

# Vision

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*True philosophy is the ascent from the things which flow and rise and fall, to those which truly are, and always remain the same.*

Plato, The Republic

This new venture for the School in Auckland, Vision, has arisen from a desire to have a newsletter which will inform and enrich members and interested families and friends on a regular basis.

It seeks to do this by publishing information about the many and varied activities and events in the School, and provide enrichment through literature and poetry from established sources and original contributions by members. Vision will pursue these aims in concert with our website, [www.philosophy.school.nz](http://www.philosophy.school.nz)

During preparation of this first issue, it was surprising to discover just how much goes on in a Philosophy year! The Auckland School's cultural programme offers a varied menu of opportunities to enjoy good company and guidance. Numerous examples of members discovering an unrealised singing, acting, dancing or artistic talent have emerged through the cultural studies groups.

These endeavours have all drawn on the experiences of our fellow Schools around the world, including Art in Action, a four day festival held at Waterperry, near Oxford each year hosted by the London School. This well

known event features international artists who are invited to exhibit. It provided the inspiration for our own annual Open Day, where the work of the Auckland School's artists is displayed as well as other activities within the School.

It is intended that Vision will have regular updates from each culture group, and the rest of the School's calendar, such as Open Days, concerts, the Ficino School Ball, construction projects, fund-raising and so forth will also feature.

For literary contributions from students we ask that they be of an uplifting nature so they direct the mind to the good. The literary section of the newsletter will also list new or recent titles available from the School bookshop and include reviews.

Vision will be published by week 12 each term, and we will be seeking contributions by no later than week 6.

Finally, "Vision" staff wish to thank all those who have contributed so generously to this first issue.

*For enquiries/contributions, contact Marilyn Marshall: Ph: 579-8646, Fax: 579-7854, Email: [mjmarsh@attglobal.net](mailto:mjmarsh@attglobal.net)*

## YOUTH GROUP

Our Youth group members have set up a intricate web of connections with their counterparts in London, South Africa, Perth, Melbourne, and Sydney.

Several of the young people have now taken part in Residential weeks in London and Sydney and have formed enduring friendships as a result. Reciprocal flying visits across the Tasman are now an accepted part of the scene; and some from further afield planned for the longer Christmas break from schools and universities.

On a recent Youth group weekend, 10 Secondary boys (12 – 15 years) joined their seniors, both boys and girls, and invited a number of past members to a Saturday night dinner. It was a very enjoyable evening and a renewal of acquaintances, leading to a “let’s do that again” request.

And ‘CULTURE’! Yes, we did inflict some culture upon these impressionable young minds by taking them to the Art Gallery to view the Masters exhibition. The visit was greatly enhanced in its value by the comprehensive insights provided by Mr Peter Tibbits, the School’s Art Group instructor, who gently opened our eyes to the finer points of the symbolism and techniques utilised by the Masters.

## PHILOSOPHY IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM

As part of a review of the School’s interaction with the community, a comprehensive website has now been launched at [www.philosophy.school.nz](http://www.philosophy.school.nz)

This is intended to provide 24 hours per day access to details about the School where those interested can find out more about the courses and activities and establish direct contact if they wish. The site also contains references to the other Schools in New Zealand and links to School websites around the world.

The site has been registered with most of the major search engines and it would be appreciated if students wishing to view the site would first use their favourite search engine, as this will improve its rankings in some cases.

*‘If you want to be happy, be.’* (Leo Tolstoy: 1828-1910)

## CULTURAL GROUPS - WHEN AND WHERE

### Wednesday

Vedic Chants:	9.00 – 10.00 am	27 Esplanade Rd
Plato Group	10.00 – 11.30am	“

### Friday

Art Group	6.30 - 10.00 pm	“
Renaissance Studies	7.00 – 9.00 pm	“

### Saturday

Vedic Dance	Morning	“
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### Sunday

Choir	7.00 – 9.30 pm	“
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# JULY RESIDENTIAL WEEK

The annual visit by Mr Donald Lambie, leader of the parent School in England, was hosted this July by the Auckland School.

He was accompanied by Mrs Lambie, and six tutors from overseas Schools.

Mr Lambie spoke about his recent visit to India to have conversations with His Holiness Shri Sankaracharya, carrying on the tradition of discourses and visits that took place over many years by Mr Leon MacLaren.

Over one hundred students attended the eight day event, which had a balanced and varied programme with emphasis upon the practice of meditation.

There was daily study of the Christian Scriptures, St. John's Gospel and great works of literature, singing and music. David Ward, a prominent English concert pianist, was present and most evenings finished with the inspired playing of Mozart's music.

Mr Lambie gave one lecture for School members not in residence and concluded with the last words Jesus spoke to the apostles, "Be of good cheer", adding "That is a commandment".

This typified both the seriousness and the happiness that was present throughout the visit. The whole event was notable for its lightness and ease.

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## FICINO SCHOOL BALL

After last year's ball we looked forward to this year's event with eager anticipation and expectation.

The theme of the Ball was "Literature" and from the walls of the Sheraton Ballroom, the immortal Bard spoke to us as only he can through extracts from his plays. The writing was beautifully executed in gold paint on a black background by Elise Broadwith.

