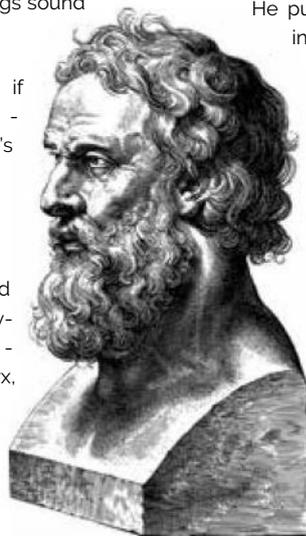
Ubiquitous elements to life in general - such as the shape of a chair or a bed - have remained relatively unchanged for millennia. Some technology (such as the cell phone) has been around for 75 years! The reuse-recycle movement began in the '70s and is getting stronger each day, and how come we are still talking about Plato 2000 years after his death?

Why does even the verbalising of these things sound slow, steady, resilient, and enduring?

Let's look at an old-fashioned concept - if you can regard the '60s as old fashioned - that's seeping into contemporary times: it's called the Lindy Effect.

The idea was first mooted in Manhattan, New York, by a bunch of whiskey-swilling, cigar-competing experts at a deli called Lindy's. They'd check out the currently-playing comedy shows - or perform at them - then sit around to chew the fat. Groucho Marx, Dick Cavett, and Woody Allen were amongst the esteemed patrons, and indeed, the deli had been a favourite hangout for all manner of famous and infamous custom since the 1920s.

During their nightly post-show assassinations or approbations, the comedians would espouse theories about the skits they had just enjoyed. They had great fun discussing why some comics were fly by night performers - here one minute, gone the next - yet others seemed to be there for the duration.



Plato

Likewise, actors who hung out at the deli mused over the fact that Broadway shows that lasted for, say, one hundred days had a future life expectancy of a hundred more. For those that lasted two hundred days, the life expectancy was two hundred more. (Think Phantom of the Opera: lifespan to date: 33 years and still going strong.)

One of the gentlemen often in attendance was historian Albert Goldman. In his opinion, performances eked out sporadically rather than regularly would avoid comedian and public opinion burnout - thereby prolonging the actor's popularity. There was much cigar-puffing debate about his ideas, and Goldman was encouraged to write about them in left-wing political, cultural, and social commentary magazine the *New Republic* in 1964. He put a name to his theorising and became known as the inventor of Lindy's Law.

The theory didn't gel with mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot, however. He reckoned the exact opposite to Goldman, so, in 1982 set about to prove that the longevity of a comedian would actually increase according to how many shows he had done in the *past*: the more exposure, the more content and material to draw upon, the more longevity. And the longer the comedian had been around, the more future-forward his existence would be.

Mandelbrot's heuristic (which is an adjective to describe a mental shortcut that allows people to solve problems and make judgments quickly and efficiently) was known as the Lindy effect. The word heuristic itself comes from the Greek 'to discover', but I also see the French word for 'time' (*heure*) in its use. And in the Lindy effect, we use time as a natural filter for its meaning.

"The Lindy effect is the razor of time - a law which describes the longevity of concepts. For some ideas and technologies, their mortality decreases over time." - *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*, Benoit Mandelbrot, 1982.

Mandelbrot explains that time and degeneration go into reverse when classifying objects and practices of a certain age. Every year that passes without extinction doubles the additional life expectancy. That means something that's 40 years in age will likely reach another 40, if not more.

It's literally the pill of longevity which, unfortunately (or fortunately!) doesn't apply to human beings – we are far too frail and perishable. That human fragility equates oppositely to the Lindy effect of 'antifragility'. For people, every year of life *decreases* their remaining life expectancy. Conversely, the technology behind non-perishable items, entities, and ideas allows each subsequent year of existence to *increase* their life expectancy.

So with something non-perishable it's very likely that the old is expected to have a longer expectancy than the young. If a business is eighty years old, and another one is ten years old, the older business is expected to live eight times as long as the new one. Those non-perishable things are antifragile, resilient; they move with time, withstand the test of time, and survive; they represent the Lindy effect to a tee.

The value of understanding antifragility was described by Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his book called *Antifragile: Things That Gain from Disorder* (2012). Taleb defines antifragility as: "beyond resilience or robustness. The resilient resists shocks and stays the same; the antifragile gets better".

It reminds me of the variations of a famed truism by 19th-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche: "Out of life's school of war - what doesn't kill me, makes me stronger," meaning that suffering can be an opportunity to build strength and resilience. A consistently smooth run in life – something we'd all like - can

