

Vision

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Ancient Artwork

Sculpture Elective

by Geoff Taylor

For much of my working life as a goldsmith, I have been fascinated by the methods and materials used to create the beautiful metal work found in Japan.

During a visit there five years ago, and particularly when standing in front of the great 200 ton Buddha at Kamakura, there was a sense of absolute beauty and a deep curiosity about the skill of the artists and craftsmen who undertook this work.

The long held fascination with the methods and materials employed had led me to the discovery of the wax used for the process of cire perdue or lost wax casting, but little did I know then that I would be conducting one of last term's "Electives" in this subject!"

Over the course of 30 years I have been experimenting with the ingredients taken from a 1500 year old formula . I brought



Tony Clarke's Heron made out of wax, ready for casting in metal.

together the principle ingredients to recreate the same material used in ancient times. It is virtually unknown in the world today and possibly as good as forgotten, because the age of technology has progressed to such a point that it has possibly lost its place now, as have many wonderful crafts of the ages past.

In Japan the wax is called Mitsuryo which means honey wax and it has three major properties, soft, hard, and sticky which in sculpting are all equally important to large or small works. Even though this material may have become almost forgotten, its properties



Geoff Taylor, Lorna Travis, Mary Ann Clarke

are so valuable in the sculpturing process because it can be worked into forms, big or small that have a wonderful natural look and feel. It has characteristics that allow for very organic natural shapes and textures. It was used in Japan for animal forms, flowers, leaves and insects and for numerous items including domestic ware, temple bells and religious icons. It takes on realistic aspects, due to its flexible qualities which allows forms to look very life-like.

Other characteristics include stretching and twisting, which is seen on many of the big icons throughout the world in bronze work, especially in Japan. Modern sculptural waxes are now made with petroleum as their base and are quite inferior to this ancient Mitsuryo wax, and will never give the wonderful shapes that can be found in the natural wax of old times.

The main purpose of the elective term was to remember the Self and maintain awareness in action. It is from stillness that the creative process arises and combined with visualisation this process can take "flight". When this special combination is connected to a favorable medium, a form arises from nothingness into shape. There is a real joy in that process which has kept many craftsmen and artists constantly at their work for

enduring periods of time throughout the ages.

The group was very responsive and there was a real feeling of unity and harmony in the quiet space of this activity. Not to say there were no moments of frustration at times as the material does take practice to master. It also proved to be a great activity for those with no previous experience, and an open heart.

It was surprising to see such a diverse range of creations and it was then that I could really see how versatile the wax was and the multiplicity of uses it had.

I introduced a quote from the Ashtavakra Gita which was used over the eight weeks and it served as a constant reminder that we are always the witness of the five elements as consciousness.



A wax mask made by Gordon Howard

It was also interesting to experience the effect of the physical elements at play on the wax.

For example, with a slight increase of the fire element, there was a marked flexibility in the material and in the withdrawal of that heat the effect of hardening became apparent, like earth giving solidity to the form, holding it firm so it

would not distort when subjected to general conditions.

Apart from the odd bout of sickness amongst a few during the course I think all in all it went rather well and had a reasonable result, and for myself it was most inspiring and very satisfying with the outcome revealing that there is still a place for different aspects of the work in this Philosophical quest. I would also like to thank those who allowed me the time to present this and those who gave of their time to help organize this process and to Gordon Howard for his photos of the group and their enthusiastic participation.

Is Facebook Useful

by Guy Quartermain



Social media sometimes appear ubiquitous today. If you are not on facebook, or using these tools to communicate or promote your business, the suggestion is that you live in the past. How useful they actually are, and who uses them for what is however a little uncertain.

I built a facebook page near the start of its widespread adoption in New Zealand. It was tremendous fun at first, much like building a website, but with your very own personal online presence. The rules of social interaction felt fresh and new, and seemed to fill an apparent void left in my generation by the widespread ongoing decline of religion and social/ family traditions and constraints. It is a place we can be together, open and safe.

For me this positive and uplifting interaction quickly gave way to a feeling of compulsion to “check facebook” regularly and dissatisfaction with the superficial user experience set in.

Blatantly commercial messages seemed to proliferate, as facebook understandably worked out it’s commercial model.