The headmaster, Mark Broadwith, gave a welcome address. He enjoined all to have a marvellous time and expressed appreciation for all the work by the "Friends of Ficino" which made the event possible. Jack Platt, Chairman of the "Friends", in his speech specifically thanked the ladies who had so willingly donated their time and talents to ensure the evening was a success.

There was a fine three course meal with wine served at our tables and the music was splendidly provided by the Wentworth Brewster Ensemble. The Master of Ceremonies, Hamish

Hudson, spoke to us of the value and benefit to the children of the words of Shakespeare.

We were then entertained by an excerpt from "The Taming of the Shrew" performed with vigour by Amber Brady and Pascall Tibbits. The next performance – equally talented! – was that of the auctioneer, John Ferens. The items to be auctioned had all been donated, including two beautiful hand-crafted shawls by Hilary and John Scott, and two wonderfully detailed paintings by Tony Clark.

During the evening raffle tickets were offered for three abundantly filled hampers of donated goodies and the "wild and whirling" music, singing and dancing continued until the Congo wound its way around the floor, presaging the approaching end of the Ball.

After an exuberant Finale by the band, and expressions of goodwill towards Ficino School, we said our farewells until next year.

A total of \$3500 was raised for the Ficino School by the event.

# Ficino School

We are fortunate to have such a rich inheritance of philosophy to guide and inform this educational venture, called the Ficino School.

The Auckland day school opened in February 1997. Those halcyon days of 29 pupils now seem a very distant memory. In fact, we are still in just the fourth year of operation. Assemblies these days consist of 107 pupils and attendant staff. We are also very fortunate to be just one of a company of eleven schools world wide, all working from the same principles. Well, what exactly are those principles? I am often asked what it is that is distinctive about these schools.

Mr Leon MacLaren, in 1975, when the St James Schools in London were founded, wrote down three simple principles to guide the schools: giving the pupils information,



simplest of all these principles is that there is such a thing as God; a fact all too easily overlooked. Secondly, 'knowledge of the universe' – a grand vision indeed, but why not? Children do have huge questions that are too easily lost when we do not attempt to answer them. The third and fourth areas cover information on mankind and the individual's relation to that humanity, i.e. their role in society.

The other two main principles that guide the school, the human duties and disciplined practice form the topic of another article. But these principles, applied well, are what give these day schools their distinctive character.

It seems that you cannot give too much time and energy to an enterprise such as this; there always remains plenty to do. Just ask Harry van der Vossen, the school administrator, and the many volunteer philosophy students and parents about that!



*Mrs Brickland and Class One outside new classrooms.*

reminding them of their human duties, and providing disciplined practice. It is worth noting the natural sequence to this. Firstly, the information does need to be provided. He further specified the need for information to cover four areas of knowledge. Firstly, 'simple principles of spiritual knowledge'. Well the

Inevitably, the establishment of a school will mean sacrifice and difficulties, but that is no reason to faint in the face of the need. These schools have a contribution to offer to education. Leon MacLaren's vision was generous, simple and wide and it is up to us to carry that forward.

# TEACHERS AND HEADMASTERS CONFERENCE, JULY 2000

This year's annual Teachers Conference lacked none of the usual sparkle and inspiration.

Mr Debenham, the founding Headmaster of the St James schools in London, had invited Heads of the overseas day schools to a Conference to run concurrently with the Teachers residential conference at Nanpantan Hall, in Leicestershire, England. All eight heads from our family of schools attended. We combined with the three St James heads, and Miss Caldwell as the retired head of the Girls School, giving a total of twelve in that assembly. The teachers numbered some 110, including all of the St James staff plus many others from the United Kingdom as well as a visiting contingency from the day schools in Ireland and South Africa! A truly international gathering.

The theme of the conference was, following Plato's ideal, that the best education needs to turn the mind from the realm of becoming to that of 'being'; or, if you like, where the person fully realises his or her true potential. Plato's Republic deals with what is necessary in education for the mind of the student be free to make this move. It has always been the practice for the teachers on these conferences to meet in subject groups, such as maths,



*Heads from the world-wide group of schools at Nanpantan Hall.*

science, English, classics or Sanskrit etc, to not only study the subjects themselves and prepare lesson material or write texts, but to consider the direction, aim and nature of the subject and how that subject can inspire and direct its students towards their full potential. In English, for example, the very practical point is made that,

*"the words in your mind, the words that you speak at this moment, at every moment, make you as an individual what you are. Language is creative and it is our thoughts which create the kind of world each of us lives in." (Introduction to Pupils Text; Year 9"*

Everybody found the conference to be greatly uplifting and it was grand to have the whole movement worldwide represented under one roof. This was the first time ever that we have all met together. There are now movements to promote the work of the schools internationally, including by the use of technology and better distribution and sharing of information. The founder in 1975 of St James Schools in London, Mr Leon MacLaren, would, I believe, have been very pleased.

*"Education is a companion which no misfortune can depress, no crime can destroy, no enemy can alienate, no despotism can enslave. At home a friend, abroad an introduction, in solitude a solace, and in society an ornament." (Joseph Addison, English Essayist - "The Spectator", Nov. 6, 1711)*

# Cultural Activities

## RENAISSANCE STUDIES GROUP

The group has been meeting on Friday nights for the past six years.

