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epress@unitec.ac.nz
www.unitec.ac.nz/epress/

Unitec Institute of Technology
Private Bag 92025, Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142
New Zealand

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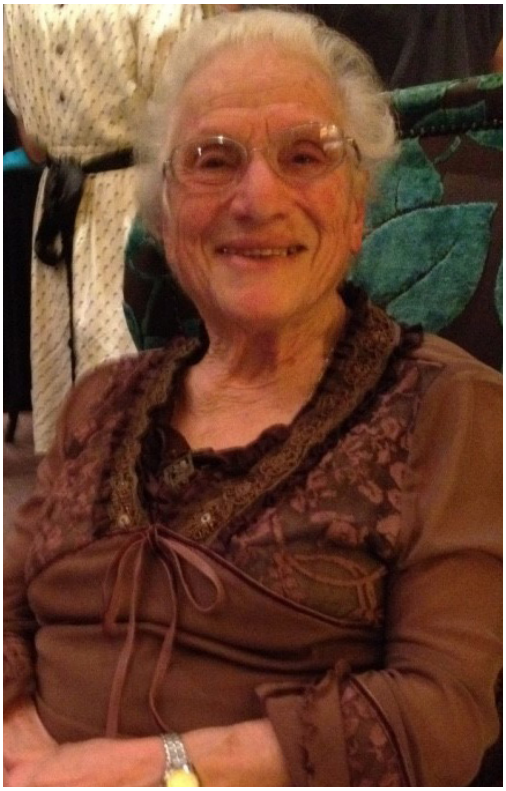

Joan celebrating her 84th birthday

MONDAY JUNE 17, 2002
64 SEAFIELD VIEW ROAD, GRAFTON

David Haigh: Joan, perhaps we could begin by you telling us a little bit about yourself, about your background – where you were born and brought up, and a little bit about your parents and family.

Joan Lardner-Rivlin: Well, my father was born in the Ukraine and he studied medicine in Germany because Jews were not allowed to go to university in Russia. My mother, who came from Latvia, also went to Germany to study economics for the same reason, and they met in Germany and got married in Frankfurt am Main. I believe after that they went to England where my father had to re-study medicine in order to qualify in England. They then went to South Africa because my father was the youngest of his family of seven and they had an uncle in Africa who wanted a doctor. So my father, as the youngest, was sent off to Africa and he eventually became a district surgeon in a small town called Jamestown, in the Cape Province – I was born in Queenstown which was not quite as small as Jamestown, which was an absolute dorp. My father was the district surgeon, the railway surgeon, the only doctor in the area. I think from him I got the feeling of the importance of the community and the importance of belonging to a community. My parents then moved to the Transvaal and that is where I went to school; we lived in Benoni and I studied at Benoni High School.

Was Queenstown a small place?

It was one of the bigger towns, but when I say 'big town' it probably wasn't

terribly big because it was one of the provincial towns. Where we were there was a big farming district and Jamestown served all the neighbouring farms.

You started to understand the idea of community there, is that from the people there or from your father?

I think it was because it was a small town and a close community, and my father was a doctor and that put one in touch with everybody. He used to take me with him on his calls.

So he had a car?

He had a car and he went out to the farms and I often waited for him, so I felt that I got to know the groups and I also got to know how important it was, what a difference the doctor made when he came. The family were all worried about the person who was ill and my father explained to me that you didn't only see the patient, that you had to consider the family and you had to try and dissipate their anxiety. I think that made me aware of the difference that somebody could make when there was anxiety so that, in fact, working with people and talking to people could help. Only now that I am talking to you do I realise just what a big impression that made on me. When we went to Transvaal I still went with my father on his calls, I often read books in the car while I waited for him.

That would have been in the 1930s I suppose?

In the 1940s.

You were born in 1927, so you would have been a teenager perhaps when this was happening. Were you affected by the war in any way?

The war was very exciting in that one my father's patients was a journalist, an English woman, and all the RAF would come to their house – these were the young RAF pilots and so on. It was very exciting for a teenager and they opened a new world for me – books, and having debates and discussion – and her place became a centre where these… they were a bit older than me then, but it was an exciting world that they were telling us about.

So, from a small town in South Africa you managed to find out more about the world.

Well, the war certainly brought the world to us and, as you can imagine, my father was an avid follower of what was happening during the war. We always listened to the BBC, etc., and were concerned about Russia and the family that was still left there, because we had lost touch with them.

I suppose that was forever, was it?

That was forever. We never heard from them again so only imagined the worst.

What about your mother during this period?

My mother belonged then to the Women's Voluntary Service, I think, which raised funds for the war and knitted things, and all that sort of voluntary work. Of course, another big influence on me was a hatred of apartheid.

How did that come about? I thought you just would have been absorbed into that life.

I am Jewish. The fact of being discriminated against because you are Jewish, I felt any discrimination against anybody because of who they were or what they were was wrong. It was quite obvious that Africans were being discriminated against.

Was that quite a common Jewish feeling or was that you, do you think?

Probably from my father as well, who believed in the equality of man. But you had to be circumspect. I was brought up with African nannies whom I adored so that, to me, an African woman was love and caring and everything good.

I seem to recall a story you once told me that your parents went away for a period and you stayed in a convent.

Yes, that was when we were in Jamestown. My father went to Budapest and to Dublin to qualify as a gynaecologist and obstetrician. While he went abroad my mother went to join her sister in Johannesburg and they put me in a convent in Aliwal North.

How was that? Being a little Jewish girl in a Catholic convent?

Well, I wasn't aware of being Jewish, because as you can imagine in Jamestown we were the only Jewish people for miles around, there were no other Jews and Afrikaans was not my first language. And coming to Aliwal North to a convent with German nuns, I was very aware that I was not one of the Catholic angels, in that when everybody went and knelt in front of a statue of Jesus to pray, I was sent to clean the shoes. When one of the nuns asked me if I was one of the little angels I thought she meant had I been a good girl, and I said yes, and she gave me a Holy picture. When later on she found out, she came and snatched it back again! But I do remember thinking – and I had never been to any religious instruction or anything else apart from what I got from my mother – they are worshipping an idol… they are kneeling to a picture. I was only eight at the time but I thought that was idolatry. I do remember that in the dormitories – and we had to go to bed at 6pm, when the children were still playing outside – the nuns would make the sign of the cross on everybody's forehead, and when they came past me they spritzed me with Holy water. I asked all the other little girls, "What makes water Holy?" They said that you bathed a statue of Jesus in it and I believed them. So I was very conscious of not being a Catholic, I can tell you that!

Later on you went to high school and university.

When we talked about what we were going do when we grew up, I knew I did not want to do medicine, for the reason that I did not have the zitsflaish, which is [the patience] to sit on your backside and study. The teachers, because I was very shy, said "Well, if you do social work you will find out that there are other people out there with needs and you will forget your own shyness because you will be aware of other people's concerns and needs." I thought that sounded good so I went in for social work.

How did you train for that?

Well, I first went to Witwatersrand university, but I dropped out.

Why was that?

Well, I think that I did not study enough. Also, I lost my mother and I decided I wanted to go abroad, I think, but I did go to Israel in 1950, I think.

Tell us a bit about that.

Well, it was something that I had always wanted to do because I was a Zionist. I belonged to a Jewish youth movement and it was a very exciting time. I hadn't thought that in my lifetime Israel would be reborn and, being an idealistic person, I thought, here is a wonderful opportunity for the new country and the idea of chalutzim, of equality, of everybody working to the best of their capacity, sharing – it seemed to me, this is idealism come true. So I went to Israel, but while I was there I got a cable to come home,

and I did, and my father died. And I think my world went to pieces. I got engaged, then decided after all that I didn't want to settle down and get married. I wanted to go and find out about life, so I went to England and got a scholarship to The London School of Economics and Political Science. Went to stay with my father's older brother and found a whole new world. Very, very exciting.

