

Vision

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Wellington's 50th Anniversary

The celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the School in Wellington has been a three-part harmony.

The first event was the successful Art-in-Action weekend held in April of this year, with the School opening its door to the public in a display of live art presentations.

The second event was the Residential Week conducted by the international School Leader Mr Donald Lambie in July, when 140 philosophy students from Australian and New Zealand Schools, local and visiting Leaders and tutors gathered at Philosophy House in Aro Street, Wellington. This was described in the previous issue of Vision.

The third and final event took place on Saturday, 9 September, 50 years after the first Introductory Course began in September 1956. There were two parts to this celebration: "Expressions of Philosophy", consisting of talks and presentations throughout the day attended by 120 School members, family and friends, and a reception and commemorative dinner that evening for 75. Mr Bruce Dean, Leader of the Wellington School, expressed appreciation of the numbers attending and made us warmly welcome at the start of the day. Two dozen Auckland students, and an Australian



Philosophy House, Wellington

contingent, travelled to Wellington for the event.

The presentations covered a wide range of topics – something for everyone. They included "The Greater Jihad – the path of inner effort" delivered with humour and considerable panache by Gilbert Mane from Sydney. This was of particular interest in view of current world events. The common meaning of "Jihad" is "war against unbelievers" but the talk also examined the other, less common meaning of inner spiritual effort leading to purification, which sets the aspirant on the path to freedom.

Other presentations covered "Renaissance Sculpture" (Anne-Marie Ngan of Wellington), "Philosophy from the East" (Rex Howard,

Brisbane), “Philosophy & Stress” (Dr Nick Crozier, Wellington), “Illuminating Words” (Deirdre Hased, Melbourne), “New Frontiers in Medicine” (Dr Craig Hased, Melbourne), “Education – the heart of it” (Mark Broadwith, Ficino School Headmaster, Auckland) and “Constanze! The struggle to preserve Mozart’s Legacy” (Dr Gary Grohmann, Canberra).

As always, the Wellington ladies had worked hard to present Philosophy House beautifully and provide delicious food and drinks. Lunch was a relaxed, generous buffet in the dining room, and this and refreshment breaks provided ample opportunity for everyone to meet and mingle.

The evening meal was similarly delicious, punctuated with speeches and toasts. Speakers included Mr John Russell, Leader of the Auckland School, who is intimately acquainted with the early years of the Wellington School. Mr Russell outlined some of the significant events of those years and provided a glimpse of the vigorous spirit of enquiry in the School at this time. He spoke of the sense of “mystery” in which the Teaching was held when access to it was not as full as it is now and the books available for study were few.

Other speakers were Mr Russell’s wife, Beverly (who gave a delightful, impromptu



offering), Judith Broadwith on behalf of several early members of the Wellington School who still attend, Mr John Jepsen, Leader of the School in Melbourne, and Laura Hubbard, the grand-daughter of Gordon Wiles, a very early member at the dinner. Also present were John Walter, a founding member, and Mrs Margaret Edmunds, who joined the School at the same time as Mr Russell in September 1957.

Finally, tribute should be paid to the many who have attended the Wellington School over the course of the 50 years, without whose contributions it would not have evolved to become the strong organisation it is today. At times their presence was almost tangible at the event: a silent host held in memory.



**“We are like dwarfs, sitting on the shoulders of giants;
we see more distant things than they did not because our sight is keener,
nor because we are taller than they, but because they lift us up
and add their giant stature to our height”**

- Bernard, Bishop of Chartres 1119-1124

What's in a Smile

by Sue Holloway

In July this year the opportunity to visit London, where my daughter, her husband and new baby son were living, came as a mixed blessing. It gave rise to several ancient fears about travel and the recent bombing of the underground but I decided to travel “light” and treat everything as an adventure.

The apartment in Bethnall Green where the family lived was on the sixth floor of a twelve-storey block, with unobstructed panoramic views of some of the most quaint and delightful buildings I have ever seen.