The main focus of study has been the Letters of Marsilio Ficino (1433-1499), Head of the Platonic Academy of Florence, from which the Renaissance drew its most potent intellectual and spiritual inspiration.

The love, wisdom and understanding so evident in the Letters of Ficino provide inspiration to all and remind us that the fulfilment of man lies in the return to his source.

The highlight of the past year was the visit by Mr and Mrs Salaman from the U.K. to mark the 500th anniversary of Ficino's death. (Mr Salaman is the leader of the London School's Renaissance Studies and Classics Translation Group). Undoubtedly, all who were fortunate enough to attend the study sessions or lectures given by Mr Salaman were much enriched and uplifted by the seemingly boundless enthusiasm and love that he manifested.

The group would welcome new members.

*Please phone Mary Tibbits (411-8391).*

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## PLATO GROUP

*"Do you then be reasonable Crito...think of Philosophy herself. Try and examine her well and truly... if she be what I believe she is then follow her and serve her and be of good cheer."*

Socrates to Crito - (Euthydemus)

The most propitious environment for the study of Plato is with friends and companions. This is because the dialogues are living conversations and the Truth in them is found in the room when two or more people read Plato carefully and discuss the questions and ideas, which are as relevant today as when they were written over two thousand years ago.

New members are welcome to join the group.

*Please telephone Lilian Beanland (630-7603) for enquiries.*

## ABHINAYA - VEDIC DANCE

Abhinaya can in our own language be described as "dance or movement to express the divine qualities of the Absolute in order to lift up others".

Those who practice this dance find it a real, practical and instant way of expressing devotion and overcoming limiting ideas about themselves, as well as a way of having fun and enjoying each other's company.

This system of dance is loosely based on classical Indian dance. Of course, on the way there have been modifications and creative input.

In Auckland there is a small group of ladies who meet on a weekly basis to practice and learn new dances and steps, and also the girls at Ficino School receive lessons.

Anyone interested in joining is most welcome.

*Enquiries to Paula Hudson (636-5578) or Rosemary Auld (412-8782).*



# A VISIT TO THE HOLY LAND

by Elizabeth Crompton

Unexpectedly an opportunity arose for me to visit Israel in May of this year.


We were going to England to see our family but our daughter had already booked a holiday with friends at the time we would be there. When she heard she was not going to see us, she suggested that I or both of us met her in Israel. The decision had to be made quickly so a ticket was duly purchased.

As the time grew closer to undertake this trip, a few misgivings arose. The BBC news spoke of fighting on the Lebanon border, but the Israeli consulate assured me that of course it was safe for tourists. Next Anne, our daughter, phoned to say that it would not be easy for herself and friends to get to Israel from Turkey, where they were. Air fares were expensive and investigation into

other ways was not proving hopeful. The Lebanon and

Syrian borders were closed and it was difficult to get through the Jordanian border except maybe by private car.

Eventually they found they could go to Cyprus by ferry and then ferry from Cyprus to Tel Aviv, where they would meet me. When I arrived, there



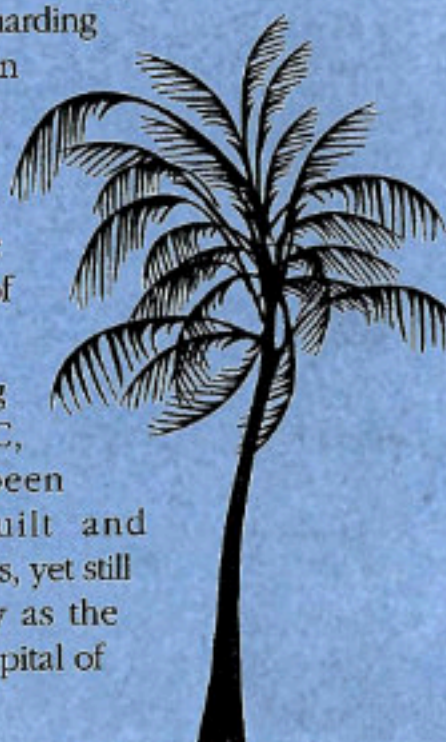
they were, three smiling faces with huge backpacks. I was very pleased to see them but they hadn't been so lucky after all. One half of Cyprus is Greek and the other half Turkish and they are enemies so you cannot cross the border. No-one had told the girls this and when they arrived on the Turkish side and found that the ferry boat went from the Greek side there was great consternation so they had to fly after all.

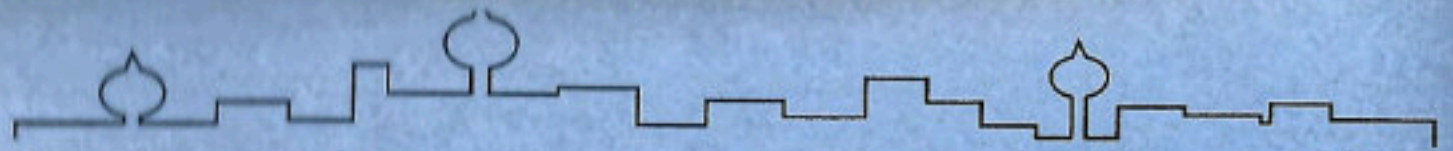
I have started by mentioning this difficulty in getting to Israel because it does reflect something of the puzzling dichotomy of this place. Thousands of people visit the Holy Land each year, often for religious reasons: to actually be in the same place where Christ was born, lived, performed miracles and was crucified. They go to find peace, to learn

**“Thousands of people visit the Holy Land each year ... to find peace, to learn more about themselves.”**

more about themselves. Although there is an obviously spiritual feeling and great reverence, there is not an easily availed peace. There is constant activity and noise, dry, barren desert, hostile neighbouring countries and various religious factions jealously guarding their rights to certain areas. Despite this, Israel is the Holy Land and Jerusalem still is the Holy City or City of Light.