What was exciting? The study or London?

London, other people – I had a very sheltered life in South Africa. Jewish girls have a very sheltered life and I landed up – before you could go and do Social Work you had to have done residential work and they send you for a month to a settlement house – and I landed up in Stepney Green and I stayed a year because the settlement house was the centre of social work, of youth work. It was all encompassing and, in fact, I found it absolutely fascinating. I was much more innocent than the youth I was working with. In fact, they trained me and they started my interest in youth work.

What were some of the jobs that you had to do at the settlement house?

Well, first of all, I lived in with a student who was at the London School of Economics who worked at night at the settlement house in exchange for board and lodging. I was paid ten shillings a week and board and lodging, and I had to help with the pre-school in the morning, help with the old-age pensioners, OAPs we used to call them, who came after that, then was the after-school programme for kids coming from school, then there was youth work in the evenings and then there was home visiting.

Why would you home visit? Was it to do with behaviour issues or…

The home visits were for old people, to check up that they were ok. The home visits were for the youth, for children. We had a Country Children's Fund – I used to go and collect sixpence a week down the Mile End Road for children's country holidays. Then we had a boot fund, where I collected thrupence a week towards their boots, which the settlement house bought wholesale for them.

So, you collected this from each family?

Yes, and brought it back to the settlement house where it was kept and recorded. We subsidised it with money we got from rich people, because we had patrons for the settlement house and they used to come, society ladies used to come. On Alexandra Rose Day, for instance, we used to collect funds – all the ladies from Hemel Hempstead would come in their cars and drive us down Mile End Road and we would go into all the pubs collecting money.

What was Alexandra Rose Day?

Queen Alexandra (mother of King George) started this tradition of collecting. I remember going to one house to check, as one of the young girls was going to school without shoes. I went to that house and I came back and reported to the supervisor that there was a funny smell in that house, it was really odd. She asked where I had been and she said, "Oh, that is our local brothel." I think now that it was probably marijuana. I was a bit innocent.

Now, the youth that I was working with, they put on a show, *Annie Get Your Gun*, and the people from the West End came to train them and we actually hired the costumes from the West End. Some of the young people, they were pimps in the West End – it was a whole new scene for me!

I suppose some families were in pretty desperate situations. Did you come across those?

I wasn't so much aware of it in the settlement house because that was the time when, as Basil Henriques said, "You just have to tap a football down a road and you have got a youth club." I think there were communities, and it was just after the war so the people were still fairly cohesive and community minded and helped one another. It was when I went to college and I did placements that I became aware of the disruption that the war had made, psychologically, to people and their families and this was the aftermath – of broken families, of men who came back and couldn't settle down, men from the working class who had become officers in the air force and were heroes, and then came back to nothing, and how difficult it was for them to go back to the old families and not to have that respect anymore. I was quite amazed at the number of people in that position.

Who ran the settlement houses in Britain?

I think there were different organisations. The one that I was at was called Stepney Green Jewish Girls Club, although it wasn't only Jewish and it wasn't only girls. But the money came from Jewish people who contributed to it, though it was open to everybody.

And were there settlement houses throughout London?

Right throughout. Toynbee was a very famous one and I think there was whole movement of settlement houses at that time. I was only a very junior student.

At the London School of Economics what subjects did you have to study?

I think we did sociology, statistics, law, social work and social administration – a whole variety. We went to London University for the law lectures and, of course, the placements were big things. You did a placement with an organisation and, because I was on a scholarship, when I was on placement – you had to leave London and go and do a placement somewhere, which meant that you still had to pay your fees on your flat and go and live somewhere where your placement was – I always arranged to get placed at a children's home, where I could earn my board and lodging and then go and do whatever it was.

Where did you go for placement?

Well, one placement in London was the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen Organisation, which looked after ex-service people – the supervisor looked like Charles Laughton and she was absolutely tremendous. She was such a fantastic teacher and that is where I had all these experiences of people who were left over, if you like, from the services and were homeless – the London Council took over houses and housed these people.

Like a halfway house?

Yes. Dysfunctional families.

Had they been affected by the war, by perhaps being in prisoner-of-war camps – that type of thing?

No. None of them had been in prisoner-of-war camps.

How did they end up, then, in this dysfunctional way?

I think that they might have lost their homes during the war. The men might have been away some time, or they were just people who couldn't cope, and I think people had come to London, too, looking for work.

Did you go to any placements outside London?

Yes, I went to Stowmarket.

Where was that?

I have no idea, now, where that was. I worked in the local authority Children's Department but I actually lived in a children's home and worked in the children's home, and then went to the office every day. Part of what I had to do for the office was go to the boarding schools where there were children from the colonies. Because what happened was people sent their children back to England, to boarding schools, when they were in Malaysia, Hong Kong and so forth – that was before the Empire was shrinking quite so much – and the children were well treated because their families were far away. Through the Children's Department I also visited children who were in care, whether it was with their grandparents or with caregivers, and one of the interesting things was Gypsies' children or fairground people's children. Because the parents kept on moving around, the council said that the children had to stay in one place and go to school. This one family had, I think, seven Gypsy children to look after. They were a Swedish family, who were very organised, and the Gypsy children's family used to come in caravans to visit them. It really was a different life for me to see this. In the children's home, while I was there, there was an outbreak of measles so I stayed to help look after the children who had measles, and they were so nice to me. They didn't have to pay you when you were on placement – especially in the children's home, where they gave you board and lodging – but they actually paid me because they said I worked so hard.

One of the things you said was that you were flatting in London. Were you with some other people?

Well, the student from LSE who was with me in the settlement house went flatting with a friend of hers and they invited me, when I started college, to come and flat with them, which I did and that was great. So, we had a series of flats. One was right out of London, where you had to go by train, and eventually we got a flat in Marble Arch, which was nice and central. By then Naomi, my friend from the settlement house, had qualified and was moving on, and the girl from the flat upstairs and I made friends. We went flatting together and have remained friends and in contact ever since. And Naomi went on to become an inspectress of social work.

[Side one ends]

Joan, you were telling me about your flatting arrangements in London. Was it the case that one of your friends was a close friend of Spike Milligan's.

Yes. The girl upstairs, whose name was Delphine, had studied as an actress and she and I eventually landed up in a mews flat, which was fantastic. She brought along a friend of hers, Pat, to come and share the flat with us. Pat had been at drama school with Delphine and she was a bit of a drama queen, very sexy girl. Delphine and I used to get annoyed with her because she never wanted to do her share of cleaning up but when you could persuade her to do it she worked with a vengeance, which was great. She eventually married Spike Milligan, although we tried to talk her out of it.

So you met Spike?

I didn't, but Delphine did – I had gone by that time. We told Pat he was crazy

but she loved the important people that she was meeting, and so on. She married him and she had a daughter, but Delphine tells me that he treated her very badly. Delphine nursed her through cancer, and she eventually died.

The thing with flatting, too, was that we were very near Europe and during the holidays we would go hitchhiking in Europe and that, again, was fantastic. The first time, five of us went together and Naomi had found this little village called Porto Venere in Italy and took us there, and I just fell in love with the place. I thought it was a fairy-tale village, and every year after that, in my holidays, I always ended up in Porto Venere – I became one of the inhabitants, more or less. But we went to Holland, France, Italy and Spain. Just in the university holidays, but people who were doing social work didn't quite have the holidays that the other students had because we had to do our placements in our holidays. But again, that was a way for me to see some of Britain. I chose to go out and live in different places. I wanted to find out what rural Britain was like.