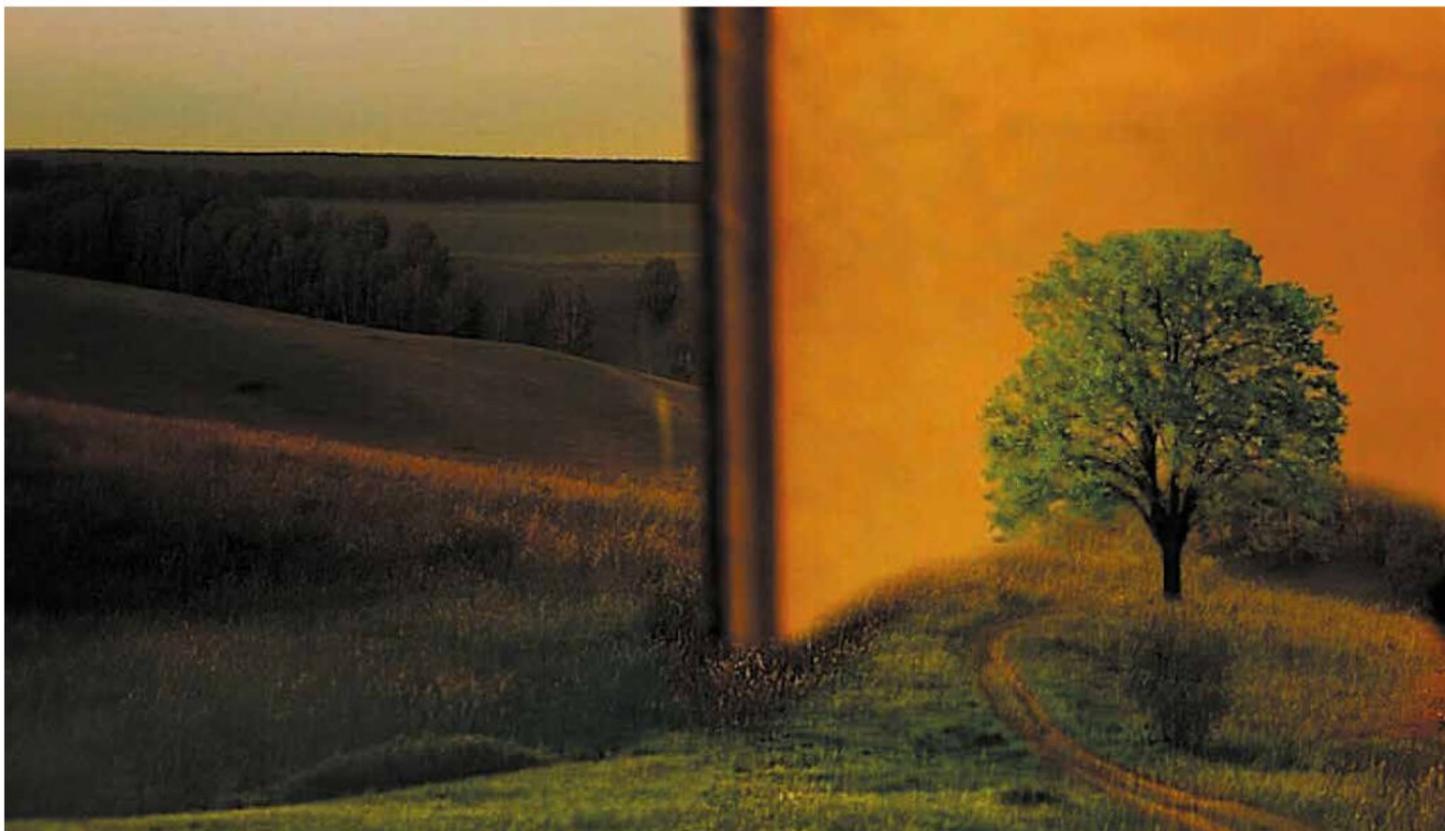
create the opposite effect in a time of crisis. We become victims rather than innovators, adapters, and fighters.

I love the current trend of employers to seek people with those latter characteristics to have on their team. Not so important are the double-major university degrees or scholarships. In hot demand are agile applicants who can adapt to rapidly changing technology, who are responsive to volatile marketplaces and who can use their soft skills (emotions) to build positive relationships. Emotions and feelings are not only integral to our moral, social, and personal well-being; they are also vital tools for solving the complex challenges we face individually, organisationally, and even as a species.

The Lindy effect allows detachment from the influences of superficial fashion and social trends in ideas, too - because most new things are fragile and will not last. The opposite to antifragility is neomania: an obsession with the new – it's a trait of the modern world! The latest iPhone upgrade, ear pods, Apple mac, or Glasson's outfit (that you only wear once) - you could call a person who loves this way of life a flibbertigibbet neomaniac, yet many of us are there on some level.

Sure, technology will continue to improve and increase its impact on our daily lives; but we don't have to yearn for the latest and greatest all the time. Instead, we can choose to make decisions based on ideas that have been around the longest – Lindy ideas. Have a think about Greek philosophers Socrates and Plato – their theories are just as applicable today as they were 2000 years ago.

"Lindy answers the age-old meta-questions: Who will judge the expert? Who will guard the guard? (*Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*) Who will judge the judges? Well, survival will." - Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Skin In The Game*



The older something is,

- the more conditions it must have been fit for,
- the broader range of possible futures it is fit for,
- and thus, the lower its hazard rate (namely: its potential for destruction).

You can relate the Lindy effect to everything that *evolves* in some way: culture, ideas, political systems, technological innovation, cultural and economic success, corporate survival, even good recipes (say, chicken soup, cheese fondue, or beef casserole) – but not, of course, the perishable ingredients! And keeping the Lindy effect at the back of your mind can help you estimate not only the life expectancy of these things but also their usefulness, relevance, maintainability, and reliability.

Weirdly enough, the Lindy effect is a tenet that in itself epitomises the Lindy effect:

"Tonight, I will be meeting friends in a restaurant (tavernas have existed for at least twenty-five centuries). I will be walking there wearing shoes hardly different from those worn fifty-three hundred years ago by the mummified man discovered in a glacier in the Austrian Alps. At the restaurant, I will be using silverware, a Mesopotamian technology ... I will be drinking wine, a liquid that has been in use for at least six millennia. The wine will be poured into glasses, an innovation claimed by my Lebanese compatriots to come from their Phoenician ancestors, and we can say that glass objects have been sold by them as trinkets for at least twenty-nine hundred years. After the main course, I will have a somewhat younger technology, artisanal cheese, paying higher prices for those that have not changed in their preparation for several centuries." – Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Antifragile*, 2012.

Alexander Rose and a team of engineers from The Long Now Foundation in San Francisco are constructing a clock to be housed underground in the Texan desert. The clock will be powered by mechanical energy harvested from sunlight and is designed to tick for 10,000 years. The Long Now Foundation began the project over 20 years ago, and it is one of several projects aimed at fostering long-term thinking.

