

ISSUE OVERVIEW

This Craft stays in the family. Catherine Smith, a sister of one of our editors, Jim Prentice, gives a very 'hands on' description of environmental activism in her adopted home in New Zealand. Activism that is sustainable – something that people sometimes forget in the heady and 'hearty' imperatives of today's world, where sustainability is out there, for others to embrace. Catherine's concerns range from community projects, to government lobbying, to global perspectives and back to educating family –and needless to say being educated herself in the process. There is so much to learn about practices for a better greener, more just, more democratic world and above all, one more hopeful. Craft magazine is fortunate to have Catherine's view and welcomes others as always.

At the community level Catherine talks about restorations of gullies, long cleared landscapes, and new projects to repair some of the damage that New Zealanders have visited on their natural world.

At the personal level she describes family activities and outlooks that foster the interests of subsequent generations - knowing we have thrown them down a gauntlet we surely cannot envy.

Catherine has a unique account of her stint as President of the Veterinary Association in New Zealand. Here she was thrown to the winds of interests and lobby groups and intense and highly charged outsiders and found a safe landing. The animal liberationists threatened her and the legislative changes under negotiation for Animal Welfare. Compromise, its risks and complications, she makes apparent.

She reflects broadly on politics from the grass roots activist stage. Here Catherine searches for the appropriate pressure points of influence on regional and local bodies in the broader political context of a better represented constituency. These points make influence more possible thanks to electoral rules in New Zealand.

She also gives us insight into the evident multiculturalism operating in New Zealand especially as it relates between Maoris and Pakehas - the more recent arrivals. This reminds us that environmentalism must embrace broad views of land and culture too. It is our values that prepare the ground for environmental devastation, Catherine tells us. Our loss of connection to deeper realities is something central that winds through this account. Her painting and her and Barry's (her husband) photography are living proof enough of what they think is worthwhile in their lives. So too is this Craft. I hope you share that in lots of ways.