From a users point of view, this was surprising because facebook fails to explicitly say that the

quid pro for use of the service is soliciting your eyeballs to advertisers, and letting facebook “data mine” your personal information. To add to the confusion, the “privacy” settings which can be used to protect your information, became increasingly Byzantine over time.

This was almost certainly a deliberate commercial ploy to encourage “openness” with information. It was disguised as a Philosophy of sharing, but was actually driven by the fact that the more open users are with information, the more scope there is to make a profit from that information. Of course making a profit from your customers is no bad thing in itself, but it is somewhat dishonest to lead them to believe a service is free, then sell their details out the back door to marketing companies. An honest compulsion to “Blaze a trail” no doubt also played a part.

Facebook has recently made its privacy settings more transparent, in response to bad publicity and user complaints, however most people I ask seem to be unaware of the privacy issues concerning commercial use of user data, and indeed it is fair to say that most users probably would not care if they did know.

How people use it

Despite Facebook’s apparent youth focus, it is widely used by older demographics, with nearly a quarter of US users reported to be 45-65 years old. This is also reported to be the fastest growing group which makes sense

when you consider all of the children overseas, and old friends that the service enables these people to interact with. To think of my (now dear departed) grandmother, who wrote many letters to brothers and sisters scattered from Europe to South Africa, being able to chat, share photos, and tell stories to her family all over the world, and instantly, is amazing. She would have loved it.

The young ones

Young people, under 25 seem to interact with facebook in a very different way. For them it is a more immersive, and more pervasive experience and tool. One 20 year old told me that postal invitations to 21st parties are a thing of the past, and creating an “ Event” on Facebook is the way all his contemporaries communicate dates for social gatherings. The few people he knows who are not on facebook apparently often “miss out”. Also it is used as a substitute in many cases for email, as a way to share photos, and as a way to share how you feel through “Status Updates”.

This is not an exhaustive list of the ways to interact and socialise on Facebook, and it really is an incredibly rich social media. Are these interactions as “Present” and valuable as those we have with people face to face? I suspect not. Does the nature of the computer interface itself damage our ability to develop and use attention? I would argue it can.

One issue is simply a lack of awareness of the number of people a user is addressing. Outside of the web, we all tailor the tone and content of communication to the size and composition of the audience. Online, the scope of the crowd is not always obvious. I have been caught out by this, posting a comment on a news article, only to find it come up in a Google search of my name. The classic case of course is bad behaviour manifesting on a Facebook page, and being picked up by a potential employer.

here is a strong argument that everyone should behave well in the first place, but nonetheless

these examples show that normal social cues that dictate appropriate behaviour and govern what we say and to whom are not always apparent online. One suggested solution is to always indicate how many potential viewers there are for any kind of comment or communication. If one could see that 500 million people can read your rant, it might give pause!

Another issue is the nature of the computer interface itself as a tool. Some software is very focussed in nature, not far from the single pointed interface of a pen on paper. Most is not. A computers biggest virtue, and perhaps its worst weakness, is it's non-linear, abundant access to information. There are so many choices, that the attention has a lot of opportunities to wander. In a perfect being, perhaps this would not present a problem, but for a lot of people, it can lead to compulsive behaviour, low quality communication, and a lot of wasted time.

So why not just ignore my computer, go to the country, and grow carrots whilst writing a masterpiece with my quill pen?

There is great potential to reach people, communicate, and have shared, unifying social and Philosophical interactions on the Internet. The technology is sub-standard, sometimes damaging, and slightly dishonest at the moment, but this will change. Software called “diaspora”, designed to prevent personal information being used for marketing unless it is on an “opt in” basis, and with optimised privacy is being designed and tested now. I am sure Socratic dialogue took at least a few years to perfect.

The future will not take place in facebook, but anyone who does not engage with social media will at the very least miss out on participating in an important and new form of public dialogue.

If we fail to engage, we fail to help social media evolve into a force for good, clear, honest and present communication.

Working in the **Domestic Violence Field**

in brief by Gwendoline Cooney

During a recent study day my husband and I were approached with a view to writing something for the Vision magazine. It was suggested that we might want to discuss the kind of work we do in the field of Domestic Violence. We were told that it didn't have to have a philosophical bent which was a relief to me but then I realised that everything we do in our work is always done with the Self in mind. It is not easy work and can often be heart rending but the emotional pull is not as powerful when we keep the teachings in mind.