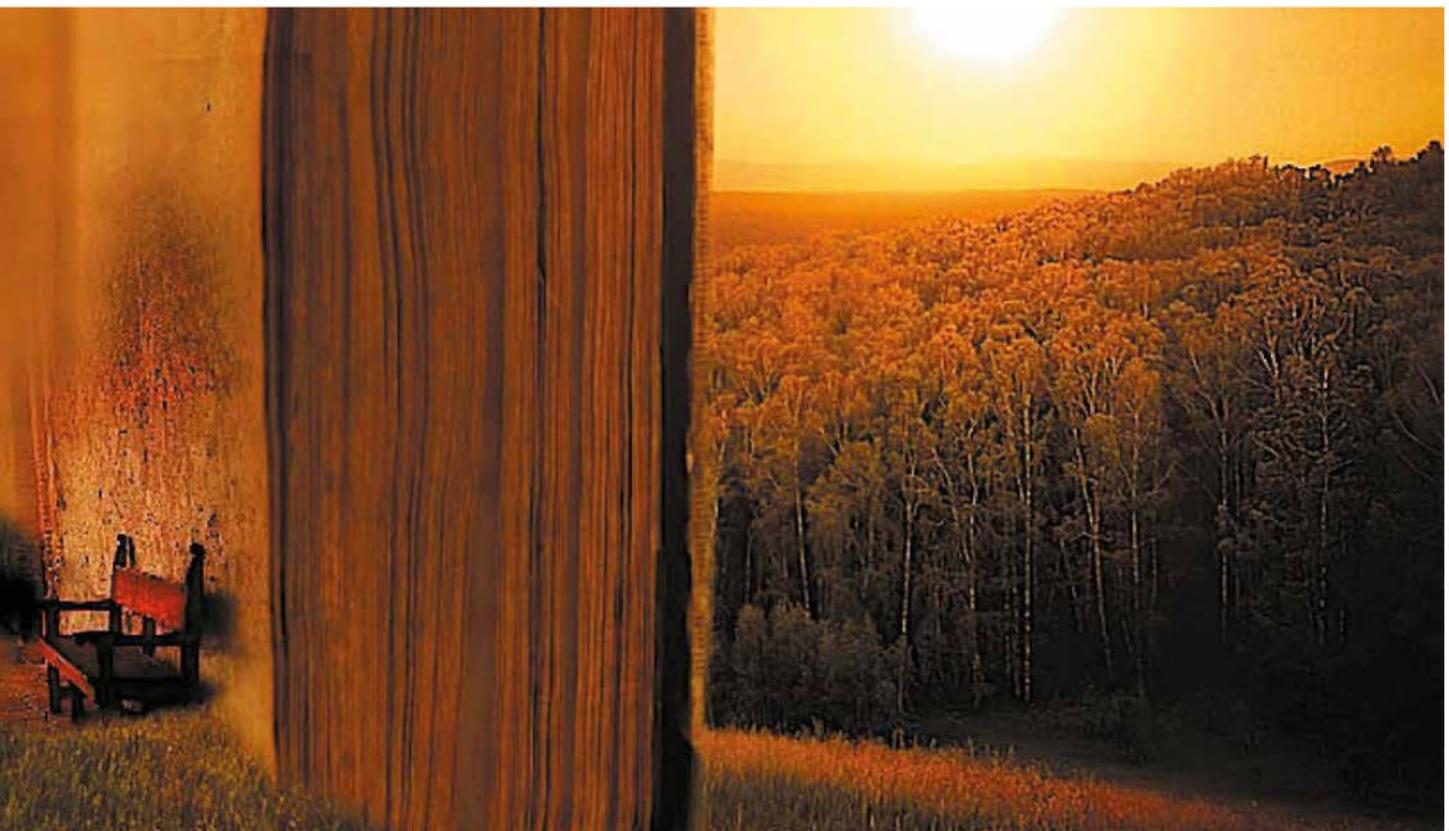
Since the clock project is meant to change the way people think about time, Alexander Rose says:

"The idea is to create a provocation large enough in both scale and time that, when confronted by it, we have to engage our long-term future. One could imagine that if given only five years to solve an issue like climate change, it is difficult to know where to begin because the time scale is unreasonable. But if you reset the scale to 500 years, even the impossible can start to seem tractable."

Every once in a while, the bells of this buried clock will chime. Each time, they will sound a new melody because the chimes have been programmed not to repeat themselves for 10,000 years. Ten thousand years is about the age of civilisation - so *a 10K-year clock would measure out the future of a civilisation that's equal to its past.*

That assumes we are in the middle of whatever journey we are on – a statement of implicit optimism. The Lindy effect's evolution from an entertaining commentary on the prowess of jokers into a concept far from funny - but no less engaging - has provided humankind with a revolutionary new/old philosophy.

It's inspiring to see an example of the Lindy effect and its concept of antifragility intentionally created in this century to be carried forward to the next and beyond. If anything could represent the Lindy effect perfectly, the ambitious 10,000 Year Clock would have to be it. *





Helix (World through Tech)
Image: Arek Socha, Pixabay

Science & Technology

The World through Tech: Know your Roots

BY CHRIS PIDGEON

We have always evolved alongside technology. From our humble beginnings mastering fire or crafting tools and weapons, the modern era's now limitless purveyance of information has introduced a new cultural shift. With the latest technology, we are now able to travel back in time, discovering our roots and, perhaps, a new piece of ourselves.

DNA – Deoxyribonucleic acid to a geneticist – has long been understood to be essential to all life on Earth. First discovered in Switzerland by physician Friedrich Miescher (Dahm, 2008), DNA is considered by many as one of the greatest scientific discoveries of all time. While some theories posit alternate accounts of history, such as the "RNA world" hypothesis (Crick, 1968), the scientific world is confident that DNA is responsible for millions of years of growth and evolution. It carries the genetic information necessary to construct the proteins, lipids, and acids that form all known organisms. It denotes almost every aspect of a human being's physiology.

Your genetic material is responsible for the colour of your eyes, the abundance of hair on your head or the lack thereof, or, in some cases, the many disorders that affect millions of people across the globe. Our knowledge of DNA and its many related fields has allowed us to understand more about ourselves and the nature of our world, including such things as disease and viruses. SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the development of COVID-19, is itself a form of DNA. Viruses are, in essence, weaponized DNA: designed to aggressively infect and disrupt

other forms of DNA present within an organism, not unlike a microscopic predator. Whether these predators are alive or not, however, is up for debate (Koonin & Starokadomskyy, 2016).

Modern developments have allowed for a much more advanced utilization of DNA. Just recently, a group of scientists published their successes in sequencing a million-year-old sample of woolly mammoth DNA (van der Valk, T., Pečnerová, P., Diez-del-Molino, D. et al). They later identified a new kind of mammoth: one that creates a link between several species across the planet, giving us more understanding of their evolution and migration over time.

Sequencing is key to genetic research. It describes the process that geneticists take to assemble pieces of DNA, which tells them what kinds of genetic information are encoded within that sequence. Modern applications of sequencing have become essential to fields like molecular and evolutionary biology, medicine, forensics, and virology.

