Freerangin' on -----' Freerange Spirit and Values' – Pt 1
An Exploration

The 'Freerange Living' series aims to interest and support those , possibly/ probably maybe a minority, who seek to lead a relatively independent life of 'natural development' along the lines the developmental psychologists have indicated, following the pattern of the business guru Charles Handy's 'honourable individualism', thinking and deciding for themselves and working out a multi-dimensional range of the values important to them, whilst at the same time 'naturally' respecting the views and values of others.

Such 'freerange' people may well also seek to contribute their own productivity also from their own internal drives and motivations, as well as being 'externally directed' by current cultural and/or work situations.

Pre-amble--------the 'freerange' mode

'Freerange' is perhaps usually most associated with systems of animal, food production which have been developed with the purpose of allowing the animals involved as 'natural' a life as possible, giving them reasonable opportunity to practice 'natural' behaviours and stemming from the feeling from some –possibly quite a few-?- that man should be more the 'responsible care-takers' of captive animals rather than their exploiters.

With profit-making seemingly having become such a strong business objective in recent times, then leading to, for instance, large-scale production units benefiting from 'economies of scale' thereby seeking high profit levels, the animal production scene could be said to have become almost schizophrenic, ranging from the aforesaid intensive generally indoor large-scale production units to generally outdoor 'natural-mimicking' smaller units.

Presumably such a range could be applied to the human animal in that intensive, 'mass' (i.e. living to society generated mores and objectives) life could then compare with living life more individually-independent, generating internal values and objectives (including social), living the more self-responsible 'freerange' style of life, the heart of which is bound within the rights of the individual enshrined in the constitutions of the so called 'free-world' cultures , but maybe now too under some degree of threat - eg. the current proposal from government in the UK to reduce individual rights by buying them off, and the rising tide of larger-scale organisational influence - ?

'No man is an island', it's said, and maybe 'individualism' could be seen as a cultural threat by some. Whilst this might hold for any sort of 'out-for-self' self-centered variety of individualism which some have commented has arisen in recent times, psychologists have predicted it not to be the case for what the UK business guru Charles Handy called 'honourable individualism', implying individual fuller development through the natural development phases as outlined by psychologists such as Maslow. Such a process, it's argued, would then produce 'developed' people with, for instance, natural levels of sociability, fellow-feeling and compassion. Such 'natural', multi-dimensional (see 'self-actualised' man later) development could then presumably merit the label 'freerange' - ?

'Free-range' living probably implies the individual having their own desire, their own will, their own drive to live their lives as much as possible their own, natural way, which according to the developmental psychologists includes satisfying social needs, akin maybe to the traditional American independence outlook, and not becoming over enculturised by the prevailing culture of the time. Finding what is 'their own natural way' could well be part of the deal, part of the freerange 'life exploration', to then enjoy over time the fruits of their efforts – the satisfaction, for instance stemming from the achievement of gaining, say, a formidable array of skills and experience through fuller self-development. Maybe the need to stretch and challenge the self to gain such fuller development, is in itself a 'natural need', leading to the fuller, so-called 'fuller-developed' person, as again psychologists suggest (see later – 'self-actualised' man) .

Some, though, have suggested that pitfalls exist, which can 'barrier' such freerange development, such as the modern materialistic so-called 'disease' of 'affluenza', presumably then potentially causing life to be over-comfortable and therefore lacking in real challenge, and/or leading to an over-stimulation to chase solely materialistic goals. Such

'pitfalls' could then presumably be amplified by the fact that the modern age has been described in terms of 'media bombardment', given the unprecedented modern plethora of media sources and their considerable commercial and financial conditioning potential effects.   Might, though, such a potentially strong conditioning environment give added impetus to the need for individual quest and striving, if 'wrong roads' and dead-ends are to be ultimately avoided - ? The well-known UK business guru, Charles Handy, called the process of 'natural development' by the term 'honourable individualism', presumably to distinguish it from any purely 'out for self' variety, and to indicate that such a 'fuller' version needed to include need areas beyond the self, such as social contribution, social recognition and social responsibility, again as psychologists suggest.

Not everyone might be willing to take what the psychologist M. Scott Peck called 'the harder road', and of course in a free country, it's the individual's call. Hopefully this work might, though, offer some 'succour and support' for those that do decide to take on the challenge of developing their own fuller values and exercise their own self-responsible decision-making, aiming to live life in a 'freerange' mode.

Sections:

Intro

Intro

Today it's been said, a fast-paced, fast flux, high tech, 'supercharged' consumer culture exists, which appears to have a powerful dynamic all of its own. Large players such as, say, large-scale commercial organisations and hands-on central control governments seem to have proliferated under such conditions, which can sometimes seem conducive to the promotion of the 'large' and 'powerful' interests, and a 'big is beautiful' theme - the considerable emphasis placed these days on 'economies of scale' could for instance point to this. Maybe Fritz Schumacher had a point in his seminal 'Small is Beautiful' work, when he said that due to the proliferation of 'giantism' in modern society, it was sometimes necessary to insist on the virtues of 'smallism'.

What, though, of the microcosm 'unpowerful' organism that is the individual, who by default could then be less empowered in such a power-driven environment? It may not be perhaps too surprising if individuals feel small, unvalued and insignificant – research in the UK, for instance, revealed that a majority of employees felt un-valued and un-cared for. The individual is of course, small, and from the 'large' perspective, insignificant and relatively powerless, being such a micro-small organism , and in need of support from either by banding together - unions seem now though to becoming under threat once more – or from government, which could be likened to the conductor of an orchestra, checking the large noise sources, but also facilitating and encouraging the small and delicate sources, if the final result is to be overall 'harmony and beauty', with everyone getting 'a fair crack of the whip', so to speak.

 In very recent times, there could be indications here in the UK that the new coalition government have recognised the need for some 're-balancing' in favour of the 'small', be it small firm or the individual, with their 'Big Society' initiative, and other actions such as appointing a referee to rule the giant-ist supermarket sector.   Opposition politicians appear also to have now also recognised potential 'imbalance', now in similar vein calling themselves the 'One Nation' party. How effective, though, might such measures prove to be – some see them as being mainly of the 'cosmetic' variety - the 'proof of the pudding' will likely be in the eating - ?

Many individuals, though, feeling in the current 'large-ist' culture that they're not getting 'over-exposure', might then wish to exercise their self-responsibility to do what they can to maintain their own set of values, as many indeed do, and this could be a way of describing 'freeranging' , which can be about re-asserting, if only to oneself, if that's all that's possible, the right to individual self-determination and freespeech.

 Freeranging is also presumably about aiming to create the conditions, such as time and space, needed to give that fuller and potentially more fulfilling free-range life. Many have reportedly 'down-shifted' to get themselves a life better suited to their own work/life balance needs, having, as freerangers, identified these for themselves, after presumably finding the pace and narrow focus of modern life perhaps somewhat inhibiting. Maybe a society of fuller-developed internally motivated 'freerange' individuals could be seen as one which could be potentially productive and impressive - ?

Cultures, though, are by their nature impermanent and transitory, so maybe the words of someone living 2,500 years ago could still have some relevance – those of Lao-Tsu, who's original words have been 'modernised' in John Heider's   The Tao of Leadership *:*

 ' a society based on materialism and the conquest of nature works to overcome these (natural) cycles. If some is good, more is better, and a glut seems the best. At the same time, those with little get less. Wise leadership, though, follows the natural order of events-------'

Lao-tsu appears to be maybe saying that man 'goes just his own way at his own peril', and that maybe real freedom and fulfillment comes with a 'willing adoption' of natural universal 'law', often in the east referred to as 'Tao', referring to a natural, universal force that governs 'how things happen' to achieve 'balance' and equanimity in the world. The self, understanding and accepting 'Tao' as the 'universal force', is then becomes willingly subject to larger forces and influences, inspiring in the individual a sense of awe and reverence. Such a situation maybe helps to explain why many individuals are drawn towards, and have a feeling for nature and 'the natural' - ?

Maybe there is also a reasonably urgent need to question and quest to get in touch with this 'lost' universal energy, just as Prince Charles was suggesting recently on UK TV? ('Countryfile', March '13). It's possible that many, as individuals, feel such a need, and might it in fact be linked to the freeranger need and desire to quest for themselves - ?

This work, then, is in support of the notion of the self-responsible, self-motivated, productive individual that is the freeranger. As only one author's been involved (although grateful thanks to others' efforts via the live case-studies), it's only one person's take, who although able to claim some 'professional' credentials in the areas of business planning and appraisal, and self-reliant living, remains firmly in the 'enthusiastic amateur' category .

Freerangin' on-------------'The Farther Ranges'

'Splendour, splendour--- ------everywhere'   (after Betjamin)

One Eastern-origined mystic writes:
'All of creation is in celebration and joy-------except man'

Even though the above might seem a bit of a 'far out' type of thought, perhaps it may not not necessarily be totally far-fetched - ? The notion that collective man has a certain 'separateness' (as exemplified modernly by man the individual being seen as a 'lone economic unit' with a therefore correspondingly low social element - ?), has been around awhile, as has an idea that there's a need to 'get back to the garden'.

The notion, for instance, that the universe and the world operate as self-regulatory entities aiming towards 'the harmonic whole' , as the Eastern concept of 'Tao' predicts, has seemed to have gained more credence in recent times. Connectedness to a universal-type health energy source seems to feature often from people who report 'enlightenment' type, transcendental 'out-of-self' experiences, which may give experiential evidence to the possibility of such 'natural' phenomena. Some psychologists (eg. Maslow), for instance, reported finding in their researches amongst 'mentally healthy' people, many incidences of 'peak' experiences of intense joy and wellbeing.

Modern life, though, can seem at times to major more on crime and violence, as the number of related TV programmes might indicate. The scale of terrorist and war violence within the world could be taken as an indication that harmony might currently be a bit of a 'far-off goal', and various writers – Pirsig, Fromm, Schumacher et al – have pointed to lack of balance and harmony in life. Maybe there is a need to take up Schumacher's advice and have a 'stop and think' -? Schumacher proposed that because the world was leaning towards 'big', that therefore it was necessary to highlight 'small' more. He might perhaps now say also that because the world is proceeding at such a speed, it's now necessary to 'stop and think' (i.e. part of a 'natural re-balancing' in itself - ?)

Ah well--, maybe if the world can't/won't do it, individuals can--- and do – undoubtedly many experienced and developed people lead 'balanced' lives, making their own judgements.

Various--------
Being able to pick and choose what you do, and when you do it, as is the case here on the eco organic micro-holding ('small smallholding') is a kind of freedom, and one which funnily enough, can lead to more work achieved, rather than less. Perhaps more employers should think of trying it, innovatively going against any 'super employee control' trend - ?
This morning was a 'tatting about' morning on the super-miniscule enterprise here that is the eco micro-holding. Wandering down to Pip's paddock, not far, to admire and digest the greenery at this time of year (late spring) in all its multifarious splendour – crikey, it can fair knock the breath away. The early-production greenhouse put there last season needed water, then done after several visits to the water tub there with the watering can. Satisfying work too, nurturing plants which are looking good as a result of previous nurturings.

Getting into it now after the gentle start, more satisfaction from weeding half the onion bed, the other half done a couple of days ago, too big a job to do all at once - got to try to avoid the dreaded work ennui. That looks good now – nothing like seeing something for your labours. Mostly, fortunately, 'labours of love' rather than work labours – how could they not be when so much satisfaction ensues from them? Moving on, after a refreshing cup of tea, now it's to

sticking some of the beans, becoming aware of the quiet, the peace, and the sheer pleasure of being able to spend time and activity in it, with just birdsong assailing the ears.

Now it's time for a spot of heavier work – clearing a patch of over-grown alfalfa green manure which should have by rights been dug in by now. Ah well, perfection's a far-off goal – and anyway, it'll have done its job for the soil and the herbage won't be wasted- good material for the fertiliser plant – the compost heap. A few more jobs – pleasurable work – and, look at that – time for lunch, better just nip down and get lettuce, fresh carrots and radish to make a bit of fresh salad- can't be too bad - ?.

Having a ball --- ?
In the west, and seemingly ever more so in the east, there seems currently to be a built-up considerable head of steam for people to follow the material path in life. Wealth, power, money, competitive edge, fame, celebrity all seem to be the cornerstones of the seemingly USA-originated western 'success-city' cultural idyll. Some, though, including possibly some older folk, might argue that such a 'shiny' version of 'success' could be a touch superficial and one-dimensional, the accent on 'out-for-self' 'money stacking' then by default leaving little room or emphasis for other important values, such as , say, 'good community', and that, for instance, the recent huge financial hiatus is a natural result of such a high self-focus 'imbalanced' culture.

Others might point to the fact that having 'escaped' from the control of 'parental -style power' in the form of religion and become on balance in the west, a secular culture, there has then occurred a period of over self-indulgence. Some have called it the new disease, 'affluenza', and pointed out that any self-criticality is unlikely to occur whilst 'heavily consuming', even though it may be suspected that over-indulgence may lead later to ill-health.
Such a trend, considering the context, may have been inevitable, contributing significantly to 'borrow, borrow, borrow' and 'spend, spend, spend' patterns, also fuelled by heavy social media conditioning, and contributing to considerable and at times unviable, personal debt, leading to some losing their homes. Hard, maybe, for the individual, especially those without wider experience, to resist, when everyone around seems to be getting so many 'goodies', and hard to resist too when the reckoning of the 'spend now, pay later' mind-set becomes a reality.