Domestic abuse is extremely complex and it is rarely caused by anger at all. It is about Power and control.

One woman is killed by her partner or ex-partner in New Zealand every four weeks. Approximately half of all homicides in New Zealand are family violence related.

One in five New Zealand men are subjected to violence by their partners

93 out of every 100 domestic violence cases in New Zealand are male assault female.

About 10 children are killed every year in New Zealand by a member or members of their own family.

The annual cost of family violence in New Zealand is at least \$1.2 billion.

One of the things we are frequently asked about is what sort of people come to our groups.

One way of describing the groups is to look around you at your philosophy group. That is very much how one of our groups can look like from the outside.

We have clients from all walks of life, including clergy, prominent business people, teachers, lawyers, police, gang members and the list goes on.

It's difficult to imagine when you meet some of our clients that they could ever cause the damage to people that they have or that they are living in such abusive relationships.

The case notes we have on each person makes for grim and traumatic reading.

We work specifically with identifying power and control issues in relationships, understanding the effects of violence and abuse, developing awareness, improving communication and learning ways to have respectful relationships.

Women's Groups - Gwendoline

There are three women's groups at the agency. Two of the groups are called 'Relating Respectfully' and one group is called 'Strengthening women.'

Initially I worked in the Strengthening Women's Group which is for victims of domestic violence.

I now work in the women's "Relating Respectfully Group" with another counsellor. There are generally seven to eleven women

attending. We always start our group with the exercise that we use in our philosophy groups.

We follow that with a question about the tension scale which measures differing levels of tension ranging from 0 which is asleep to 10 which is a state of being out of control. Most of the women notice a marked reduction of tension levels after the exercise.

Our group deals with anger issues and ways of communicating respectfully, we look at power and control tactics, tension scales, child development, self awareness and much more.

Some clients are referred from the courts, some from Children and Young Persons, and some are self referred. Any woman who takes out a protection order against her husband or partner is offered groups for themselves and their children.

Some of the women are victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, some just want to deal with anger issues and some just want to learn how to communicate effectively.

It can be quite difficult working with people who have been referred from the courts. The resistance is high. We generally go with the resistance and accept the place the person is in and over time they tend to join in and enjoy the group.

It helps to have self referred clients in the group who are enthusiastic about the programme. They tend to draw the other clients along with them.

The Domestic Violence Act, 1995 states that a person psychologically abuses a child if that person -

- (a) causes or allows the child to see or hear the physical, sexual, or psychological abuse of a person with whom the child has a domestic relationship; or
- (b) puts the child, or allows the child to be put at real risk of seeing or hearing that abuse occurring;—

A lot of our clients are unaware of the horrific

effects that witnessing violence can have on a child. All of our clients are made aware of the effects on children and all children of clients are offered groups. We run groups for children from age 7 years up to age 16 years.

I think one of the saddest things for me in this work is seeing how the children are affected.

However, one of the greatest joys of this work is to know that the work we do may ultimately benefit not only the client but also the children.

Although we deal with very serious issues in the group there is always room for fun and laughter.

I love working with these women and to be a part of their developing awareness. I have learned so much from them. Being in the group makes me think more about how I communicate and deal with things and how my behaviour affects other people. I see my own self doubt flitting across the mind when I'm in the group. I can get caught up with worrying about how I come across or I'm not good enough, but I bring to mind constantly that there is nothing more powerful than the Self, and through remembering that simple truth, I am able to forget about "mini me" and let go and be present. I can see the difference in the group when I am caught up in the play and when I'm able to let go. When I let go the group seems to let go.

In saying all of that, this can be a dangerous place to work. We had an incident a couple of weeks ago when we finished an evening woman's group. A man covered in blood started banging on the door and trying to get in. We do have panic buttons and alarms fortunately, but he ran away before the police arrived. We always have to be vigilant about keeping the doors locked when workers are alone in the building. We have had female and male workers threatened by very dangerous men. Fortunately we are skilled in dealing with that level of anger but it doesn't mean it will always be effective.

Men's Groups - Michael

Michael works as the men's co-ordinator, In addition he runs men's groups and also does one to one counselling.

