



Convergence Newsletter

Nr 59 — January 2021

Welcome to this Convergence newsletter! This newsletter has an exciting announcement: there'll be gatherings near Akaroa in Feb and at Gricklegrass in March. We're looking forward to them.

The newsletter also has info about the work we need to keep doing at Journey's End, and several excellent retreats offered by convergees, to feed your spirit. And even though Convergence itself didn't go ahead this year, many convergees gathered in small groups. These lead to wonderful moments of connection, and you can read about them here.

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Convergence notices and newsletter

There is an email list for Convergence notices, which are sent out more often than the newsletter, and are better for news that can't wait. You can get more information and opt in here: <http://convergence.org.nz/notices>

Send notices you would like to have included to mynotice@convergence.org.nz

To receive the newsletters ask info@convergence.net.nz for it (note the .org/.net difference!).

The newsletter is produced approximately 4–5 times a year (e.g. before working bees). Please send contributions for the next newsletter to mynotice@convergence.org.nz. Upcoming newsletters and deadlines are announced on the notices list.

Convergence gatherings

The weekend at Rob Totty's place near Oxford just after Convergence would have finished has almost become a tradition. It was hot, so many of us went for a swim in the river with its very good swimming holes. Three hardier ones even went upriver, to float down again. It was a bit shallow in places, but a posterior scratch was worth the fun! The weekend was well attended and the food was very good, as always. Thanks Rob for having us!

Without Convergence this summer a few of us voiced the idea to have more of these gatherings during the year, to keep that Convergence energy and community spirit up. And it's happening! The next gathering is at a beach near Akaroa in late February. And then there's another in late March. Free full moon! Details further on.

Do you like the idea of more weekend gatherings during the year? Or maybe an afternoon/evening? Would you like to host one? Send the details and it'll be in the next newsletter.

What's happening at Journey's End

Even though the main gathering didn't go ahead, Convergence still had responsibilities at Journey's End—native trees to care for and a shed to build! So, a great group of volunteers spent a weekend out there in early December, building (literally!) on the work done earlier in the year. We ended up in two teams, one focused on the shed and one on the trees.

The shed is to store Convergence firewood and gear and needs to be big, solid and lockable. The shed group measured, sawed and screwed (not up), and by the end of the weekend, they had the frame finished for an extremely sturdy shed. It still needs a roof and walls.

The tree team cared for the trees we planted in June and discovered that the grass and blackberry had adored the spring rain. First find your trees! We spent hours and hours chopping back weeds, and found that most of the young trees have thrived too. To make this job easier next time, we rounded up dozens of old car tyres from all over the campsite and laid them round trees, with extra mulch too. Several of us were out again in mid-January and did another round of tree care, and were amazed at how much the blackberry had grown in just a month. Some time before winter—we're not yet sure when—Convergence needs to do this again.

The shed needs more work too—roof, floor, walls, doors, and there'll be working bees until the shed is finished.

After that there probably won't be any more working bees so take the opportunity to go out to Journey's End while you can, especially when it's free. Dates and details will be announced on the Notices email list and posted on convergence.org.nz.

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Gathering near Akaroa

27+28 February 2021 (full moon weekend)

You're invited to a Convergence style gathering at David's family's lovely holiday home right by the sea in Lushingtons Bay, near Akaroa. This'll be a great chance to keep the Convergence energy going, and catch up with convergees in a beautiful peaceful place.

When? Saturday 27 lunch to Sunday 28 February 2021.

Where? Lushingtons Bay Rd.

Food? Bring your breakfast, and food to share for lunches, dinner.

Bring? Repellent, sun protection. Deck chair. Personal stuff + bedding.

Staying over? 5 bedrooms, room for campervans, and flat lawn for tents.

Activities? Swimming and boating! Walking, talking, connecting, sharing, eating, converging... Safe sandy beach for swimming. Deep sea caves to explore. Small yachts, kayaks, other watercraft available. Spectacular walking tracks to other bays.

Stay longer? Possibility to arrive Friday evening and leave Monday morning.

More questions? Contact David on 021 670 451.

Getting there: <https://osm.org/go/uonvyujQ?m=>

Turn off onto Takamatua Bay Rd before Akaroa, then take Quail Crescent, then Kingfisher Rd, then Kotare Lane, then Lushingtons Bay Rd—2km along to the end, blue house on the right.