One self-preservation route maybe to become 'financial freerangers', as many of course do, managing their own affairs- knowing what they can and can't do, can and can't afford, what they want to afford and not afford, and exercising their own self-discipline, at the same time resisting the blandishments of the 'commercial sirens'. For those who resist, say, significant debt levels, maybe then living in smaller houses, driving less expensive cars – at least they are then masters of their (littler) ships that are maybe then less likely to flounder on the rocks of cultural expectations. They are making their own 'freerange' decisions.

'Business-isation'-----?
It could appear that business has a powerful say in the nature of modern culture – in the UK over recent decades government has seemed to embrace and use business-originated ideas and methods wholesale, with the introduction of the bonus culture , high managerial level pay to the public sector, the extensive adoption of a 'targets' culture, interestingly recently for the first time publicly in the UK seen as 'flawed' , and the considerable use of socially-conforming measures such as league tables, for instance.

One of the limitations that seems to have emerged from this era, and from both private and public sectors, is that according to UK research, a majority of employees for instance, have reported feeling under-valued and uncared for within such a culture. The 'big government' concept of recent years has, according to one academic observer on TV, led to a situation of 'micro-management' – centralised over management –a 'parental' style which then in itself may well invoke disinterest and demotivation amongst its participants, not over keen to play the responding 'subservient' role in their adulthood, devaluing their own self-prowess and self-stature.

A good era and culture, then, for organisations and organisational power, but not necessarily seemingly the same in the longer-term for many of the individuals within it, who's scope for creativity and initiative would seem then to be curtailed by such a control-orientated culture, again leading then potentially to lower social and self status , and to possible de-motivation.

'Mass culture' systems are by definition, powerful entities, and even though maybe the individual has faced more 'culturally conforming' pressure, directly and indirectly than ever, in the west there currently remains the notion of individual freedom and freespeech, although faced with the size, might and power of some of the modern day organisations, the situation could appear at times, somewhat 'David and Goliath'.

'The state of independence--------?'
For the individual, especially the aspiring freeranger who wishes to retain some independence and follow the western 'individual freespeech' code, the problem these days may be the weight of influences and pressure bearing down on her/him to align with 'mass' norms, amplified presumably significantly by the 'media multiplication' factor, and therefore by default not to work things out for themselves, which seems maybe anyway to have fallen somewhat out of fashion (eg. existential debate seems to have been replaced by 'material gain' focus - ?)

To be fair, this modern life does mean that many – most-? - could be pretty busy, that more control measures/systems exist than ever before (one report even quoted, for instance, that staff in a large retail chain could be stopped and searched at any moment of the day), and seemed to have been subject to an on-going culture of 'continual change', which presumably can potentially cause confusion and turmoil for the individual trying to establish and hang on to his/her own values, plus presumably significant potential insecurity.

Organisations will naturally feel entitled to operate in their own interests, although in being part of society and being dependant on it for their 'results', might they be wise to think beyond themselves to see the broader perspective, the bigger picture - ? Any firm or organisation carries out a social function, otherwise people would not demand its goods and/or services – the act of business is often – always? - an essentially social transaction. This seems to be pretty much what the prime UK consumer organisation , 'Which?', is referring to in its call currently for UK banking to change its course:

'Bankers should put customers not profits first, and pay and bonuses need to be linked to customer service, not sales. Bankers need to meet professional standards and comply with a code of conduct, and if found wanting, they should be 'struck off' and not be allowed to continue in the work. Bankers should also be held responsible for mis-selling and bad practice, and if found guilty of it, punished. Any bonuses allocated should be clawed back in the event of being found guilty of bad practice or mis-selling'.

What business provides to society is the provision of specialist functions, but such a view may have been somewhat dimmed in the drive for profits, and an ultra-competitive 'non-society' outlook in recent times. It seems that it could be back to this question of balance between important areas – individual, economic, social and environmental, for instance – and that the strong focus on an 'out-for-s elf' money gathering aspect maybe by default has not given sufficient room for the other key 'non-economic' areas , resulting in 'imbalance' -?

So, with individuals and organisations feeling in the 'freeworld it's their right to act in their interests, presumably a 'refereeing' function could be needed to avoid any excesses of competition, and to follow the accepted social principle of protecting the vulnerable, a cornerstone surely of a civilised society - ? The individual, being a very small micro-organism within the melange that is society, can be vulnerable to and at risk from, the larger more powerful players in the culture. The employees in one UK giant utilities provider complained of just this recently, whereas the firm had

always in the past had a good people profile, it had changed into a non-caring 'profit monster'.

Another large corporate UK-based firm has been taken to task in the British broadsheet press for using its size and power abroad to persecute through hefty lawsuits, individuals who have criticised their practices in public. Corporate power seems to have become increasingly significant, perhaps another strong reason for the need for effective refereeing, with again the financial fiasco recent ('08/9) evidence.

Harmonic beauty-------
Maybe a useful analogy is that of an orchestra comprising of many different components – large and small, loud and soft- and in need of a conductor who's authority is respected and observed, to then organise such a potentially rabelasion melange into a product of harmony, an event of beauty. Does such an overarching social objective exist, though, especially in such 'out-for-self' orientated times? Maybe balance and harmony are key essences of beauty, and life would be better geared to it, as it undoubtedly is for some individuals - ?

The days of the old maxim 'the best government is the one that intervenes least' seem now gone, and faced with, then, seemingly considerable organisational power sources and possibly a nagging feeling of many that individual power and rights could be under threat, what can the 'freeranger' individual who wants and needs self-expression and development, do?

Life saving - the freeranger way------
'Freeranging' may imply to some that it's about being free to do what you want, when you want to, and ignoring anything and anyone else. Such a definition of 'freedom' is surely though incomplete, in that plainly if people live in a society as they do, and partake of its offerings, they already don't operate as a single entities. Take also, say, freespeech, for which people in the past have fought for, been persecuted for, and even perished for – presumably a debt is owed to those people, and therefore presumably no-one operates 'free gratis' as a totally separate entity, everyone is part of history, part of the march of time. Again, the psychologists suggest that social needs are part of peoples' make-up and need to be met, suggesting that people at times can naturally curb/limit their own stances to facilitate wider social efficacy.

In practice, then, there may be some considerable limitations on freedom in the 'do whatever you want to do' sense – it maybe a pitfall area. The fact that life is finite, and that the life of earth is finite – the sun's going to burn out in 50 or is it 70 million years ?– is also somewhat of an actual (though distant) natural restriction, as are potential big natural events such as 'big weather' events and natural events such as volcano eruptions and their effects. 'Undiluted' freedom maybe then something of a myth - ?

An alternative approach – which could be described as a 'freeranger' approach – is to follow the likes of development psychologists such as Abraham Maslow and subscribe to the notion that the fuller a person is developed along the human development scale, the more capable they'll be, the more life/universe understanding they'll have, and at the fully 'self-realised' stage, the more potential for self-fulfilment they'll have, although following such a path maybe the more challenging option - ?

Just taking one small area, for instance, that one of the elements of 'freedom' is psychological freedom, which in turn can imply an understanding of the self, which in turn suggests a need to face the self, warts an all, and then quite possibly/probably do 'self-work' to progress – not maybe necessarily the easiest job in the world, even if the outcome can be rewarding.

Freeranger self-responsibility----?

It's been argued, reasonably maybe, that the trend towards secularism in the west, shaking off the older 'parental-type' influences such as religion, implies that man in general wants to 'freerange' and take up the reins. If man then is 'running the show', it follows logically that man then has responsibility for the outcome(s), there is then no 'fall back' position, no-one to take the 'blame' – other than man. Maybe this is the stage that's imminent, i.e. a realisation and acceptance of such responsibility - ? A 'moving-on' from what's been described as a micro view mainly involving the self , to the bigger vision of being now involved in decisions, actions and behaviours which will and are affecting the world, and its future.

This may well have been the case to some extent for some time, in the sense that environmentalists have for awhile raised longer-term 'bigger issue' type concerns. It could be a case of again of achieving the workable balance – plainly there are limits to resources and increased world consumption of them, and 'the responsible concern' might be that it would be unwise to over squander scarce resources in any over-consumption in the shorter-term, to be left bereft in the future.

'Husbanding' back in fashion-------?!

So some – many? - might argue that there is to some extent a pressing need to responsibly 'husband' relatively scarce resources. In the past, a farmer, for instance, would have been called a 'husbandman', and even today 'husbandry' as a term is in common use – 'animal' or 'crop' husbandry for instance, implying effective and efficient sustainable longer-term focused management of those areas. Many if not most current farmers, for instance, could be said to be good 'husbandmen', looking after and improving long-term resources such as land, for future generations – and, looking after things for the future can give its own return of satisfaction.

Holding back the husbandry years---------

Growing produce 'organically', for instance, (which before the advent of chemical fertilisers in the 1930's, most farmers practised) means having to think and plan well ahead to cater for on-going future soil fertility, which in turns means having to plan cropping in a rotation to supply and support the longer-term soil fertility. On a non-organic commercial farm, for instance, crops can be grown continually on an area of land with the use of chemical inputs to provide soil fertility, and to suppress any crop disease problems which can come with continuous cropping of one crop (eg. wheat). Has this 'new-found' ability of being able to easily go to the chemical bank, then contributed to the longer-term outlook 'withering on a dated vine' - ?

The organic grower, though, cannot rely on imported chemical inputs, so has to manage an array of crops to preserve soil health and fertility, generally not getting quite such a high short-term output as is produced by chemical farming, but winning in terms of creating a sustainable system which works over the longer-term, and which by its nature looks after the health and fertility of the basic long-term resource, land. Such a system is proven to be long-term viable, and to get the longer-term sustainable result as well as a reasonable shorter-term output, the organic farm has to grow a wider array of crops, so a four-year rotation might look as follows:

grass, wheat, legumes (eg. peas or beans), oats.

The farm is now only able to have a quarter of the acreage of wheat, say, in comparison to its conventional chemical-farming neighbour, and has to be set up to be 'mixed' – it generally needs to cater for livestock, for instance, to utilise the grass/clover output, and thereby also re-supply fertility via livestock waste. It's probably more work, and takes more running generally, but then the returns in terms of more sustainable and eco-friendly results, and more intrinsic satisfaction, for some at least, might well repay any extra input.

Holding husbandry------------

The same applies on a very much smaller scale here on the micro holding, run on a system generally known as 'permaculture, which means that the growing system is, like many organic situations, largely self-contained, supplying its own nutrients on a long-term on-going basis. Obviously any system that's capable of being self-nurturing over time has built-in sustainability, especially one which turns its waste into fertiliser for the future, a useful example of re-cycling within a production process. The main nutrient source for the micro-holding does just that, in that it converts plant waste from the growing process itself, then into future fertility via composting.

'Green' manuring (growing an area of, say, wheat or mustard after another crop, say, onions, to dig into the soil), and ensuring a reasonable proportion of legumes within the crop rotation such as peas and beans (which 'fix' nitrogen fertiliser from the atmosphere into the soil), complete the on-going fertility picture. More specifically, the bed of broad beans, for instance, can provide a useful micro example. Firstly they were grown from home-saved seed with no fertiliser or chemical spray costs . Sown under glass to get early plants which were then planted out, no more work really than planting out seeds, and this year not even having any weeding - normally only one weeding maximum needed anyway. The tops are pinched out, to go onto the compost. The beans, picked young for taste and texture, are shelled, the shells with their amazing furry protective inner linings go onto the compost, and the cut-down stalks go onto the compost later . On top of that, the plants have been busy storing nitrogen in nodules on their roots (cutting the stalks off leaves the roots in the ground to release the good plant food that nitrogen is). All supplied by Mother Nature-, so a 'natural biological' system.

Variety – and seasonality- are a couple of the spices of life here on the eco micro-holding, and of course cropping needs to be planned not only with shorter-term output in mind, but also to take care of the longer-term soil health and fertility, just as in organic farming, and of which the broad bean patch as above plays an important part. The micro-holding veg. growing plot is split into four to facilitate the required rotation:

potatoes, roots (turnips, swedes, beetroot etc) , onions, legumes (peas and beans)/ winter greens.

Smaller crops egs. salads, celery, courgettes, are squeezed in here and there. Probably the most fertility demanding crop are the potatoes – June new newly-dug potatoes, melt-in-the- mouth young fresh-picked broad beans home-produced and boiling bacon with parsley sauce- has earth anything more fair? The potatoes set the basis of the rotation as they are mean't to be grown no more frequently than one year in four, to avoid pest and disease problems, which is fine as it means everything else can be grown. Amazing too what can be grown – for two, the micro-holding generally with its allotment-size veg patch, provides maybe half of the potatoes needed for the year, depending on the season, all of the onions, 80-90% of fresh vegetables all year round, all seasonal salads and taste-full tomatoes. Even though it's miniscule small- anyone with a garden and an allotment could do the same - it all gives a sort of dynamic to the place – it's then not just a home, more of an eco 'life support' unit, in combination with nature – an important factor, lots of birds live here – and a dynamic 'independent' aspect to being a 'husband' - hopefully now elevated to 'husbandman'.

Freerangin' on ---------'Freerange Ways'

The micro-holding here is a miniscule-size enterprise, against, say, a modern corporate giant, but nevertheless at this micro level it delivers a useful function. Growing own food (veg, eggs and fruit), sorting cheap – and sometimes free-eco fuel supplies (i.e. wood), using 'intermediate technology' , low resource demand handtools, living and working in a 'green oasis' – all leads to practising self-reliance, handskills, and eco awareness, in turn nurturing the freerange independent spirit.

Freerange bio-diversity--------?

There are presumably many ways to freerange and many different degrees of it, and many are undoubtedly skilled at practising it. Lovers of mountains and mountain climbing, then working as, say, a mountain guide, perhaps will then likely spend a lot of time in 'freerange', and the extra social responsibility of looking after others on the mountain may well fit in with a personal needs pattern, in that social needs and their fulfillment are, according to psychologists, a key human need area. Someone, though, in a job that doesn't particularly 'float their boat' but pays the family bills, will likely not have quite so much freerange opportunity, and may need to make conscious efforts, limited though they may have to be, to take at least a bit of time to nurture their own freerange spirit, if they should desire it.

