

CHAPTER 4

SEX, BOOZE & ROCK and ROLL

February 1969 saw me commence employment in the Dargaville Magistrate's Court as a clerk

I would have liked to have gone on at school for another year and completed my University Entrance but I was restless and employment became available so I went for it

The 'meeting' in Dargaville was divided into 'good boys' and 'bad boys'. We called the good boys 'spiros' (a derivative of 'spiritual'). The spiros were intent on entrenching themselves in the EB system – they got all the perks: – invitations to meetings, preaching in the gospel halls and sending the 'drafts' off to the various recipients around the globe

The 'bad boys' crept out of doors in the dead of night to attend movies at the local cinema, parties where alcohol was drunk and Beatle records played in equal abandon, Saturday afternoons in the pub or the billiard hall and so on (I am going to gloss over the illicit sexual romps as being outside the scope of this work!!)

The 'good boys' – Russell Simpkin, Lewis Simpkin, Donald Campion, Roderick Campion (aka Fatima Rotunda), Murray Boakes, Phillip Doouss and Vernon suckling

The 'bad boys' – Noel Suckling, Maurice Boakes, Brian Windust, Peter Windust, Neville Waller, Clifford Rountree and Andrew Cottle

(Of the seven bad boys, three were to be diagnosed with mental illness – the other 4 had IQ's less than the Black Caps national average on a one-dayer!!)

I was the youngest of the seven. Four were 'withdrawn from' by 1971 and the remaining two by 1972

!970 to 1972 was a time of much corruption in the exclusive Brethren movement both among the leadership and the rank and file. Wife-swapping was common among trendy couples

Groups of young people would congregate in various centres and there would be lots of drinking, loud music and sexual coupling. I heard of one family who regularly showered together and the father would have intercourse with the young daughters – centres notorious for this conduct were Whangarei, Auckland, Hamilton, Gisborne, Palmerston North and Christchurch – the leadership in these centres was similarly hackneyed and dysfunctional (more so than usual)

The Aberdeen incident saw 'a purge started that the Lord would stop in his own time'

Many who opposed James Taylor Jnr were 'purged out' especially in the UK and USA – Australasia, once again protected by geographical remoteness, escaped these widespread losses

The leadership was taken over by one James Symington from Neche, North Dakota, USA. He was a classically simple 'farmer Brown' type who thought anorexia nervosa was a form of swine flu. When asked about a 'young sister' in Palmerston North who DID suffer from anorexia nervosa – his response: 'she needs a good thrashing'

He was a man of severe brutality. He took personal delight in purging professionals and families who he perceived to have had a more privileged childhood than he had had. I remember how dentist/maxillagist Mr Powell of Hamilton was treated – young men trod all over the white carpet with muddy boots and humiliated him and his sick wife (she was a lovely lady) – the Symington regime was the epitome of brutality, injustice and cruelty

It amazed me in 'the review' in 2003 that those involved in the 'putting right' just didn't have the courage to denounce the Symington era for exactly what it was – no wonder they welcomed the Hales family back for more of the same. No wonder they did very little 'putting right'.

James Symington took three-day meetings in Auckland towards the end of 1972. I had a bright red Fiat sports car and travelled down to Auckland in this. A number of young men dodged a number of the meetings and spent the afternoon in a strip joint. I travelled back to Whangarei on the Sunday evening with several other young people and we attended a wild party

A husband and wife were in the bedroom organising a wife swap – the husband was having intercourse with another man's wife – the wife didn't have anyone so came over to me and we undressed and had sex on the double bed. This scenario was typical of what was happening around the country

Then the purges started – dozens confessed to sexual impropriety and were withdrawn from. Quite a number had been visiting escort agencies and massage parlours – there were cases of bondage and discipline and bestiality – the list grew from B&B to B&D to GWB – several cases of tax evasion etc etc were thrown in for good measure- they all ended up OUT!!!

I remember they asked Symington about a family in Whangarei – his response: 'For goodness sake get rid of them'. Did this get remembered in 'the review'?

When the smoke cleared early 1973, all my friends had gone – not one was left.

I did what we always did in the EB system: - Just ignored the fact that a lot of friends and family were missing and got on with it

I immersed myself in my growing library and began to study – the music was over (Not really – I kept my big stereo and all my records – I told my parents that 'when it had to go – I would go' – my mother used to love to come down to my room and listen to 'A Walk in the Black Forest')