It is here that we find ourselves treading on new ground. Genetic genealogy has become increasingly popular in media, both in traditional journalism as well as social networks. Genetic genealogy describes the process of sequencing, testing, and ultimately profiling an individual's genetic makeup, allowing a genetic genealogist to reach several significant conclusions. Firstly, they may be able to understand who a person is related to. Similarly, they can provide a breakdown of genes present in the DNA profile. In some cases, these may indicate potential diseases or disorders, such as Parkinson's or Alzheimer's, which have granted medical professionals time for preventative measures.

The most widely known aspect of genetic genealogy, however, is the ability to identify where a person's ancestors originate, and what their 'geographical makeup' looks like. Companies like AncestryDNA, MyHeritage, 23andMe, FamilyTreeDNA, and LivingDNA all provide some form of this service, allowing individuals to discover where they truly come from.

The implications of identifying someone's background over hundreds or even thousands of years are extensive to say the very least. According to the MIT Technology Review, over 26 million people have participated in such testing by 2019 (Regalado, 2019). Jillian Landers and Danielle Parrish (2021), two scholars of social work, have described the phenomenon of "new kinship" (p. 272), which are "unexpected relations due to genetic testing" as an area of social work that requires more thorough study and support. Many people are dealing with newfound knowledge of family relations and for some, the ethical or social consequences are too much to bear. Discovering through genetic genealogy that you may be adopted would likely create a life-changing shift in the dynamic between you and your family members. It would affect your identity.

In scenarios such as these, it is simple to see how drastically different our culture could be if everyone were aware of their genetic heritage. Let us imagine a brief thought experiment. An older man is taking a leisurely stroll through his neighbourhood when he notices a car he has not seen before, with someone sitting inside. Through the window, he can see that this person looks different than he and his neighbours do, and through some racial bias, he decides that this person should be deemed suspicious. He calls the police, and they arrive to deal with the situation. Later that week, the old man is gifted a DNA testing kit by his young granddaughter for his birthday, which he gladly accepts, and sends off a sample in the post. Several weeks later, he receives an email, detailing his genetic makeup. It reveals that ten percent of his DNA structure hails from the same geographic region he thought that 'suspicious' person did. Take a moment to ponder how you might react.



Would you find yourself full of regret, now knowing that you share some form of connection to that poor individual forced to deal with the police? Would you believe that you still did the right thing, claiming that regardless of your heritage, the person was still suspicious? On a larger note, would you be more accepting of other cultures, considering the connections you now hold to places around the world that you could never have dreamed of? Or would you maintain a bias towards certain ethnicities because that was part of the culture you grew up in? These are the kinds of questions and connotations that genetic genealogy brings up. Questions of personal heritage, of belonging, and of self-discovery and inner conflict.

As a society, we are not yet primed to deal with these sorts of revelations. The technology is too new, and there is too little support available to those dealing with such information, given that at-home testing kits still hold a sort of 'gimmick' within our culture. They might not yet be seen as something that could affect your entire perspective on certain aspects of life. However, given enough positive work done in the area, genetic genealogy could be a tool to discover a new part of ourselves and become part of a culture we never belonged to before. It may allow us to accept and tolerate our differences and understand other cultures or ethnicities. While it would likely not be the key to eliminating racism or intolerance, it might provide a suitable means of coming closer to other communities and understanding that cultures can be complementary.

As with all good things, though, there does come a notable caveat. The ethics of collecting and profiling such large amounts of the public's DNA have been questioned by many. Privacy is of great concern. Are you willing to hand over such personal

and private information to understand yourself on a deeper level? Is it ethically permissible for a company such as Ancestry.com, a for-profit company owned by The Blackstone Group - a management company largely concerned with private equity, real estate, and asset management - to house the genetic information of millions of people? Greater still, what would the implications be if some nefarious group of hackers were to infiltrate such companies and steal your genetic information, along with that of millions of others? Is it worth processing and housing such information for the pursuit of personal heritage at the risk of its theft?

Consequently, who should have access to this information once it is stored after use? The "Golden State Killer" was famously apprehended after years of avoiding capture through the advent of genetic genealogy (Jouvenal, 2018). DNA material currently has no defined legal protections in most countries, leaving many legal scholars and lawyers concerned with the potential uses of such implicating material. Other DNA collecting companies have since introduced policies to protect against DNA profiling by authorities, but others have yet to address the issue. It also seems concerningly difficult to delete your DNA data once you have handed it over. A report details one journalist's battles with taking back the genetic information she had volunteered. She discovered that it became increasingly inhibitive as laws were in place to prevent the destruction of physical test samples (Brown, 2018). Despite her many requests, to maintain quality control within genetic laboratories, she was forced to give up. This speaks volumes to how little control we have over our personal data in the Information Era; even our DNA is not safe.

Despite its risks, DNA testing might just be a unique method of reinvigorating modern culture using the technology available to us. Through its ability to transport us through time and glimpse at what makes us human, an individual can form a deeper connection to their past, their heritage, their family, and their ideals. Someone without much prior exposure to other cultures might find themselves experiencing a world of new ideas, experiences, and people.

Although more effort needs to be made internationally to better protect the sensitive information that DNA samples carry, it seems as if genetic genealogy might just be worth the risks. Post-COVID, we are forced to look for more creative and unique means of strengthening our cultures and communities. Meeting at a molecular level could be an approach worth keeping in mind. *

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Photo: Isi Parente, Unsplash

Sexuality

'Lesbi' in culture

BY HAYLEY WHITE

River Lancaster kind of always knew that she was lesbian, just a little bit. She came out to her family and friends as bisexual when she was 13 and continued to date boys even though she was not really into it.

"You know how you stare at someone and you're like wow, they're so attractive and it just happens? I would have to pretend, and I would have to force the thoughts like 'Oh my gosh, I'm so lucky to have such a cute boyfriend,' I would actively have to think it," she tells me. It paints a picture of how much she absolutely was not attracted to men. At all.

Being queer in 2021 is hard. Not only is it about trying sort through their own sexuality and discovering who they are, but they also feel the weight of the entire world on their shoulders as they slowly work through normalising same-sex relationships. Globally, opinions on homosexuality vary widely from place to place. A lot of countries have made massive strides towards becoming inclusive of same-sex relationships, with places like Canada, Belgium, New Zealand, and the Netherlands making same-sex marriage legal in recent years. Despite the progress made by these countries, other nations such as countries in Africa and the Middle East have not been so accepting, and homosexuality is still highly illegal.