Starting, say, a small enterprise is an obvious route to nurturing and developing independence and the freerange spirit that lurks within. Planning the enterprise, including often involving market research to discover key information, organising its creation, getting it up and running and then travelling with it 'at the helm' and facing virtually inevitable stormy waters at times, can be an empowering and developing experience for the individual(s) involved. One of the pitfalls, though, involved in starting up lifestyle enterprises, can be that at times the 'heart' dimension, the person's interest and passion, can predominate, without the balance which 'head' and 'will' aspects provide.

Because the enterprise is 'lifestyle' does not necessarily mean that it can be immune to the vagaries of business life and effective business/enterprise planning can make a key contribution to the establishment of an on-going sustainable and viable lifestyle enterprise. A useful sequence to use can be: Heart – to follow the passion, Head – enterprise/business planning to then work out the effective 'route', and then Will – to drive it forward and make it happen, as well as coping with the inevitable setbacks along the way.

In just one area, for instance, say, staffing, there is so much to know and discover – effective selection and hiring of staff, work organisation, work environment organisation, employment rules and regulations – and that's before the tricky business of effective staff management and getting them to give of their best, a journey of achievement surely then leading to the creation of 'empowered people' - ?

A Journey of the spirit ---------- ?

When setting up such an enterprise, should it be done as 'a journey of the spirit', following a path one's drawn to? Or should it be more 'hard-headed' with making money as its guiding light? It's an interesting question to ponder: should an enterprise best be set up following the person's interest, or should the ability to deliver good profits be the over-riding factor, which can at times seem to be an 'over-riding' message of a materially-geared culture - ? The fact that there's been a such a strong cultural focus on the money -making aspect, though, may also have had its own conditioning effect, which may make the 'open-mind' free-range analysis that bit more difficult.

On the one hand, someone might quite reasonably feel it's best to go for an activity that's likely to make good money, do it for X years, then sell up and then it's the time to 'do their own thing'. Others, though, might also quite reasonably argue that a) they don't particularly want to spend quite a chunk of their lives doing something they're not particularly into, and b) there could be dangers involved in so doing in that they could end up losing their own way. As ever in the 'freerange' world, it's the individual's right to consider things and to choose, their own way:

M and J decided to retire early, sell up their high value southern England property and buy a small farm in an area they loved, the south Shropshire hills. Neither had much in the way of farming experience and having a passion for rare-breed sheep, they plunged in the deep end and acquired a flock, whilst also attending as many related practical short courses as possible. Their farming neighbours were very helpful, seeing them through one or two early inevitable crises.

The very different lifestyle at their stage of life took a bit of getting used to, particularly physically, but a couple of years into it they couldn't imagine any different lifestyle. As long as the farm covered costs there was no need to make profit as pensions covered living costs, their major lifestyle benefits being living in a beautiful and peaceful place, working with the animals they loved, living in a caring community and, through the rare breeds connection, meeting like-minded, interesting people.

Freerangers are probably likely to be bio-diverse, quite probably there's a huge diversity of ways and means of practising freeranging.

Head and heart--------
Robert Pirsig, who wrote the 1970's classic 'freerange' book entitled Zen and the Art of Motor Cycle Maintenance, considered that man in America, the first super-materially orientated culture, had in fact gone 'off track' due to over use of rational logic with 'inhuman' results such as the creation of 'concrete jungles' and de-spiriting work practices. 'Head', and 'Will' had not been balanced by the 'Heart' dimension, he claimed, to the demise of 'quality' and the triumph of 'quantity', leading then to a decline in importance of the individual (as the guardian of 'quality') within society.

As in the section above, an Eastern -origined concept holds that there is in fact a natural sequence which comes into play. It holds that the first dimension to come into play is in fact the 'Heart' dimension, for instance, initially identifying the desired goal/acitivity. This is then followed by the 'Head' dimension, in effect working out and planning how to successfully effect the process, then to be 'naturally' followed by the 'Will' dimension, needed to carry through the operation, to cope with the ups and downs, the times particularly when the going might get 'tough'.
Such a sequence might suit a 'freeranger' approach, in that there may well be an 'inner dimension' representing the essential essence of the individual, which might be important to nurture, pretty akin maybe to a 'nurturing of the spirit'.

Spirit nurturing-------
Around the time of Pirsig's Zen comments, social researchers identified two basic 'life approaches'. The first, labelled 'outer directed' corresponded with Pirsig's 'off track' society, organised to organisational needs, with individuals then responding to 'outer' prompts from organisations (governments, churches, commercial firms (via advertising, for instance,)). This lead, according to Pirsig, to an 'underdoing' of individual priorities and needs, and then as a natural reaction, to a rise of an 'inner directed' approach', within which the individual now felt empowered to respond and act on their own internal values, which Pirsig held to be the source of 'quality'. In recent times, for instance, the rise in environmental concern and animal welfare in production systems might perhaps be seen as examples of 'inner directed' 'quality' influences taking wider hold.

Such 'inner directed' possibilities and influences could be seen as important and influential for 'freerangers', focusing on the needs behind them. Freerangers may well be interested in having and cultivating their own internal values, even if at times they do not always appear to coincide exactly with those of the wider society. This then involves doing the 'self-work' involved in gaining a clear view of what those values are and developing sufficient personal strength to espouse their own values and outlook, again not necessarily always an easy thing to do in a fast-paced, demanding,

media-fuelled culture.

'It's not easy to be sane in an insane world' *is a quote that can at times ring a chord.*

'Back to track-----------'
Given then, that the current organisational-leaning culture might not provide the most 'freeranger' empowering environment, in spite of its seeming espousing of the individual, what can individuals seeking at least some independence of spirit, do? It would probably be inappropriate for a work such as this trying to champion the attributes of the developing individual to start to give blueprints or recipes for 'success'. The triumph of the individual attaining to their fuller natures is surely just that, i.e. an individual journey and achievement.

Presumably not only are individuals born with differing traits, characters and potential, but each and everyone has had a different journey in life - therefore the individual is unique, even though such uniqueness might be masked when individual behaviour might be inhibited to such a point that she/he can only exhibit conditioned behaviour. Nor can any review of freeranger-type activity/thinking cover most possibilities, so the next section or two is presented in the spirit of aiming to create interest and possible thought and/or action at the individual's appropriate and chosen level.

Stopping the World-------------
'No person is an island*', it's said, but people temporarily, for instance, do take time out, go on retreats – a very few even purposefully live unfashionable solitary lives as hermits:*

H lives in a mud hut, complete with wood stove, in a wood in a wildish part of Wales. She likes her own company, and she likes solitude, walking in the woods and in the fields, and tending to her veg garden. She has chosen this way of life purposefully with the aim of creating as strong a connection with nature and the universe that she can, for which she feels simplicity is the order of the day. Some days, she says, she feels 'at one' with universal spirits, a bigger presence, so her lifestyle appears to work well for her.

The cultural battle-cry of 'change, change' has been loud and strong in recent times. Although some - many? - might feel it useful to stop and consider how much change can be adequately coped with in an on-going situation, and whether periods of and stabilisation are beneficial, in practice it can at times appear that the pace and expectations are ever cranked up – more and ever higher targets, ever increasing levels of social legislation, ever more growth and expectations - the built-up momentum now created tending to become its own driving force.

Not perhaps surprising then, that the need to 'stop, take breath, gather and look and consider' is felt, and has been felt for some time –Fritz Schumacher was calling exactly for this in the 1970's. Will the culture fulfil this need? Probably not, seems to be the most likely answer –the momentum created – Schumacher's big boulder rolling down the hill – is such that it may be 'unstoppable'. Following this line of thought, the individual's viable choice is then to take what action they can, given that for many, options may well be limited to 'doing the possible', in that current conditions such as for instance, family considerations, will act as potentially curbing influences.

The point for freerangers/would-be freerangers may be to be doing what one can, which can then nurture that important independent spirit, which in itself will help cushion the individual from any cultural over-effects. Remaining in the slightly smaller house, say, and avoiding taking out that chunk of extra borrowing involved in moving up the housing scale, could be an example of the individual inuring his/herself to some extent from the system.

Some have highly individual freerange ways, living life their own unique and individual way:

'Mad Black Jack'---------

Black Jack, or Mad Black Jack as some called him, was a striking, fearsome looking character, with his jet black hair plastered back, his black beetling eyebrows, his great hooked nose, deep, penetrating eyes, with a generally weatherbeaten and swarthy countenance – a real diabolically devilish apparition and with a devilish spirit to match. His 'freerange' gambit was to extract humour and fun from life as often as he could. As a bus driver, he'd one early spring day driven a hospital visiting bus, and whilst sitting in the hospital canteen, noticed that his conductor partner had picked up a folding white stick left on the bus. Jack concocted a cunning plan. Allowing time for his passengers to have re-boarded the bus, he had his conductor lead him out, in an overcoat and dark glasses – it was a bright but cold day - to the wrong end of the bus, so he could then tap his way with the white stick all along the bus, and make a bit of a show clambouring into the cab.

'Tell them I'll be ok once I get the feel of the road', he told his conductor, who on then rounding to the other side of the bus, found the passengers pouring off.

Jack had to be brought round to do eyesight tests before they'd re-embark.

Complaints to the company ensued and Jack was officially disciplined, but, my, Jack's numerous exploits worked wonders in keeping spirits up, not least in the re-telling of the Black Jack folklore tales. In keeping his own considerable spirit up by his particular 'freerange' approach to life, Jack also had a positive effect on those around him.

'Sweet are the uses of adversity'-------

For those freerangers with more flexibility and opportunity to 'stop and look' and in so doing counter any anxiety levels inherent within such a fast-flowing, competitive culture, again there are undoubtedly myriad ways of actually carrying such a move out. Packing in the stressful job, selling up or renting out, moving back in with parents to give the time and space to 'take stock' might for some be relatively simple moves.

Renting the town/city pad out and renting/buying in a less expensive area might suit others, just as, say, ceasing full-time employment and living on other income – part-time, rental etc- might fit the bill for others. One of the live case-studies described in the next section went to live for a time in a hut in a wood, another went wood living for a shorter, specific period using a tent.

P and T found that their working lives had changed significantly, pressurised considerably by a work culture of quality standards, work targets and almost constant change via seemingly endless on-going re-organisations. They particularly disliked the de-professionalisation process such high work control patterns in their eyes delivered. After a couple of work directives and one work re-organisation too many, they'd had enough and resolved to take back some control within their lives. They quit their jobs, in effect taking early retirement, taking actuarily reduced pensions, sold their house, then buying a flat to rent out to contribute to income, and bought a live-aboard canal narrow boat, on which they lived at a marina in the winter months, the summer months sees them meandering the UK canal system, with now plenty of time to spend at their passions of writing and painting. They now found themselves to be considerably less stressed, due not only, they thought, from their 'escape' form unsatisfactory work situations, but also due to the slow pace of their new lifestyle and the peace of the countryside though which they passed, which had a calming and a balming effect for them.

For those able to seek significant time out to sinfully(!) contemplate navels and develop their 'inner directed' mode, various options are available. Some, presumably often with spiritual quests, retreat into retreats, existing just for such purposes. Others may sell-up, rent out or whatever and re-locate to areas of the world with cheap living costs. Even without the backing of resources, some aim to travel cheaply in the world, seeking temporary work as and when

needed (one paper recently reported a traveller visited all the countries in the world on a budget of £10 per day, for instance). A culture significantly geared to wealth making (recent research revealed, for instance a noticable 'get-rich-quick' trend within the younger generations) is maybe not over-conducive to or over-condoning of individuals taking their own control down a 'non-wealth' type of route, but yet it is surely the individual's right and responsibility to look after their own self-preservation - ?

R worked conventionally for just five months of the year. His earlier training via an agricultural engineering course, working on farms and a natural bent and interest in all things mechanical, qualified him pretty well for his varied 'freeranger' lifestyle. The five months paid work was seasonal work for two or three farmers, who valued having access to a skilled operator on the tractor for busy periods, and via good contract rates of pay and longish working hours, R was able to earn quit a bit over the five months. The rest of his year he devoted to growing food on his allotment, doing a certain amount of mower repairs and servicing, undertaking small engineering/mechanic-ing jobs for other people, and carrying out his own projects, one of which, for instance was to build his own ride-on mower out of bits and pieces and for a cash outlay of less then fifty pounds.
 Taking a job to him was an interesting experience. He'd look at it, seemingly going into a trance-like state, pulling at his considerable beard and at his earring, presently muttering ' I dunno – maybe somat can de done with the darn thing!' Invariably, though, a day or two later, there it'd be, as good as new, with as like as not an ingenious repair solution applied.

Undoubtedly to travel and experience other societies and cultures helps gain some over-view perspective of the home culture. A decade or two back there did seem to be some encouragement within the culture for individuals to develop via wider experience, whereas in more recent times and given possible higher insecurity levels within the potentially more heated, faster, more competitive culture, there could be more instant pressure to 'join the system'– it's reported, for instance, that many younger people already have significant debt levels on leaving higher and further education, and also that 'time out' gap years are becoming more popular with older folk.

'Downsizing' has also been reported as a significant social trend, with people switching lifestyles to achieve better 'life/work' balance, or to follow more their interests and passions, for instance. Organising work schedules such as working longish hours weekend shifts, then freeing up time in the week, might be, for instance, another example gambit to facilitate a 'freerange' lifestyle.