Built by King David in 1004 BC, Jerusalem has been destroyed, rebuilt and invaded many times, yet still retains its identity as the Eternal City and capital of Israel.





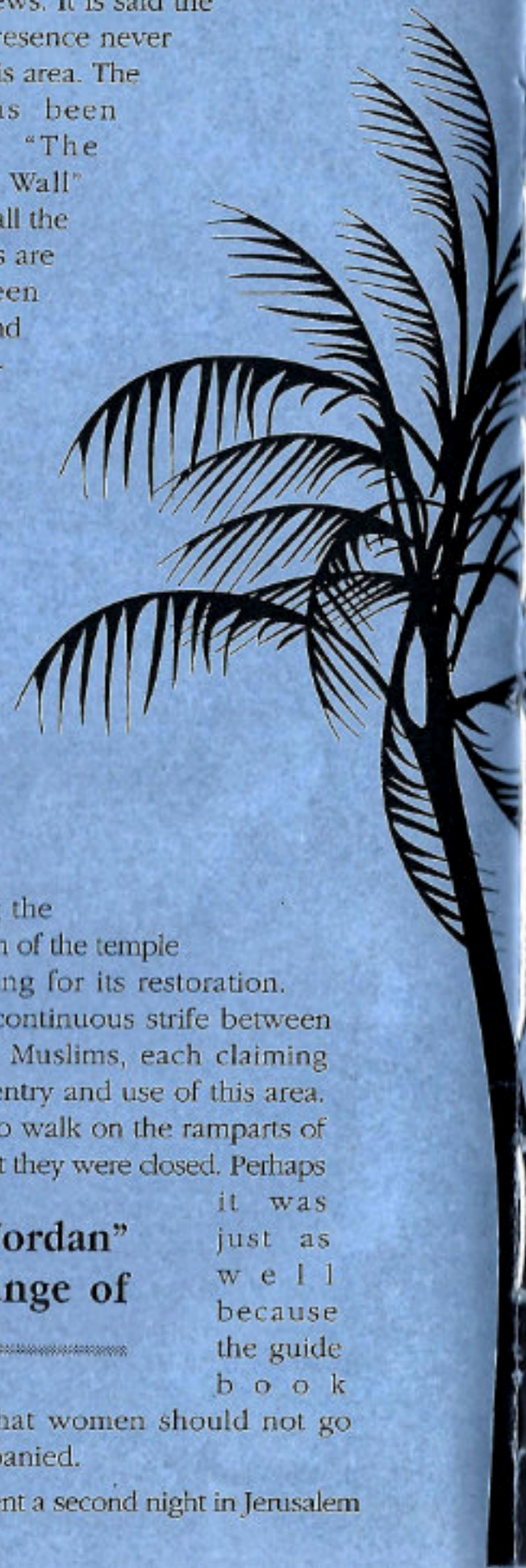
It was the first place we decided to go. We found a hostel in the Old City in the Muslim quarter. Everything was quiet and deserted the evening we arrived. Later we found there had been a strike on. At four in the morning we were awakened by the Muslim call to prayer, and later when we looked out of the window the streets had been transformed into a bustling, colourful, continuous market of stalls selling goods and food. We ate pizza for dinner and felafel in pita bread for lunch, this being suitable for the girls' budget. We carried bottled water with us all the time, it being essential in the heat.



The first day we spent walking the seven stages of the Cross, the route Jesus took to His Crucifixion. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is built on the place where it is said He was crucified, buried and ascended to heaven. Outside, near the church, are ruins of water pools, wells and cisterns where people once went to be healed and where Jesus performed many miracles. This gospel site invited us to take time for meditation and prayer, which indeed we did. There is a crypt here dedicated to the birth of Mary, Mother of Jesus.

Later we went to visit the Dome of the Rock. This is a large beautiful mosque under a grand golden dome which is awe-inspiring when it catches the sun. The mosque contains beautiful mosaics and there is a rock, the middle which is said to be where Mohammed rose to heaven. The area is surrounded by a wall. At the first two gates we tried, only Muslims were allowed in. Part of the wall is all that

remains of the second Jewish temple and it is a very sacred place for the Jews. It is said the divine presence never leaves this area. The wall has been named "The Wailing Wall" because all the time Jews are to be seen wailing and praying -



mourning the destruction of the temple and praying for its restoration. There is continuous strife between Jews and Muslims, each claiming rights of entry and use of this area. We tried to walk on the ramparts of the city but they were closed. Perhaps