Same-sex relationships are not exactly new either - in fact, many historical sources focus on male homosexuality, especially in Western culture. In Ancient Greece and Rome, homosexuality was socially accepted. It was common for adult men to form relationships with adolescent boys. It was the adult man's role to love, care for, educate, and be a role model for the boy until he came of age. Oftentimes, the active partner in a homosexual relationship was not thought of as homosexual. Instead, the passive person in the relationship was more often considered the homosexual one.

Native American culture had what was called *Beardache* or 'gay Indians' which were thought of as a third sex. It was seen as acceptable for a man to have sex with a *Beardache* but unacceptable for *Beardache* to have sex with one another (Mondimore, 1996 as cited in Sullivan, 2004).

For many cultures, sexualities and gender identities were given one label, such as the Māori *takatāpui* meaning "intimate companion of the same sex". The term has been reclaimed to embrace Māori who identify with all genders, sexes, and sexualities. In 1832, *Takatāpui* was found in the earliest Māori dictionaries and proves how homosexual practices were accepted in Māori culture. Despite this, gay, lesbian, and bisexual people are not as visible in other Pasifika cultures.



River Lancaster

Teiti Johnson-Craig is a young Samoan-Māori woman living in Hastings. She always found girls attractive but did not realise she was sexually attracted to women until she fell in love with her best friend. "It honestly took me until the second to last year of high school to actually tell myself that I was bisexual, and it was pretty hard to accept myself because I had all these expectations from all these people around me," she tells me.

These expectations came from family members like aunties and uncles. "They were pretty judgemental, but I just took it on the chin because that was who I was, and I just had to accept it," she says.

Her brothers did not make it easier on her either. They would tease and mock her about it all the time, and her dad especially was not accepting of it, but Teiti believes that comes with being Samoan-Māori. "My dad, he's Samoan hard," she says and clarifies: "Strict as; straight forward. He doesn't want any of us to have any problems with ourselves and apparently that was a problem, which was why he was so judgemental about it," Teiti says. "He just thought it wasn't normal, like 'all your siblings are like this, but you're like this.' That was how he pointed me out, that was basically the case."



Teiti Johnson-Craig

And knowing that the Samoan culture was not particularly accepting of gay and bisexual people was not much help, either. Teiti says that the family just did not want her to give them a bad name. They believed something like this was going to do that because she was the only person who was into both girls and boys.

"My mum was fully supportive," she is grateful to admit. "She knew I was bisexual but she was waiting for me to tell her, and, in a way, that made me feel comfortable because I was able to open up. She was the first person I did tell, and she would always talk to [my dad] because my dad's hard-headed. She would just try to like talk to him and explain to him that not everyone's the same," she says.

River also had to deal with family expectations, but in a bit of a different way. She would receive passing comments from people asking if she had a boyfriend and talking about having children. "We were at lunch and [my grandparents] were like: 'Do you have a boyfriend or anything at the moment?' And I was like: 'Oh, so actually I've realised that I just like women,' and they were like: 'Oh that's cool,' and my grandad was like; 'I like women too!'," she laughs.

"And then a couple of hours later they were talking about how I was gonna have kids. I asked them: 'Why is this important - I'm a child.'" As for her dad's side of the family, River is a little more hesitant to tell them. She tells me that her grandad probably does not care all that much, but her nana was born Catholic and still holds onto a lot of those beliefs. "She's very anti-abortion and stuff like that, so I don't know if I can deal with that drama. I might just get married to a woman and if she's alive she can be there - just send the invite - 'Surprise!'" She bursts out laughing.

Religion has played a big factor in how our society views homosexuality for a long time. Most religions tend to label homosexuality as unnatural, ungodly, and impure, so of course people who have had exposure to these messages are likely to have anti-homosexual attitudes.

In some cases, certain religions may be more disapproving than others. In the United States, Judaism, and mainline Protestant churches are generally seen as more accepting and liberal,

compared to conservative Protestants who are known to be less (Adamczyk & Pitt, 2009).

Muslim religions are markedly more conservative than any Western religion. There are a handful of Islamic scriptures that outlaw same-sex relationships. The Qur'an itself labels homosexuality "an abomination" or *fahisha* (indecency or lewdness). It is said that the prophet Lot (or Lut) was sent by God to tell everyone that people who were caught performing homosexual acts had to be banished from their towns. Other writings, like the Hadith, which is a recording of the words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad, prove that homosexuality was around in seventh-century Arabia, but was heavily punished.

While River was really struggling with her sexuality, she had a Christian friend who would check up on her every now and then. Even though she felt like she couldn't talk to him about her sexuality without being judged, when she eventually opened up to him, she was relieved to be met with only a little bit of resistance. "I told him I was a lesbian, and he was like: 'No that's cool; you know that I don't see you any different. But maybe just don't say that you're a lesbian because you never know - you might find the perfect man of your dreams one day - maybe you're just seeing the wrong men,' and I was like: 'I don't think so,'" River laughs.

Teiti also had to come to terms with people not really believing her sexuality as being bisexual. Bi-erasure is a big thing bisexual people struggle with, because if they date someone of the same sex, they are labelled gay, and if they date someone of the opposite sex, then they must be straight. "I get that quite a lot, especially from people I meet," she tells me. "I just tell them straight up that I'm bi. When they ask questions about what I'm attracted to, or about past relationships and things like that, I just let them know because, they don't see me as that and think: 'Oh, no, you're just into boys!'"

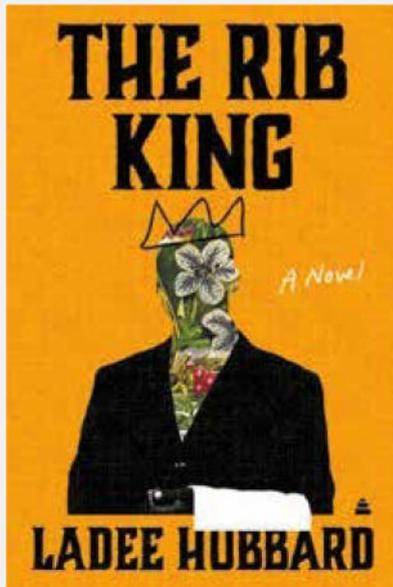
While the world appears to be okay with gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, River and Teiti do not agree. River says that accurate representation of lesbian relationships is important for young girls to grow up and realise that what they are feeling is not wrong. She says that all portrayals of lesbians are sexualised. "If I had seen that media earlier, I would have realised that it's okay, it doesn't have to be a big deal," she tells me.