Perfection - the far-off goal?---------
The degree to which people fully and willingly engage with a culture will presumably vary considerably - some are willing, embracing constituents of the culture , others could, for instance, be relatively disaffected within a culture – it takes all sorts, as they say, and good job, too, as for freerangers, bio-diversity of humans is probably of the essence. What can be done, for instance, in the face of a culture that might appear to want to heavily influence individuals within it - ?

' When will governments get off our backs?' *said one lady on the TV recently, for instance, and to some – many? - it could seem that the old dictum of* 'the best government is one that governs least' *is no longer the current mode, leaving then less 'space' for independent 'freerange' mode - ?*

There appears then, to be a reasonable case that for freerangers/would-be freerangers operating largely 'within' the culture, some counter thoughts and measures are needed to cope to preserve and enhance the independent spirit . Again, the potential options would seem to be myriad, ranging from 'doing a Victor Meldrew' and raging against, say, modernism , to developing a protective dry, wry humour, which to some extent accepts the reality of modern life, but indicates its owner is not necessarily consumed by it.

The 'Victor Meldrew' option undoubtedly invites the undelightful 'grumpy old person' tag, although such a tag might be a reflection on the manner in which some, possibly with less experience, try to cope with characters who's world view can encompass negative as well as positive scenarios - ?

Freeranger frugality-------?
The aim of consciously counteracting, at whatever level, any perceived over- conditioning cultural effects is both to avoid being consumed and damaged even by such effects, and also to generally raise and increase awareness over time. It's said that imprudent bank lending through the 90's and the 000's was a key underlying cause of the financial near-collapse in 2008/9, and that to satisfy the business mantra 'you must grow the business' and hence ever expand the lending business, the less desirable 'sub-prime' markets were heavily sold to, even though the borrowers' abilities to service the loans were known to be questionable.

In reality, when economic conditions became tighter many had to default on their loans and repossessions of property increased significantly, providing a good example of a prime case where it would be important for individuals to protect themselves from an undesirable cultural trend, for which individual independence and strength would be needed, two qualities which could be valuable not only to the individuals themselves, but also in sum and in the longer-term to society itself:

'Counter culture' man, A, has an active policy of making his own decisions and countering any cultural effects he sees as potentially detrimental, and has been able over time to organise his own life to run with a self-limit set on his borrowing, in response to what he perceives as a cultural over-readiness to lend and borrow, then translating into cultural pressure on the individual.
 He's gone against the borrowing trend consciously, to assert his independent nature to himself, to avoid falling unconsciously into any difficulties (eg. financial), to be in a position to be able to have more (independent) options to act and as part of a self-development programme to build-up his own strength – again a longer-term move towards increasing independence, increasing free-ranging power and ability.

Such borrowing 'frugality' could take some strength of mind when the 'norm' is running the other way and people are borrowing and spending seemingly freely, enjoying more material goodies. Although frugality seems to have been well out of vogue in recent conspicuous consumption and affluenzic times, some, like A above, do opt to practice it in the pursuit of self-restraint and therefore self-discipline, thereby becoming better placed to be 'master of their own ship', again probably a desired freeranger condition and attribute.

A more frugal approach can also lead to the 'keeping something for the rainy day' state of mind, which surely must then give useful freerange feelings of security and a calming assurance of 'being prepared', which again would seem to run counter to modern trends, with recent press reports suggesting that modern consumers 'see no point in saving', living now and paying later.

If practising 'freeranger frugality' does bring practical and tangible benefits such as not having one's home repossessed, then such independent, freerange decision making will have delivered very real benefits, not only for the freeranger, but for those around her/him.

Freerangin' on---------------------'Freeranger Traits and Skills'

Simple tools---------

In the toolshed, an old rake, two hoes, one of the Dutch variety, a strong steel spade bought aeons ago for peanuts at a sale, a well-used garden fork that's more than paid its way, especially since the introduction of a no-dig system, a hay rake given by an ex-neighbour, a clutch of handforks and trowels along with a couple of very useful hand onion hoes. Then there's a long bent shovel looking as though it was made to dig peat and now useful in the drain and ditch clearance department, a couple of hand scythes, a pickaxe, a sledge hammer and sundry small tools, including three or four different sized lump hammers .

A very useful collection, generally picked up ad hoc at sales or car-boots for a song and all in use at sometime or other through the year and without such simple 'intermediate technology' type implements, the micro-holding work would not happen. All tools operated 'by hand' and dependant on a certain amount of knowledge and expertise to be usefully deployed and used, and absolutely necessary adjuncts to any human skills, facilitating actual hand work, to give that particular fuller, 'holistic' satisfaction. Aesthetically pleasing, especially to their user, and like old friends, worth hardly a bean, and at the same time, totally necessary and 'priceless' – something of a paradox.

Going independent--------------

Thinking about it, it does take a bit to be a freeranger, and sometimes it can risk having counter-productive results – the risk manager of one of the big UK banks reportedly lost his job prior to the 2007/8 financial crisis by being brave enough to do it – he was saying 'hey, hold on, what we're doing is too risky'. Not a message his colleagues apparently wanted to hear – can probably surmise why –and hey presto, out on his neck for doing his job. 'Going independent' might at times be a risky business , particularly in cultures which operate significantly 'en masse', and at other times it presumably may not be the wisest choice of actions: it might be better to 'go with the flow' ----- or is it - ? Whilst it might seem counter-productive in the shorter-term, maybe in the longer-term, things can work out for the better - ?

The 'free world' traditionally holds that it's the individual's right to think for themselves and make their own decisions, within reason; for example, as long as others don't over suffer. (At times of national crisis, such as the Second World War, many – most? - agree to a sublimation of individual priorities in favour of those of 'en masse' eg. in UK, farmers had to farm to national standards, rather than their own). Even if it's decided to 'go with the flow', it might more appropriate if that decision is an independent decision taken by the individual concerned, rather than just, say, being swept along. One line of thought is that it's anyway a natural process that people make their own mind up, and it's also been argued that the natural human response to the use of 'force' (eg, trying to make people think/act along certain lines) is resistance, and that to expect anything else is folly. If a 'boss' and/or the 'system' is over demanding, for instance, it's argued, there will be resistance, even if the situation inhibits the open display of it.

Employees can, for instance, resist in a 'sub-clinical' non-overt fashion by withdrawing measures of loyalty, care, effort and self-responsibility, and even if employees have reached the stage of 'resignation', accepting they're in practice powerless to change the situation, maybe their resignation should still not necessarily be interpreted as full acceptance - ?

A rising tide-----?

Such, though, has been the intense focus within the culture of recent years on 'change' ('innovate, innovate'),

technological development and making money ('be an entrepreneur'), that a fast-paced momentum appears to have been created that probably can 'sweep people along'. A freeranger move could be to recognise such a momentum and trend, and decide whether such a 'frenzied' ride, as some no doubt might see it, is for them, then taking 'personal insulation' steps to offset any perceived negative effects. (One senior UK MP, for instance, recently warned about making sweeping assumptions that everyone should be/wishes to be, 'aspirational' in the current culture sense, suggesting that many wish to still operate to more traditional values such as 'good relationships', to which 'individual competitivism' could be a threat).)

Just something as simple as limiting car travelling speed, for instance, could be an example of a small insulatory step to counter, say, the feeling of being too swept along by the mainstream culture fast pace, causing then the over-establishment of the individual's 'inner automaton', which can then limit personal independence.

N was a classic example of an independent freeranger-type of individual. He'd had a variety of work activities leading then to him setting up his one-man mower repair and handyman business. He and his wife lived in a pleasant small village handy for a near-by town, in a relatively small cottage, with a good garden which the two of them enjoyed and in which they'd for years grown much of their own food.

His long-standing wood stove was fuelled mainly for free, work contacts supplying quite a bit of surplus wood and also due to him having his eye out- quite a bit of wood had been collected and stored, for instance, from spoil heaps from local barn conversions, wood that would have otherwise been waste bonfire-burnt.

N and his wife hadn't followed the trend of extending the cottage, preferring the independence of low dependence on borrowing, the trend of which N felt had caused over-high property prices which could bring longer-term difficulties.

Although some might well have branded N a 'stick in the mud', his reservations proved to be some extent founded – and he wasn't losing his roof.

Small equals creative------??
The modern trend, for instance, of high control work situations in which employees have to respond mainly to 'external' (i.e. to them) prompts rather than from 'internal' motivation drives, are perhaps unlikely to be the natural milieau of freerangers, with perhaps smaller non-hierarchical work situations likely to suit them better, particularly if involved in small skilled and knowledgeable groups doing creative work, which, according to some team theory, often work better less structured and hierarched to then better unleash individual creative forces:

V is the owner operator of a garage in a large village close to a rural town. It's a busy garage, due in no small part to V and his staff's sensitivity to their customers needs. If, for instance, there's a need to keep the bill within reason, V or one of his staff will happily shoot off to a local scrap yard to get a cut-price part- maybe there can't be too many garages actively operating to keep the bill down. And yet – method in the madness – in the surrounding area there's more than one car mending outfit gone bump, and V's is certainly not one of them, usually being fairly snowed-under with work.

The guys at the garage, five in all including V, work as a gang, helping each other out as required and whilst V retains the right to have the final say, walking in the premises you wouldn't know that he's the boss. He'll probably be under a car, for starters, then there's the general air of banter and mickey taking, in which the boss is often a prime suspect. Everyone deals with the customers, whoever's available, and often customers, being locals themselves, will pass the time of day and have a natter with one or two of the guys.

Now and again minor 'war' breaks out and one or two will stomp about a bit, but they always seem to get over it pretty quickly, back to their old amicable, smiling selves. V seems to b able to resist the temptation of intervening, enjoying the argument probably, and generally lets them sort themselves out. Occasionally V's wife manages to get him away for a break for a few days, but even though he's knocking on now and could easily retire, he still prefers to be at work, and why not, when it's as enjoyable as it is for him?

Maybe freerangers could be split into two broad categories – 'questors' and 'practitioners'. 'Questors' could be those freerangers, possibly generally younger, 'finding their way' and finding themselves, and 'practitioners' those, possibly generally older, capable, self-reliant, self-responsible and experienced people who 'know their own mind'- freerangers fairly well down the track. Both groups are probably likely to use similar human skills and approaches, some of which may be useful to look at.

Self acceptance
Thinking and working things out for oneself seemingly involves several factors, the most basic of which could be accepting the principle that the individual right to do so exists, an important key foundation. Then it's accepting the extra 'workload' –it could be less effort not to bother. In a way, it's presumably also taking on a challenge and discovering the range and limits of one's own values and capabilities, accumulating valuable self-knowledge. Accepting oneself as a valid entity may not always be a simple process, particularly perhaps in a culture which exerts considerable 'mass' conditioning pressure, directly and indirectly.

Fortunately many states are built on foundations of individual freedom, on the basis that the state is the accumulated form of individuals. Some, though, nowadays perceive some threat to individuality and individual freedom emanating from the power wielded by large business organisations, some of whom can appear, for instance, to be anti the traditional defender of the individual at work i.e trade unions, and even intolerant to some extent towards the 'non-big' i.e. the small. Even the government (UK) appears to be running a agenda of fewer human rights, with proposals to reduce employment rights for employees, including offering cash handouts in return for human rights, and with a move to sign off from the European Human Rights Charter. Large entities i.e. organisations, can tend to create large amounts of both actual and illusory power, against which the individual is but a tiny entity, and therefore vulnerable – it may be right to be wary, for instance.

Self-discipline
Anyone, presumably, can think and believe anything about whatever – the true nature of freeranger-type of enquiry, probably is to enquire openly and to some extent 'un-self-interestedly' and let the evidence sway the outcome(s), rather than present any vested interest type of approach, which after all, might only serve to strengthen any existing prejudices. Such an approach will perhaps be likely to be more challenging to the self, but which then presumably stands the chance of prompting growth and the creation of the 'bigger self" - ?

Today's culture, though, might present more than normal level of difficulties in this area, in that it can appear to promote a self-seeking approach, which may then in itself act as an inhibitor to the notion of individual growth. The individual could gain a feeling that it's ok to accept her/his current thoughts, wishes and mindsets as a sort of static norm, without questioning or self-criticality, thus displacing any possible individual growth stimulators - ?

The notion that only relative reality exists, there's no 'absolute reality', is sometimes used to support the 'out-for-self' philosophy, but might this seem to be somewhat limited when related to the wider world - ? Those old pagans may not have been so daft, when they practised a spot of sun worshipping, and maybe trying to relate to a bigger reality is important, and particularly for freerangers wanting and needing to gain enough self- discipline to be able to process wider and bigger realities than just the 'small-pond' reality of the relatively miniscule self - ?

Self–responsibility

In recent times, one of the limitations that's been identified, is the fact that the free-market philosophy ('leave it to the market, the market decides') has then tended to discourage any sense of exercising responsibility, and thus encouraged the 'we can do whatever we want' mindset. The individual might reasonably argue therefore that responsibility is not her/his province, as lead by the 'system'.

On the other hand, if the earth's eco-system is , say, damaged by man's action, with the result that future possibilities are impaired, where does responsibility lie? It might be tricky to avoid the conclusion that it would have to lie with the 'top' organism i.e. mankind. This is not too much of a problem for those on the 'self-actualisation' path, in that accepting responsibility for the consequences of one's actions would be central to any 'higher/further' development. True, the individual has but a miniscule effect on the environment, for instance, but for the freeranger it may still be important for own self-integrity to be making their own contribution, which, who knows, may then have a wider effect:

One UK Midlands family decided to accept responsibility and self-act to help preserve the environment and took particular care when shopping to avoid, for instance, non-recyclable packaging. They were able to reduce their 'throw-away' waste to negligible amounts, their small-scale positive efforts then becoming amplified by being featured on regional TV.