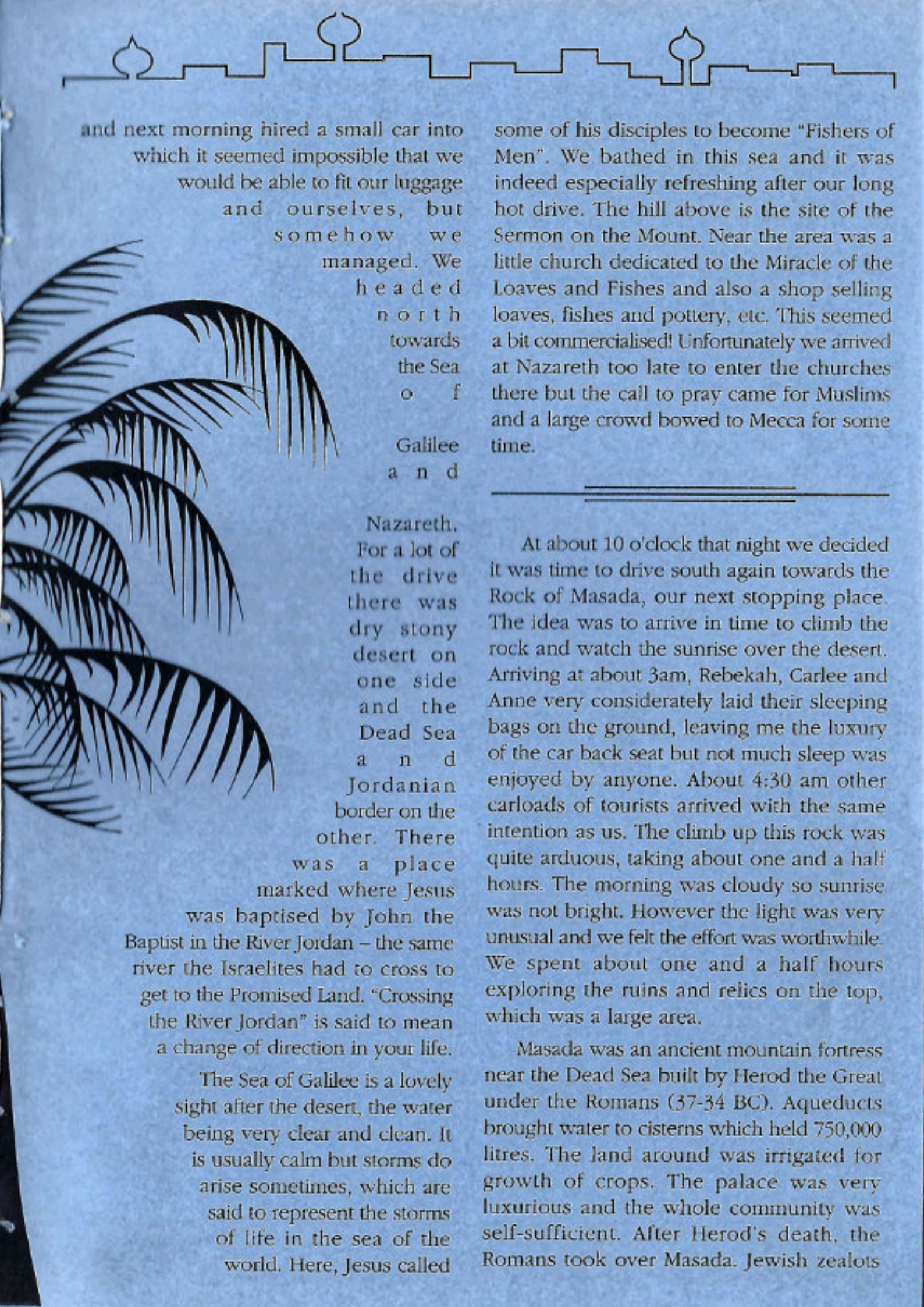
**“Crossing the River Jordan” is said to mean a change of direction in your life.**

it was just as well because the guide book

advised that women should not go unaccompanied.

We spent a second night in Jerusalem





and next morning hired a small car into which it seemed impossible that we would be able to fit our luggage and ourselves, but somehow we managed. We headed north towards the Sea of Galilee and

Nazareth. For a lot of the drive there was dry stony desert on one side and the Dead Sea and Jordanian border on the other. There was a place marked where Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist in the River Jordan – the same river the Israelites had to cross to get to the Promised Land. “Crossing the River Jordan” is said to mean a change of direction in your life.

The Sea of Galilee is a lovely sight after the desert, the water being very clear and clean. It is usually calm but storms do arise sometimes, which are said to represent the storms of life in the sea of the world. Here, Jesus called

some of his disciples to become “Fishers of Men”. We bathed in this sea and it was indeed especially refreshing after our long hot drive. The hill above is the site of the Sermon on the Mount. Near the area was a little church dedicated to the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes and also a shop selling loaves, fishes and pottery, etc. This seemed a bit commercialised! Unfortunately we arrived at Nazareth too late to enter the churches there but the call to pray came for Muslims and a large crowd bowed to Mecca for some time.