You actually became quite proficient in Italian?

Only for that general region. I couldn't understand Italian anywhere else, but around Porto Venere, yes. I would always tell my friends about it and suggest they go to that village, and those who did all found it quite beautiful. And it is the people there that are so beautiful, too.

Byron stayed in Porto Venere.

Grotta di Byron. The romantic poets, Shelley…

Shelley died there, didn't he? I think he died in the harbour there.

And Byron, of course, practised swimming at Porto Venere to prepare for his Greek swims.

Now, after your study – can you bring us up to date? You obviously got married and you travelled to different countries.

Yes, I would like to say that after I finished college I worked for the London County Council in South London and what I did was actually school social work. I was a social worker in a number of schools, liaising with the Health Department. I worked with a doctor and a nurse as the social worker in these schools. I think this is an excellent scheme whereby you have a nurse, a doctor and a social worker doing preventative work in schools, and I really enjoyed that as well. Now, so many years later, they are just piloting school social workers in New Zealand.

What sort of things did you have to do?

We had clinics, and teachers or family would refer children to the clinics if there was a bed-wetting problem or a behaviour problem or a dysfunctional family problem, and then we would make a home visit and see that the child got the health treatment they needed. Whether they needed to be referred to a hospital, whether it was eyes or ears – everything was checked at that time.

Give them a good start in life.

Absolutely.

How long did you work there?

About four years and then my brother – who was in South Africa and was close to my father's eldest brother, who was 20 years older than my father and had no children of his own, we were like his children – wanted to spread his wings, and I went back to South Africa so that he could leave and I would be there for my uncle.

There was an uncle in South Africa as well as an uncle in London?
Yes, and an aunt in South Africa – my mother's sister was there as well, so I did have family to go back to.

What did you do when you first went back to South Africa?
I went to work for the Johannesburg City Council as a detached youth worker, and I worked in a park in a disadvantaged area of Johannesburg. I had a little office and worked with children who came to the park. My problem in going back to South Africa was that I had to start categorising what people were, what children were. Whether they were black, white or coloured. I found that very stressful.

Was that for administrative purposes? For what purpose did you categorise them?
I worked in a park that was for whites, and I couldn't bear to turn any children away so I accepted all children. This brought me to the attention of the authorities when a newspaper printed a picture, and I was told that I couldn't do that, although my employers were very sympathetic.

How was that dealt with then?
I had to go to the parents, and I burst into tears when I was telling them.

These were the black children?
Also the Chinese.

Even Chinese were not allowed?
Yes, and it landed up with a woman sort of comforting me, and I decided that I couldn't really remain there so I left and went to Zambia.

Why did you choose Zambia?
I saw a job advertised in Zambia, it was then Northern Rhodesia and, of course, I had met the man who was to be my husband on the boat going out to South Africa and he was in Northern Rhodesia and we were corresponding. So I went to Northern Rhodesia to work on a copper mine as a social worker. That was community development.

Who did you work with? The miners or their families?
I worked with the families of the miners in Luanshya. It was a mining town, that is what it existed for, and the mining company was quite paternalistic in that they looked after their staff with their own hospitals, their own social workers, their own schools – it was a company town and the company looked after you.

What was your role?
It was, in a way, training and health – public health and training African staff who were working with the miners' families. But then I got offered a job as a community development officer for Ndola Council, which was a local authority rather than a company office. I found working for the local authority, rather than for a corporation, was great. I worked in an African township called Chifubu and there I was in charge of all the welfare for that township. The only other European woman there was the nurse, who was responsible for that area. I worked with the schools, with youth groups, women's groups, and it was a complete community development. I had a staff of, I think, 25 – teachers and social workers, youth workers…

What year was this?
It was in the 1960s and it was the time when Northern Rhodesia was becoming Zambia. It was very political and I found it terribly exciting to be part

of the beginning of a new country. Although there was quite a lot of tension – particularly between UNIP (United National Independence Party), which was Kaunda's party, and the ANC. I once got caught in the middle of it, which was the most frightening time in my life. We had a big bare patch where all the youngsters used to play football, and I was walking across it when a whole impi, which is the Zulu word for a group of warriors, of UNIP was coming from one side and the ANC from the other side, and they were chanting. If you have an African group chanting it is very, very powerful, and the hot sun… my knees were absolutely knocking because I was in the middle and they were coming from both sides. Just a few months previously, a European woman had been burnt to death in a car not far from there, and I thought, "I am not going to see my children grow up." But the two groups just went around me. I got out of there so quickly, but they certainly did not threaten me. They were threatening each other and they absolutely ignored me.

I was busy talking with the women about voting and how you vote and what voting means, and democracy, and all that. The women were very active in the political sphere at that time because in Zambia men were in the ascendency, although the women did all the work; the men held the power and the men would also have multiple wives. But the women got a vote and they became very active, politically and commercially too – the women were very active. Of course, UNIP won and Kaunda became President.

We seem to have skipped over something very important… you got married, and you mentioned children!

I got married and I had three children. In Zambian society you don't have a place with all the women until you have children. Although I was running women's classes, I wasn't allowed to attend their meetings because I had no children. When I had children, I was then allowed to join the women and one of the things that I was promoting was breast feeding. It had become sort of sophisticated to use formula instead of breast milk because there wasn't any milk in Zambia then, and they made it from horrible New Zealand milk powder. One of the things I remember was showing La Leche films from England to promote breast feeding, and the women burst out laughing when they saw European women breast feeding their children. I said, "What's so funny? You go around with nothing on top." They said, "Oh madam, we didn't know that [they] were the same as us!"

Is that right? Well, that's an education. Did you have the three children in Zambia?

My eldest, David, was born in Northern Rhodesia in 1964, and the other two, Judith and Vigdor, were born in Zambia in 1965 and 1967 – same hospital! As I say, having children then got you status.

The other thing I didn't mention before was that the British Council used to send out books and information to Northern Rhodesia, and then Zambia, which was a tremendous resource for us, for community development work, and they also sent a youth worker to do youth leadership courses. I would go along with them and choose leaders from our youth groups, who were then trained to become youth leaders in recreation and youth leadership. Again, what I found terribly important in youth work was to educate the youth in community work, so it became part of their training.

Why did you leave Zambia?

Well, our jobs were taken away from us. It was part of Zambianisation – the jobs were given to Zambians. I think five people took my job. But I think we made a difference – in health, in promoting inoculations and the whole community development process of teaching people to help themselves, having women's groups doing nutrition and health, looking after family and parenting and that whole thing. The only ones we didn't have much effect on were the men. Certainly the women, the children and the youth. But we just could not remain in Zambia because there wasn't work, so we had to decide where to go from there. Derrick didn't want to go back to England because it was too cold. We certainly did not want to go back to South Africa. Friends of ours went to Canada and said it was too cold, after being in Africa. During the war my husband had been in Hong Kong and just loved it, and I had read all the Pearl Buck stories and I thought, I really want to get to know the Chinese better – I just love it through the Pearl Buck stories, so we went to Hong Kong.

Did you have work there?