The psychologist M Scott Peck, in his well-known book 'The Road Less Travelled' rates self-responsibility highly, and the opportunity to develop it:

' To be free people, we must assume total responsibility for ourselves, but in so doing must also develop the capacity to reject responsibility that is not truly ours'.

 According to developmental psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, for instance, it's a natural progression to develop and accept self-responsibility, if the right to think for oneself and make one's own life decisions is taken up, hence an area of key potential importance for freerangers, and a key element of freeranging. It's been said recently that for those having chosen a more secular route such as in some western cultures, that without any 'guiding force from above', collective human responsibility has now become more of a live issue, and one which increasingly needs to be addressed to ensure the future well-being of the world and its constituents.

Put simply, collective responsibility (of which the best type could be the amalgamation of many developed individual self-responsibilities-?) might well be needed to meet the world challenges already present, and ensure a viable future for it. From the past, there are specific examples in which populations were unable to organise 'collective responsibility', and perished (eg. Easter Island - ?)

Self-resourcefulness/reliance

 Maybe, in spite of all today's sophisticated technology and computer wizardry, there could be less basic resourcefulness these days than practiced by people in the past, who may well have learn't their resourcefulness from times of deprivation and adversity - ?

 'Sweet are the uses of adversity*' said Shakespeare.*

 Some have said that over-affluence can bring its own problems and that currently in the West, there exists the modern disease of 'affluenza'. The modern trends of increased obesity has been used to point to that, although presumably the long hours culture at sedentary jobs could also be a factor.

Imagine, though, being a 'practical polymath' and being able to turn the hand at more or less anything? Whilst farmers, for instance, are often said to be 'jack of all trades', those who have been in this 'practical polymath' mould – calving cows, getting machines running again, negotiating deals, welding pieces of broken metal, sowing fields of corn, planning and sorting work regimes---and so on, tend to be multi-skilled operators. Undoubtedly experience plays its part – maybe it could be an idea for youngsters, say, to do as they used to i.e. get in some practical experience before going to college/university- a bit of 'life university' before academic university:

Some students a few years ago in Denmark had had to do a minimum of three years practical experience in a workforce before being able to undertake their main academic course. They were impressive people, a compelling mixture of self- assurety, self-responsibility, and appetite to gain knowledge.

Self-deprecation

A term meaning being able to not take the self over seriously, the ability to be able to laugh at one's own efforts, including mistakes, which in turn implies self-permission not to have to be perfect (in itself a form of 'self-acceptance'-?). Sometimes it can seem that especially in a highly competitive culture, perfection and zero errors is the only allowable level, especially, as in the UK rail industry, where there is a punitive culture. And yet, 'to err is human', so is the bar being set too high, giving over-challenging conditions which can only result in tension, exacerbated by a 'blame and hit' culture, and, ironically and paradoxically, then leading to more tension resulting in an increased possibility of further gaffs-?

Maybe there's a need to accept a reality that all are learners, mistakes will happen, and possibly the best way forward is to accept such imperfection whilst learning from the situation – a version of 'work in progress'. Perhaps a tighter spec for some 'expert' operators who should know their stuff and indeed get it 'right first time' but in terms of freerangers 'learning from life', getting experience under the belt, a slightly more relaxed approach might pay dividends, which anyway could well be the 'natural' approach. 'Failure' is not then, as they say, falling off the bike, but any denial of it and failure to learn from it:

One dairy farmer never seemed to get it right in his own eyes –'*I dunno, I'm sure*' was his standard clarion call , followed by '*blessed if I do!'*
Yet his herd was a top performer, and he knew more than most, and a lot more than many – a canny, self-deprecating man, freeranger to boot.

Self-lessness

Not really too long ago, a society cultural 'rule' in the UK seemed to be that a person had to think of others, not the self. At the same time, there was always the saying 'charity begins at home', so life at times could be just a bit confusing. Maybe it's a kickback against such stringent society rules that the 'out-for-self' philosophy has seemingly taken such a hold, and again the freeranger approach is to perhaps to try to side-step current/past cultural 'conditioning', and to work it out for themselves.

The psychologist Maslow's take on it was that in terms of the immediate needs (eg. to satisfy hunger) and the base needs (eg. to have a level of security), the individual did need to be self-seeking- that was the dynamic priority. Once though, a reasonable degree of immediate and base need satisfaction was in place, then the individual progresses 'naturally' onto more socially orientated needs: the need to belong, to contribute *(to the group)* and then for recognition in the social sense.

In this more 'progressed' phase, the individual moves away from self-pre-occupation to a wider, more embracing outlook, developing a broader perspective, and any continuing over-focus on self-seeking could then be considered a

potentially 'counter-productive' situation - ?

This phase could be said to be a naturally 'less self' stage, as self has been 'dealt with', attention now being drawn to a bigger stage, resulting ultimately in the possibility of the individual then developing a 'bigger and fuller' approach, probably a beneficial process for both the individual, and the society in which they operate, and of particular relevance to freerangers, and a pattern which would seem to be represented naturally in family life. Advantages of Maslow's take are that it developed from objective research, albeit some time ago, and that it introduces a dynamic time element which somehow 'rings true' and can be helpful in clarifying any potential confusion.

'Self-lessness' can also come into play at a more practical level, according again to M. Scott Peck:

'-----to live wisely, we need to daily delay gratification and keep an eye on the future; yet to live joyously we must also possess the capacity, when it is not destructive, to live in the present and act spontaneously.'

Self-knowledge/awareness
From the discussion above, it's probably evident how valuable the ability to be 'self-aware' would be, in particular in terms of gaining the perspective of where the self is at on any dynamic time/process scale, in that it could significantly contribute to any 'overview' understanding and awareness, which could be one of the freeranger's most useful tools in any self-growth armoury. Going back a bit, as Socrates said, 'know thyself'.
 'Full and free' communication with other like-minded souls who are trusted confidants can be valuable in terms of developing the ability to enhance such a self-awareness process. Presumably, as before, time is needed to accumulate the experience to facilitate self-knowledge, and probably as ever, the state of play is 'work in progress'.

Self – preservation
In the sense that life presumably cannot necessarily be guaranteed to provide streams of endless positive experiences, and at the end of the day there's then a need to 'take the rough with the smooth', self-preserving could well be a useful and necessary process. Whilst some might see such an approach in terms of a sort of selfishness, another, perhaps more pragmatic way of looking at it, would be to take a 'functional' view; that is, if the self isn't preserved, then its longer-term performance will be impaired, to the detriment not only of the individual concerned, but also the wider community, social contribution being as above a developed human need and activity.

 Divisions, say in terms of the psychologist Maslow's need areas, may well be somewhat blurred in practice. As soon as people undertake jobs, they could be said to be socially contributing, even though at that stage their own concentration might be focused firmly on their own career. With the current culture pressures such as fast-pace of life generally, long work hours and control-based work environments, it may now be more important than ever to develop 'overview awareness' to gain perspective, and then to 'freerange self-manage' as effectively as possible.

 Any fast-paced, fast moving culture probably has the ability to at times be demanding and stressful for the individual, particularly if there exists a strong focus on short-term profit making, which can then often appear to translate into a pressurised situation in the workplace, with managers pushing their staff for ever greater performance, either by strong use of authority/ control measures, work targets and /or practising on-going financial incentivisation.

The freeranger developing 'overview awareness' can then aim to recognise the essentials of the situation, and aim to manage accordingly, and in a way that gives a measure of longer-term self-preservation, on the grounds that a) they themselves as unique individuals are important, b) they need to be pro-active to some extent within the situation to

preserve/enhance/exercise their own self-respect and self-status c) to as well as possible ensure their survival under pressure conditions and d) to protect their longer-term productivity performance levels.

Managing from below---------
'Managing from below' can be an art in itself and again can be a 'horizon widening experience', in that understanding that can be gained of the manager's aims, pressures and stress points can then aid the individual in effectively managing her/his own position within the situation, then also add to the growing stock of awareness so useful and important to the freeranger.

In practical terms, faced, say, with a demanding manager driven by a demanding system translating, say, into unrealistic work performance expectations, a self-managing employee might use what could be termed the 'smokescreen effect', communicating for instance, frequently with the manager and conveying a frequent message of industrious activity, whilst effectively getting on with the job at a more sustainable pace and level.
It can then be argued that the employee who does effectively manage work situations to maintain their own on-going effective levels of productivity (not 'work shirking'), is a real asset over time to a company, although it can appear that the longer-term is not always in strong focus in current times.

Self-originality
The factors considered in this section could be said to be some of the key freeranger traits that can aid in any personal development journey, and will likely be developed and enhanced in the course of that journey. Perhaps one of the most potentially important areas has been so far overlooked – that of 'self-originality' or 'self-creativity'. Individuals operating within the arts are presumably well versed in this area, using art to find themselves, express themselves and explore possibilities, although avid money gathering may perhaps not completely divorced from such a world.
When art does spring from individual originality and creativity, it can create a powerful effect and communicate at a deeper non-verbal level – some music, for instance, can have the effect of reaching and moving people, as well as giving inspiration.

'Out of the ether-----'
It has been said that such creativity comes from a 'higher self', operating as it were, on different   energy frequency levels, and individual experiences of large energy forces have been recorded. Maslow, the American psychologist and researcher mentioned earlier became intrigued by reports of peoples' 'peak experiences' which he came across more frequently than expected in the courses of his psychological researches, and even made a study of them resulting in his book 'The Farther Reaches of Human Nature'.

This piece could be said to be somewhat 'self-orientated'. In its defence, though, it does seem to be making a case for considerable work on the self, with the ups and downs that might involve, as opposed to advocating any simplistic 'out-for-self', 'do-what-you-want-to-do' type of approach, and such self-work surely then contributes to the self-strength and self-status/image of the individual, part of their 'life harvest' - ?

This fits in with the self-actualisation/realisation approach covered later in this work, and all of which might cumulate in what could be called 'self-reliance' – the more the individual develops and 'grows' and develops as a person, the more likely they'll be able to use their own judgement, be surer of their own values and make appropriate decisions – be, in fact, 'self-reliant'.   Meat and drink - and veg - surely, for freerangers _??

Freerangin' on --------------------' Freerange Values and Objectives'

Although it might well seem to some that money, having taken a more centre-stage position , has to some extent over-ridden many other human values, often hard fought for too, no doubt amongst individuals many and multivarious values still exist, some without monetary consideration. Broadly speaking and as a general example, the 'live and let live' set of values encountered often in original and trditional rural communities, could be contrasted with other more 'individualistic competitive' modern cultural modes.

Another example maybe of a kick-back against modern levels of competitivism and larger-scale money making, can be seen in the UK west country in the rural town of Totness, in which the independent 'live and let live' spirit has extended to the folk of Totness defending their independent small traders and the essential independent spirit and nature of their local community by opposing the establishment in the town of any large-scale national formulistic chain operators.

Some have charged the larger-scale national operators with being over-driven by the economic (money) dimension , then putting at risk the deeper and wider set of values and objectives that exist in life, and can often be particularly seen and demonstrated within the rural sector (see later). One current example could be the problem the UK smaller family-business milk producers are having with the large oligopolistic (= few large buyers) milk buyers using their 'unequal' power to squeeze the milk prices. Focused single-dimensionally 'large-scale' as they tend to be, the large-scale buyers tend to find smaller-scale production 'unsatisfactory' , judging them on a one-dimensional economic scale to be 'inefficient' against large-scale 'economies of scale' production, although of course, taking a wider view, smaller-scale production involving many independent producers may well have significant advantages when viewed from community and individual angles.

Objectives and Values

Looking, for instance, at the UK rural sector, plainly in terms of people and rural community, it's small and family farms which support by far the greatest number of rural people, particularly now that the larger operators are so heavily mechanised, reducing the labour input often to a minimum.

P had taken over a largish mixed livestock and arable farm from her father and proceeded to turn it into organic production. She then added further organic enterprises and also expanded her business via processing and retail outlets, one of her enterprise objectives being to do her bit to reverse the trend of rural de-population in terms of active rural enterprise activity.

Larger farmers certainly probably achieve a level of efficiency through the 'being large' benefit of economies of scale, which, though, does not, necessarily and automatically imply that smaller farms are inherently economically inefficient, although such a message does seem to be commonly implied. The author, in consultant role, has witnessed many economically sound smaller rural businesses, although a presumption of inefficiency can often seem to continue to exist' It could be argued, though, for instance, that the smaller business incorporating good levels of scope for flexibility via, for instance, low overheads and a good ability to 'trim the sails' (eg. family run businesses), might be amongst the most efficient operators - ?

When, though, if fulfilment of a mix of objectives - social, business, environmental and personal, rather than solely economic. is used as the measuring stick, then it is by no means certain that smaller and family independent

businesses could be described as inefficient.   Perhaps it is really mainly 'experts' - governments, bankers, CEO's, accountants, advisors, lecturers et al who come from a mainly 'economic efficiency' point of view – ? Such a one dimensional approach, though, could lack the balance which has to be struck between potentially conflicting objective areas in real life; a 'leisure time' objective, for instance, can conflict squarely with that of maximum economic results - a sensible balance has to be struck.

Rural entrepreneurs, for instance. in general seek to satisfy a variety of goals/objectives, which can often conflict with each other, and which bring into play a mix of values they hold to be important, resulting in experience and expertise in managing complexity, as the results shown in the next sections indicate. These relate to the array and extent of objectives for a particular type of small rural business i.e. that of farming. It could be, though, that many if not all types of smaller independent enterprises will have considerable arrays of objectives.