The men's group that Michael runs always starts with the philosophy exercise and he has had quite a few of the men say that they find it very peaceful and it seems to be an incentive for the men to turn up on time as they don't want to miss it.

A great deal of the men's programme is based around the Duluth Power and Control Wheel.

The Wheel is divided into segments that show how power and control is maintained in the relationship by utilising certain tactics.

Physical and sexual violence, or the threat of it, is the 'rim' "of the wheel "that holds the 'spokes' of the wheel together. Just one incident of physical or sexual violence is often enough to make women and children live in fear.

One of the clients in Michael's group gave him permission to use a statement he made in the group.

He spoke of how he had broken his wife physically, emotionally and spiritually.

When asked what he meant by spiritually he stated that she could no longer be at peace with her own individuality which she had been able to experience in the first years of their marriage. She was unable to express herself in any way that wasn't defined by him."

Michael says that a large degree of the men he counsels have shown great remorse and deep grief about the effects of their behaviour on themselves and others, especially the women and children. They all agree that the women didn't "sign up" for this and at no time did this behaviour look like love.

The men who are helped by this programme are in agreement that their anger has not had their best interests at heart. When they explore this concept it tends to awaken their values

related to "what is a good man."

Michael has found that there is a "good man" in most of his clients.

Michael is often asked how he is personally affected by doing this type of work. He says, "For myself I feel blessed that I can be a catalyst for change. The "Course in Miracle's" interpretation of a miracle is when a person has a change in perception. To be in the presence of someone as they develop awareness and experience a shift in consciousness, is profound and very humbling. Yet some days, I must admit, it just feels like hard work.

Some of the men I work with are able to reconcile with their families and it is wonderful to see. Some don't get the message at all and I know that means others will suffer.

I always hold with the essence of what one of the Catholic Popes said that if we want world peace we must begin in the home.

These programmes are not about men becoming doormats. They are about teaching men how to deal respectfully with the events in life that they tend to overreact to. They learn how to take responsibility for their experiences "in the moment." It is not about shaming them; it is about opening their eyes.

With the tools they are given in our groups they are able to respond in a non-threatening manner and learn to live life in ways that are not destructive to themselves and others.

I have to keep in mind that it is ultimately up to the men to change and I have no control over that. I can only offer them alternatives."

This is a very brief look at what we do. I have tried to answer some of the questions that we are often asked. The programmes and interventions I have described apply to our agency North Harbour Living Without Violence Inc. Each family violence agency has a philosophy and way of working that is particular to them.



We use the 'Duluth' model of intervention though it has been adapted to meet the specific needs of New Zealanders.

The Duluth Model originated in Minnesota in 1980-1981. The original Minnesota organizers were activists in the battered women's movement.

Duluth was deemed the best Minnesota city to attempt a co-ordination of criminal and civil justice agencies in an effort to respond to domestic abuse cases that included battering.

Eleven agencies formed the initial collaborative initiative. These included 911, police, sheriff's and prosecutors' offices, probation, the criminal and civil court

benches, the local battered women's shelter, three mental health agencies and a newly created coordinating organization called the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP).

Our agency adopted the collaborative model and works in closely with other agencies in the community such as the Police Family Violence unit, Community Probation, District and Family courts and Women's Refuge to name a few.

We work specifically with identifying power and control issues in relationships, understanding the effects of violence and abuse, developing awareness, improving communication and learning ways to have respectful relationships.

Bookshop News



by Geoff Long

In 1945 thirteen volumes or fragments of volumes written on papyrus were found by chance near Nag Hamadi in Upper Egypt. It appears that they had come from the library of a Gnostic (relating to esoteric mystical knowledge – Oxford) community and together comprised 49 works written in Coptic and most of them unknown.

In many respects this discovery is comparable in importance to that of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls. It has created a sensation. None of the works included in the discovery have been discussed so much or have created so much interest as “The Gospel according to Thomas”.

The introduction to this book has been reprinted and is available from the School of Economic Science, London. Readings were given on the recent Sanskrit week in Nanpantin. Here is a sample of the writing:

These are the secret words which the Living Jesus spoke and Didymos Judas Thomas wrote.

And He Said:

Whoever finds the explanation of these words will not taste death. Jesus said:

Let him who seeks, not cease seeking until he finds, and when he finds he will

be troubled, and when he has been troubled, he will marvel and he will reign over the All

The bookshop is hoping to have a shipment here by the end of next term.

