

Vision

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A Change in Perspective

The First 18 Months of New Leadership

In 2007 after 40 years of service as leader of the Auckland School of Philosophy, Mr. John Russell retired from his role. He was succeeded by Mr. Barrie Preston, who had been chosen in a ballot of senior Auckland students conducted by Mr. Donald Lambie, the leader of the worldwide body of the School, during a visit the previous year.

Although Mr. Preston has moved into this position with his own personality, the essential message and character of the School have not changed.

In an interview for this article, Mr. Preston said, *“At the time of accepting the new role the resolution was made to give the life in service to the school.”*

He responded further by giving this quote from Sri Shantananda Saraswati in 1976 (to the then leader of the Sydney School); in support of his new position as leader and what that means:

“All those who seek Truth or development and realisation of the Self and come to you come with only one vision and that is to realise their

Self. You are also there for the same purpose. Thus there should be no difference between you and anyone else who comes into your school. Your development is their development.” 1976 His Holiness.

Mr. Preston had a year as leader-in-waiting after his appointment was announced in 2006 and during that time read all the conversations of His Holiness Sri Shantananda Saraswati, as well as all the Upanishads. This, he said, was essential in order to be able to serve the students wholly and meet their enquiry fully.

During that time, Mr. Preston also reflected on the School and examined what it was. In one view he saw that it could be looked at as an adult education organisation, so he spent some time researching adult education, in particular, Professor Knowles, regarded as the father of adult education - Andragogy. This research is ongoing with an aim to encourage members of the School to become



Mr Barrie Preston

independent learners, as well as taking another look at the way material is presented in tutoring roles. Tutor training is still an area that Mr. Preston would like to develop more in the future. In addition, he started formulating ideas for changes in the management structure, group structure and administration of the School.

Further to this the senior School has been studying the Upanishads one book at a time on group nights. This Mr. Preston estimates will take about three years and will better equip those students to serve the greater body of the School. There will thus be an immense increase in the spiritual realm for all students in the School who have been involved in it which translates to a far better input for students in the junior School.

“There is so much instruction in the Upanishads which substantiates so many of the references His Holiness uses. It’s very easy to get only a superficial understanding of what His Holiness is saying.” Mr. Preston pointed out.

Mr. Russell stepped down in August of 2007. At that time Mr. Preston had a meeting with the senior group, who had given decades of service in all key roles in the School, such as, management, tutoring and administration. At that meeting he asked them to relinquish all their areas of responsibilities and also to give up their tutoring roles. *“Their response was extraordinary. They acknowledged the need for change and the need for others to step up and take on responsibilities.”* he said.

After that a meeting was called for the senior School on a Sunday, and the above-mentioned plan outlined. The students were asked for their first and second choice nominations to fill all the key roles which were now available throughout the School, with the proviso that none of the senior group were up for nomination. By the days end nominations for the whole senior management, level head roles, executive committee, chairman, accountant and so on were taken in.

The next step then in the following weeks, was to ask each person that was nominated whether they would take on their new jobs, and without exception everyone agreed. This was a transparent procedure which in some cases produced nominations Mr. Preston would not have considered, but were nonetheless the right choices for those roles.

The thinking behind asking new people to step up into areas of responsibility was the concept that those people would grow by having that responsibility and in their growth there would be a growth for others coming up through the school, and the whole organisation could grow in that way.

The aim for the senior group, then for the next 12 months, letting all their previous involvement subside, was to be able to focus, in the main, on the Teaching. This was very successful. Mr. Preston saw the beneficial effects of this refocusing in the import of the group nights in the latter term of 2007. Then from the beginning of 2008, tutoring roles were restructured to bring some of those senior people back into tutoring roles.

A highlight for Mr Preston at the end of last year was a two week residential in England which included 26 leaders from around the world. This was an important gathering to not only reflect and meditate together and to meet each other, but also to be able to discuss the commonality between the schools, address problems and highlight what works.

One of the problems that all Schools are facing is low enrolment numbers. Mr. Preston pointed out that last year in particular enrolments were down in Auckland and advertising didn’t seem to hit the mark. However, the new year has seen an increase in numbers which is steady.

His vision for the future is to have a lot more students taking up meditation and for the more senior students to really focus on study.