— David

Gathering at Gricklegrass—Party!

27+28 March 2021 (full moon weekend)

The weekend of 27--28 March we are hosting a Convergence get together/Pot-Luck dinner/party at Gricklegrass from noon Saturday to noon Sunday. It's the full moon night. BYO vegetarian food, musical instruments, drinkies, and a relaxed attitude. There will be pot-luck meals, fire baths, music, laughter, places to camp or park up, even room to sleep inside if you book ahead fast (there's limited space) ☺.

Getting there: <https://osm.org/go/uow85198-?m=>

Gricklegrass, 109 Woodside Road, Oxford

— Gordyn

Newsletter contributions and feedback

We really appreciate the feedback we get from people about the newsletters. Thank you! Your support and encouragement helps, and we're interested to hear what people think. Please send feedback and suggestions to mynotice@convergence.org.nz, we won't see it in any other place. Many thanks!

We love to get write-ups of past events and musings on Convergence. Just email us. And if there's something in your region that'll interest convergees, please let us know too. Please refer to the bottom of the front page of every newsletter.

Every now and then someone asks us why something was or wasn't put into the newsletter. The answer is that we put in everything people send us, as long as it's related to the Convergence ethos, which is the established and good policy already in place before us. It's not written policy, but if it's not OK at Convergence or endangers people, it's not OK here, and we'll probably leave out workshops etc. that clash with Convergence events, but feel free to send them in anyway.

In the time we've been making this newsletter, we've published everything we've been sent, except a few already-finished events and one clashing workshop.

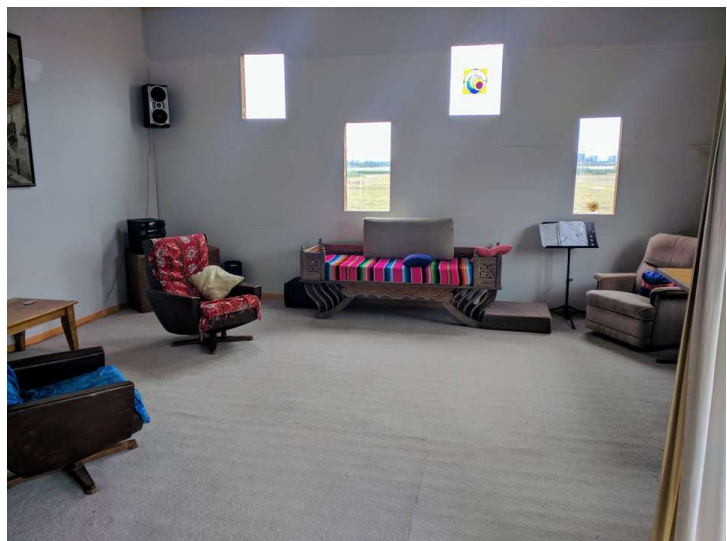
Sometimes it looks like we're providing a lot of the content, but that's only because you haven't taken up the opportunity for co-creation yet... 😊

New Years Celebration in Motueka

The gathering at River and Sarah's place near Motueka 28 December – 3 January was amazing. Nestled at the base of a hill and surrounded by Sarah's immaculate flower gardens with numerous grassy camping spots, the main house is paired with a substantial shed. This provides a second kitchen, toilet and bathroom, two extra bedrooms, a lounge and an indoor area large enough to have a brazier in. If more than the 20–25 convergees who were there had arrived there was an extra paddock for camping, and a port-a-loo had been laid on.

The weather was pretty good too—cloud morning and evening, with sunny warm days. Only a little overnight rain one evening. One or two sandflies but no mozzies.

Circles are River's passion, and almost every morning (except for a trip to the Mt Arthur area on New Year's Day) there would be a morning circle. With no morning meetings or workshops to attend, the circle would just go on until it finished. There was no expectation to attend either.



In the afternoon there could be clay modelling or glass painting, and an afternoon women's circle in the shed. One afternoon there was a men's circle under a tree. Often there would be an evening circle around a brazier in the shed as well.

New Year's Eve was celebrated with sharing, poetry, old programmes and new hopes going up in the brazier, and dancing until midnight. The shed was big enough for two music zones plus a chill out area around the brazier.