On the ground floor was a minimarket run by four Afghan brothers. I was relieved, as this convenient source of produce meant we did not have to venture far out into the heat-wave for supplies. Unfortunately, my daughter said, “We avoid shopping there as they are expensive and not at all friendly. We have found another supermarket further down the road where the Bengali staff enable us to feel welcome”.

As the prospect of a lengthy walk down the road in the heat did not appeal to me, I settled for the minimarket downstairs and soon discovered that although expensive, the quality of produce was excellent. The shock of not having one's smile returned and being on the receiving end of such obvious dislike was most uncomfortable, as it seemed to arise from a deep resentment. I found myself wondering if we had potential terrorists in

the making right under our building!

I reminded myself that this holiday was to be an adventure and in line with this positive approach, to treat them as my own sons.

The regular morning visit to buy a newspaper, etc. offer a smile, a positive remark about the weather or the quality of their produce, and experience surliness in return, became a daily, challenging routine. No mean feat in the teeth of the continuing lack of response.

The four weeks stay reached its conclusion and on the last day one of the brothers at last smiled at me across the counter, enveloping me in a wave of warmth as our eyes met.

The following day, after saying goodbye to my daughter and grandson and while heading for Heathrow Airport with son-in-law Paul, the same Afghani passed us on the footpath. The smile said it all as he nodded his head in recognition.

When my daughter Katrina phoned from London a week later, she mentioned that one of the brothers had asked if I was her mother. When she said “yes” his response was “She looks like you”. Having studied languages, she asked how to say hello, good morning, thank you, etc. in Afghani and these are now the greetings that are used, opening the way to genuine friendship.

Yes, you guessed it: my daughter now frequently shops at the minimarket!

**Without the smile from partial beauty won,
Oh, what were man? – a world without a sun.**

- Thomas Campbell, Scottish Poet (1777-1844)

**Every time you smile at someone, it is an action of love,
a gift to that person, a beautiful thing.**

- Mother Teresa of Calcutta (1910-1997)

Library at Esplanade Rd

Many students are aware of the resources of the lending library at 27 Esplanade Road, but those who are not may find the following of interest.

The library, which has been built up by donations of books and audio tapes from members of the School, offers a variety of subjects to choose from. As well as tapes and books there is a series of over 30 CDs under headings such as 'Philosophy and Attention – Decision Making – Faith – Happiness – Mind – Reason – etc. These are recordings of special lectures given by members of the Dublin School: a very popular series and well worth listening to.

The 'Philosophy and –' audiotapes are recordings of weekend lectures given at the London School of Economic Science between 1989 and 1998 by members who had an interest in a particular subject or a historic or famous person. Some speakers were in an occupation or profession such as law, acting, education, etc. and their talks underline the practical use of philosophy. These also have been popular over the years.

Among the 600 books for loan or reference there are writings from sages and saints, popes, poets and statesmen. There are the Upanishads, which means "to sit down at the feet of another to listen to his words". and the Ramayana, the famous epic of Rama and

Sita and their separation and trials before being reunited.

There is the Bhagavad Gita, which forms part of the epic Mahabharata. The Gita is an enduring scriptural guide, well known to both East and West, which takes the form of a conversation between the Lord Shri Krishna and Arjuna, the warrior who seeks direction on the path to enlightenment.

Also in the library are Shakespeare's works, and poetry by Tennyson, Wordsworth and many others. There are writings by Leon MacLaren, the founder of the School of Economic Science, Henry George's outstanding book on law, Winston Churchill's life and writings, and works by Laurens van der Post, renowned author, linguist, explorer, anthropologist and philosopher, who wrote numerous books about Africa.

Also there are the Dialogues of Plato, the Letters of Marsilio Ficino, who was an influential figure during the Italian Renaissance, and the writings of Eckhart Tolle, a spiritual aspirant of the present day.

The library is there for all students to use. Donations of suitable books are always welcome. Simple directions for the withdrawal and return of CDs, tapes or books are displayed.

Any enquiries can be directed to Selwyn Daniels, Ph. 445-2672.