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At about 10 o'clock that night we decided it was time to drive south again towards the Rock of Masada, our next stopping place. The idea was to arrive in time to climb the rock and watch the sunrise over the desert. Arriving at about 3am, Rebekah, Carlee and Anne very considerably laid their sleeping bags on the ground, leaving me the luxury of the car back seat but not much sleep was enjoyed by anyone. About 4:30 am other carloads of tourists arrived with the same intention as us. The climb up this rock was quite arduous, taking about one and a half hours. The morning was cloudy so sunrise was not bright. However the light was very unusual and we felt the effort was worthwhile. We spent about one and a half hours exploring the ruins and relics on the top, which was a large area.

Masada was an ancient mountain fortress near the Dead Sea built by Herod the Great under the Romans (37-34 BC). Aqueducts brought water to cisterns which held 750,000 litres. The land around was irrigated for growth of crops. The palace was very luxurious and the whole community was self-sufficient. After Herod's death, the Romans took over Masada. Jewish zealots

took it by surprise in AD 66 until AD 72-3, when they were attacked by the Romans. A thousand defenders, including women and children, held the fortress for two years against 15,000 Roman soldiers. When the Romans eventually broke through, the Jews preferred to take their own lives rather than surrender. Seven women and children hid in a water duct and lived to tell the story.

The Rock of Masada has become a symbol of Jewish National heroism. It was abandoned from the 6th century until the 20th, when it was excavated and restored in 1963-5 by thousands of volunteers from all over the world.

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Our next stop had to be the Dead Sea. What an amazing experience. The water is an emerald green colour and has a 30% mineral content. It tastes revolting and can burn your eyes. You cannot sink and we actually sat in the water with cups of coffee. The minerals leave your skin beautifully soft, although the salt will sting any broken skin

or raw parts, and we were warned it could be a painful

experience.

We found an area of therapeutic black mud, so we

covered our bodies and faces with this, waited 20 minutes and took another dip, feeling quite experienced Dead Sea swimmers by then.

After this we drove back to Jerusalem, hoping to visit Bethlehem, which is near, and also the Mount of Olives, which we had missed before. Both proved very elusive and we wasted about two hours trying to find our way to the Mount, where Jesus was betrayed. It was poorly sign-posted and quite disappointing when we got there. Bethlehem was also difficult to locate but eventually we found it, a lovely little town. The Church commemorating the Birth of Christ has to be entered by a low door. To get in you have to bend your head to show humility, and you must dress appropriately, with legs and arms covered. We also visited a beautiful little church which had an underground grotto marking the spot where Mary is supposed to have fed the baby Jesus in secret when fleeing from Herod.

After this very full day we were rather late arriving in Tel Aviv but found a friendly hostel in Jaffa nearby. The day in Tel Aviv was spent in sorting money, going to banks and shops, and included a refreshing afternoon swim.

Next morning I had to be at the airport by 5am, three hours before departure, in case of lengthy questioning. This indeed took place but luckily I did not have to queue for very long. After talking to me the official then went to question Anne to make sure our stories were the same, even though she wasn't leaving with me.

Arriving back in England after a very awakening, interesting and different experience, it was wonderful to be met by son John and driven through beech-lined streets to Windsor and Ascot. England is indeed 'a green and pleasant land'.

***'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.'* (Words of Jesus - St John's Gospel, 14:27)**



## CHOIR

The choir has 16 enthusiastic members who meet on Sunday evenings to practise in the Ficino School Renaissance Room under conductor Jenny Whittington (B.Mus.Ed., Dip. Teaching). The repertoire is mainly sacred music, from early to modern, including some compositions by members of the affiliated Philosophy Schools in Britain.

In April the choir's first residential weekend took place in conjunction with the Art Group. This provided an opportunity to study aspects of music which could not be included in weekly practice, such as composition and Mr Leon MacLaren's music course on the natural octave. In addition, Mr Digby Crompton gave an interesting talk on Mozart's opera "The Magic Flute"

There was also a Study Day in August, in which the course material on the natural octave was pursued, plus composition and singing practice.

School of Philosophy events such as Open Days have provided opportunities for the choir to perform to audiences. In addition, through membership of the NZ Choral Federation, it has taken part in combined choir presentations such as the massed choir at the Starlight Symphony concerts in the Domain, and more recently, a Millennium Concert "Singing Down the Centuries" at the Town Hall in September.

New members are needed!

*Enquiries to Beverley Wilson (817-6200).*

## ART GROUP

The Art Group has been meeting more or less on a weekly basis since the beginning of 1986.

Each term a particular aspect of the visual arts is chosen for study under the guidance of the words of Shri Shankaracharya.

In recent terms the students, for practical work, have selected various paintings of the Old Masters to study and copy from. This has proved very helpful in "coming to grips" with the technical aspect of painting and in appreciating the art and skill of the Masters. Some time has also been spent in the study of the anatomy of the human figure.

In term 2 of this year the group looked at composition with reference to harmonic musical principles and the Vastu Sutra Upanishad.

One of the highlights of the Friday evening meetings is having dinner together as a group, where thoughts, speech and wine flow freely around the much loved subject of Art.