The property is a 10 minute drive into Motueka for those craving shopping or coffee. Some people spent the afternoons at Little Kaiteriteri beach, other nearby locations or exploring the Great Taste trail by bike, hanging out on the porch talking or reading. Jonny Bear led a Vision Quest on the last evening. There was no real programme, no hassles, and plenty of time to work things through and have those deep conversations.

I had a healing, relaxing, low hassle, social time on a well set up property at a gathering that felt very allowing. Much gratitude to River, Sarah and all those who participated.

— M

About 25 showed up for this event with 10 coming all the way from Christchurch and beyond! It was certainly nice for us to not have to do the reverse journey this year and what a pleasure to have such a variety of great people attending. All our spare bedrooms (5) had people in them and there was a variety of other accommodation ranging from a house truck through to small tents. The weather was great and our garden was flowering away, all combining to create a pleasant experience.

Sarah announced at the beginning that we were not “in charge” and other people had to decide what would happen. This went very well and activities such as sharing circles; shared meals; yoga; bike riding; sea swimming; clay sculpture; glass painting; scrabble; walking up to Mt Arthur hut as a group, and even palm readings by Arthur (not related!). Along with women and men’s circles, another innovation was a men’s get together with whisky! This pushed the odd button but it lead on to an evening around the brazier (inside our HUGE shed) where each person could speak about whatever passions, beliefs etc they had, with no interruptions. Most people really enjoyed this and it sure opened things up.

All in all, a wonderful experience with calls for “more please!”

— River

New Years Celebration in Christchurch

Without Convergence there was (and is) a real opportunity to do something different this summer and shake off that routine. Leaving 2020 behind called for major celebration though, so we decided to host a 24 hour gathering straddling the change of year. Food and company were very good, and it provided the connections I value so much about Convergence. I felt good about having a social gathering without a glass of wine too. The sharing circle was a highlight for me, with a strong feeling of everyone merging into the space and sharing deeply.

Several people made a beautiful spiral on the lawn, using the bricks from the chimney that was shaken back into bricks almost 10 years ago. We walked the spiral at sunset, and again at midnight. Sitting around a table for breakfast, we shared our 20+ year waffle tradition: the 5 hearts making up each waffle go to 5 different people, so everyone gets to eat a little bit often. There’s at least as much talking as eating.



I was left with a euphoric high and lots of energy, and carried that with me for quite some time.

— V

The “Conspiracy Circle”

I love hanging out with Convergence people. They strike me as being some of the most open, curious, dedicated, fearless, people around. Most of them are working on becoming better versions of themselves, and many are actively working on or with the less lovable parts of themselves.

So over the New Year at a Motueka gathering of some 20–25 people who have attended Convergence, some of the men sat around one evening and had a whisky together. Apparently the conversation drifted onto conspiracy theories, voices became raised and some people were triggered.

The upshot is that somebody called another circle to address this, but this was not your normal circle. Standard circle culture is that everybody gathers and agrees to confidentiality. You sit in a circle so that everybody can see each other. People talk from their personal experience of their lives using “I” statements. The person who picks up the “talking stick” has the floor, speaking uninterrupted until they are finished and put the stick down, unless they have agreed to feedback, and even then it is not given until the speaker indicates readiness.

The Conspiracy Circle, if I can call it that, was run a little bit differently. Still with most of the guidelines, and people still shared “I” statements, but we could share about the wider picture – with nothing off limits. Politics, health, religious or spiritual beliefs, conspiracies – whatever we wanted to share. A lot of this went “I believe...,” or “I understand...,” or “I feel...,” or “I experienced...,” or “From my work I know...,” or “My education means...,”

There was also an additional rule which meant that the following speaker couldn’t talk directly about what the previous speaker had said.

The thing which surprised almost everyone, including myself, is that it worked! There was a respectful sharing during which everybody was listened to and heard. No raised voices, no horrid names called, no anger or rage against the other. We learned something new and interesting about each other, we learned where people were coming from and how that formed what they believe. In the end we all felt closer to each other and more connected as a group, and perhaps most importantly, everyone heard both sides of the story.

There are several caveats around using this technique. The first is that most participants need to have some experience of circle work and an understanding of circle culture, knowing what makes a circle work.

Secondly, the people involved need some maturity and self-control. Being able to sit with being triggered, not immediately jumping up to make a point, actually listening to things that they disagree with, not trying to win at any cost, not immediately playing the victim, owning their feelings, etc.