Term Break Events

Christmas Concert:	Sunday, 3 December, 268 West Tamaki Road
Sanskrit Study Day:	Saturday, 9 December, 27 Esplanade Road 8.30 am – 5 pm
Cultural Studies Weekend:	19 – 22 January, 268 West Tamaki Road

Touched By Eternity

by Penny Tuffnell

(Penny participated in the recent Ficino Class tour to Europe. What follows are her reflections on the statues by Michelangelo displayed in the Accademia in Florence).

What is the essence of creation,
the essence of man?

We could spend a lifetime considering this question and possibly never realise what it could mean. We could look around ourselves, maybe look into the worlds of others and begin to see how essence is reflected into creation.

There have been many great beings over the centuries who have been magnanimous enough to leave traces of essence behind to lead and guide us to greater realms of knowledge and understanding. I don't think it was an intention, more a natural generosity, the natural behaviour of man in harmony with creation and large enough and inclusive enough so their hearts are reflected in any activity they participated in, whether that be speech, music, artistry in the form of architecture, sculpture, painting, or just living truth and justice.

What resounds astoundingly is that this essence does not dilute over time; in fact, it is over time that it becomes more magnificent.

When you walk into the Accademia in Florence, Italy, and sight the four Prisoners, the Bearded Slave and the statue of David carved by Michelangelo, you cannot help but be struck by the qualities of Michelangelo himself. It is his penetration into the existence of man in his human form that is so striking. Not only this, but for over five hundred years have these beautiful statues existed, and many more besides, and you are compelled to realise that it is the power of consciousness that draws thousands of people in awe and wonder. Many do not recognize the qualities specifically, but

definitely acknowledge the beauty.

Beauty alone strikes a chord within the heart that resounds eternally within the viewer. You need not understand, you only have to look.

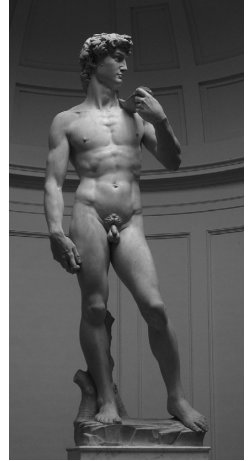
This is the magic of conscious work and marks the mastery and generosity of the artist. It touches the heart and mind on many levels. It has an unlimited potential that can uplift all by opening hearts and generating joy. It enlarges, centres, steadies and holds. It reflects the qualities of man, but above all removes all that is untrue and leaves only the truth of yourself – pure, perfect and complete. There is nothing to do, but be still.

The essence of man is the very essence of God.

The greatness of artists is revealed by their ability to achieve this, and above all, recognize and acknowledge the human condition and guide, encourage and lead others towards all that they have discovered themselves.

You walk away from the Accademia more in touch with Michelangelo than you would think possible. His very being in its Absolute nature is reflected in the statues. What a truly Glorious man.

.....Touched by eternity.



Michelangelo's "David"

Ficino School's Inau

22 September –

Why send children as young as 11 years on a school trip to Europe?

Between the ages of 11 and 13 children are still very receptive to beauty and magnificence. This is not always so easily accessible later on; even a year older and supposed 'likes and dislikes' can prove a significant barrier. On connecting with the best of what our civilisation has to offer, a sense of wonder and awe is still relatively easily awakened for the younger child. A much larger vision of the world can take root. Direct connection is obviously preferable; pictures and films are no substitute for the real thing.

To go to Florence, the heart of the Renaissance in Europe, and learn about the extensive influences that emanated from that great period in human understanding and awareness, can inspire a young boy or girl to themselves strive and work for that kind of awakening; on whatever scale possible. Similarly, to go to the home of Shakespeare's work, the Globe Theatre in London, and enjoy a taste of brilliant insight into humanity in all its aspects, can give a vision and depth of understanding in the life of a child, that may carry them forward in more completely realizing their human potential.

It was our plan in designing this trip, to maximise the opportunities for that real connection.

As an additional bonus of course (often given as the sole reason in its own right for travel) the children also had the benefit of



The group stayed in a 17th century castle near Florence

meeting other peoples, living and working in their own countries, just like ourselves. Exposure to people speaking another language was also intriguing for our 11 senior pupils, and four graduates from the 2005 class.