Cultural Picnic Day

by Graham Farrelly

Approximately 80 people enjoyed the School's annual Cultural Day on Sunday 5 April. This year it was called a Cultural Picnic Day... and what a feast it turned out to be! The weather was magnificent, not a cloud anywhere to spoil the picnic atmosphere.

The day was held at 268 West Tamaki Road, Glendowie - one of Auckland's iconic houses. This must be one of the city's most spectacular venues to hold such an event, with the grandeur of the house and the views of the Waitemata harbour. People were invited to come for all or part of the day and to partake in a sumptuous lunch. The quality and presentation of the food and wine was excellent, matched only by the quality of the singing by the School's Choir after lunch.



Choir performing for the day

for his great generosity in giving his time to support the event by presenting the opening talk "What is Truth: *Is yours the same as mine?*" and the final presentation and concert entitled "Beethoven's Spiritual Journey". His wisdom and professionalism was much appreciated by all present.

The picnic theme extended to the wide variety of talks available in the two elective sessions:

1. The Nature of Credit – Russell Allen
2. Philosophy and Success – Brian Wilson
3. The Quest of Peace and Justice – Wendy Dodd
4. Sanskrit – An Introduction – John Denton
5. Faith in Reason – Matthew Roscoe
6. The Language of Symbolism – Hamish Hudson
7. Philosophy and Work – Graham Farrelly
8. The Philosophy of Flight – Gary Allport



Students registering for the day

The organisers wish to thank Dr. Gary Grohmann, leader of the School in Canberra,

"What is enquiry? To enquire thus: "Who am I?" is true enquiry. Knowledge of truth arises from such enquiry; from such knowledge there flows tranquillity in oneself. Satsanga is the best companion to the destination. The spirit of enquiry itself is the greatest wisdom" From Vasishta.

A Peaceful and Pleasant Place

by Lillian Beanland

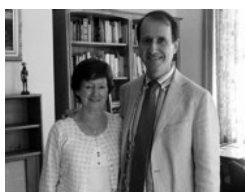
Studying Plato at Illoura, Melbourne

ILLOURA is an Aboriginal word meaning 'peaceful place' or 'pleasant place', and is the perfect name for the Philosophy house in Melbourne, where Plato Weeks are held annually in the summer recess

Illoura is a beautifully restored and gracious old Victorian house - an oasis of peace in the heart of St Kilda, five minutes from the popular beach, shops, restaurants and Luna Park.

This year seventy students attended the Plato Week. They came from Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Perth, Wagga Wagga and Tasmania. One student came from England, and there were two New Zealanders - one from Wellington and myself from Auckland.

David and Frances Horan travelled from Ireland for the third time to conduct the Melbourne week. Over the past 21 years, David has introduced thousands of Dubliners to the works of Plato through his "Day with Plato" held annually at Dublin Castle.



David & Frances Horan

From the London School, we were fortunate to have Arthur and Phillis Fardell visit Melbourne for the second time to help as Tutors. They are both enthusiastic Platonists and Mr Fardell, an eminent linguist, has several published books, and has helped

with the translation of the seven volumes of *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino*.

This year, David Horan gave, for the first time, a public lecture at a packed outdoor amphitheatre on a warm summer evening. Entitled "From Heaven to Earth", it focused on the teachings of Plato and Socrates, and showed how philosophy should be cherished as a rich and vital activity directly relevant to these modern times. His talk was enthusiastically received by the audience of some 380 people, and many questions were

asked and answered. It was a very successful event which may set the pattern for future public lectures in Melbourne.

The preparation and organisation of the week by the Melbourne School - particularly by Marita and Warwick Brewster was, as always, excellent. They quietly and cheerfully gave so much love and service which was warmly appreciated by their guests.

The key focus of the week was Plato's dialogue on unity - called *Parmenides* - and David Horan was a wonderful teacher and guide to this most challenging of Plato's dialogues - setting the scene for us each morning prior to reading the text in small study groups.

Each afternoon we had a quiet time for study, reflection or walking - whatever we chose, and this was followed by a period of Dialectic, which is said to be the 'Art of

The key statement that guided our enquiry was:
"All speech either conceals or reveals the Truth"

discovering the Truth'. Dialectic practice is always a revealing and challenging experience, and the conversation was a practical way to experience the key statement from Socrates.