Thirdly, I believe that the circle could only work where there is personal interaction. Social media like Facebook strips conversations of their humanity, and creates the distancing that allows othering. They reward the loudest and most aggressive voices and encourage extreme positions. Video media which allow immediate personal interactions could support this circle.

The good news is that with the right group and the right intention, a real healing can occur around very contentious subjects—the very kind that are forbidden at many a dinner table, even the kind that can tear a community apart.

— M

New Years Celebration at Journey's End — Converging

Journey's End holds a magic at any time of the year, however it's the people that make the place. As I initially made my way down the steep rocky road and through the gates my excitement was slightly subdued as it became obvious the masses of tents and the usual few hundred magic makers were not present. Until I saw the first person and felt the excitement bubble up and return immediately.



On reflection the event ended up being very similar although completely different. The pace was slower but included all the things I had come to love at previous Convergence events. The quality of the moments were all consistently deep as I had even more time for the people around me and most importantly time for myself. To sum up my experience I have made a poem that may also reflect some of the feeling of the other wonderful people that embraced the land and each other at Journeys End this year.

Some things are the same,
Other things so different that is so plain,
What remains is the land, the sauna, the sand,
I witness the trees so much more,
Sacred Space created in the absence of the usual main marque,
More trees appear to parade themselves,
I notice more shades of green
The sounds of birds seductive and sweet
Instead of seeing the structures,
Or hearing the masses of people meet
Similar circles, lots of play,
paper aeroplanes, necklaces made and gifted by a princess
music and heart felt connection,
cacao and collaboration,
dancing and dreaming, drumming and strumming,
Not everyone's here but still loving feelings and bliss
Still connecting the same but more time for stillness
Converging in a way like no other but it was a 10
Kia kaha all to all our sisters and brothers I'll see you again

— Stephen

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Alive as Earth

11–14 February 2021, Tui Treefield, Golden Bay

Inna & Col are organising Alive as Earth—a 4-day summer gathering in the Tui Treefield.

It is the evolution of Tui DeLight, simplifying into Experianza and now taking more focus towards bringing together people who want to create positive change for humanity and the Earth in this time.

We would love you to be part of it!

It's a co-creative format of held vs open, with selected themed workshops in the mornings (with some popular well-known celebrities ;-)) oh... who might those be...?) and open-space in the afternoon for networking, fun and play (incl beach time and sauna), before coming together as one community for a shared dinner and evening program around the fire.

Check it out: www.innaevolution.com/alive-as-earth

What a great opportunity to travel to Golden Bay and get together.



Expand the Box with Open Floor Movement

17–21 February 2021, Sanctuary, Fernside, one hour from Christchurch

So many workshops and trainings offer that this is the real deal, the event that will change your life, and at the end of the day, and I am sure you know that as well, nobody can change your life of course, except YOU and the clarity that you really want to change.

What this training can offer you is tools for how to do that and how to sustain a more alive, courageous, dangerous, wild life with more intimacy, rule breaking freedom.



You will have to really want it, and you get the most out of it if you grab it by the horns and run with it and create.

Please give me a call if you are curious and want to know more, as it is not something that can easily be explained with posters and advertisements.

Here is more info if you are curious enough to find out more:

www.embodiedfreedom.co.nz/expandthebox

Sybille Biedert

Open Floor Teacher, Possibility Manager

Edge Worker, Group Facilitator

sybille@embodiedfreedom.co.nz

www.embodiedfreedom.co.nz

Ph: 021 040 2261

Golden Bay, Aotearoa/NZ



4th year of Embodied Intimacy

Wed 24 – Sun 28 March 2021, Tui Events Park, Golden Bay

The 2021 Men's and Women's Summer Embodied Freedom Movement Retreat is happening. You experience a range of different modalities.

The event weaves together conscious dance, individual, partner and group exercises and creative writing. All designed to connect you with your body, your feelings, your creativity and your presence. All while having a lot of fun DANCING and creating community.

The active morning sessions are balanced by nurturing afternoons. We invite you to pause, and nurture yourself. Enjoy daily restorative yoga, nourishing food, soak in hot tubs and saunas. At a beautiful outdoor venue next to the Abel Tasman Park, in Tui Events Park, Golden Bay.

More info, videos & photos:

www.embodiedfreedom.co.nz/summerretreat

Early bird pricing until 1 February. There are a few places left.

Sybille Biedert

(See contact details above)