This spirit of unity with fellow humans was also evident for the children when they arrived in London, where meeting a large number of children working in St James Schools, in exactly the same spirit as them, lent tremendous encouragement, awakened much interest and opened their horizons to the world.

The girls and boys all spent a day or so with their equivalent classes, going through a normal school day. They were also generously – some would say bravely – billeted with pupils their own age for 6 days of the UK period. In most cases the children were complete strangers as they arrived in London. In all cases they got along well and now have the potential to develop good

gural European Trip

- 9 October 2006

by Mark Broadwith



Visiting San Marco Monastery, Florence

friendships on the far side of the world.

The Europe party of 21 (including three teachers and three parents) returned safely – albeit exhausted – on Monday afternoon, 9th October; after 18 days away. We had spent the whole school holiday period abroad together, enjoying a sample of the history of western civilization, in both Florence and London. The trip was a huge success. It was challenging but also inspiring.

This inaugural trip seems to have achieved its aim of awakening in our senior children a

sense of a much bigger and (especially) deeper sense of a civilized world. Although it is not always easy to tell what they have taken from, for example, standing in front of Botticelli's Primavera, we have definitely seen afterwards a greater focus and maturity in the children. They have also indicated through speech and writing that they have been amazed or inspired by different things that they have seen or understood.

The children acquitted themselves very well. I was impressed by their friendliness, steadiness and confidence. They were a credit to their families and the school.

We look forward to sharing some of the stories, images and discoveries with the wider school community as the term proceeds. The children will be presenting slides and both prepared and impromptu speeches sometime soon. The dates will be advertised. Everyone will be welcome.

This trip has been deeply worthwhile, and it is my hope that it has established a precedent for the future. It is our plan to run these cultural trips, to a variety of locations, every two years.

Some extracts from the children's notes:

"My favourite part was going to the Globe Theatre (workshop) and doing the haka, and playing fun games!."

Faustina.

"the uprightness of (Michelangelo's statue) 'David', made him look almighty and fearless in the face of his opponent. ... made with great detail and divinity..."

Nick.

"The trip was a fantastic learning experience; something I will remember for the rest of my life."

Akshay.

"The Europe Trip was an amazing experience.... (of the Frescos at Waterperry House) ... the painters have allowed you to take part in (the story) by making you feel as if you are in the painting ... we all left satisfied and I would love to visit again."

Davina.

Handel's Messiah

by Nigel Rankin

Handel's Messiah was composed in 1741. It came about as the result of a happy coincidence of three events; an invitation from Dublin for a charity performance to assist debtors, an unsolicited libretto sent to Handel by Charles Jennens, and an opportunity for change in Handel's life.

It's useful firstly to look at Charles Jennens, without whom the Messiah would not have been composed. He was an interesting man, well-to-do with considerable estates in England, but also religious with an intimate knowledge of the Christian scriptures. He had been educated at Balliol College, Oxford and had wide interests in music, literature and the arts. Although fifteen years younger than Handel he was a longtime admirer of Handel's work and had corresponded with him for several years.

Jennens identified the 'Mystery of Godliness' as the work's theme. His selection of scriptural texts was very carefully made and is remarkably effective. He organised the libretto in the conventional three parts. Part 1 deals with the prophecies concerning the Saviour and their fulfillment in his incarnation, Part 2 charts the course of events from Christ's passion to the final triumph of his second coming and Part 3 is an extended commentary on Christ's role as Saviour. The text was taken from the Authorised Version of the Bible and the Coverdale translation of the Psalms, and is presented as a narrative with the story being carried forward by soloists and chorus.



Handel received this libretto in mid-1741 and began composing on Saturday 22nd August, completing the score on the 14th September, twenty-three days later. This was an intense burst of activity and an amazing achievement. Even the physical labour of committing the notes to the pages during that period is remarkable. The shortness of this composition period has been interpreted as a sign of specific religious inspiration. Handel was indeed a religious man and his state of mind has sometimes been referred to as an example of divine frenzy. Handel himself, after finishing the Hallelujah Chorus, is quoted as saying, "I did think I did see all heaven before me, and the great God himself".