Each evening we had interesting and inspiring talks, - to name but one - a spirited conversation between two professors from Monash University on '*Paideia*' - the passing on of knowledge. Our week was a good example of this though it could be said that the only knowledge gained was of how little one really knew! These evening talks were both erudite and fun.

The Plato Week was one of good company, good conversation and friendship. Lunch was served outside and we ate in the '*Garden of Eden*', the lovely area of shady trees beside the house, where the quiet and interesting conversation and good company continued.

Having attended several Plato weeks, in Melbourne, Dublin and Lucca, it must be said, as has been said at every previous Plato week, this was the best week yet!

In August I will be attending the two week

seminar in Delphi to study the *Timaeus* and to enjoy the good spirit and company of Plato lovers from around the world.

Seize the opportunity to attend next years Plato Week at Illoura - the 'peaceful place'. You will be refreshed and nourished by the experience.

At the end of the Melbourne week we were given a quotation in calligraphy by ex Aucklander Deirdre Hassad:

I pray to all the gods and goddesses to guide my mind in this study that I have undertaken, to kindle in me a shining light of truth and enlarge my understanding for the genuine science of being; to open the gates of my soul to receive the inspired guidance of Plato; and in anchoring my thought in the full splendour of reality to hold me back from too much conceit of wisdom and from the paths of error by keeping me in intellectual converse with those realities from which alone the eye of the soul is refreshed and nourished.

Invocation to Proclus'
commentary on Plato's
Parmenides



Answer if someone asked you: "Who are you and where do you come from?"

If somebody asked me: "Who are you and where do you come from?" I would say:
"I am God and I come from God. But only in front of people who don't make fun of me."
by Lys Meurillon (Aged 10)

"I am a dwarf from under the mountains, I might reply to the ant towering over me."
by Findlay Boyes (Aged 10)

A Special thanks...

... to those who gave generously to assist in the preparation of this issue, particularly with photographs.

If you would like to contribute to Vision, contact **Nicolette Farrelly**

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Red Pill or Blue Pill

by Simon Laurent

Morpheus: *You have the look of a man who accepts what he sees, because he is expecting to wake up. Ironically, this is not far from the truth... You're here because you know something. What you know, you can't explain. But you feel it. You've felt it your entire life. That there's something wrong with the world. You don't know what it is, but it's there like a splinter in your mind, driving you mad. It is this feeling that has brought you to me. Do you know what I'm talking about?*

Neo: *The Matrix?*

Morpheus: *Do you want to know what it is? The Matrix is everywhere. It's all around us, even in this very room... The Matrix is the world that has been pulled over your eyes, to blind you from the truth.*

Neo: *What truth?*

Morpheus: *That you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else, you were born into bondage, born into a prison that you cannot smell or taste or touch. A prison for your mind. Unfortunately, no one can be told what the Matrix is - you have to see it for yourself. This is your last chance... You take the blue pill, the story ends. You wake up and believe whatever you want to believe. You take the red pill, you stay in wonderland and I show you just how deep the rabbit hole goes. Remember, all I'm offering you is the truth: nothing more.*

The film trilogy, The Matrix, is set in a future where humans are bred to provide energy for their machine masters, and kept docile by being plugged into a virtual reality where they appear to live in today's world. Neo, the leading character, takes the red pill and escapes from the electronic dream state. He discovers that even in the real world the machines have sought to programme the outcome of a liberation such as his. His solution is to make a choice contrary to their expectations, which in turn establishes a new order.

The films are in fact a deliberate allegory of

the spiritual work. The Matrix virtual reality is a metaphor for the creation which is taken to be real. It can only be understood as a sophisticated illusion by seeing the world as it is, after which it no longer has the same blinding persuasiveness. Plato describes this journey in Book VII of the Republic - the story of the cave – but Plato speaks in terms of compulsion, of being dragged into the light out of the realm of shadows. Neo, on the other hand, takes the red pill by choice and realises that his salvation at each step arises out of the choices he makes.