No, we went on spec really. We went via Israel, where we spent some time in an orchard settlement, quite an old, established one, where everybody worked their own place but shared the work, so that there was a certain amount of independence and yet there was a sharing thing. When we landed in Hong Kong in 1967, it was a case of looking for work. They were having a youth festival when we arrived there and I thought, how fantastic to be able to work in the youth work field in Hong Kong. Then, through the rabbi I heard that the Hong Kong Council of Social Service were looking for a Youth Director. I went to apply for the job but I had to have a CV, which I didn't have, so I went to the alleys. They have an alleyway in Hong Kong with all the letter writers, so I went to this letter writer who could type up my CV for me in English. He said to me, "Oh, you are very highly qualified, aren't you? You will get the job." And he was right, I did get the job for the Hong Kong Council of Social Service as the Division Officer for the Division of Children and Youth. That was another whole new world opened to me, working with 80 organisations that dealt with the youth of Hong Kong. Education, recreation – you name it. There was another Division of Children and Family but mine was Children and Youth. What I found so fantastic was that in the Hong Kong Council of Social Service there was Director of Education, Director of Prisons – so you had education, because of the drug problem there were young people in borstals and they had a programme to actually re-educate these people – and then there were all the different churches, you had the YW, the YM, the Playground Association, all these different groups including the university – so you had the academic and the practical, everybody sitting around, including the Government Department for Social Welfare – and we could actually make policy, which Social Welfare then took back. Because it was a colony I think they were far more sensitive to what we said than ordinarily. Again, it was a very exciting time for me and, of course, because you have to be careful in Chinese society not to offend, I had a mentor in the Commissioner for the Scouts, Lawkwan Fook, who really taught me what to do and what not to do, how to behave and what the protocol was.

[New tape]

Joan, you were explaining about the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and how they managed to co-ordinate things. Can you tell me the programmes that you actually ran for the Youth Division?

Well, it wasn't so much that I ran them; different organisations ran them, but the co-ordination was done at Division meetings so that everybody knew what each other were doing and could co-ordinate with each other. For instance, we had holiday programmes and each agency would draw up a holiday programme and bring it to the meeting, and we would then co-ordinate it and bring it out in a booklet – and I would have a competition amongst all the youth groups to design a cover for it. When I came to New Zealand and I was interviewed by Bob Larking for Community Advisor at ARA, he asked me, "Have you been involved with holiday programmes?" and I said, "Yes." He asked, "How many children?" and I said, "A million." And that is how many children took part in the holiday programmes, it was one million.

What sort of things did they do?

They did everything – sport, art, games, camping and gambling! They would have fêtes at school and all sorts of activities.

Was it organised around schools?

Schools and youth groups and church groups. Don't forget there were Chinese who had sort of village community groups, of people who had come from the same village or who lived in places around Hong Kong – they had these local welfare groups and they had activities. And of course, all the different youth organisations would have activities.

I felt that there should be a voice for youth because in Chinese society they don't really have much of a voice, they have to respect their elders, so I inaugurated the Hong Kong Youth Council. I had a great deal of difficulty in describing voting and democracy because, of course, it was a colony and the young people were not brought up to vote. Then the Scouts Association had thousands and thousands of members. Do they have the same number of votes as a group that only has a small membership? I was quite involved with the Red Cross Youth and found them a tremendous group to work with in implementing the Youth Council. I also had volunteers from the university who would help in the youth work. One of the volunteers, in particular, I became very friendly with and close to, and I am still in touch with her, she is like a daughter to me. She was actually sent by Hong Kong to the United Nations, because that year they had a Youth United Nations, attended by youth from all over the world. In order to get Hong Kong to actually be recognised, not as a colony of Britain but with a Hong Kong representative, was quite a political thing that we did manage to do. She learnt quite a lot as well because it was the first time, I think, that she had left Hong Kong.

Something else I was involved in starting in Hong Kong was the Physically Handicapped and Able Bodied (PHAB) organisation, and that is how things worked. A youth worker from England came to Hong Kong because there was concern about the way physically handicapped children and youth were hidden. It was considered shameful to have a physical handicap and the idea was to integrate people with and without a disability so that young people with disabilities would be more accepted. This youth worker was the most magnificent woman and a wonderful speaker – I was given to her as a guide and went with her to all the schools and youth groups as she spoke about

PHAB. She was a very well-known youth worker and, in fact, because the British Army was stationed in Hong Kong she got a whole lot of phone calls from army wives and people in the army who had been in her youth groups, so her influence reached far. I promised her that we would have PHAB up and running in Hong Kong, and within a year we did; it was a joint effort of the Division of Children and Youth and the Division for Disability. So, the two Divisions together implemented PHAB by running a camp for young people both with and without disabilities. This was a tremendous undertaking and again the Scouts were most helpful. The leaders of the Scout movement in Hong Kong at the time had helped the British who were interned by the Japanese during the war, so the British were really very grateful to this layer of leadership and they were tremendous. We were given this YMCA campsite which was on an island, and was specially adapted for us by the Y's Men, which was a group of men who had belonged to the YMCA. They widened the doorways to make them accessible for wheelchairs. I then had to worry about how to get young people from Hong Kong Island onto this island where the camp was. The British Army in Hong Kong were very, very helpful in every field of social endeavour, and I went to the liaison people there and said, "Can you help me get people from Hong Kong Island?" "Yes, we will give you our landing craft." Ok – well the landing craft requires soldiers to jump out and race up the beach… how do I get people from there? In Hong Kong, young people from the schools and universities were paid to go and do Civil Defence. They had lovely uniforms, and were highly trained because so many natural disasters happen in Hong Kong. So they came as an exercise – all the young Civil Defence people would carry the people with disabilities off the landing craft onto the shore. But it was very hot and the landing craft had no cover, so I went to the police and asked them for a cover, and everybody was so helpful. We even got people in hospital beds to this island for the first PHAB camp, which was a roaring success, and I was later invited back by PHAB to celebrate their 25 years. They are still going strong, even stronger than ever and I was invited as an honoured guest. They have their own camps now, and a fleet of cars and vans, and are very acknowledged as one of the leading organisations in Hong Kong, with VIPS as their patrons. I actually went with a PHAB group from New Zealand to Hong Kong on two occasions.

That must have changed a lot of attitudes in Hong Kong towards disabled people.

I think it did, because at the last conference they had they invited people from China so that they could have that same… because in China it is very much disabled people together rather than them being integrated.

OK, so what else was there in Hong Kong? The holiday programmes, the Youth Council, PHAB…

Also, through my husband's work – because he worked for China Light and Power – I was offered a house that had belonged to one of the managers, a lovely big house at a placed called Tai Po. I came back [to the Hong Kong Council of Social Service] and said, "I have been given this house, can you turn it into a youth camp?" Lawkwan Fook, with his network of people who had belonged to the Scouts, finished it for us and the Young People in Prisons – they came and did all the work to turn it into dormitories with bunks – and it became a centre where we took groups camping. At that time camping

wasn't quite accepted yet for mixed groups and this was one of the ways to break down the barriers to Chinese families allowing their children to go to camps. We used it for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards scheme and it was a lovely place. Now, of course, it is gone and there is a whole town of high-rise buildings and everything is in a high-rise building – the shops, everything. Tai Po is a beautiful harbour, it was a fishing village.

Another thing I remember from Hong Kong is going out around Hong Kong and coming across a young Italian priest who was working with the fisher folk in this area. They used to ferry people across, and they would cut each other's fares; under the influence of the priest they formed a group and agreed on prices. They formed like a credit union to help each other with their boats and fishing, and to build houses for themselves. He just changed their lives and that, to me, was community development: actually working with people – not imposing on them – just giving them the resources, giving them the ideas that they could then develop. That is why I have always thought community development is such an exciting concept.

Then you left Hong Kong in 1971, after four years. Why did you decide to leave?

The children were of school age and schooling in English was not free. I had a very dear friend, Jean Stott, who had come to live in New Zealand and she wrote these fantastic letters about it. So it was arranged between us that we would come to New Zealand.

