

# The sixties and all that

Twenty years ago John (Danny) Daniels began writing for the Sunday Express under the name of Danny Edwards, his articles appearing on the Under 21 Page, covering the pop scene in New Plymouth.

In the 18 years since he left New Plymouth John has travelled to Europe twice, but has spent most of the time living in New South Wales. He is married and has a daughter.

The Express has received a number of short articles from him which we will publish over coming weeks under the logo, Child of the Sixties.

CHILD OF THE SIXTIES

In recent months I have been in somewhat of a time warp. Everywhere I look, and in everything I read, New Zealand seems to be calling to me. Being an expatriate Kiwi, I get homesick and often start thinking of my youth in New Plymouth where I cut my teeth in amateur journalism and photography. As the years roll past it seems just like yesterday that we, the children of the sixties, were heavy into the Beatles, surfing, hot rodding and rock music in general.

At this time one of the wildest pop groups, The Underdogs, had come to the forefront of New Zealand rock music, and it was to be my first job as an amateur journalist to interview them.

Here was I, the green kid from the suburbs, waiting

nervously to interview one of New Zealand's top pop groups, at The Devon Motor Lodge. Boy was this kid out of his depth!

In typical showbiz tradition the group arrived a little late, making this young

## CHILD OF THE SIXTIES

By John Daniels

reporter even more nervous. I thought I was well prepared, questions all written down and pencil at the ready.

I think they could have given me a few lessons.

First I had to sort out

who was who, a hard job when you're new at the game. Asking them questions like how they got their start in showbiz must have bored them to tears. They had probably heard this question hundreds of times before.

After talking for what seemed to be forever, I had enough material to write their life histories and then some. After many thank yous, and photos being taken on a small box type camera, we parted and went our ways.

After coming down from my high, I went home and wrote up my first interview, which was submitted for publication a few days later. After reading what appeared, I realised the editor had used his discretion and cut my manuscript down to a readable size, leaving in only the main

points of interest. From this came my first lesson — don't write a manuscript!

Lesson number two — buy a good camera. Lesson number two was to prove a good one. Although I was to go on and interview many more pop groups, photography was to become my first love.

But after all these years I still recall that first interview, look back and have a good laugh to myself.

As the years roll by it seems like yesterday that we, the children of the Sixties, were heavily into the Beatles, surfing, hot-rodding and rock music in general.

Do you remember the rock bands playing at the Old Folks' Hall, and those great dances at the Trades Hall? Those days just seemed to be one big, long Indian summer — days spent watching the surfies at Fitzroy and nights filled with madness around beach campfires, with good vibrations ringing out from the radio.

From the beach we would retire to that greatest of old New Plymouth institutions, Ping's Pie Cart, for "pea, pie and pud" before heading for home.

That was how it was in New Plymouth for us, the children of the Sixties, in New Plymouth. They were mad days. We filled our weekends with music and happenings the like of which may never be seen again — happenings such as holding a party for 13 people in the back of a van.

Was it the cool sea breeze that gave this small city something about its bikies, surfies and V8 boys that was unique, or were



Friends outside the Blue Room.

we simply doing what thousands of other kids were doing in every other town and city in New Zealand? Were we all going exactly the same way about frantically copying the best in British fashions, music and fun?

Were we of that generation really searching for something that other generations before and since have not sought with such intensity? Those who

founded and patronised The Blue Room thought folk music was the answer. (The Blue Room was in the building that has since become the Egmont Steam Mill; its dark decor and general air of utter depravity appalled the easily-shockable establishment of the day. — Ed)

Or did Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds hold the answer? Was she just a passing phase like the

mind-blowing chemicals that first came our way in the Sixties, or the magic mushroom that is having similar effects today?

All the time the music kept changing. First there were the Beatles, then the Rolling Stones; and Bob Dylan was in there too.

These are some of the things that an expatriate Kiwi remembers about New Plymouth in the Sixties.

# Down to where the Titanic lies

This week's Tuesday documentary on TV One follows undersea geologist Robert D Ballard's expedition to locate and film the world's most elusive shipwreck — the Titanic.

A handful of the 1986 pictures have already been shown on news networks around the world. But the best is yet to come. Says the documentary producer and director Graham

there's several tons of pressure to the square inch. But there's no real reason why the major parts of the Titanic shouldn't have been preserved. In fact I think

# GOLD-X

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