Furthermore, and this is crucial, he comes to know that the choice must be made

continually. In the final showdown with his nemesis, Agent Smith, he comes close to being beaten. Smith asks him, "Why, why get up? Why keep fighting?... Why do you persist?" Neo replies, "Because I choose to." Whether he wins or loses is less important than his conscious decision to strive.

What is that choice, then? Hamlet said at first that it is, "*To be, or not to be*" - an election between facing the challenges of the world or the "sleep" of ignorance or even death. Yet his later and lesser-known statement shows his progress beyond the fear of what life will bring:

*If it be now, 'tis not to come. If it be not to come,
it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come.
The readiness is all.*

One can only be ready in the present moment, or in the words of T S Eliot's Burnt Norton, "the still point of the turning world":

...at the still point, there the dance is,

*But neither arrest nor movement.
And do not call it fixity,*

*Where past and future are gathered.
Neither movement from nor towards,*

*Neither ascent nor decline.
Except for the point, the still point,*

*There would be no dance,
and there is only the dance.*

William Wray in his book *Philosophy Works* calls this "the only time for opportunity", and goes on to say:

*There's only one time for living, and life is never
achieved without meeting life where it manifests.*

The first and fundamental choice is to live in the present, rather than the past or future. It is not the only choice – as Neo learned after he took the red pill – but it must be the first. It follows then that the choice persists from instant to instant. This is one reason why the Katha Upanishad says that the path of truth is "sharp like a razor's edge." The alternative to choosing the present moment, in the



Red pill or blue pill

terminology of Morpheus and of many spiritual texts, is enslavement in the illusion.

The third instalment of *The Matrix* ends with the chant

*Asato ma sad gamaya
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
Mritorma amrtam gamaya*

which translates to

*Lead me from the unreal to the real
Lead me from darkness to light
Lead me from death to immortality*

This can be seen as a call from the individual self for help from the Universal Self to overcome his or her limitations. Importantly, the supplicant knows that it is in this "prison for your mind" and has resolved to seek release.

We face the choice of taking the red pill or the blue pill every moment of every day. It is this capacity which defines the unique status of the human embodiment. What choice do you make at this moment, as you read this?

A Visit to Vienna

by Graham Soughtton

**“The streets of Vienna are paved with culture,
the streets of other cities with asphalt”**

Karl Kraus (1874 – 1936) - Austrian writer

In the third term of 2008, middle and senior school students took a break from philosophical pursuits to study culture. I went to Vienna for 10 weeks. This was a lucky and inspired choice, because Herr Kraus was right!

Is there a city anywhere that so completely represents the full flowering of classical Western culture? By classical I mean pre modernism, pre 20th century. This city is a celebration: of architecture before glass and steel; of music before the jazz era; of art before abstractionism; of heroic romanticism before working class revolution; and yes, of a Christian God as something glorious. This at least is how it seemed to me, and this is a key point because this recollection is a very personal perspective.

The most obvious outward presentation of any city is of course its built form. Vienna's cathedrals, churches, palaces, museums and great public buildings are among the world's great baroque treasures. The architectural and decorative richness is truly impressive



Shoenbrunn Palace

but somehow also on a scale that is balanced, harmonious and never daunting.

The effect of being in Central Vienna is truly elevating, but it is impossible that such richness was assembled from the resources of a few million Austrians in a nation two thirds the size of the North Island. There must have been more to it.

There was. For several hundred years Vienna was the centre of an empire which at various times encompassed: Northern Italy, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary (in 1867 Hungary acquired self rule, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire came into being.)

The common wealth of these nations must



have flowed towards Vienna, and there must have been a stable and strong leadership to exercise stewardship of it and organise how it would be applied.

There was. The Hapsburgs. Arising in the 13th Century from a dukedom in Switzerland the Hapsburg family ousted the German rulers of Osterreich (the East Kingdom) and went on to forge a remarkable dynasty that ruled Austria continuously for over six hundred years, and became the most important and influential family in Europe. Vienna cannot be appreciated without knowing something about them.



Gloriette ceiling

A Hapsburg, Friedrich III, was crowned Emperor in Rome in 1452 and so Austria became the Holy Roman Empire, an inherited title the Hapsburgs retained for the next 350 years. No doubt feeling ordained by God to rule, the Hapsburgs extended their territories across much of Europe, and as defenders of the 'true faith.'

