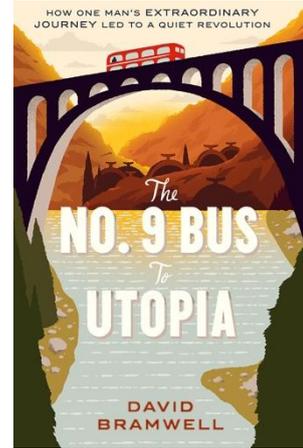


THE No.9 BUS TO UTOPIA

*How one man's extraordinary journey
led to a quiet revolution*

by David Bramwell

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When a long-term girlfriend walked out, citing his 'selfishness' as the reason, David Bramwell knew he had to change. He had read about some extraordinary communities of people who live outside conventional society. Could they teach him about giving? Had they found a better way to live in the modern world? And, if so why do so many of them still insist on wearing tie-dye? He set out on a year long quest to find out.

With wit, humour and a great deal of affection for the people he meets along the way, Bramwell recounts his experiences of communal living in **NO 9 BUS TO UTOPIA**. From an anarchist hippy commune in the heart of Copenhagen, to a spiritual caravan park in Scotland, from free love communities across Europe, to a hot-tub paradise in California, Bramwell tried them all. He aimed to spend a month with the residents, learning about their way of life, whatever it entailed – group hugs, being kind to inanimate objects, naked bathing, stress-releasing meditation, and so much more. He didn't always last.

In the Italian Alps he joined a 1000-strong community that felt more like the movie set of Star Trek with its secret underground temple the size of St Paul's Cathedral, an alien founder, and, so it was claimed, a fully-functional time-machine. There was even a singing rubber plant called 'Hellie'. Yet, despite the fantastical elements it was this community that most impressed Bramwell and is the only one to which he may someday return.

In **NO 9 BUS TO UTOPIA** Bramwell describes what happened when he arrived home in Brighton. Determined to make a change, not just to his own life, but to the increasing numbers of lonely and isolated people in society, he set up an event to bring his own community together. Called 'Zocalo', it involved neighbours taking chairs and barbecues outside their homes on one day, and talking to each other. It was hugely successful, and he now plans to extend the event across the city, and to other areas, too. He may not have discovered his own Utopia but he had found a way to bring people together and, in the process, learnt how to give something back.

About the author: A writer, broadcaster, performer and musician Dr Bramwell is the creator of the best-selling '*Cheeky Guides*' book series, and host of Brighton's long-running salon, the Catalyst Club. In 2011 he won a Sony Award for his show, *The Haunted Moustache* on Radio 3, and has also won 'Best Comedy' and 'Outstanding Theatre' Awards. Despite his inordinate pride in being a northerner, he now lives in Brighton.

For an interview with David Bramwell or a review copy please contact Jane Beaton on 07802

433471 jane@kewpublicity.co.uk.

For more information: www.drbramwell.com.