We came here and stayed with Jean in Bucklands Beach and through her connections found a place in Manurewa which belonged to the Foundation for the Blind, and we stayed there until we found a place on the North Shore. While there I applied for two jobs. One at the hospital as Senior Social Worker and one for the Auckland Regional Authority as a Community Advisor. The hospital job came through first so I accepted that, but after two months the ARA job came through and I decided community work was far more my thing than the hospital, which it seemed was mainly working with women having babies.

After all your exciting work in Zambia and Hong Kong that didn't have the same appeal.

Well, it was putting pressure on solo mothers to decide what to do with their children and I didn't like that. That was a big issue at the time, thank God things have changed a lot.

You then accepted this role at the ARA under Bob Larkin. What would your function be?

I think it was under the Town and Country Planning Act that there was a responsibility for women, for children, for education, for welfare and for social interaction. So that gave a very wide scope, I felt, and also Bob was very generous in introducing me to all his contacts, which led me to making contacts of my own. At that time there was a really amazing group of people involved in community, in local authorities and in some government departments, and in some voluntary agencies. Once again, it was an exciting time of starting new initiatives, of identifying needs and actually trying to do things about them.

How did you go about identifying needs?

Networking mainly. Networking with people in the field, meeting community

groups and talking to them, and it was also an exciting time in that women's groups were ascending. Women were becoming more active politically in the community. Women's voices were being heard more, they were getting involved in community houses and preschool – just more vocal I think, so being able to get together with them, with encouragement and a bit of administrative help they were able to do all sorts of things.

Would you say that was one of your key roles, giving encouragement and providing some back-up resources?

Yes, and also in the youth-work field and co-ordinating groups. There was a disability co-ordination group, setting up a Council of Social Services as a co-ordinating group. Running seminars on social issues.

Did you see your role as primarily supporting groups and doing that sort of work, or was it more policy and advocacy, and setting up new services?

I think it was a combination of everything. What you did was be out in the community with your antennae wiggling and you saw where some group needed resources or help. Where another group, if given some ideas and help and initiatives, could start something up. For another group it was being an advocate for them or being a channel to the local authority. I think what community advisors did, which was important, was take messages from one group to another so that you put people in touch with one another who could help one another. We perambulated. Because of being regional we could cover all the local authorities so that really gave one a whole lot of networks in which you could plug people into one another – does that sound funny?

You found that being a regional body was a strength?

Absolutely.

Because at that time there were about 30 local authorities, it wasn't like now where you have, say, five. There were 30-odd and most of them did not have a community worker, only the big ones. So, did you find that you tended to work more with the smaller local-body areas where they did not have a community worker?

I think so. I think North Shore area, with five boroughs, didn't have much in the way of community work, so I was able to start a whole lot of things on the Shore. Manukau, of course, already did, and Auckland City did, so it was more working with the ones that didn't. And of course, the Citizen's Advice Bureau was an ideal way of liaising and getting in touch with them.

I'd like to run through – just for the record because I think it is very impressive – all the things that you were involved in; for instance, training courses.

I think that was really started by Bob Larkin and it was training courses in recreation and community leadership, so these were leadership courses, and we got people to come and give talks and workshops on skills needed to train people in community leadership roles so that you enhanced their powers, if you like, to be able to carry out their ideas. These proved to be tremendously popular and a lot of people who were volunteers came for training, because there wasn't any training in that area at all. We started with basic training and found that there were people coming to us and wanting the next stage, so we went up to stage one, stage two, stage three and actually gave certificates to show that people had attended these courses. I was amused in later years, when I saw people's applications for jobs, that they had included our

certificates as the very first training in community and recreation leadership. We gave them a wide range of skills in budgeting, strategic planning and programme planning, and we could tailor the courses – whether it was for people who wanted to start an after-school group, people who wanted to start a community house, people who were in the recreation field. Before there was formal training there were our community leadership courses. It was a small group who actually identified resource people and we had a whole network of organisations that we would send out the curriculum to and get a tremendous response from. I think maybe 2–3000 people went through the courses.

You had some interesting characters that did this course, can you tell me about some of them?

We had different people come as resource people, and they had different methods of doing things; one of these, I think, was making a machine that would do certain things. One of our more feisty students was by the name of Tim Shadbolt, and he invented The Great New Zealand Clobbering Machine, which was of course people-enacted, this machine. He was really a colourful student who completed our courses and one of the things was that the certificates we gave were proper certificates and we would get the Chairman of the ARA to present them at a ceremony. The ARA actually allowed us to have a proper ceremony with food and all the rest, and the Chairman would shake the hands of the people qualifying for the certificates. Of course, along came Tim in very big boots that were unlaced and very short shorts and looking a bit wild, and Tom Pearce was the Chairman at that time. He held out his hand for Tim to shake and Tim said, "I refuse to shake hands with you Tom, on the grounds that you are a racist." I think that was the time of the Springbok Tour and Tom said "Oh, grow up Tim."

But at least the Chairman could take it.

Oh yes, he could. They didn't make each other wilt at all.

You had other people who have gone on to do work in community development.

I have sometimes met people that I had forgotten, because there have been so many people, and they have reminded me, "Oh, we came to your course." Or, "Oh, I know you, you ran those courses." They have said how useful it was to them and they are now advisors and high up in the recreation field. We, of course, also inaugurated the Recreation Association and were very involved with playgrounds at one time, and looking at recreation facilities.

You also set up the PHAB organisation in New Zealand. You brought the idea from Hong Kong, so how did it work here?

Well, I looked – because coming from England where there is this huge youth work organisation and in Africa and in Hong Kong – I came to New Zealand and thought, I am sure they have the same set-up here but of course there were no youth clubs as they had in England, with their own buildings and so on. Not only was there no organisation to integrate disabled and able-bodied people, but there did not seem to be any youth clubs at all. I found it difficult to get started with PHAB and I went to all sorts of organisations without any luck until I went to what was called the Extramural Hospital in those days, and Dr Lopdell, of the Extramural Hospital, thought it was a wonderful idea and put me in touch with the occupational therapist. With their help I eventually got a group together to set up a PHAB group, which was resourced by Auckland

Regional Authority (ARA) as a youth group.

[Turn tape over]

PHAB grew because of the camps. I had great help from the Red Cross, who had a nurse who came, and the Crippled Children Society (CCS) who had one of their field workers come, and because I was used to getting help from the army I went to the navy and got help from them in the way of transport and cooks. We ran camps for as many as 100 young people, and because there were schemes at that time where you could get young people jobs and get supplementary pay for them, I found great help through the Catholic Students' Association and one of their young leaders was one of the best organisers I have ever met – he is now a very well-known lawyer – and he organised staff and transport and all sorts of ancillary services. To many young people these camps were an eye opener – they had never been away from home before, they had never mixed with their own age group before and certainly, for many able-bodied people, they had never had anything to do with disabled young people. We also had Ani Pehima bring a group of young Māori to the camp. Hato Petera were tremendous at sending their Red Cross team, who came to camp after camp, and I think it helped many of the young people who came to choose careers such as nursing, support work, youth work. I sometimes see on television some of our ex-PHAB workers in positions where they are influencing policies. PHAB is still going but, unfortunately, I was unable to continue my work with them through the ARA and I thought that was very short-sighted of some people not to allow that work to progress. But there was no funding, as you can imagine, for this work: we had to raise funds.

Why did the ARA stop their support?

I think the director of planning did not see it as part of the core business and I was told to stop. I continued on a voluntary basis but it meant that I couldn't help with administration or supply the resources that were needed – and certainly not run the camps, which needed quite a lot of administration, as you can imagine. PHAB is still going, but in a different way, in that we now have a contract with the Auckland District Health Board for a certain amount – not enough, but it has its own staff now and I think they have about ten clubs all over Auckland. So, it is going strong. The week-long camps no longer happen but the work is done through clubs. Certainly the disabled young people are playing a greater role now, so it has gone from strength to strength. But it had a difficult period when I had to retreat from it and it went right down because there was nobody to carry it on.