Rural Enterprise Objectives and Values in Practice

A study by this author of larger (UK) Shropshire and Staffordshire (327 ha's - (808 acres)) farmers' goals and objectives in the 1980's)i.e. before major entrepreneurialisation drives) indicates a wide diversity of farmers' objectives with significant scope for potential conflict:-

Fig. 1   Rural business objectives identified as 'important' or 'very important'*

> (The degree of importance assessed on a point scoring basis - not in priority order)

- to be good at what one does and develop personal skills
- to maximise profits
- to create and maintain wealth
- to have a secure business
- to have up-to-date machinery and equipment
- to develop interest via new methods
- to improve standard of living

- to fulfil social responsibility
- to have a good farming reputation
- to husband land and act as caretaker
- to have and maintain a good contented workforce
- to ensure nation's food supplies
- to ensure a good cash flow
- to have sufficient time for family and leisure
- to make sufficient profit

The rural/farm business/enterprise is the means – the vehicle - by which satisfaction is achieved in these objective areas which are plainly not restricted, to purely economic objectives – these operators are demonstrating a need to achieve a mix of and a balance between various important life areas, as the overall group priority rating in Fig. 2 (below) shows:-

Fig. 2   Top Six Objective Areas (in order of priority)

1) To make sufficient profit
2) To be good at what one does and develop personal skills
3) To have and maintain a good, contented workforce
4) To ensure a good cash flow

5)   To husband the land and undertake a

                  caretaking capacity

6)   To maximise profitability

Even though a profit objective is number one priority, interestingly enough it's 'profit sufficiency' which comes well before 'profit maximisation', thus facilitating the achievement of the other personal, social and long-term husbandry objective areas. Rural operators are clearly indicating that to them, whilst financial performance achievement is important, it is at as a 'foundation' function, and there is then a need to achieve a balance in satisfying a composite wide-ranging mix of objectives, rather than a focus mainly on a narrow range of solely economic (commercial) objectives.

Other studies of rural enterprise with varying sizes of rural businesses have tended to show a similar wide, diverse range of objectives. Gasson, for instance, found twenty-one primary business objective areas for rural enterprisers and identified the differing objectives under four main categories:-

-       instrumental e.g. making a satisfactory income
-       intrinsic e.g. enjoying the life/work
-       social e.g. belonging to the farming community
-       personal e.g. chance to be creative and original

Perkin (1992) identified a priority rating of objectives of a group of Berkshire rural operators:-

1)   Live in community

2)   Be own boss

3)   Show a yearly profit

4)   Keep loans below 50% of net worth

5)   Maintain standard of living

6)   Leave business to next generation

Again the message is that these rural independent operators ('rural freerangers') in practice are having to gain a working balance to various potentially conflicting objective areas and, that, for instance, in practice, the profit maximisation objective area commonly promoted by many experts has to be limited to some extent in that other areas in reality also need degrees of priority.

Looking at individual priorities

Such priority listings are for a group of farmers as a whole, but when looked at individually, there is considerable differential between individual farmers. Figure 1, for instance, below, shows a group of six case study farmers (Green, (1997)) and gives a basic profile for each particular case-study individual.

Fig. 1

Farmer Profiles						
	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3	Case study 4	Case study 5	Case study 6
Farm System/Type	Predominantly dairy	Dairy& milk processor	Predominantly dairy	Predominantly dairy	Mixed livestock	Mixed livestock 250
Farm Size (hectares)	122	61	73	20	121	57
Age of farmer	27	36	37	47	59	30+
No.Years Managerial Experience	0-10	11-20	0-10	11-20	30+	
Marital Status	Single	Married with family	Married with family	Single	Married with family	Single with children
Business Status	Own business	Own business	Own business	Own business	Own business	Own business
Land Tenure	Tenant	Owner occupier	Owner/occup & 20 ha rented	Owner occupier	Owner occupier	Owner occupier
Educational Status	University	Post school part-time	None	None	Post school part-time	None
Current Business State	Reasonable	Reasonable	Under pressure	Reasonable	Under pressure	Under pressure
Income Status	Comfortable	Comfortable	Restricted	Comfortable	Restricted	Restricted

Even given such limited profiles, considerable differences in age groups, social situations, size and type of farms and current business/financial pressures, can be seen. These businesses with their unique individual differences and ranging from 20 HA's to 122 HA's in area size all exist within a relatively small geographic area (a radius of approx. twenty miles). Due to limitations of space and relevance, the full results of the case study survey are not shown - results from representative, example objective areas will, though, serve the purpose of demonstrating the diversity that exists amongst different individual situations. The results show the level of importance the various case-study participants place on the objective area in question and also the level of achievement they currently experience in the area in question. Looking initially at a purely business area objective, that of 'profit maximisation', in Fig. 2 (below) the diversity effect can be seen both in importance priority ratings (1.0 = extremely important, 0 - unimportant) and in the varying reported degrees of achievement.

Fig. 2 (see next page)

Importance & Achievement of:
### Maximising profits
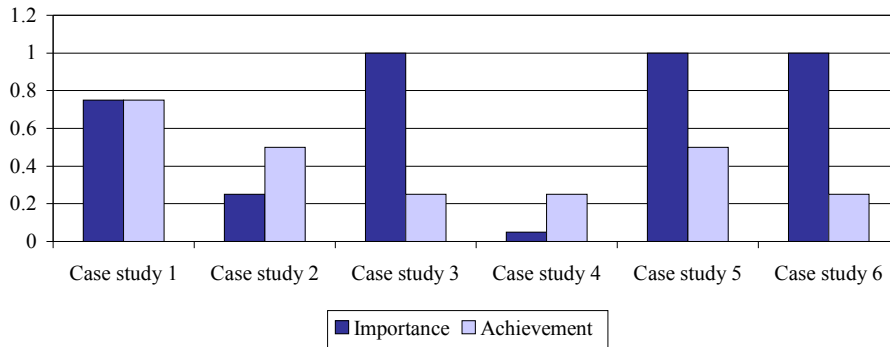
Farmer Case Study

Case study 2's relatively low level of importance priority rating and case study 4's virtually zero importance rating contrasts starkly for instance with the extremely important ratings from case studies 3, 5 and 6. This could appear to demonstrate a correlation in these cases with the importance of profit making with business pressure, as these are the case studies reporting income pressure. Only one case study participant, case study one, feels that there has been high achievement of this objective areas (which does, of course, potentially conflict with many other objective areas - in one study 75% of participants reported conflict.).

Fig. 3 (below) shows the case study results for an objective area in the 'social' category - 'having a good farming reputation'.

Case study 2 participant reports a relatively low importance priority rating and a mid-level achievement rating contrasted with the other scale-end case study 3 participant who rates this objective area as 'extremely important' and reports a fairly high achievement rating. Again the diversity between individuals both in terms of their priorities and their achievement levels is highlighted.

Importance & Achievement of:
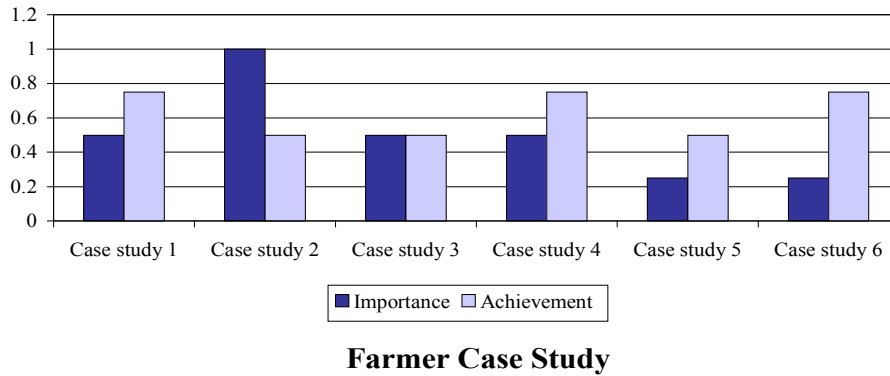### Having a good farming reputation
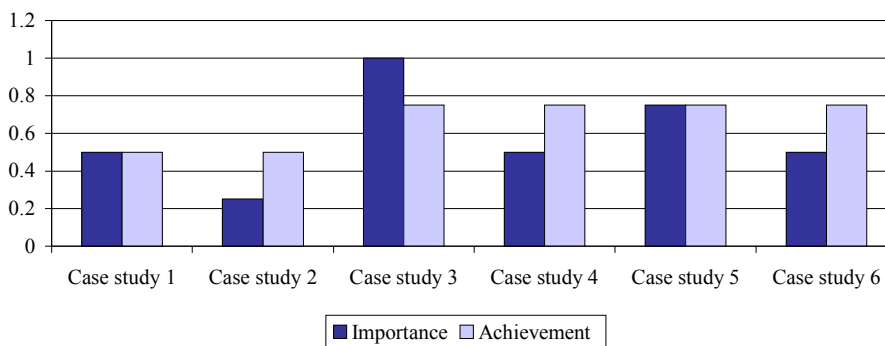
Farmer Case Study

In a 'personal satisfaction' objective area, the picture is similarly diverse as Fig. 4 demonstrates:

Fig. 4

Importance & Achievement of:
Intrinsic Job aspects of Farming


Farmer Case Study

The lowish priority ratings given to the personal objective area of 'intrinsic job satisfaction' by case study participants five and six again contrast strongly with the 'extremely important' level ascribed by case study number two participant, with the other participants at the mid-importance level. A 'current' dynamic effect probably likely to be influencing case studies five and six is that both report current financial pressure, thus tending to push financial objectives to the fore, as can been seen in Fig. 5, and so currently relegating priorities in other objective areas. Three out of the six participants report back relatively high achievement ratings of this objective area.

Figure 5 demonstrates another topical objective area - that of 'environmental consideration' objectives:

Fig. 5

Importance & Achievement of:
Consideration towards the environment

Farmer Case Study
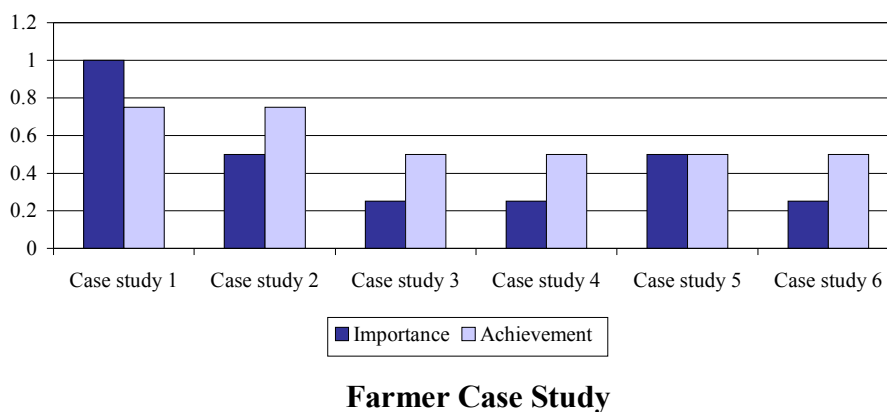
Again the diversity between individual rural enterprisers is shown, with no. 1 giving this objective area 'high priority', a couple of others rating it 'medium priority', and the remaining three according it 'low priority'.

Fig. 6 (below) illustrating the objective area of 'public's opinion of farming' demonstrates the same picture, re-emphasising the message that with the smaller lifestyle type of enterprise, objective priorities could likely be less homogeneous than, say, the larger corporate type of business, more heavily geared to the achievement of standard financial goals.

Importance & Achievement of:
Public's opinion of farming
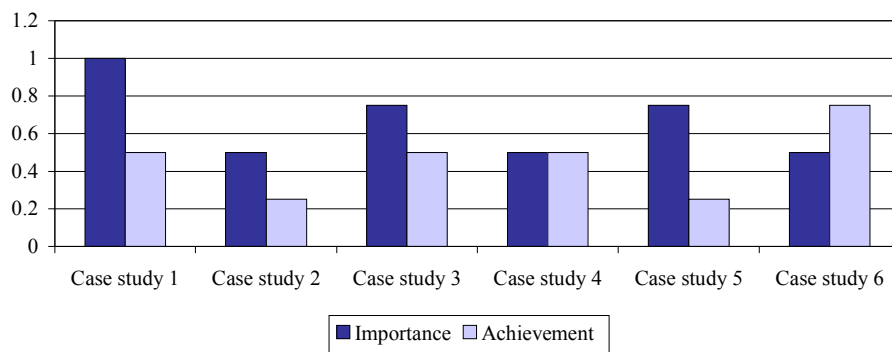
Farmer Case Study

None of the case study participants rate this objective area below that of mid-importance, with one rating it at highest importance level. Only one participant records high achievement level with another two at the other end of the scale recording low levels.

Clearly the view into objective priorities and achievement levels provided by this group of case study participants illustrates the particularly individual nature of the smaller 'lifestyle' -type enterprise/business objectives, reflecting individuals' values, with both objective priority ratings and objective achievement ratings showing clear individual diversities, with current level of business pressures experienced an 'added' dynamic influence. Such results also remind that mainstream 'mass' objective priorities such as 'to make maximum profit' or ' to grow the business', can mask diverse realities, and can also be dangerous when 'adopted' without reference to the individual business's current state or to the particular priority objective pattern relative to that particular business.

Intrinsic and independence objectives: conflict with modern times -?
Enjoyment of rural work and lifestyle and being able to lead a relatively independent lifestyle features in most studies of rural enterprise objectives. Gasson, for instance, under the general heading 'intrinsic' identifies the following particular constituent areas:-

- enjoying the work itself - individual tasks, variety etc.;
- pursuing a healthy, outdoor life;
- purposeful activity, value in hard work;
– independence - from supervision, free to organise time in a variety of situations.