A definition of divine frenzy is difficult to find. Even the Oxford English Dictionary stumbles, but Shakespeare provides a description in "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Theseus speaks of "The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; and, as imagination bodies forth the forms of things unknown, the poet's pen turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name".

Plato speaks of this state of mind in the *Phaedrus*, referring particularly to poetry, and Ficino discusses divine frenzy in one of his letters. He bases his discussion on Plato, but scathingly (and unfortunately in the present context) dismisses those who imitate the celestial music by voice and instruments as "superficial and vulgar musicians"! Sanskrit has the term *pramathabhasha* which has been defined as "...a state of abundance of energy either through ecstasy or some other intoxicating situation through emotional charge".

Whatever Handel's state of mind during the composition, the premiere of the *Messiah* in Dublin became a major event. All Dublin's most important people were invited to attend and ladies were asked to refrain from wearing hoops in their dresses, and gentlemen to come without their swords, so that 100 additional people could squeeze into the Fishamble Street Theatre where the new work was unveiled.

restrain himself from standing when the trumpets rang out in the Hallelujah Chorus. With the king standing, everyone else in the audience had to follow suit, and thus a tradition was born. To this day, audiences stand during the Hallelujah chorus. Thereafter, the work became increasingly popular and acceptable to the church hierarchy, and Handel continued to offer the *Messiah* for charity, mostly The Foundling Hospital in London, every year until his death.

The *Messiah* has continued to be a favourite with audiences and a venerated English institution for over 260 years. The Auckland Choral Society itself has presented it each Christmas for the last 150 years. The reasons for this long-standing success are not difficult to find. As Peter Watts, the Musical Director says; "It's proportions are exquisitely balanced. It's key centres are carefully planned. It's scoring is restrained and yet perfectly shaded. It's use of voices,

**"And from that time to the present, this great work has been heard in all parts of the kingdom with increasing reverence and delight";
Charles Burney, in a 'Sketch of the Life of Handel'.**

On April 13th, 1742, with Handel at the harpsichord, the *Messiah* was played for the public for the first time. Before it was finished, it had moved its audience to tears. Reviewers were elated, and the next performance drew such a large audience that the glass in the theatre's windows was removed so the concert hall would not overheat. The presentation raised £400 for Dublin's hospitals and enabled 142 debtors to pay their debts and leave prison.

Conversely, the London premiere suffered a different fate. Church leaders were shocked and outraged that the Bible was being sung on stage by actors. However, when George III first heard the oratorio he could not

both solo and choral, is always appropriate for the text and mood...and the setting of the words is immaculate".

Handel's *Messiah* is performed every year at Christmas-time throughout the English-speaking world. Like all that is best, it is ever-fresh and always a joy to hear. Christmas just wouldn't be the same without it.

(with thanks to Tessa Stephens for assistance and encouragement)

This year "The *Messiah*" will be performed by the Auckland Choral Society on 18 and 19 December.

Philosophy in Action

by Cynthia Koks

One Sunday morning earlier this year, a number of Philosophy One students who were able to shake off the “Oh, I don’t want to get out of bed” feeling, attended a session of “philosophy in action”.

They were given the opportunity to discover for themselves the space where the “working surfaces” in an action meet and the love, knowledge and power that exists there. The banisters and doors at 27 Esplanade Road were treated to their attention.

Leaving aside the “fingernails on blackboard” screeching sounds while varnish was scraped off wood, awkward working postures and fine dust particles clogging the nostrils, most were able to rise above the torments of the physical body and discover the joy of just

attending to the work. Despite the aches and pains resulting from the exercise, the group as a whole discovered that life is not a race or competition, joy doesn’t come when the job is done but in the job itself, comparing one’s self to another is pointless (we always seem to come out second-best) and you need not be afraid of tackling something new (not one had used a scraper before).

Come time for refreshments, Emilie Preston’s delicious chocolate cake was greatly appreciated by everyone.....

It was quite an enlightening morning really. In a nutshell, life is happening now. It would be useful to be there as it happens! And not one person left the building with a frown.