Also on order are some copies of Leon McLaren “Beginning of Term Lectures”. These have not been available for a number of years. Volumes 3 to 5 are the only volumes available in print. The bookshop has some on order.

Looking for Christmas presents.

The bookshop has compiled a recommended list.

- Eckhart Tolle calendars are always popular – limited number available.
 - CD’s - here is a very wide selection of CD’s on many topics, guaranteed to suit many tastes.
 - Books of short stories, particularly the De Mello series, such as “*Song of the Bird*”, “*Prayer of the Frog*” and the “*One Minute Wisdom*”.
 - Laser engraved crystal cubes – a very limited number are available, quite unique and ethereal.
 - Don’t miss out on the Special releases
- from the Festival of Spirit Event coming soon!
- Two books on ‘*The History of the School*’ by Leon Mac Laren, one of which is a new edition entitled “*In Search of Truth*” which describes in wondrous detail how the school actually developed from idea to fact.
 - Also a great little pocket edition of Mr. Mac Laren’s sayings called ‘*Reflections*’.
- Any queries or requests to Geoff Long:
advasco@xtra.co.nz
- Merry Christmas!

An Experience of the Festival of Spirit

by Rosemary Auld

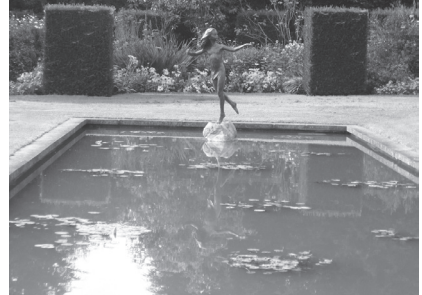
In September this year, an Australian friend and I agreed to travel to the UK to attend the Festival of Spirit which was a celebration of the life of Leon MacLaren, the founder of the School of Economic Science in London.

After a visit to Ireland to acclimatise to the northern hemisphere, Angela Miller and I joined a residential week of dance in the impressive Waterperry House in Oxfordshire. This is a place where students of philosophy from the UK and around the world, meet to study. We shared the residence with those attending the Care of Nations study week. There were over 90 people altogether. An extensive programme of lectures and many different study residentials took place in other venues over the three weeks of the celebration in London.

All who attended the dance shared in the joy of movement. We learnt new dances, and choreographed pieces to texts of Shakespeare and the Bible. The dance group was largely made up of dance teachers from around the world who were inspired to join in with this wonderful event.

During our time at Waterperry, we were taken around the extensive world class gardens of Waterperry House. The House itself has a fine history including having been a Horticultural College. We loved the tea house, garden centre and horticultural museum, and Saxon Church which is still well used by the local community.

The Grande Finale Celebratory Evening in London, on the 26th September, was rich in its offerings. There was a dramatic re-enactment of the early life of Leon Mac Laren and the beginnings of the School of Economic Science,



Gardens of Waterperry

singing and a selection of other performance items. It was a great privilege to be part of it. The performances took place in the historic Theatre Royal in London's Drury Lane, alongside Covent Garden. The stage was set up for the musical production of *Oliver* at that time and it was fascinating to find ourselves amongst the hydraulics of the hundred year old Theatre.

My dance friends have exchanged messages about their experience of this event as performers or in the audience. One of the three dancers who performed that evening in the 'Dance of the Three Graces', commented

"I was truly an observer the whole way through...

I was conscious throughout of the precious moment.

It was a joy from beginning to end.

So many people played a selfless role in the coming together of the dance."

Similar comments could be made on the dance performance of the Ficino School girls. Their piece, a reflection on Krishna, brought about an inner silence with it's freshness, focus and remarkable self-assuredness.

The Festival of Spirit was so many things to so many people. The wonderful family

Plato

at Villa Boccella

by Lilian Beanland

The week studying Plato at Villa Boccella in Tuscany in September this year, was heavenly.

The main Villa, which is located near the walled city of Lucca, was built in 1729. It has been beautifully restored in recent years, and the estate still produces its own wine, oil, and preserves, and sleeps 26 people in grand style.

There are four other buildings which have been converted from their original state to provide accommodation for guests:

The first is the Dependence, formally the farmhouse which provided the food for the villa. It now accommodates 20, with magnificent facilities.