And you also got involved in setting up a retirement village called Northbridge.

That was one of my first jobs with the ARA. An old colleague of Bob Larkin's came in with all this information about retirement villages and said that he had been all over the place to try and get support for starting one, and eventually came to the ARA. Bob said to me, "There you are – go ahead, do it." So, we did and that was a case of forming a group and looking at finding land on which to build the retirement village, taking in ideas from villages in Australia and the States. This was to be a non-profit retirement village. It was one of the first, I think, and what was remarkable about it was that the steering

committee had on it the Minister of Social Welfare and the opposition Social Welfare Spokesperson, which was Frank Gill. What was amazing to me as a newcomer to New Zealand, was that these two gentlemen treated each other with the utmost respect and backed each other up every inch of the way, and I thought, where else can you sit with a Minister? They were very helpful in finding land, which was Crown land, and getting permission for the retirement village to be put there. Then we had to go the ASB and ask for bridging finance, and in the meantime create publicity, because you needed people who would come in and put their names down. This took quite a while – we had gerontologists coming in, we had public meetings about housing for the elderly, we ran a seminar through the ARA on housing for the elderly – all to get ideas on what this retirement village should look like. The idea was that it was total care, that you went into your own place but you may become decrepit and then you would have other options open to you. There would also be a hospital, which was subsidised and was on the premises, so that if one partner went into hospital the other partner could still be in touch. That took some time. The architect drew up the plans and Margaret Russell of the Auckland Old People's Welfare Council – as it was then called; it's now Senior Citizens and Age Concern – looked at them and said, "Where do people put their suitcases? Where are their cupboards?" It was in fact aimed at people who had a little bit too much money to go into pensioner housing, but not enough money to go into the open market. Once it was all up and organised and running it was handed over to a group made up of representatives from the Hospital Board, the ARA and various other organisations and they took over the running of it, I think as trustees, and still do. Of course, it's no longer just for people who couldn't be in the open market, as the costs have gone up enormously, but it's still non-profit. It has been very successful. That is one thing about doing things involving buildings, you can actually see them when you go past. Other things that you start in the community are just wisps, ideas, or you can see them come to fruition.

One of the things I helped set up was the North Shore Council of Social Services – coming from having worked for a Council of Social Service and seeing that there was no Council of Social Services on the North Shore. We worked together with Vaughan Morrison, from the Department of Internal Affairs, and Jim Courtney, who was from the voluntary organisations; the three of us were local government, central government and a representative from the voluntary organisations. The North Shore Council of Social Services is still going, as the North Shore Community and Social Service Council – it has changed a bit, over the years.

And you did the same with the Auckland District Council of Social Services.

I think the Auckland District Council was already established but I certainly was involved as secretary and many years later I still am.

And that is co-ordinating and advocacy?

Yes, all the Councils of Social Services have different ways of working, really. One of the other interesting things is that I was involved in the setting up of the New Zealand Council of Social Services and that, again, is because most of these initiatives were put forward and helped and resourced by local-body community advisors. It was the local-body community advisors who provided

the impetus and the resources for the setting up of these groups and we had meetings in Wellington with David Robinson, who was the Community Advisor for Wellington, very active in setting these up. Very idealistic, very exciting networking and it was a wonderful experience to be at the beginning of these things which still go on today.

You were also involved with setting up quite a number of Citizens Advice Bureaus right across the Auckland area.

A group from Birkenhead wanted to set up something, some community group, and Bob said to me, "Here you are. Go ahead and do it." A meeting with the group looked at what it was they wanted to do, and the way to do it would be through a Citizens Advice Bureau. Peter Harwood was involved at that time in Auckland City Council, setting up Citizens Advice Bureaus, but the Birkenhead Borough Council said, "Over my dead body," or words to that effect. So, there was no support as there had been in Auckland or in Manukau, but because the ARA could resource it we were able to start CAB in Birkenhead with a volunteer supervisor who was, in fact, a qualified social worker. But, again, that was a community group who set it up. I helped identify trainers and I think I got the Community Advisors of other local authorities to come along as trainers. The premises were shared with the Plunket Society, so when we opened the Bureau we had to put away the potties and the paraphernalia. I think we got a $200 grant from the JayCees. So that was a real community initiative that could be brought to fruition because of the backing of the ARA. That CAB is still going after close to 30 years. Because I was involved with the CAB it meant when other local authorities, or groups in the local authorities, looked at starting I was always asked to come along and actually speak to the public meetings, because I had the experience of how to start one. I think I went to Mt Albert, Mt Roskill, certainly New Lynn – I was asked by the mayor to be actively involved in the setting up of New Lynn, even to interviewing the supervisor.

But didn't the mayor have an ulterior motive for this?

I am not sure. I just think he thought it was a lovely idea to be able to sit there and give advice to constituents, though there was quite a lot of resistance to CABs from some local authorities. One said the town engineer could answer any questions, so I said, "So, if somebody comes to ask about contraception, what is he going to tell them?" They looked nonplussed. I also addressed Glenfield and East Coast Bays when they set up their CABs. It took us five years to get Takapuna off the ground because the mayor did not think Takapuna had any problems that he or his wife could not sort out.

So, this mayor held back setting up a legitimate community organisation for five years?

Well, they could not open a bureau without premises and there was no way that he would back getting these, unlike New Lynn where the mayor was very active in finding them. Eventually, through the intercession of an Anglican minister, the bureau was given premises in a condemned building so the Takapuna CAB started there. Again, because it was a community endeavour, the local Lions group came and did the painting and refurbishing. Again, it was true community-initiative spirit that, in spite of no money, got it off the ground.

How did you actually overcome the mayor's resistance? Did you just wear him down?

I think it was because a religious minister interceded on our behalf that he eventually caved in to the point of… "Well, they can have these premises and that is it."

That was a cunning move. Rather than fighting it head on you decided to take a roundabout route.

I did try and fight it head on, which wasn't always such a good idea, but one gets fired up. I went to several public meetings where this mayor was attending and challenged him, and at one of the meetings he told me to wipe the silly grin off my face – I think I was looking ironic. Then I got quite a shock when he became chairman of the ARA.

In hindsight, do you think it was the wrong approach to argue with him in a public meeting?

I don't think there was any option because to keep quiet meant that nobody else there knew about it, whereas if you actually challenge and say 'this is a community thing' and he is seen, in front of everybody, to squash you, although you might be squashed at least other people are aware of what has been going on. Not everybody is willing to stand up and be squashed; especially when I stand up – you can't really see me! [Joan, by the way, is not of a very great stature.]

So, you were involved in setting up all these CABs or giving advice on them.

Well, I was involved on the periphery of some of them.

What do you see is the advantage of setting up CABs?

I think it does meet a need in the community. One, it harnesses the community people to actually come and offer their services so it gives them a forum in which to be trained and give their services to the community. It gives the community a place to come and be heard, to come and ask questions that perhaps in the old days you would have asked your neighbour or your family, or somebody like that, but those support systems are no longer there. You know you are going to get neutral, unbiased information and it is a shortcut through the frustration of trying to find things out for yourself. Nowadays, they say, people can look it up on the internet, but that takes time and CABs are trained in what is the latest legislation, how it affects one. The other thing that CABs can do is gather the issues people raise and bring them to the attention of the local authority, whether the local authority can deal with it, or central government, or the consumer organisations, or the Law Society, or whoever has influence in that particular direction. When the Disputes Tribunal put their prices up the CABs quickly sent tremendous submissions stating that the people who came to them, that they referred, couldn't afford it – so it is a voice for these people, it is advocacy.