Teiti says that people just need to hold off on their judgement. "At the end of the day people have their own opinions, but it doesn't hurt to keep them to themselves. It's just the judgement that gets to us," she says. River agrees, saying that people think staring and smiling at a gay couple means they come across as supportive, but it actually feels the opposite. "That's really nice and thank you for your acceptance, but it's not really acceptance because if it was, you wouldn't be staring," says River. "If you see a queer couple in public, it's not that hard to just not stare at them. I get that it might be new for you and you may never have seen it before, but there's no need to comment on it. There's no need to stare because really it has nothing to do with you." *

Source: Homophobia, History, and Homosexuality, *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*

books

REVIEWS BY PHILIPPA HADLOW



The Rib King

BY LADEE HUBBARD

HarperCollins, 2021

Rating: 4 out of 5 stars on Amazon

Who is The Rib King? I picked up this book from our local library, curious about the cover illustration: a black-suited silhouette carrying a butler's white towel across his arm and bearing a hand-scribbled crown on his flower and berry-filled head.

The Rib King by Ladee Hubbard is a novel set in early 20th century New Orleans America. August Sitwell is a Black American servant, plucked as a child from the ravages of a racist massacre in the South, and employed with five others by the wealthy Barclay family. Miss Mamie, the cook, is renowned for her sumptuous meat sauce. When the family falls into financial strife, an enterprising business associate suggests selling Miss Mamie's sauce to recoup the family's lost fortune.

They name this sauce The Rib King and Mr Sitwell is bribed by greedy capitalists into personalising its brand. The sauce is a culinary triumph yet though August and Mamie are instrumental in its success, neither see a dime of the proceeds. August is furious, and his resentment justifiably builds into hatred - not only at this exploitation but also that suffered by so many other African Americans at the hand of Southern Whites.

The corruption of his abusers twists him into a person unrecognisable from the first half of the book and leads him towards revenge and a shocking tragedy, while Jennie Williams, another domestic worker for the Barclays, eventually discards her abusive life and remakes herself into an inventor and entrepreneur, outmanoeuvring gangsters, activists and White businessmen alike.

The Rib King is an unsparing examination of America's fascination with black symbolism and exploitation that redefines African American stereotypes in literature.

"Wow! What an interesting read. I always find novels about the 1920s very interesting and enjoyable in this book did not disappoint. The author of this book covered a lot of American history, and the social commentary was on point. I'm looking forward to another book by this author." - Brittany Jenkins, Verified Purchase.

About the author:

Ladee Hubbard is the author of *The Talented Ribkins*, which received the 2018 Ernest J. Gaines Award for Literary Excellence and the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award for Debut Fiction. Her writing has appeared in *Guernica*, the *Times Literary Supplement*, *Copper Nickel*, and *Callaloo*. She received a 2016 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award as well as fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, Art Omi, the Sacatar Foundation, the Sustainable Arts Foundation, Hedgebrook, and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts.

Tree Sense; Ways of thinking about trees

BY SUSETTE GOLDSMITH

Massey University Press, 2021

Rating: 5 out of 5 on Goodreads

I had the good fortune to marry a man who loves trees. His path in life is strewn with them: working, living, planting, and nurturing. In Taranaki, our climate and terrain are so suited to trees that we are the envy of countries worldwide. That makes me glad because, over the past 80-odd years, global opinions and activities centred around caring for the environment have slowly built, then erupted in favour of trees.

I remember seeing a beautiful play enacted by a local theatre company based on the 1953 short story by French author Jean Giono: *The Man who Planted Trees*. It moved me

deeply because symbolically, that man is my husband. And metaphorically, he is also the author of *Tree Sense; Ways of thinking about trees*: Dr Susette Goldsmith.

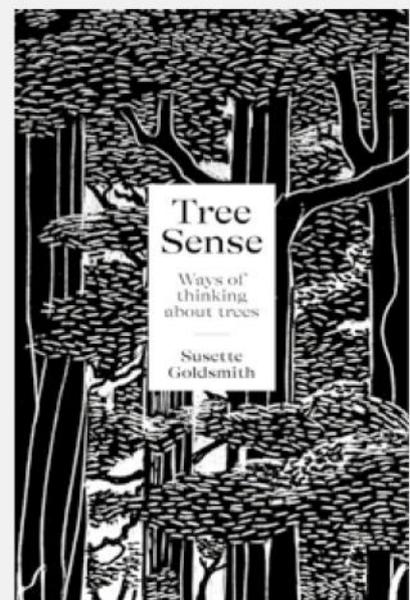
Writers like Giono and Goldsmith give hope to a world crying out for more trees.

Tree Sense; Ways of thinking about trees by Dr Susette Goldsmith provides a gamut of persuasive, informative, and well-crafted stories, written by a group of respected writers, ecologists and activists. From the lyrical opening prose by Elizabeth Smither, to Goldsmith encouraging the development of 'tree sense' in New Zealand citizens (citing the Bush Preservation and Amenity Tree Planting parliamentary conference in 1937) *Tree Sense* is immaculately researched and historically accurate.

Other contributors, such as researcher and artist Dr Huhana Smith, botanist and ecologist Dr Philip Simpson, environmental advocate Dr Mels Barton, New Zealand Geographic co-founder Kennedy Warne, and Master of Horticulture plantsman Glyn Church, present their pieces with knowledge and sincerity.