The second and third are two buildings, originally used for producing oil and flour, which face each other across an orchard of peaches, plums, figs, olives and vines. They are now called Limonia Piccola, which sleeps 6 and Limonia Grande which accommodates 10. They are beautifully appointed with spacious kitchens and lounges.

The fourth, Boccellina, similar to the above, sleeps 11 people.

Being placed in Limonia Piccola was a privilege. It was shared by a couple from South Africa, one lady from London, one from Melbourne, one from Sydney and one (me) from Auckland. A mini Commonwealth!

we stayed with made it possible to attend a memorable lecture in a Church, near Mandeville Place, central London, titled “St Francis of Assisi”. In this lecture, John Jepsen, leader of the Melbourne School, reflected on the life of study and faith of the Italian Saint who rebuilt the Church of his time with a

My Group decided that Limonia Piccola was a good place to have our meetings, so it was like entertaining friends at home. In the mornings, the whole gathering met with David Horan in the main hall, a former barn, and then dispersed to separate groups until about 1:30, when we were free to either rest, study or go into Lucca until 5 pm when further meetings took place; it all ran like clockwork.

The walled city of Lucca is a wonderful place to visit; full of churches and treasures, and fully pedestrian. It is the birthplace of Puccini and we were fortunate to attend a short concert of Puccini and Mozart works, which was a highlight of our time in Italy.

The week left one with a desire to study and enquire further and with a deep appreciation of the good company of Plato and all those who attended.

Having attended the Plato in Italy and the Festival of Spirit in London, and having greeted many old friends, one was left with the certainty that the School is just as strong here in Auckland- we lack nothing. Next year we are to have a Plato week in Auckland and there is no doubt that it will be just as rewarding.

fresh understanding of scripture. Mr Jepsen suggested that the message was no less relevant for the Church of our time.

The Festival was remarkable for its diversity and the opportunities it gave us all to share in the Spirit of the School’s founder, Leon MacLaren.



Villa Boccella, Lucca, Tuscany

A Visit to

by Karen Crompton

Delphi

In June this year I was very fortunate to be able to accompany a group of Year 11 students from St James Girls School in London, on a trip to Greece.

The main purpose of our trip was to visit some of the ancient sites in Greece, namely Delphi, Epidavrus, Athens and Mycenae. The other purpose was to allow the students time to enjoy each others company in beautiful surroundings and unwind after having had a period of intensive study and exams. Our trip was to be five days long including the flights to and from London. This meant we would be packing a lot of sight seeing into a short space of time.

We arrived in Athens in the early evening and straight away drove by coach to Delphi. On the way one of the teachers told us the story of Oedipus, a sobering tale, and one which was to become a recurring theme for our journey as each of our guides was to give us different interpretations of the story. We arrived at our hotel late at night and were ready to go straight to bed in order to be up early for our first day of sightseeing.

I woke up at about 5.00am to the sound of birds singing. As we had travelled to Delphi in the dark I hadn't realised how high up it was. The new town of Delphi in which we were staying is nestled into the side of a very steep hill and looks out over the Sacred Olive Groves and down toward the sea.

The view from the balcony off my room was magnificent. It was very peaceful as I sat watching the swallows flying by and the light change on the surrounding countryside. Many people comment on the energy or atmosphere of Delphi and find it a very special place, with which I would whole-heartedly agree.

After breakfast we set off for the ancient site of Delphi which was just five minutes (by coach) down the road. We were glad it was still fairly early because the day was promising to be very hot. We were lucky to find ourselves in the company of a wonderful guide called Penny. She had an engaging manner and a quick wit and challenged the girls to use their intellect and think for themselves and not rely on what their teachers or guide books said. She said as the ancient sites of Greece are surrounded by myth and legend and many different archaeological theories, it was important to exercise reason and sound judgement when interpreting information. With this in mind we all listened enthralled to the tale of how Delphi came to be where it is and why it was so important.

We were surprised to learn how recently the ancient ruins before us had been discovered and excavated. For a period of time small treasures had been unearthed in the area surrounding the village of Kastri, which covered the present day site of ancient Delphi, and these finds had caught the attention of many archaeologists who wished to investigate

further. In 1891 villagers living in Kastri, were finally persuaded to leave and take up residence in a village built especially for them, where present day Delphi is situated. Kastri had been in existence since medieval times and the villagers were extremely reluctant to leave their homes.