Such values, of course, are not likely to be exclusive to farming – 'purposeful activity' and 'independence', for instance, could maybe be attributed to most independent businesses. Studies of the rural sector elsewhere also tend to highlight

the importance of these intrinsic-type objectives for rural enterprisers. Young, in a study of US farmers reported that 41% of farmers rated 'independence' as the highest valued aspect of the farming occupation. Logically this would imply that they would be prepared to sacrifice a certain amount of profitability (ie. not maximising profits) before surrendering independence. It has been argued that today's society is increasingly 'mass' with standardisation seemingly a common theme and result, with by default associated lower tolerances for individual differences, thereby posing a potential threat to individual independence. Society appears then to be making a relatively strong demand that individuals should fit the model of society provided, rather than provide, for instance, the stability and framework for the full development of the individual..

If this is the case, then this trend can be seen as an actual/potential conflict area with the basic objectives and values of rural operators. The 'businessisation' trends which appear to have been a common theme over the last decade, have focused attention on efficiency, profitability, return on capital and capital growth, and hence away from the non-readily identifiable goal areas which intrinsic goal areas represent - another aspect of trends which when looked at in the light of rural operators objectives, is likely to cause potential conflict. This type of discussion, though, does not necessarily automatically imply that rural operators necessarily give low priority to commercial objectives, rather that whilst economic priorities are 'base' or foundation-level objectives, they tend to be in a mix with personal, environmental, social and other priorities.

The achievement of 'profit sufficiency' (as opposed to 'profit maximisation') features prominently amongst rural enterprisers' objectives - it was the highest rated objective for instance in the Staffordshire/Shropshire study mentioned previously. Also, as the case-studies earlier tended to indicate, the priority ratings of objectives tend to be subject to dynamic forces and when finances and profits are under pressure, profit objectives become more urgent and a higher priority, as case studies five and six, demonstrated. It appears that when a certain 'survival' or 'survive and thrive' level of profitability is attained, that a wider mix of objectives comes on stream and 'higher-order' objectives come into play, which ties in with the message of the psychologist Abraham Maslow..

Maslow's Peak Experiences
Although Maslow's ideas have been around for some time, and a number of reservations expressed about them; his basic model, though, can appeal to an intuitive level of feeling about human needs and how they operate, and it's interesting to note that modern texts on people management still feature Maslow's ideas prominently (e.g. Higher Education textbooks).

Maslow was allegedly the first psychologist who investigated the concept of human mental health as opposed to human mental illness, and his researches led him to formulate his 'hierarchy of human needs' concept. As reviewed elsewhere, the base level he identified as survival, biological needs - food, drink, shelter/protection, procreation - and then a step up to 'security needs' - i.e. to ensure a regular supply of the base need fulfillers e.g. food. Once these steps were largely met, Maslow's researches then indicated that social needs then came more into play - the individual wanting to contribute to the group, followed by the need for social recognition/esteem and allied with personal/self esteem.

The next step up is to the pinnacle level, which he labelled 'self-actualisation' needs, by which he meant 'the individual being able to express and develop him/herself to full potential'. The author Colin Wilson, caught an interest in

Maslow's concept of 'self-actualisation', and particularly Maslow's assertion that many individuals operating at this level reported 'peak' experiences - moments of mystical-type peace, joy and fulfilment. In his own book, (New Pathways in Psychology), Wilson asserts that Maslow's work tended to be under-quoted and the area of 'peak experiences' particularly so. The whole area of 'self-actualisation' is very much related to the individual i.e. the unhindered development of the individual to his/her unique maximum potential.

There have been various explorations/developments of Maslow's self-actualisation concept – one, for instance, from modern psychology, comes up with the following characteristics as previously described of the 'self-actualised' i.e. the mentally healthy and developed person:-

The self-actualising person

1   Perceives people and events accurately, without undue interference from their own preconceptions.

2   Accepts self and other, including imperfections, but seeks improvement where possible.

3   Is spontaneous - especially in their thoughts and feelings.

4   Focuses on problems outside self, rather than being insecure and introspective.

5   Is detached, so that they are not unduly thrown off course by awkward events.

6   Is autonomous, and remains true to self in spite of pressure to conform.

7   Appreciates good and beautiful things, even if they are familiar.

8   Has peak experiences of intense positive emotions of a sometimes mystic quality.

9   Has close relationships, but only with a few carefully chosen people.

10   Respects others, avoids making gratuitous fun of people and evaluates them according to their inner qualities rather than race or social class.

11   Has firm moral standards, and sense of right and wrong, though these may be different from many other people.

12   Is creative. This is perhaps the most fundamental aspect of self actualisation, and is seen as the result of the other aspects listed above. By being open-minded and open to their own, actual experience, the self-actualising person sees things in novel ways and can draw innovative conclusions from established information.

13   Is not 'enculturised' i.e. retains individual assessment and judgement.

(*Arnold et al,* Work Psychology)

All the characteristics/attributes on the list could be seen as advantageous and indeed the person with such a profile might not only be an impressive person, but 'naturally powerful' in the sense of having real personal strength emanating from a deep and real sense of worth. Such a profile is that of an operating individual, who is nevertheless socially orientated in terms of respect for others and particularly in acknowledging, and with respect for, the views of others. Perhaps it is the confidence brought by a real sense of individually gained self worth that incubates open-mindedness and enquiry? - i.e. the individual is not having to protect and defend due to any inner insecurity - ?

Conflict ahead?

The question might be, though, as to whether such self-empowered individuals may not be out of vogue in current society. Many (Ritzer, Schumacher et al) argue that the current level of 'massness' in society, allied with the noted

trend of 'dumbing down' with its non-questing implications, is leading to ever-increasing standardisation strands within society, with governments taking a 'parental' as opposed to 'equal adult' role. The heavy use of standardised quality systems creating homogeneity, the use of performance related pay creating a Herzbergian 'jumping for the jellybeans' syndrome, the creation of a 'hit' culture via the use of league tables and the establishment of a 'control' culture via 'Big Government' and further workplace control measures via targets, for instance - are all quoted as indications that there is a trend more towards a mass homogeneous society which then, by definition and default, could be less tolerant of individual diversity. .If there is some validity to this type of argument, conditions may not be optimal for freeranging and freerangers.

Pirsig, (Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance)*, for instance, argued that the rise in power of logic on the one hand, and the waning of the individual's status and power and influence on the other, has led to the overall imbalanced position where 'logic' (i.e. organisations) rules and 'small' i.e. individuals, are disempowered. , then reducing the balancing effect of 'quality', which resides in individuals, in favour of 'quantity' i.e. the 'large-scale' approach.*

Possible conclusions

On the one hand, Maslow is stating that the gaining of peak human mental health is about the individual being unhindered in reaching the highest (pinnacle) need area - self-development, actualisation, then empowered and encouraged to quest and develop 'individual excellence', along with Pirsig arguing that the individual is the font of 'quality'. On the other hand, there is the possibility of current 'mass' based society with standardisation trends then by definition working against Maslow's self-actualisation process, possibly even impeding it (e.g. measures in recent years to reduce employee security (eg. temporary contact working) having a 'blocking' effect on reaching 'higher' need levels) - ?

A conclusion from such a type of analysis could be that current modern materialistic culture could be then hindering rather than aiding longer-term human health as defined by Maslow, which may itself imply that more human ill-health, both mentally and physically could be expected. Some notable social commentators, for example Erich Fromm, have already pointed out awhile ago that modern Western man does not necessarily seem to be notably long-term fulfilled in spite of the plethora of material benefits available . Ritzer, too, sees this as the problem and is pessimistic re the outcome, seeing mankind propelled by largely commercial motives on a 'road to nowhere', as it were. Schumacher too, sees modern society's 'progress' rather as a boulder hurtling out-of-control downhill. He is not quite as pessimistic as Ritzer, calling, along with Pirsig, for a 'Stop and look re-examination of values' – values being the force behind the objectives and goals people set.

'Small' rather than 'large' culture can be an answer-?

Western economics calls for 'maximisation' e.g. maximisation of profits equates with the most efficient use of resources, hence profit maximisation has long been an active business objective promoted by economists, companies and governments et al. Some argue that economists and others may have promoted basic imbalance by promoting 'maximisation' which is a relatively modern notion and in earlier times, as Heider's modern interpretation of Lao Tsu's words below indicate, may have been taken as a 'doctrine of greed':

'.... a society based on materialism and the conquest of nature works to overcome these (natural) cycles. If some is good, more must be better and an absolute glut seems best. At the same time, those who have little get even less. While (good) leadership follows the natural order of events - and does not take the consumer society for a model'.

Lao-Tsu (5th century BC)

(Heider (1985))

'Moderation in all things' used to be the cry, probably indicating to some extent that life was multi-dimensional and multi-faceted, with a balance then needed between the various strands. It's this 'balance' which in more current times seems to have been somewhat diminished, with maybe the heavy emphasis on the free-market 'maximisation' trend being one of the major causes - ? It could, though, seem likely that such a balance cannot be ignored over a longer-term and that currently (Feb. '13), there's indication of the start of a 're-balancing' natural trend, with the new wave of top financial men indicating that the over self-interested ways of the financial institutions will not be suitable for, or sustainable in, the longer-term future, and that they themselves will need, for instance, a wider, more balanced and self-disciplined approach to their business.

Freerangin' on -------------------------'The Freerange Individual'

Spending reasonable amounts of time in quiet green oases, working in comfortable patterns, variations and paces, 'balm for the soul'. Not so good maybe, though. for creating adrenalin for a more modern fast-paced life, but pretty good to practice Fritz Schumacher's exhortation to have a 'stop and think' - ? Growing things can bring a strong awareness of basics- such as, if the sun don't shine, and the rain don't fall, then, finito! for instance. Back to basics. Makes you think too, it's all in pretty much of a hurry, these days - to where? For what? Interesting questions, in the meantime, just plod on gently weeding the onion bed, and maybe an answer or two will pop up from the subconscious, or the universe – never know your luck.

'A man's reach should be beyond his grasp, else what's a heaven for?' *(Browning)*

Aiming higher, aiming for the bigger, higher self, for even the so-called 'enlightened' state – but is it all 'eyewash' , as some - many? - might perhaps describe it, particularly in a so called analytical scientific age of munificent materialism that, according to some, has lead us to aim low rather than high, 'dumbing down' trend as opposed to 'wising up' - ?

 In this age of 'affluenza', have the sparkling array of goodies on offer, for instance, bedazzled and stopped/slowed up the 'restless spirits' - ? Is there now, for instance, a case of 'lost vision and faith' – and now, only if it can be felt or touched, it is to be believed - ? Spiritualism in the form of organised western church delivery has declined and secularism risen, but is there a chance , though, 'the baby may have been thrown out with the bathwater' along the way , the 'baby' being a spiritual aspect to life - ?

In modern times, the historical 'parental' approach of religious orders might well have palled, thwarting then maybe fuller personal development, probably of some importance to growth-seeking freerangers, who at the very least are likely to want to operate 'multi-dimensionally' , as opposed to single-dimensionally at the base material level. This may then mean investigating, for instance, areas such as personal spirituality.

Many so-called 'ordinary' people do report what they describe as spiritual experiences, but at the individual level – maybe actual spirituality can only be experienced at this level - ? It may not be verifiable by mass analytical methods, but does that necessarily render it invalid? If it's real and beneficial to the individual, (and, presumably not over harming others), then maybe it needs to be accepted as real and genuine human experience - ?

Maslow, the analytical psychology researcher already referred to, was apparently surprised by the number of his subjects who reported 'peak experiences', citing experiences of intense joy, well-being and mystical-type moments, and went on to specifically investigate such phenomena, concluding , that they could be real, 'authentic' experiences and that a 'higher level of being/consciousness' could be a real possibility, possibly/probably having been experienced by some.

A significant minority of humans actively seek to attain higher states of being via the personal growth movement, and many spiritual teachings of eastern origin aver that the business of humans is to grow in a spiritual sense, some suggesting that every human will ultimately (after maybe many lifetimes) end up in a state of grace, experiencing full awareness, love and compassion.

Whilst all the spiritual stuff might sound far-fetched and removed from current experience, maybe it's not too bad an idea to recall that the experience of every human is essentially likely to be limited – after all being very small organisms – and that it' could then be likely there's the potential to experience outside the individual's current realm, whilst also of course retaining some suitably critical facility to detect any hocus pocus – the area of spirituality, non-concrete as it is, could presumably be a potential nirvana for fraudsters. In other words, to practice good freeranging,

keeping the mind relatively open, and enquiring. Maybe the 'higher' level can be investigated by examining Maslow's highest human need level he identified, that of 'self-actualisation' - becoming the fullest version of self a person can become, which obviously reverberates strongly for those freerangers on a journey of personal growth and the exploration of their individual natures and potential.

Self – actualisation
Modern psychologists, including the eminent Prof. Cary Cooper of Lancaster University (UK), have sought to put more meat on Maslow's frame by identifying the modern characteristics of the 'self-actualised' person, and it's these characteristics which could seem to be relevant to 'freerangers':

The self – actualised individual:

'Perceives people and events accurately, without undue interference from own preconceptions'

Maybe not quite so simple to do in practice for many – most - ? Who hasn't some or other axe to grind or 'vested interest' ? Accumulated experience over time bringing a 'more you know, the more there is to know ' type of awareness, may well help in terms of the individual developing the capability of taking an objective view, and of course another angle is to cultivate the 'open mind' approach, which many undoubtedly do, although in recent times the 'closed mind', vested interest approach could seem to have gained ground.