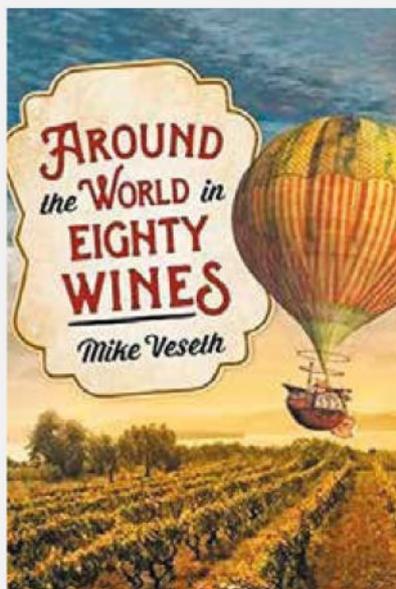
Climate change has informed and transformed our approach to life and, the protagonist of this era is undoubtedly arboreal. *Tree Sense; Ways of thinking about trees* reminds us to mindfully defer to our tree resources as environmental lodestars of the future.

"An ecological tour de force." - Murray Williams, RNZ



About the author:

Dr Susette Goldsmith is an independent writer and editor of Ngati Mahanga and Pakeha descent. She is an Adjunct Research Fellow at the Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies, Victoria University of Wellington Te Herenga Waka. Dr Goldsmith has published three social histories: *The Gardenmakers of Taranaki*; *Tea: A potted history of tea in New Zealand*; and *Suzy's: A coffee house history*. Her current research explores new ways of perceiving, interpreting, and safeguarding natural heritage in 21st-century Aotearoa New Zealand.



Around the World in Eighty Wines; Exploring Wine One Country at a Time

BY MIKE VESETH

Rowman & Littlefield, 2018

Rating: 4.1 out of 5 stars on Amazon

If you've heard of a chap called Phileas Fogg, then hats off to your literary knowledge! He was, of course, the hero and main character in Jules Verne's famous adventure novel, *Around the World in Eighty Days*, published in 1872. The plot involves Fogg's substantial wager with a fellow 'reformer' (a political movement in opposition to the Conservative party) that he can circumnavigate the world, by steamer and rail, in 80 days or less.

Around the World in Eighty Wines; Exploring Wine One Country at a Time by Mike Veseth takes his cue from this classic - as have numerous other emulators over the last century. However, Veseth goes deep into replicating Phileas Fogg's audacious and risky gambit, following in his footsteps from London to Egypt, India, Hong Kong, Japan, the USA, and back to the UK.

Along the way, love, natural obstacles, and transport issues cause delays to Fogg's tight

timeframe, and, if not for his resilience and endurance, all would be lost. Fogg's staying power across odds mightier than distance, and his human traits of strength, loyalty and love see him through; it's these qualities that provided the inspiration for *Around the World in Eighty Wines*.

Veseth sets a challenge pleasanter (and far less perilous) than Fogg's. He aims to journey around the world collecting 80 bottles of wine in order to answer the question: Why wine? What is it about mythical and historical wine that has enraptured us enough to wax lyrical about its nose, colour, *terroir*, provenance, and price? Every glass tells a story, paints a picture, or continues a legend, and from one wine country to the next, Veseth lets us in on them all.

From Winston Churchill's favourite Champagne tippie, France's Pol Roger, to Italy's Prosecco affaire, the Portos of Portugal, the Sauvys of India, and beyond. *Around the World in Eighty Wines* is a rollicking journey of fascinating historical and contemporary wine wisdom.

"Like a master blender, Mike Veseth stimulates the mind's appetite with a wonderful balance of illusion and substance, as complex as a fine wine. Structured with cultural nuance and imagination, this delightful book is a must-read for serious wine enthusiasts and neophytes alike ... should be enjoyed with a glass of your favorite 'origin' in hand." - George Sandeman, Sogrape Vinhos, Portugal.

About the author:

Mike Veseth is professor emeritus of international political economy at the University of Puget Sound. He is editor of the award-winning blog *The Wine Economist* and author of several books on wine.

CRISPR People: The Science and Ethics of Editing Humans

BY HENRY T. GREELY

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2021

Rating: 4.1 out of 5 stars on Amazon

Memories of the furore that erupted when Dolly, the cloned sheep minced her way onto a global centre stage in 1996 have never left me. The world was aghast yet intrigued and the ethical debate that's raged on ever since is just as vehement today, if not more.

As science and technology evolve to conquer hurdles and push boundaries at an ever-increasing pace, so do the questions about just how far science should extend its clever fingers. Dolly became a household name and was the first animal cloned from an adult cell. In this book, *CRISPR People: The Science and Ethics of Editing Humans* by Henry T. Greely, we read about more recent DNA manipulation and what it means to humankind.

CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats) is a way of finding a specific bit of DNA inside a cell. Technology has the potential to transform medicine,

enabling us to not only treat but also prevent many diseases. Gene editing has endless applications. It can be used to make plants more resistant to devastating diseases. It can play an important role in the adaptation to climate change. In health, we are already seeing promising results in preventing disease.

However, are we ready for human embryo editing?

Researchers conducted the first experiments using the technique to edit human embryos in 2015. Since then, a handful of teams around the world have begun to explore the process, which aims to make precise edits to genes. But such studies are still rare and are generally strictly regulated.

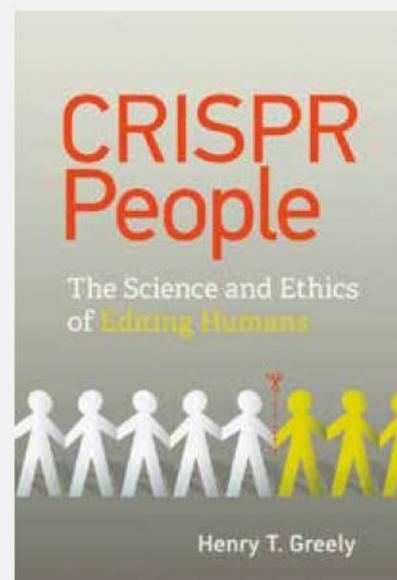
In China, however, in 2018, the first designer babies came onto the scene thanks to He Jiankui, the biophysicist who announced that he had created the world's first gene-edited babies - twin girls called Lulu and Nana.

CRISPR People: The Science and Ethics of Editing Humans takes a cautionary and well-researched stance on He's action, documenting the process and discussing the repercussions of 'germline editing' and its impact on future reproduction, families, and society in general.