In the Hapsburg palaces it is possible to sense that they were building a glorious tribute to the Almighty, and that they thought it was

possible to recreate, at least for themselves(!) a 'Heaven on Earth'. A Christian Catholic heaven, in gilded gold, and wondrous frescoes in soaring spaces. Why not? At least it is a use for wealth that stands the test of time, and now serves Austria well as a drawcard for its flourishing tourism.

The Hapsburgs were not especially warlike, and their empire was not so much a geopolitical entity as a series of strong alliances cemented by family relationships. The Hapsburgs married into nations more often than they invaded! In those days of monarchical power this was just as sure a way to siphon off resources.

It's worth knowing that this little nation, punching far above its class never faced the full hostility of the large emerging European heavyweights, France, Russia, Spain, and to a lesser extent England. They should have been easy pickings, but thanks to adroit statesmanship and their geographic advantage, they were mostly left alone. Austria straddles the Danube valley. Invading Central Europe from the east, with horse drawn armies, means pushing through the Danube valley. The Turks tried it twice. Here come the Muslims!

But fiercely Catholic Austria and friends turned back the tide both times. (Do not expect Austrians to be in favour of Turkey joining the EU! Memories are too long.)

The second defeat of the invading Turks in 1683 combined with the continuing rise in the power of the Roman Catholic Church led to the period of stability and prosperity that gave rise to a sustained period of the flowering of baroque architecture and culture, and especially music in Vienna.



Nothing lasts forever. So what happened? WW1 happened. All across Europe in 1848 the fever of common revolution required monarchies everywhere to loosen their grip on power, and to liberalise democratic enfranchisement. Only the Hapsburgs dogmatically held the absolutist line. In their territories anger simmered. It was not a surprise that on a Royal visit to Serbia in 1914 a Serbian Nationalist should assassinate the heir to the Hapsburg throne. The surprise was that Austria then sent in an army to teach the Serbs a lesson knowing that Serbia had a treaty with Russia. The Russians pushed the Austrians out and should have left it at that but invaded Austria, before thinking about the treaty Austria had with an increasingly militant and aggressive Germany. The rest is history. The Austro Hungarian Empire was destroyed, and in 1918 the last Hapsburg locked up the Schonbrunn Palace and left town. After 640 years of rule the Hapsburgs were finished, and so was the monarchy.

The Schonbrunn Palace and grounds are one of the great attractions in Austria. The Hapsburgs' 'Summer house', has 1500 rooms and a 1000 hectares of gardens. <http://www.schoenbrunn.at/en/>

Vienna is the embodiment of an era of glorious, some might say godly empire now past.

A vainglorious conceit, perhaps, but magnificent in its outward manifestation, and in its day a setting stable, and sophisticated enough to be the centre of European musical culture.

Vienna, the city of music. In an astonishing wave lasting 200 years its' great music masters were Haydn, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Schubert, Bruckner, Mahler, Hugo Wolf, Schönberg, Anton von Webern, Alban Berg, and Johannes Straus Sr and Jr.

Although born in northwestern Germany, Beethoven and Brahms settled in Vienna and spent the rest of their lives there.

The list goes on... and the same can be repeated in architecture (only a modern name is familiar to me Hundertwasser); art (Klimpt, Schiele); science (Mendel, Doppler, and Pauli); psychology (Freud, Adler); Wittengenstein (philosophy); Steiner (education).

And then there was Adolf Hitler!

Every barrel of apples has a rotten one.

We don't know what cosmic causes produced this rotter, but in Vienna (he was Austrian but not Viennese) he is totally expunged, and rightly so.

In fact the only mention I found of him was when I was reading about the Holy Lance.

This is the spear which is said to have pierced the side of Christ. It's one of the holiest relics in Christendom and is on public view in a case in the Shatzkammer Museum, alongside a piece of The Cross. It is said that the holder of the Holy Lance cannot be defeated in battle. Charlemagne carried it while he rampaged successfully across Europe and into the Middle East to reclaim Jerusalem. Hitler was fascinated by it and it is said he invaded from Germany to get it.

(The Holy Lance must have lost its' mojo after D Day!)