Transactional analysis, which seeks to clarify psychological states, identifies that the individual comprises of three basic states : Child, Parent and Adult. *The* 'Child' *is the feeling, spontaneous part of the individual, the* 'Parent' *the judgemental, responsible side, and the* 'Adult' *the 'weighing the evidence in the balance' objective state, said to be a later maturing element, and the area corresponding with this particular self-actualisation characteristic.*

Time, presumably, is also necessary for a reasonable level of self-knowledge/awareness to accumulate, which can then be used to, say, offset any self- known prejudice to ensure an objective take on the situation. An individual, for instance may have had certain political conditionings/leanings all their life, but even though they're still relevant, now puts these aside and vote differently because of a dynamic situation – another political party, say, having a perceived better policy on a key current issue.

The self-actualised individual:

'Accepts self and others, including imperfections, but seeks improvement where possible'

Accepting not only self but others – quite a tough spec - ? - and accepting imperfection in the same breath. Probably useful to remember, the statement describes the 'finished article' – for most it could be more of a case of 'work in progress' - ? A few decades back, the UK had hierarchical, quite strict, social codes which can appear to have given the message that the individual wasn't that important, and what mattered was 'organised society'   (eg. 'you must think of others before yourself'). Maybe today's 'focus on the self' philosophy is the other end of the spectrum, possibly a longer-term reaction to the non-self times, which potentially presumably could then have left many reared in those times with low self-esteem issues , and some 'accepting self' problems - ?

Such an example can perhaps illustrate why it can be important for the individual, maybe with some help, to freerange and develop understanding and answers for themselves, which can then offset any possible negative conditioning effects, such as in this case, over-strict social strictures potentially restricting individual development. 'Accepting others including imperfections' gives though room to manoeuvre, in that it gives some space to take them

'as they are' and release any self-inflicted pressure that they should be like ourselves. 'Acceptance' though, can be a concept that can cause some confusion at times, in that does it mean, for instance, that any behaviour is then 'acceptable' - ? Another, pragmatic approach could be to 'accept' in the short-term the situation as it is, whilst in the longer-term working for change for the better if needed - ?

The more freerange 'work' the individual does, perhaps the easier this apparent contradiction is to cope with, in that as the individual via growth 'work ' is strengthening the self in a real way, the self then becoming surer of own ground and better then able to take on board and cope with other sorts of personalities. A 'saving grace' too, is that there is then the rider to 'seek improvement where possible'- the last phrase probably being meaningful in that not necessarily all situations are easily improvable- some may be pretty difficult.

The self-actualised individual:

'Is spontaneous – especially in their thoughts and feelings'

One minute the spec is to be able to recognise and then 'put aside' prejudices and pre-conceptions, in order to be objective via the 'Adult' ego state, and yet now also have the facility of 'spontaneity' -? Perhaps, though, again, this referring to the 'finished actualised product', means that such a well-sorted person will then automatically come over spontaneously, the reality of which will be that there's been a lot of previous work and growth. Expert pro golfers, for instance, often seem to have reached such a state of 'effortless perfection', but have obviously previously worked and practiced hard to get to this point. Probably a neat state to attain to, especially if it's as a 'life operator', and a neat feeling being 'on the way' towards it - ?

The self-actualised individual:

'Focuses on problems outside self, rather than being insecure and introspective'.

Again probably important to keep aware that this spec is of the advanced 'finished article'. Insecurity and introspection may not be bad per se, in that it's presumably possible that a certain amount at times could need to be gone through to reach the 'sorted' state - ? It has been commented that one of the limitations of the 'out-for-self' philosophy is that by its design it encourages self-absorption, in itself maybe a form of 'over' introspection, and therefore by default restricts the capacity of the individual to take on board any wider picture, not necessarily a situation conducive to freeranging.

The self-actualised individual:

'Is detached, not unduly thrown of course by awkward events'

Presumably, such a characteristic implies the individual possessing inner strength and 'moral fibre', courage and integrity, which again might imply quite strongly that the individual has grown and developed over time, and that this process has involved the individual gaining her/his own strength and values, which in turn, may imply that freeranging has been a part of the process and that developing such personal assets is the pay-off of practising freeranging - ?

The self-actualised individual:

'Is autonomous, and remains true to self in spite of pressure to conform'

This characteristic again emphasises the role of individual strength, gained in the crucible of valid individual experience, and the ability such strength can give to be able to manage the sometimes-difficult job of resisting social pressures felt to be potentially injurious. Some have argued that today's culturally conforming pressures may be greater than anytime previously because of such an extensive media presence and use, and because of a strongly 'mass'- focused culture, by default then potentially limiting in terms of fuller individual growth..

The wider world tends to be be experienced by the small organism that is the individual through the media, which by definition has to present selected and filtered items, and parts of which may put a deliberate bias into the content. The general effect, too, needs consideration – some believe that, for instance, news coverage is over-biased towards negative events , reflecting a cultural position.

News providers might presumably validly argue that they are accurately representing events, although presumably there has to be a 'mass' effect – little Johnny and his parents joy at him getting through important exams will be discounted as news against wider-impacting news, which if in actuality is largely negative in nature, could then contribute to a negative-energy environment.

Although the individual's news is indeed 'small', it may be still capable of having a 'big' impact, such as, say, an uplifting effect on people generally, so maybe more balance with more small positive and meaningful news and less large, negative and remote news would give a better milieau for people to operate within, and with a bit more focus on 'small human' news, a better balance and more meaning, particularly maybe for freerangers - ?

Modern large-scale commercial times can potentially induce indirect socially-conforming pressure:

One TV programme recently showed an individual embarking on a freerange type of trip, trying to discover 'real' independence in the traditional home of the 'free', the USA. He aimed to cross America by car coast-to-coast, but only staying in small independently-owned establishments and buying gas (petrol) from independent sellers. It proved to be a hard mission, and he had to get off the beaten track often to get any joy.

He railed against the fact that 'big focus' times had created large-scale chains of impersonal, homogeneous eating and bedding facilities across the country, expressing the concern that one effect could be then the creation of a homogenisation process creating homogenous , non-independent people.

When this is linked then with, say, the impersonality of the food and other goods buying systems, the idea that the 'system' is moulding people, and by default then reducing individuality, sociability and independence, may not be so far-fetched, and of interest and some concern to freerangers.

The self-actualising individual:

'Appreciates good and beautiful things, even if they are familiar'

Is it 'human nature' to respond positively to 'good', say, to a 'feelgood' news story on TV - ? At a guess it could be so, which is good news, although presumably not everyone may necessarily comply, for various reasons. Such a state would also reiterate that humans are social animals- would it, for instance, be pretty hard and against human nature not to respond to, say, a child in distress - ?

Does, though, any mainly self-orientation geared culture then by default de-emphasise the social aspect , and therefore put human positive response as above at some risk? Would such a narrowly focused 'self' culture then be

too single-dimensioned, in need of more balance between important multi-dimensions, (eg. social as well as individual), and is therefore the individual being culturally restricted to a smaller, narrower view, thereby limiting ability to 'see wider'? (and hence to see and relate to 'good and beautiful things' - ?).

If so, maybe there's a case for a degree of 'cultural re-balancing' - ? 'Seeing wider' and appreciating good and beautiful things could be one of the essences of freeranging – one of the key benefits and returns of making the self-investment necessary. Presumably, creating 'harmonious balance' between important life-sustaining areas (egs. individual, social, environmental, security, economic, sustainability etc.) is a key role for government, and one at which any 'vested interest' type of political party system might at times struggle with - ?

The self-actualising ndividual:

'Has peak experiences of intense positive emotions of a sometimes mystical quality'

In recent times (and maybe of course before) inquiry into energy beams and sources have revealed that it appears that some (few-?) people have been able to operate on different energy patterns – similar maybe to switching to a different wavelength – and that these individuals can then receive energy through these that is positive and beneficial. Maybe the experience of intense 'peak' surges has something to do with such energy waves -?

Such concepts maybe sound somewhat far-fetched in current times, of which it's been said that the wavelength generally operated on currently is low, due to the emphasis on lower, base, material levels. If there is some reality in this, and many freerangers presumably may well want to keep at least an open mind on it, then the implications could be that in current times it will be harder rather than easier to have higher-level experiences, which, though, might in turn offer self-evident proof to some that they don't exist - ?

An eastern concept gives that such 'higher' human experiences are attained through the process:
  Mass > Individual > Spiritual (personal level)
which again might be a more difficult concept for some given the trend particularly in the west to secularism and hence away from spirituality, possibly accelerated in a scientific, analytical age geared towards logic.
 Logically, though, is it impossible to escape from logic - ?

The self-actualised/realised individual:

'Has close relationships, but with only a few chosen people'

Maybe this high-spec individual has in the past had more relationships than he/she has currently – in the process of developing to the high spec the individual gains self-knowledge and 'naturally' becomes more 'discerning', and quite possibly 'rarer'- there may not be too many alike around, and after all, 'birds of a feather----'.

If the 'mass > individual > spiritual' concept has merit, then to get to the 'advanced' point, an individual has undertaken the self-knowledge/self-discovery/self-awareness journey, which is individual and unique to the individual, so there could be an 'aloneness' factor – the higher is gone, the rarer the air, the fewer the people - ?   A load of baloney - ? ?   But nevertheless seems to make some sense, and of course – open mind – who knows? Could help to explain some of the differences between people - ?

The self-actualised/realised individual:

'Respects others, avoids making fun of people, evaluating them according to inner qualities, rather than external factors such as wealth, race or class'

A tramp, for instance, could actually be a self-actualised person, but is unlikely maybe to get much modern-day respect and recognition, in a culture wherein wealth, power and trappings are deemed to be the important success indicators - ? Any such self-actualised individual presumably would have a pretty healthy level of self-respect, which could well have been enhanced by taking on the self-development work in itself, and which then externally translates to respect for others, but perhaps not so easy to practice without a solid foundation of self-respect -?

It would seem likely that a society comprising of self-actualisers/developing self-actualisers could be productive and creative. Would, though, a human self-actualised society ever be a realistic possibility? At this point maybe a little unlikely, but, perfection being 'the far off goal', and maybe freerangers can 'do their bit' - ?

The self-actualised/realised individual:

'Has firm moral standards, and sense of right and wrong, though these may differ from others'

A school of thought holds that absolute standards don't exist, only relative standards, whilst others believe such a view to be dangerous, one leading to 'moral decline' due to lack of a firm and clear moral compass. Could it be the relatively high degree of self-knowledge the self-actualiser accrues in her/his journey which then leads to their own clearer vision of right and wrong   - ? The important thing, maybe, particularly for freerangers, is to make the journey, and discover for self what matters, what's important, what's 'right and wrong' - ?

The self-actualised/realised individual:

'Is creative. As a result of the factors above, themselves a result of the individual's efforts of self-inquiry into 'what is', such an individual practices open-mindedness and openness to their experiences, seeing things in novel ways, drawing novel conclusions and developing novel solutions/applications'

So, an answer, or even 'the' answer (?) to generating innovative activity, is to ensure that the 'organisation' creates the conditions suited to self-actualisation, to the fuller development of individuals and a work environment which recognises and values peoples 'inner' qualities - ? It might be interesting to see it done, although it could be likely that it is done often at the 'micro' level - ? The 'innovative' outcome, though, may just be that 'progress' is at too fast a rate, losing the anchor core of our beings, vital to self-actualisation itself, and that, innovatively, there's a need to 'take a break', and even go backward a step or two, to then find a 'right road' on which to travel, a process which freerangers are no doubt doing for themselves. Maybe, too, having a beer or two , whilst having a break, possibly a Bank's beer, which is, as their slogan says, 'Unspoilt by Progress - ?.

And finally, the self-actualised/realised individual'

' Is not unduly influenced or trapped by the prevailing culture'

Well, she/he is a freeranger - ?!

Bibliography

Arnold, J. Cooper C, Robertson, I T (1995) **Work Psychology**. Pitman

Gasson, R. (1973) **Goals and Values of Farmers.** *Journal of Agricultural Economics 24, 421-37*

Green, S. (1998)   **Farmer's objectives**. *Harper Adams, Shropshire UK. In: Robinson, M. A. (2000)* **Clarification and Identification of Business Objectives**. *Farm Management Vol 10 No. 8 Winter 2000*

 Heider, J. (1985)   **The Tao of Leadership.** *Wildwood House.*

Maslow, A. H. (1954)   **Motivation and Personality** *Harper and Row.*

Pirsig, R. (1976)   **Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance.** *Corgi.*

Ritzer, G. (1996)   **Macdonaldisation of Society**, *Pine Forge Press.*

Robinson M. A. (1984)   **Farmers' Objectives** *Harper Adams Occ. Paper 8411*

Schumacher, E. F. (1973). **Small is Beautiful.**   *Vintage.*

Wilson, C. (1972) **New Pathways in Pyschology**: **Maslow and the Post-Freudian Revolution**. *Gollantz*

Yamate, K. (1995)   **The Way of No-Mind.** *Council Oak*

Young, J. A. (1984) **Small-scale Farmers**. *In: Applebaum H(ed).*   **Work and Market in Industrial Societies**. *Abany. N.Y. State University of New York Press.*

Mike Robin biog
(freerangerpress@yahoo.co.uk)

M R worked variously as a timber yard hand, builder, encyclopaedia salesman, farmworker, bus conductor, barman, wildlife society recruiter, driveway salesperson, farming adviser/consultant, farmer, farm diversification consultant, journal editor and lecturer in farm business management, acquiring an Agricultural Economics degree along the way.

His interests are organic farming, rural community, the environment, longer-term sustainability, reading, music, golf, culture watching, people potential and small-scale organic growing. He has previously written Rural Lifestyling: Whys and Wherefores of Starting a Small Independent Rural Enterprise, *a series of rural management guides, as well as sundry academic journal and conference papers.*

He and his partner run a small life-sustaining smallholding ('micro-holding') in the UK midlands.