"Starting from the Crispr babies affair, Greely explores what an ethical framework for editing the human germline could look like. When would it be justified, how (and by whom) should it be regulated, and what would the impacts be for society. An excellent and thought-provoking read." - Kate, Verified Purchase

About the author:

Henry T. Greely is Professor of Law, Professor by courtesy of Genetics, Stanford School of Medicine; Director, Centre for Law and the Biosciences; Director, Stanford Program in Neuroscience and Society; and Chair, Steering Committee of the Centre for Biomedical Ethics. He specialises in the ethical, legal, and social implications of new biomedical technologies, particularly those related to genetics, assisted reproduction, neuroscience, or stem cell research.



E MŌHIO ANA KOE?

do you know?

Test your cultural knowledge



Q U I Z

- 1 How long has astrology been around for? 
- 2 What are the Vedas?
- 3 What would happen when the star Sirius would appear in the sky at dawn?
- 4 What is *Wep Renpet*?
- 5 What is meant by 'the moment of *At*'?
- 6 What is *latromathematics*?
- 7 What is the Lindy Effect?
- 8 How could you define 'stoicism'?
- 9 Where does the term 'sacred geometry' come from?

- 10 What did the Age of Enlightenment signify?
- 11 What is a *mazurka*?
- 12 What is the meaning of *Buddha*?
- 13 Who are New Zealand's community of 'nomads'?
- 14 How are we able to travel back in time?
- 15 What does DNA stand for? 
- 16 What can some of the benefits of a DNA test be?
- 17 And what are some of the challenges?
- 18 Why can driving lessons in New Zealand be challenging for migrants?

- 19 Where does the English language originate from?
- 20 What was The Great Vowel Shift?
- 21 Who are the 'marathon monks'?
- 22 What is the meaning of *sennichi kaiho gyo* and what is it part of?
- 23 Who are 'the lightning-footed people'?
- 24 What is so special about the Kalenjins?
- 25 What are *abayas*?
- 26 Why was the primeval forest cleared from the Orokonui Valley early last century?
- 27 What is the *Muharram*?

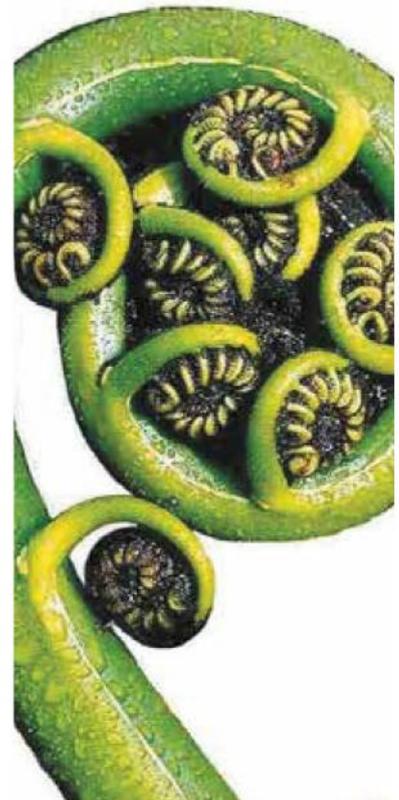
- 28 And *Rosh Hashanah*?
- 29 What is the city Mumbai famous for?
- 30 Why were vultures disappearing in the Parsi community?
- 31 When did immigration to New Zealand begin?
- 32 What can some of the challenges be for a person immigrating to another country?
- 33 Why are the crew at the M.Y. Faith dressed in naval uniforms from the last century?
- 34 Why is most of the shoreline of Lake Monowai lined with stumps of dead trees?
- 35 What is the *Cavia porcellus* and where does it come from?
- 36 What are Capybaras?
- 37 Why would men and women from ancient cultures wear decorative ear piercings?
- 38 Why would North American Inuit women and Japanese Ainu women receive tattoos?
- 39 How old is the practice of tattooing?
- 40 How long have people been gardening by the Moon?
- 41 Why is it important for foreigners to have their voices heard on community radio?



- 42 What was the 'Neolithic Revolution'?
- 43 Why and when was gorse first introduced to New Zealand?
- 44 What is Jainism?
- 45 What is *himsa*?
- 46 What is *Paryushana*?
- 47 Why don't all nations have the same view on same-sex relationships?
- 48 What are some religious views on homosexuality?
- 49 What is the Big 'OE'?
- 50 Why did the OE become a cultural necessity in the '20s and '30s?
- 51 Can you name any Indian community celebrations?
- 52 **Mōhio Māori** (Māori knowledge)
- How is Matariki connected to Greek tradition?
 - What is the Hautapu ceremony?
 - When, how, and why was Te Reo Māori deemed an official language of New Zealand?
 - Why did not a lot of Māori grow up learning their own language?
 - Why was the English government teaching the English language to Māori in the mid 1800s?



- Ngā kupu Māori** (Māori words)
- 53 How could you describe the following words?
- RŪNAKA ~ TE KOROWAI
 O MIHIWAKA' ~ KĀKĀ ~
 TĪEKE ~ TUATARA ~ KIWI
 ~ TAKAHĒ ~ OROKONUI ~
 MARAMATAKA ~ PŪRĀKAU
 ~ TĪKANGA ~ NGĀ MATA O
 TE ARIKI TĀWHIRIMĀTEA ~
 ATUA ~ WHĀNAU ~ KĀRAKIA ~
 TŌHUNGA ~ KAI ~ AOTEAROA ~
 TE AO MĀORI ~ MĀTAURANGA
 MĀORI ~ WHENUA ~ MOANA
 ~ NGAHERE ~ AWA ~ RANGI
 ~ NGĀ WHETU ~ TA MOKO ~
 MOKO KAUAU ~ TAKATĀPUI
 ~ PĀKEHĀ ~ KŌHANGA REO
 ~ KURA KAUPAPA MĀORI
 ~ WHAKAPAPA ~ TĪPUNA ~
 KĀKANO ~ TIPU ~ MITA ~ KIA
 ORA ~ MŌRENA ~ KEI TE PEHEA
 KOE? ~ KEI TE PAI AHAU (OR)
 TINO PAI ~ WHAKARONGO MAI
 ~ WHARE ~ HAERE MAI ~ KOA ~
 ATA MĀRIE ~ PŌ MĀRIE ~ TAU
 KE ~ NGĀ MIHI ~ TĒNĀ RAWA
 ATU KOE



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