Love

Love is in the air, in every sight and every sound
But we are deaf and blind with our two feet on the ground
We do not hear the voice that is needing love that day
We do not see the chances to make someone feel okay

We’re people who are busy, have no time, we rush around
We do not notice those who are low and feeling down
But love can change our vision and show the way to live
And help us hear and see the needs on which to act and give

When love is given freely it spreads and ripples out
To all the corners of the globe from North way down to South
And as the ripples spread afar and get naturally extended
This world of ours so full of woes will gradually be mended

Then, the world rejuvenated will dance and want to sing
The love that conquered selfishness will reign, be crowned as king
If we pay attention and take a different view
Spread love and have it multiplied it will come back to you

by Eileen Meghen, Dublin School



Bookshop News

New in Bookshop this term

A number of fresh titles have arrived in Bookshop, as well as more copies of books previously in stock:

The Pocket Thomas Merton,
consisting of short extracts from his writings

The Rumi Collection,
edited by Kabir Helminski

Where God Happens,
by Rowan Williams, Archbishop of
Canterbury, with a foreword by Desmond
Tutu

**Desert Father – A Journey in the
Wilderness with Saint Anthony,**
by James Cowan

The Practice of the Presence of God
by Brother Lawrence



Philosophy Works – New light on life

Philosophies of Asia,
by Allan Watts

What is Zen,
by Allan Watts

Shakespeare Quotations,

Leonardo da Vinci In His Own Words,
by William Wray

Marsilio, a historical novel,
by John Stewart

**Sheila Rosenberg: A Renaissance
Lady,** by Joan Crammond

Seven Liberal Arts,
by James Armstrong



New **0800 Number** for Enquiries

The lines of communication between the School and the community are about to be simplified.

To coincide with advertising for the new Philosophy term starting in late January, an 0800 number will be in place for enrolment enquiries. This number – **0800 610 539** – will be shared by both Philosophy and Parenting Courses and will work on a simple menu, at least to begin with. At a later stage, additional information such as term timetable, coming events, who we are, etc. could be added as a ‘press 3’ option.

When the 0800 number is dialled, callers will hear ‘press (1) for School of Philosophy enquiries; press (2) for Parenting courses’. Both options will transfer to someone who can

answer questions and provide information.

The existing number at Esplanade Road will remain for ‘in-house’ calls. At this time and up until the change over this phone is being monitored 24 hrs for all calls. After the changeover, there will be a recorded message if the phone is not picked up. The phone number at 268 West Tamaki Road will also remain as-is.

Major advantages of the new 0800 system are:

- A free calling 0800 number is attractive to enquirers.
- One number means it can be in place for all advertising.
- A 24hr call service for both Philosophy and Parenting Courses is more economical.

Philosophy

An introductory course of twelve weekly lectures

RECOMMENCING IN JANUARY

The course is offered for the interest and enjoyment of thoughtful men and women who seek an understanding of the nature of human existence and the world in which we live.

The lectures show how great philosophic ideas of past and present, put into practice, lead to clear thought, reduction of stress, and effective action in work, study and every aspect of daily life.

The course, which includes the opportunity for discussion, is given on Tuesday and Thursday (7.45 to 10pm) and Tuesday morning (9.30 to 11.45am) and you may vary your day of attendance.

The fee for this course is \$120 for adults, \$60 for non-earning students. Enrol now by phone, or in person from 30 minutes prior to your first attendance, or visit our website:

www.philosophy.school.nz

Course commences:

Auckland: 30 January & 1 February 2007

27 Esplanade Road, Mt Eden

For Enquiries Phone: 0800 610 539

or 09-638-7577 (during week prior to enrolment)

Hamilton:

For Enquiries Phone: 07-856-7174

School of Philosophy (Auckland) Inc

A registered charitable organisation established 1960

With an eye made quiet by the power of harmony, and the deep power of joy, we see into the life of things.

- William Wordsworth
(1770 - 1850) English poet

For Enquiries/Contributions contact **Marilyn Marshall**
Ph 579-8646 Fax 579-7854 Email marilyn.marshall@xtra.co.nz