You'd expect a city "paved with culture" to have great museums. Vienna does not disappoint. There are too many to recount, but my special memories are:

The Tutankhamen exhibition at Kunsthistorisches Museum.

The largest ever retrospective survey of Van Gogh, at the Albertina Museum (a beautiful museum, once a Hapsburg palace) the art of Egon Schiele, and Gustav Klimpt at the Leopoldo Museum., and the wonderful permanent displays of ceramics, glass, fashion, textiles, jewellery, and design at the Museum of Applied Arts (Mak).

The city is also a city of parks, and the greatest is The Prater (6000 hectares). It would take a number of days to walk it; and of course at the outskirts of Vienna, the Vienna Woods.

Vienna is located on the western rim of the Vienna Basin, on the gentle slopes of the Vienna Woods. This "green lung" is part of the green belt which also includes vineyards and old vintner's villages.

Even though many of these villages are now part of the city, they have retained their rustic character and are favourite

destinations for visits to heurigen. A heurigen is a café or house attached to a vineyard, and the wine comes with great food, and folk music. Vienna is the only metropolis in the world where wine is grown within the city limits! Austria has a strong wine culture. The rich soil of the Danube valley, and the hot summers deliver delicious wines; and this aspect of Viennese culture demands a separate exploration.

We need another 'cultural' term.

P.S. 2009 Mercer Quality of Living Survey. Vienna voted as #1 best city in the World.



Bookshop News

New in Bookshop this term by Geoff Long

A book we haven't seen for a while is now available, "*The Book of Chang Tzu*". This book is proving to be a surprise in that the well known teaching – the Tao Te Ching was always credited to Lao Tzu yet here is research that explains how there are three authors and of the three only Chuan Tzu can actually be proven to have existed – nothing like a good mystery.

Having said this the work itself is very readable, set out in short stories and a little like Socrates – a position is stated by someone which Chaung Tzu then proceeds to counter. A different flavour and worth a look.

Aparokshanubhuti of Sri Shankaracharya would have to be one of the smallest books on self realisation. Simple and with a commentary that expands the translation, it is a must read – rumoured to be useful for the July week!

At last the anticipated translation (so far) of the "*Laws of Manu*" from SES, very limited stock available – be quick.

The Tao of Daily Life takes a story/parable from the Tao Te Ching and applies it to our everyday life. This is both instructive and helpful – true teachings are timeless!

Illusions – Richard Bach's adventures of a reluctant Messiah. Easy reading on a wet afternoon and enjoyed at all levels.

The Ultimate Medicine from Nisargadatta – transcripts of his final meetings. Short and poignant.

The Truth of Economical Taxation – a must read for the IRD- and those who enjoy a challenge.

Latest additions of Convivium and Spectrum magazines are now in stock – limited numbers.

Good reading all !

Plus there are three new CDs from Ireland – wisdom and humour with enchanting accents.

All bookshop enquiries to Geoff Long:
advasco@xtra.co.nz

The Open Day

by Nicolette Farrelly

What was striking about the Open Day held during the recent Philosophy term break, was the naturalness and openness shown by everyone there. An estimated 40 new comers took part in the day as well as some members of the School who brought friends and family. The format of the day was easy and accessible.

After a short introduction on the history of the School given by Nigel Rankin, attendees were invited to hear eight brief talks on various topics, and how they related in a practical way to each of the speakers' lives. The duration of each talk was approximately 20 minutes, with about ten minutes for questions.

The topics covered in room 1 were:

- Philosophy and Family – Nicolette Farrelly
- Philosophy and Money – Roger Spiller
- Philosophy and Education – Margaret Brickland
- Philosophy and Youth – Andrew-John Spicer

The topics covered in room 2 were:

- Philosophy and Health – Tim Farquharson
- Philosophy and Meditation – Roy Holmes
- Philosophy and Work – Graham Farrelly
- Philosophy and Art – Tony Clarke

This programme was repeated in the afternoon, so that those attending had a chance to hear all the presentations if they wished to. Although the topics and the character of the presentations varied, the underlying message from each of the talks was the same. Come into the present and live a Conscious life.

