

Findhorn aiming for paradise

Findhorn, a community in Scotland on the shore of the North Sea, has increasingly captured people's imagination in recent years. In a talk sponsored by the campus Baha'i group, Hayden Roberts last Thursday evening explained that there is more to Findhorn than the forty-pound cabbages and six-foot flowers commonly associated with this unusual community.

Hayden Roberts, who works with the department of extension on campus, spent two weeks last September living in Findhorn

while working towards a Ph.D in community development.

According to Roberts, those living in Findhorn see it as a "new age community" and as a centre of the "new consciousness." The new age, as these people see it, is based on values of harmony, love, co-operation and unity rather than conflict and competition. "They are striving to develop a universal cosmic consciousness."

Findhorn began in 1962 when Peter and Eileen Caddy settled in this desolate area north of Edinburgh, Roberts explained. Eileen Caddy, whom Roberts referred to as a "sensitive,"

received intimations that both she and Peter Caddy were to stay at Findhorn and grow a garden. They were soon joined by Dorothy MacLean, also a "sensitive."

By "tuning into the forces of nature" and talking to their plants, these three were able to grow enormous vegetables in the sand despite the harsh North Sea climate. Roberts showed slides of the lush garden growth and contrasted this with the scenes of the sand dunes that surrounded Findhorn. Now, after years of cultivation, the Findhorn garden is rich in compost.

Since 1962, Findhorn has grown into a community of 250 people. According to Roberts, their activities now include publishing, selling crafts, running a local store - they have even

purchased a local hotel. Approximately thirty visitors a week pay 45 pounds a week each to experience living at Findhorn. Other programs are also conducted for outsiders by the community.

Members of Findhorn include doctors, lawyers and other professionals who have given up lucrative practices to live at Findhorn.

Roberts described life at Findhorn as secular. "It includes people of all faiths and no faith," he said. "There is no dogmatic requirement. Some of them are not even in the spiritual bag."

"Findhorn is not a place of contemplation," Roberts said, "but a place of balance between meditation and working. The emphasis is to be and not to philosophize."

There are few rules and quite open, Roberts said. Findhorn is not a commune. Private property is allowed. Those living at Findhorn are expected to join in the daily life of the community and are expected to attend "Sanctuary"

Roberts described sanctuary as a daily meditation where members gather at eight o'clock every morning to join hands and meditate on the life of the community. Everyone eats communally although they are free to have meals wherever they prefer. Smoking and drinking are limited to member's quarters.

According to Roberts, Findhorn's founders expect to grow into a "city of light" with a population of 50,000 people. Their purpose is to demonstrate that the values of the "new consciousness" are practical and to provide solutions to modern problems.

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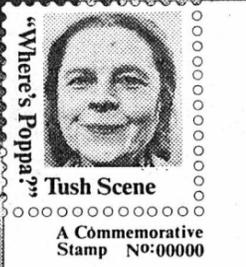
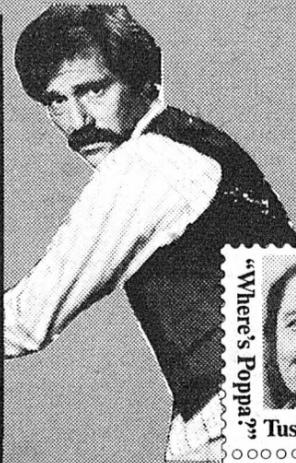
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