*Enquiries to  
Peter Tibbits (411-8391).*

## SANSKRIT CHANTING GROUP

"The Sanskrit language ... is one of the most magnificent, the most perfect and wonderfully sufficient literary instruments developed by the human mind; at once majestic and sweet and flexible, strong and clearly formed and full and vibrant and subtle..." *Sri Aurobindo*

sarve bhavantu sukhina	"All be happy;
sarve santu niramayah	All be without disease;
sarve bhadrani pasyantu	All perceive well-being;
ma kashcid dukkhabhagbhavet	None be in misery of any kind."

This is one of the many chants practised by the group, with emphasis on pronunciation and meaning, which brings an appreciation of the beauty and spiritual richness of this great Language of the Vedas.

*If you are interested in joining this group, please telephone Lilian Beanland (630-7603).*

# Views and Reviews

*Contributions  
that celebrate the  
light in the world*

"Books are the true levellers. They give to all, who will faithfully use them, the society, the spiritual presence, of the best and greatest of our race." - *W.E. Channing - Self-Culture, 1838*

There are a good many reasons why human beings collect and read books, but perhaps the quotation above conveys the best of these.

The world of literature is ignored by some people, either because of a natural disinclination to read, a perception of lack of time for it, or something in life which has effectively "put me off reading".

The aim of the literary section of the newsletter is to give enjoyment not only to the converted but also to those who have hitherto seen little efficacy in "damned, fat, square, thick books" - as the Duke of Gloucester so crudely put it on being presented by Edward Gibbon with a copy of volume 3 of his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire"... Fortunately for posterity, Gibbon was made of stern stuff and presented his massive work to the world undeterred!

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## NEW BOOKS

**"Initiation into the Philosophy of Plato"**, by Raphael (founder of the Asram Vidya Order in Rome). Pub: Shephard-Walwyn (Publishers) Ltd. \$42.00

**"The Prosperity Paradox"** - The Economic Wisdom of Henry George - Rediscovered, compiled by Dr Mark Hassed. Pub: Chatsworth Village Pty. Ltd. \$35.00

**"The Infinite Soul"** - Ralph Waldo Emerson - The Vital Years, 1803-1841 by David Stollar. Pub: St. James Publishing. \$70.00 (at cost)

**"Woman"** - A Unique Tribute, Compiled & Illustrated by Dorothy Boux. Published by Shephard-Walwyn, London \$75.00

This beautiful book is the fourth to flow from Dorothy Boux's calligrapher's pen (the others being "Images of Christmas", "The Golden Thread" and "All the World's a Stage").

Drawing as it does on the words of Marsilio Ficino, Johann Goethe, Khalil Gibran, Edith Sitwell, Emily Dickinson, Geoffrey Chaucer, Rupert Brooke, Omar Khayam, Miriam Teichner, Lao Tse, William Shakespeare, John Masefield and Sheila Rosenberg, to name just a few, it is not surprising that "Woman" is in demand from the School Bookshop.

Superbly illustrated and calligraphed, this book is an ideal gift and inspiring reading for women and men alike. Through its pages Dorothy Boux has explored "the true nature of woman, the experiences of her life, from youth and young love to maturity". She adds that "essentially in referring back to the bed-rock of the unity which lies at the root of creation, the lady may rediscover herself, her strength and her true purpose, and thus become of profound use to everyone".

**"The Book of Reflections - Simple Steps to Self Discovery"**, compiled by the School of Economic Science, London. Pub: Arcturus Publishing. \$9.00

**"A Comprehensive Concordance to the text of the Bhagavad-Gita"** (Shastri translation), compiled by the School of Economic Science, Cape Town. \$14.00

**"The Yoga of Herbs"** by Dr David Frawley & Dr Vasant Lad. Pub: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers. \$18.95

# ON THE NATURE OF HEAVEN

Sitting by a moonlit river,  
Beside a bracken fire,  
Soaking up Nature's sounds  
And watching the stars go by.  
I sense God, I sense Love,  
I sense Light, I sense Life,  
All within me now.  
And the friends I am with  
Are dancing beside me  
Their faces all a-glow.  
What makes people think  
That heaven is elsewhere  
Than right here, right now?  
For surely this beauty  
Is heavenly beauty  
That is here on show.  
Yet this we sacrifice  
For the strife of city life.

Its cause for confusion;  
This great big illusion;  
It's time we asked ourselves why.  
We're sitting here  
In perfect silence  
At peace with ourselves  
And this world  
Yet one day soon  
We'll return to the noise.  
Isn't it absurd?  
The sound of the river cleanses our souls  
The fire burns in our hearts  
For heaven and all of its glory  
Have been right here from the start.  
The fire sprinkles angels  
That glow and disappear,  
Night Sky catches them  
And brushes them through his hair.

*by James Crompton*

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## Another view of the moment now...

Listen – look –  
What is this 'now', the moment we're now crossing?  
Can this truth vanish?  
Look, your shadow thrown over the chair,  
That dog's jerking bark, the distance of whistling,  
A gate clanging-to, the water thrown into the yard,  
Your fingers travelling your bracelet, my voice –  
listen,  
My voice – your breathing –  
And Teusret running through the empty rooms.  
It is true for us now, but not till now, and never  
To be again...