The naturalness referred to at the outset of this article was tangible in the lunch break, where everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch provided by a small group of ladies.

Although the venue was the Villa at Esplanade Road, we could just as easily have been in someone's home having a get together with old and familiar friends.

The day was very memorable. A 'must do' because it not only reflected the community's interest in the School of Philosophy, but also reflected the qualities of service, openness and naturalness which are hallmarks of the School.

Practical Philosophy

Courses begin in the week commencing Monday 27 July, and week commencing Monday 12 October. You can attend either of the venues indicated below.

**27 Esplanade Rd,
Mt Eden or
North Shore,
Lake House
Arts Centre**

Course fee is \$135
for nine weeks.

For further information

www.philosophy.school.nz

or call us toll free on
0800 610 539
for more details

Hitting the Moa

by Edward Barry (Aged 10)

On Wednesday March 25, at Mount Smart Stadium, it was athletics day for Ficino School.

At 11.30 Class 6 moved to the 'Turbo Javelin Station.' Mr Alexander told us the rules and gave us tips for along the way.

I was called for my first go. I imagined a giant Moa walking along the javelin field. I pretended to be a Maori hunter and threw the javelin with all my might and hit the Moa right in the chest! Almost 13 meters (12.8 meters to be exact)!

Most of the other throws by my class mates

were nine to ten metres (only a few shrews and rats were speared).

The Moas were going to survive! – or at least they thought they would.

That was until Fin took his next throw... compared to the other throws it was enormous. The Moa was running. Could it escape? Fin's javelin was on target. We all held our breath, and... the Moa limped away, injured.

The measuring tape was out. Had he beaten my first throw? It was close. I bit my lip. Mr. Alexander called out "12.6 meters", I let out a sigh of relief and was victorious!

Auckland School

Cultural Groups

Come – and enrich your life!

Plato	Wed. 10.00 –12.00 am	Lillian Beanland	521-5054
Economics	Sat. 7.15 – 9.45 am	Russell Allen	276-8770
Forms of Government	Sat. 10.15 – 11.45 am	Russell Allen	276-8770
Choir	Sun. 7.00 – 9.00 pm	Anita Hudson	412-7252
Art – Portrait Drawing	Sun. 7.00 – 9.00 pm	James Hanna	846-9931

New members to these groups are welcome.

For enquiries, please phone the group tutors listed.

All at 27 Esplanade Rd, Mt Eden **EXCEPT** Plato – 268 West Tamaki Rd, Glendowie.

Auckland Sanskrit Week

by June Wells



Tutors on the Auckland Sanskrit Week

In January, Auckland was the host school for the annual Sanskrit Week in Australasia. It was our very first time hosting this event.

Fortunately the Sydney School looked after the programme side of the event, but even so, there was a tremendous input by many of the Auckland students. The organisation that goes into a residential is not always apparent, but it can honestly be said that without the time and effort put in at the early stages, the week would not have run as smoothly as it did. It was really wonderful to see how well everyone worked to bring everything together. With the scene finally set, our guests were also welcomed by perfect summer days.

The attendance from the Australian schools was tremendous; there were two Australians to each New Zealander, which came to a grand total of sixty students! It was very encouraging for all of us to see how enthusiastic the Australians are about Sanskrit. There has been such a lot of work done in the past by the Sydney and Melbourne Schools, but more recently by Perth and Brisbane, Schools. They have produced several helpful charts which are now available from our bookshop. These are based on Sanskrit grammar - Rupani (noun endings) and verb endings.

What was also impressive was the extra research which has been done on Sanskrit. In one of our afternoon sessions, for example, there were presentations on several topics, relating to Sanskrit. It was interesting how diverse these subjects were and how skilled the presenters were with their work - the love for the subject was so obvious. One

of the presentations showed that the Sanskrit language had been found by NASA to be the most logical language to use for instructions for Robots because the path was more direct and logical than any other language.

Dr. Gary Grohmann, who is the leader of the Canberra School, explained to us about the principles of writing the alphabet. The straight line at the top of each letter, represents the Absolute. The downward stroke for each letter is the personal self connected to the Absolute/Self and the creation. The rest of the strokes for each letter represents the play of creation. When Sanskrit is written in this way it is evident that one is not only reminded of this, but in some magical way the spaces between the letters are so much clearer and better formed.