Another community development approach you were involved in that has been successful in New Zealand has been the community house system. Can you explain that, and was there a link between the community houses that you were involved in and your ideas from London with the settlement house system?

A tenuous link I think. The community houses were already being promoted when I got involved through John Raeburn, who saw this as a mental-health initiative to have a community house where people could come who were under stress, or who needed neighbourhood help and support.

What was John's position?

I think he was in community health at the medical school. He was very much promoting the Ottawa Charter. But, of course, what happens once you start an initiative is it takes a life of its own, and what happened was that the community got a house and a local committee, which then ran the house. I was involved in setting up that local committee, for the Birkdale Community House. Anne Hartley was very much involved with that, she was the Labour MP for Northcote until 2005, but before that she was Mayor of Birkenhead and also Mayor of North Shore City… in fact she became involved in politics because of her work in the community, so this was before she became a local-body politician.

She was involved in a Playcentre?

She was involved in the Playcentre movement and also in the importance of preschool education, which is something the community house offers. What Birkdale also pioneered was getting school kids involved in the crèche, so they learned parenting skills, which was tremendous. Groups would meet in the community houses, and gradually classes were run there, so a lot of the community houses now have classes running there. I remember we had a budgeting class there and looked at setting up a support group for step-parents and step-children – whatever we found there was a need for. Sometimes it would work and sometimes it wouldn't.

John Raeburn's approach was always to investigate what the needs were and that was one of the strengths of his approach. Rather than just doing what you thought might be needed, he had a systematic way.

We did surveys looking at needs… we did a lot of door knocking. I began to know my own street quite well from door knocking for collecting, because you always needed to raise money. Certainly, Birkenhead Borough Council – as it was then – was very active in setting up these community houses, which other local authorities then also set up. The community houses are still going, not quite in the way that they were but they are certainly still centres for community and classes, a place to gather. Of course, the preschool is still very much part of what the community house does.

One of the other areas you were involved in was in training and job creation and you had links with Ōrākei Marae.

Well, the ARA got involved with the different schemes that the government was doing to promote work and subsidise various jobs, and we certainly took advantage of it in the youth field and the literacy field, and in the supporting of recycling, which was one of the YWCA's initiatives that we helped with. So, through the marae, through Ani Pehima, they were doing training courses for young Māori in various fields and I helped with the administration in those areas. I think Ani was doing very innovative work with young Māori girls. We also had youth workers under the department doing work, especially for youth at risk. In the literacy field we supported an outreach through the Labour Department and had really very good staff promoting literacy and programmes such as anti-violence among young people. In fact, many went through these schemes and into influential positions in the community development field.

I think one of the strengths must have been that the ARA could provide back-up resources, get those set up; even though it wasn't running the programmes, it was there to provide the advice and the administrative

background.

We could actually get people and projects off the ground. I think that was one of the strengths that we had, because we did all sorts of initiatives and the people that we got, because they were given the opportunity, just rose and rose and became very effective workers.

[New tape]

Finally, another activity that you were involved in that set off lots of other things was the Home Care 60s Plus scheme. Tell us about that.

I was invited to be part of a pilot project to look at home care for people over 60. The idea was that if you could give help at home you could keep people out of hospital, and save money in the long run. This was a Social Welfare Department initiative and I think I was asked because of local government; they had people from voluntary organisations and people from various other places who all had something to do with the elderly. I saw myself as putting community development principles to work. The idea was to get institutional organisations, religious organisations and – as far as I was concerned – community organisations to deliver home care into their own areas so that we could assess how the different organisations delivered the service. It was very much a pilot scheme and Social Welfare made money available that was needs based. Then halfway through it the government decided to transfer it from Social Welfare to Health. The money would still come from the Social Welfare budget but it would go to the Health Department. The minute it went to Health they capped it, so although the money was coming from Social Welfare it was not needs based, it was capped. Which meant that they had to work out exactly how much an hour they would give, and so on. But the pilot had two years of implementation, and it was a joy because, again, it was a new initiative. We looked at training of home-care workers because they worked with the most vulnerable group, and we looked at the monitoring and evaluation of the work. It was a social worker's dream, with everything in place but, of course, there is many a slip between dreams and them coming true, and certainly under Health it wasn't as free as under Social Welfare and many of the things had to be cut. I think what eventually happened was that contracts initially went out to all the different groups that we wanted, but as the years have gone by – it is still in process now – the money has been cut back and back so that the training and the monitoring aren't paid for, and it has difficulties. But the idea, the concept of care in the home to keep people out of hospitals, is certainly alive and well.

In a more philosophical mode, why were you involved in community work? What was the motivation? What did you want to achieve?

I think the exciting thing was that you were involved with community groups, you were involved with people – people have ideas, they want to reach certain targets, they want to do certain things – and in community development, if you have resources behind you, you can actually help them to get these things to happen, to go from paper into actuality, into reality. Sometimes you work like hell to get an idea going and it flops, then five years later that same idea takes off, because it was too soon then, they weren't ready for it, but another time it just goes. But the whole idea is that you can write something down on

paper, you can theorise, but then you can actually see it coming to fruition, you can see the people involved, you can see what actually comes out of it. So it is to help people to make things happen – for the good.

That is the important point isn't it? That it has got to be for some improvement in society and it is meeting community needs.

If people identify what they need and what they are willing to work for, and not just say, "Yeah, we need this. Who is going to give it to us?" If they say, "We need this and this is what we are going to do to help to get it," then you can actually help with resources or, again, being a regional area, you know the people who have the skills. At the ARA we certainly had a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience in the staff that we could go to for advice, for information on a variety of subjects. We had experts in all areas.

You were at the Auckland Regional Authority – which became the Auckland Regional Council in 1989, then ultimately the Auckland Council in 2010 – for 20 years. It must have been exciting but there must have been some stressors during that period, because the ARA did change.

From the beginning (when initiatives and new thinking were encouraged) to the time when more conservatives got power (and did not like new initiatives, and did not like things happening, and certainly were not encouraging) was a very difficult time, because you had to balance what the politicians would actually back with what you saw as the community wanting or needing. You either had to persuade the politicians, or persuade the senior staff to put the case to the politicians, or go to some of the politicians who were more sympathetic than others, or you had to get the community to actually speak on your behalf. There were different ways: for instance, for the government, some of the social workers would give us information that helped us to ask the right questions to influence policy. In the same way, we could give information so that politicians could be asked the right questions, or the community would give us the questions. It was a case of who could help whom to do what.

During that conservative period when the New Deal came in with the Mayor of Takapuna Fred Thomas, whom you had not seen eye to eye with, were there any consequences on you in particular?

Yes, there were. I think I was being targeted because I had earned displeasure by being active in that community, and it was very, very difficult because I knew that the slightest slip was being looked for and I had to rely on senior staff to protect me.

Do you recall any specific instances when you felt under pressure?

I did feel that when my secretary told me that she was being asked questions about me and about what I was doing.

That was by a politician?

Yes, and I wondered about his motives. Well, I didn't wonder, I knew what his motives were, by the very fact that I was working in the community and the community was telling me things that they may not have liked about what the local authority was doing, or about politicians in that local authority, and they knew that I was getting this feedback. It is a case of, do I get cowed and not speak up and not say anything, or do I look at what my job is? My job is the community advisor, and if I am advising the community to stand up even though they are challenging a politician, then that is my moral dilemma – who

am I working for? Am I working for the community or am I working for the people who pay my salary? When the two are in conflict, what do I do?

And who did you decide you were working for?