Temple of Apollo

However, the region is renowned for having seismic tremors and after a particularly severe tremor they decided to take the opportunity to relocate themselves to homes which were being offered by the government at very little expense to themselves.

In 1893 there began a systematic excavation of Delphi by the French Archaeological School. They removed vast quantities of earth and debris to reveal the ruins and in the process unearthed many exquisite treasures, all of which can be seen in the Delphi Museum. Most of the ruins which were unearthed dated from the 6th and 7th centuries BC but there is evidence that the site has been occupied since the Mycenaean period which dates from 1600-1100 BC. As a group we felt over awed to be standing in such an ancient landscape which had been so painstakingly and beautifully restored.

In ancient times it was believed that Delphi was at the centre of the earth. This was because when Zeus wanted to find out where the centre of the earth was, he sent two giant eagles into the sky from opposite directions and where they crossed the land directly

below was considered to be the centre or navel of the earth. An omphalos or navel stone was erected at this spot and can be seen in the Museum of Delphi.

Since Mycenaean times Delphi has been a place of worship. Deities such as Gaea, Themis and Phoebe had their followers long before Apollo came along. However it is through the worshipping of the god Apollo that Delphi became famous and people from all walks of life travelled many, many miles to come and consult the Oracle of Delphi. According to mythology, Apollo battled with Python who was guarding the omphalos. Apollo slew Python and cast his body into a fissure and then built the first temple. Apollo had to pay penance for his actions as Python was the son of Gaea, so spent the next eight years purifying himself.

Apollo spoke through a priestess known as either Sibyl or Pythia at the Oracle of Delphi. She had to be a woman of blameless life and sat on a tripod stool over the fissure where Python's body had been thrown. The intoxicating vapours which arose from the



The Athenian Treasury

decomposing body sent Pythia into a trance, allowing Apollo to possess her spirit. In this state Pythia prophesied. Priests were on hand to interpret Pythia's sayings as they were often incomprehensible. The interpretations were always left somewhat vague and open to various understandings, thereby ensuring that the Oracle was always right.

There are different theories surrounding the vapours which were used by Pythia. Some believe the gas ethylene issued from the ground, causing intoxication and others believe the burning of laurel leaves (Apollo's favoured plant) was the cause.

In the winter months the Oracle could not be consulted as it was believed Apollo vacated

Delphi and travelled north. In his place the god Dionysus was worshipped. It is said during this period of time chaos ruled. However our guide Penny suggested that Dionysus was not necessarily the cause of the chaos but rather the excuse. People liked to relax and enjoy a drink or two and as Dionysus is the god of wine people readily imbibed.

There are three inscriptions carved into the Temple of Apollo. They are 'Know Thyself', 'Keep the Measure' and 'E'. The first two maxims are beautiful guiding principles for life, however the debate is open as to the meaning of 'E' and scholars have been debating this for centuries.

Before we knew it, it was time for us to leave and travel to our next destination. As we left the beautiful surroundings of Delphi it was hard to believe we had only been there for a few short hours. We had traversed through the history of Ancient Greece and its associated mythology and sometimes it was

hard to tell where mythology stopped and reality started.

For me one of the highlights of that particular part of our journey was watching the girls who had studied Ancient Greek for their exams try and translate the Greek which had been carved into stone all those centuries ago. For them it brought history alive and validated all their efforts to learn such an ancient language.

What has been written here is just a tiny part of the story of Delphi, barely scratching the surface. If you should ever go there I would thoroughly recommend paying for a guide as they have done an enormous amount of study and are very knowledgeable on all aspects of Delphi.

Ficino School - The Talk of Europe

by John Winter

In mid September this year a group of 17 students, 3 teachers and 4 parents from Ficino School were fortunate to have a truly wonderful experience. The 11 and 12 year old girls and boys travelled to Europe on their study tour of the Italian Renaissance, Roman history and Shakespeare.

Their arrival in London was perfectly timed as they were able to join in with the final concert for the Festival of Spirit and show their talents. The girls performed a dance entitled 'Pearls on a Thread' and the boys and girls sang beautifully with the St James Children who jointly presented Gloria and Domini Fili. The opportunity to perform on stage at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, one of London's oldest theatres, to a capacity crowd will be something they will recall for their lifetime and will also be a great boost to their development.