*from "The Firstborn" – a play by Christopher Fry*

"As to the grossness and subtlety of human nature, the heroes, kings, masters, prophets, those who have won the heart of humanity, have been fine in perception and in character. They have not been gross. Their fineness was simple; there was always a simple side to it, but at the same time it was subtle, which made it beautiful. A person who can say without saying and one who can do without doing is a subtle person and that subtlety is worth appreciating."

*"The Sufi Message" (Vol. 4) –  
Hazrat Inayat Khan*

## Joan Elizabeth Payne

### 1914 – 2000

Joan Payne was born at an important time in history and was to grow up and play a part in succeeding important events. Her formative years and life as a young woman in England were tempered by the conditions following the Great War and leading up to the Second World War, in which she played her part as a private secretary close to the centre of Government.

After the war and married, she emigrated with her family to New Zealand where they remained, finally settling in Auckland. It was here in 1961 that she saw the first notice advertising the "School of Philosophy" and joined as a founding member. As time passed it became obvious that her talents were considerable and she was moved to increasingly greater responsibility, until finally achieving Leader status and a close association with Mr Leon MacLaren. In fulfilling this function, she took particular care of the ladies in the Schools in Australasia, who very much appreciated her quiet watchfulness and ready understanding.

Mrs Payne was known to very many people around the world and was renowned as much for her unflinching good humour as for her stoicism and maintenance of a level of personal discipline that far exceeded modern perceptions and practices. Fiercely independent, she persevered and took her last driving test two days before she was hospitalized.

Those who knew her in the School were always pleased to see her, and quickly became aware that in the later years of life her philosophical comprehension came not just from long years of study and practice but from a level of understanding that placed



*Photo, courtesy Adam Castles*

her outside the ordinary realm. This was valued immensely, as was her love of language, literature, drama, history, music – indeed the arts in general – which she fully supported in the School.

Always modest, her ability to make light of minor mishaps, and to detect absurdities inherent in the over-zealous, enabled a balanced and mature view of life to temper her responses.

Such maturity and nobility of spirit and mind is an immense loss to all who knew her. Mrs Payne will be greatly missed, and her example will be remembered and aspired to for a long time to come.

*"Of all the virtues proper to a woman the most vital to the fulfilment of her function is generosity ... Most of all, she will be giving of her own substance, more often than she realises. ... How differently is the function performed when the giving is large and generous." (Sheila Rosenberg)*

# WHAT'S ON WHEN

## December -January Summer Recess Highlights

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
Fri. 15 – Mon. 18 Dec:	Residential Weekend at 268 West Tamaki Road (David Boddy visit).
Fri. 5 – Fri. 12 Jan:	Art Group Week at 268.
Sun. 14 – Mon. 29 Jan:	Teachers' Conference at 268.
Sat. 20 – Sun. 21 Jan:	Sanskrit non-residential weekend at 27 Esplanade Road.

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### “End of Year Celebration”

On Wednesday, 6 December at 7.30 pm there is to be a School of Philosophy end of year function at the Auckland College of Education.

The programme for the evening will include a brief address from the Principal, wine, food, good company and entertainment featuring the School choir, and drama excerpts. Other items of entertainment will be advised when they are finalised and invitations to the event issued to all members of the School.

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### Construction Weekends

During three weekends in January, students will undertake the transformation of Rooms B1 and B2 at the Villa at 27 Esplanade Road. This will provide a generous room with good ventilation for Part One and other such meetings, with a capacity of about 70 people. Renovations to the top floor of the Villa will then be complete and establish a home for the School of Philosophy.

The construction weekend dates are: 6 – 7; 13 – 14; 20 – 21 January, 8 am to 5 pm.

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*The next School of Philosophy “Open Day”  
will take place on  
Sunday, 4 March 2001 at 268 West Tamaki Road.  
Further details to be advised in due course.*

Sun. 3 December:

Term ends

# PHILOSOPHY

## FOR TODAY

*A practical approach to wisdom.*

A twelve week course which presents simple, practical means of finding direction amidst the change and uncertainty of modern day living. No previous study of philosophy is necessary.

You are welcome, regardless of age, occupation, background or beliefs. This is not an academic or historical study of philosophy, but a practical course which presents the great teachings of past and present in a manner relevant to daily life.

Students have the opportunity to tackle those simple but profoundly challenging questions, such as:

- Who am I?
- What is wisdom?
- What is Truth?
- How do I gain peace of mind?

Those attending are encouraged to apply what is presented each week and offer observations from their own experience. The emphasis is discovery through direct experience. This quickly develops awareness and self-confidence, which are of immediate practical value. Continuing courses are available.

This twelve week course runs from 7.45pm to 10.00pm on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 27 Esplanade Road, Mt Eden. You can vary your evening of attendance. Enrolments are welcome from 7.15pm on the first meeting.

Fees are \$95 including GST (\$50 non-earning students)

Course commences: Tuesday 29 January and Thursday 31 January 2001

Enquiries welcome – Phone 09 638-7577

### School of Philosophy (Auckland) Inc.

*A registered charitable organisation. Established 1961.*

*Hamilton enquiries Phone 07 829-5396*

## TERM DATES FOR 2001

	Commences	Finishes
TERM 1	Monday, 29 January	Sunday, 22 April
TERM 2	Monday, 21 May	Sunday, 12 August
TERM 3	Monday, 10 September	Sunday 2 December