Sometimes for one and sometimes for the other. Fundamentally your loyalty must go to your employer but if you feel that that employer or parts of that employer, because an organisation like the ARA is more than just the politicians, it is the whole administration…

Did you ever get any written instructions or was it all just insinuation?

I think it was insinuation, veiled threats.

They were not willing to put it in writing. And, of course, in those days the politicians had a bigger say in staff right through the organisation, rather than the current system which is just to appoint the Chief Executive.

But even then, if the Chief Executive is not sympathetic to community development it is very difficult for those in that field. I think that comes through in local bodies, depending on where the politicians are. Like in Manukau, where the politicians believe in community development, the staff there can go from strength to strength in that field. Where the politician looks with suspicion at the voice of the community you are going to have a dampening down.

Were there any pressures from the community itself? Were there high expectations that you could not deliver at times? Did you ever come across that?

On the whole I think people were sympathetic. They realised that you could only do as much as you could do, so I don't think there were any great demands made. Of course, the thing with community development is that you downplay your own role, you work from the back so you are really empowering people – often they forget that you are working there, supporting them and helping them, and making them think that they are doing it all themselves because you can't be the front leader in community development. That is why other people can say, "But what does she do?" Because so much of it is back-room work or support and administration, and information gathering and handing over, empowering all the time without making people feel that they need that empowering, so it is a subtle way of building people's confidence, of giving them the information, of giving them the confidence to go ahead and do things.

Were there any jealousies that you came across in your career? Even from other community workers?

I think sometimes there were but I don't think I paid very much attention to that. I was probably hurt at the time and then just went on anyway.

What about staff in the ARC, not the politicians but the senior management?

Well, the immediate management that I was accountable to, I got support and help from the immediate superiors. I got good advice when it came to political nous. As far as the higher-ups were concerned, I didn't find that they were empathetic to community development or that they used community development in the way that they should have. But then that also depended on who was in power at the time. There were certain planners who were helpful, but as you went higher up you could not always count on support. There was certainly a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience.

I found the librarian was a fount of knowledge, the Māori advisor was tremendous in being able to teach one about Māoritanga and the Treaty. I had one-to-one tutorials with different staff there, who were immeasurable in assistance and help.

So one of the ways that you dealt with these dilemmas was to ride them to some extent, but just keep going, not knuckle under.

I think sometimes I got really depressed and I might have wept once or twice.

Did it affect your health at all?

I suppose it did sometimes, but what would happen was that I would really get down because this wasn't working and there was no help there, and there were obstacles put in the way, but then I would go to another meeting and people would be enthusiastic and they would say, "Oh, that is a great idea!" Then my spirits would just rise again, so that was just some of the ups and downs… I never lost faith in the whole community development principle.

In the end, why did you leave the ARC?

One, I had reached the age when they said I had to retire. Two, the whole community development section was no longer in community development, and I think with my leaving it ceased to exist because nobody was appointed in my place. In fact, when I looked at who was doing that regional community development thing I saw that the Department of Internal Affairs had, I think, five community advisors who were doing the one job that I had. I used to say to my immediate boss that I never had any money to give away, whereas other local-authority community people all had finances that they could actually give. Certainly, the Department of Internal Affairs had funding to give but when I said to my boss, "I have to go out there and do things and I never have any funding I can give," he said, "Ah, but that is a challenge for you, that you can be effective without giving funding."

This is the same story as in Zambia – you were replaced by five people! Are there any final things you want to say about your career?

Well, just that community development is like a drug – I am addicted to it and I was really touched when the groups and organisations I was involved in asked me not to leave when I retired, but to continue in a voluntary capacity, because they felt I still had something to contribute.

Run through some of the organisations you are still involved with in your retirement.

I am still involved with the Takapuna CAB, PHAB, North Harbour Home Care, YWCA, Auckland District Council of Social Services, North Shore District Council of Social Services, Birkenhead Community Facilities Trust (which I was one of the Trustees of before) and the Birkenhead Budgeting Service. What I have more or less retreated from is the youth work that I was involved in. However, I have been asked to join the board of Age Concern and just lately I was asked to represent Age Concern on the Auckland Council's Injury Prevention Advisory Group. When we had to introduce ourselves I said, "This is what happens to youth workers who go white, they join Age Concern!"

One of the big roles that you have taken on, I think since retirement, has been with Access Radio.

That was really interesting, in that I was actually sent to Access Radio by the ARA – they had applied to the ARA for funding and I was asked by the then Chairman to go to a meeting and come back and report whether the ARA

should give it to them. I went to the meeting and I was absolutely rapt by this multicultural group who were doing Access Radio and I came back with a glowing report that yes, we should fund them. They then sent some politicians who said, "No, we can't fund them." So the ARA never funded them, but they got me and I have been involved with them for 13 years now and, in fact, I am now Chairperson of their management committee and have found that a most rewarding, exciting job.

How many groups have programmes on Access Radio?

I think we have got about 90 groups and there are 40 different languages, and it is a really exciting concept. There is a management committee of about 12 who come from 10 different countries. English is a second language for most of them and the interaction between the different cultures is fantastic and we support each other.

Are there any arguments or conflicts at all?

Conflicts and arguments seem to be mainly within the same group. Say you have a group that is putting on a programme, the people within that group might have disagreements with one another and complain about each other but you very seldom have conflict between two different groups. The Indians do their programmes and the Pakistanis do theirs. There are various religious groups – the Hindus, the Buddhists and Christian sects of all kinds – God has plenty of money for programmes. We stress the importance of community groups, so that people can hear their own language and news from their own group. For instance, the Irish group has an hour-long programme and they have news from Ireland that they get from the internet, they play Irish music, they give birthday greetings, and greetings to people in hospital, and it really is a family programme.

Do you run the Jewish programme?

I do the Jewish programme, Radio Shalom, which runs for half an hour on Sunday mornings. That will be religious if it is a festival – I get a Rabbi to do it – or I interview people in the community or visitors to the community. I have just been doing a series of matriarchs, some of the older ladies in the community talking about their early days, and also academics who are teachers in the various professions. You never run out of ideas. One of the things we are looking at now is migrants and refugees. It is really important that they can have a programme in their own language because it is also a way to get messages across to them. Unfortunately, refugee groups don't have the money and we have to sell air time because it is expensive to keep a radio station going. I met Lianne Dalziel at a function and told her about our problem, that we would really like to have refugees run programmes in their own languages because this is one of the ways you can disseminate information. Particularly to women, as the women are often home with the children and they don't get the opportunity to mix or speak English, and she said to write to her on that and we will see what will happen.

At one stage you were about to lose your frequency, what happened then?

That was a very exciting time. We were to lose our mast, which meant our frequency, and that meant we had to go onto FM but the government had not yet made the decision on who to give what on that FM band – in fact, they still haven't – and we had to get an FM frequency or go off air. Our marketing

manager is particularly good at this, the person who helped us was Phil Warren, the late Phil Warren of ARA, who was, of course, a showman and a leading light in broadcasting, and he got all the mayors together and they wrote supporting letters for us, as a regional radio station, to the government. We also went to the MPs and got their help and also the President of the Labour Party at that time, Bob Harvey, who was also a media person, and used everything we could until they gave us a frequency. In fact, we had a ceremony in Waitākere, in which Marion Hobbs actually handed over the licence to me.

So you are still working on community development in retirement? It doesn't matter whether you get paid or not, it just keeps going.

That is because I love it. I think it keeps one alive, it keeps one up with the play – you know what is happening in the community and you feel that you can still make a difference.

[END]

David Haigh has a long career in community development. He is the former head of CD for the Auckland Regional Authority and has recently retired from Unitec New Zealand, where he taught in social practice, sociology and not-for-profit management. David is active in Auckland Action Against Poverty.