The most wonderful part of the week was the harmony of the event. Mr and Mrs Fardell from the London School took the Week. They had come directly from the Melbourne School, where they had just finished tutoring at a Plato week. They are a wonderful couple, who exemplify the Truth so openly. At our first meeting we were implored to 'Live with a Pure Heart', so with the wonderful example in front of us we all endeavoured to do so. The sentence to 'Live with a Pure Heart' was the most potent of all during the week and will be remembered for the effect it had. That, combined with the study of the passage quoted below, certainly helped one to rest in the Present, and the Presence of the Self.

*The intelligent Self is
neither born nor does It die.
It did not originate from anything,
nor did anything originate from It.*

*It is birthless, eternal, undecaying,
and ancient.*

It is not injured even when the body is killed.

(Katha. Up 1.2.18)

Most of the Auckland attendees were in the same group and have since been inspired to consider taking the Sanskrit exams, which are in need of much support to keep them going. Many of our Australian counterparts have taken exams in Sanskrit as have members of the school throughout the UK.

It would seem we take our beautiful surroundings for granted here in Auckland, but the appreciation of all those who attended from other Schools was a real wake up call - to actually see what we do have to offer, and what is there. Just seeing the

reflection in others of how lucky we are with these premises made us take another look. Everyone was also so enthusiastic about their accommodation. There was special mention of the menu and presentation of food, plus the well equipped kitchen facilities, which changed the normal view of our residential home. Last but not least was the appreciation of our local wines, especially chosen by Peter Lister for the occasion

For those of you not so keen on Sanskrit I can tell you that it was really all very inspiring.

Philosophy students wishing to know more about Sanskrit classes please telephone Elaine Kearney 5359096 or email elainek@orcon.net.nz. If we have enough interest we could start a new class.

The Contribution of Business

by Jackie Bedford

There are better ways to do a lot of what goes on in business," says Nigel Parry, a student of the School of Philosophy in Wellington.

Nigel and fellow student David Kelly have just run a two-session course on business, investigating how philosophical principles can guide people in business.

"People spend their lives in business," notes David. In his case, he has run a computer software company since 1987. Nigel has started up and then sold two companies in New Zealand and overseas and acted as a management consultant.

The main focus of the two Sunday-morning sessions was studying essential business processes, including decision-making and service.

It's a good time to be putting business under the spotlight and seeing what philosophy can contribute, says David. "The current crisis is a

moral or ethical crisis, not an economic one."

Twenty-five Wellington students took part in the course, which was developed in part from resources used in England. The participants included small business owners and workers in large companies and government departments. They clearly got something out of the course, based on feedback, and have indicated they would like to take it further.

During the course, David and Nigel were able to share some of their own experience and perspectives.

"Business is not about making more money," says David. "It's about making a contribution – making the world a better place."

"All businesses are about people," says Nigel. "Every business is a people business. Businesses buy things from people, sell to people and you employ people to do that."

The two are planning to offer a five-part course in future.

Ficino School Fair

by Nicolette Farrelly

Ficino School hosted its third and most successful Fair in March. There were countless comments about the wonderful quality of the day.

The Fair is a great way to showcase the school to a wide public arena and the overwhelming consensus was that the hospitality, quality and goodness, which are hallmarks of Ficino School, were all reflected on the day, in the aesthetically pleasing layout, the generosity of the parents and friends who manned the stalls and in the overall atmosphere.

There was something for everyone. Home made preserves and cakes, a delicious range of Asian food, sausage sizzle, quick fire raffle, silent auction, and pre-loved books and clothing.

There were also plenty of activities and stalls for the children. These included a boffer tournament, coconut shy, face painting, go-



All sorts for sale

cart races, mini golf, Old MacDonald's Farm and a variety of sweet treats like lolly leis, toffee apples and home made ginger beer.

The weather was faultless and the number of visitors was estimated at approximately five hundred plus. The profit which will mainly be going towards the fit-out of a new classroom, was around \$14,000. The success was due in large part to the good will and dedication of a small team of parents who brought the Fair to its fruition, and then to all who helped on the day, or simply enjoyed themselves and spent their time and money.