The main aim of the trip was to see up close the great works the students have studied for several years in books. The effect of experiencing these first hand is something

not to be underestimated and will be a great foundation for appreciating the role of art in life and the world we live in. Standing before the great works of the Renaissance, walking among the ruins and well preserved



Hamish Hudson giving lessons at the Roman Forum

creations of the Roman Empire, having first hand Shakespeare acting lessons and seeing a performance at the Globe Theatre were all different and equally enriching cultural experiences. The spirit of the artists and craftspeople in their works are evident when standing before them with the knowledge of how the creation came to be.

The trip began with a long flight to Rome with only a few hours out to stretch the legs in Hong Kong. Exiting in chaotic Rome to board a coach, the hardy travellers were able

to relax as they toured the city. Expecting them to be dazed was a mistake, they eagerly snapped photos and asked and answered questions in a prelude to what they were to explore over the coming days- the Roman Temple “Pantheon” from 126 AD and Trevi fountain, Circus Maximus and the Roman Forum, Colosseum, St Peters Basilica and the Vatican Museum & Sistine Chapel along with an out of town excursion to the sprawling 5000 person villa of Emperor Hadrian.

Heading up to Tuscany to stay at a castle near Florence we stopped off at Orvieto, the hill top



The Roman Forum

fortified town with a famous and spectacular Duomo- Gothic styled cathedral.

Staying in a villa beside the castle at

Montegufoni was a highlight. Not only because it had a Florentine pool for the afternoon cool down but that Charlemagne the Conqueror passed through there over 800 years earlier. Dating back to the 12th century, the original structure was built by the noble Ormanni family (of Divine Comedy fame). Montegufoni served as a meeting place for Florence’s nobility and later as a refuge for artists and writers. D.H. Lawrence and Somerset Maugham are amongst many great writers to have visited it. During World War II it housed famous works of art, including Botticelli’s “La Primavera” and Giotto’s “Madonna D’Ognisanti”.

Exploring Florence’s spectacular galleries and visiting Siena from this base was like being in another world, the morning walk from the Castle to the bus past the valleys of olive groves and grape vines glowing in the morning sun was a great start to the day.

Ficino children, parents & teachers in front of St Paul’s Cathedral, London.





Lesson in The Globe Theatre

Florence's renaissance works are something to be cherished, from the statues of David to the Uffizzi and Academia galleries with their amazing creations of the Renaissance artists.

Flying out of Pisa, past the leaning tower, off to London we went. The great British Museum, Natural History Museum and Science museum amazed all the eager students. They saw some of the sites of London via an open top double decker bus. Exploring the Tower of London, meditating in St Pauls Cathedral and acting lessons at the Globe theatre were all part of the enriching London experience. Somewhere in all this the performance for the Festival of Spirit was rehearsed and performed and the students were also billeted out with St James student families for 3 nights at this time! Out of town the tour included Waterperry House and its

stunning fresco's, Salisbury Cathedral with the Magna Carta, Stonehenge, Oxford, and Bath, and a morning at Charmouth beach breaking rocks and finding Jurassic fossils.

What a wonderful trip! The children were all so well behaved and interested. Every day we enjoyed unsolicited compliments from fellow travelers on the children's radiant and refined nature. They were simply a pleasure to travel with. Thanks has to go to the Ficino board for its' wisdom to approve the trip, the teachers for their commitment and effort to carry out the mammoth task and the parents who supported it with their fundraising and their trust in the travelling group to care for their children for 3 weeks. I can highly recommend the experience and also have to give thanks to those who shared the load and provided such good company along the way.

Following are some examples of reflective writing by the senior students of Ficino school who recently went on a ‘Renaissance’ study trip to Italy and England.



San Marco monastery, Florence ‘Saint Peter Enjoins Silence’ a Fresco by Fra Angelico

“Silence”, the command given for entering the monastery. Silence in body, mind and soul. It begs the question, “What is silence?” something that we do before lessons? Something so our parents can have some peace? Looking at this fresco in San Marco, it seems more than that.

Being here it seems like something tangible, something you could hold like silk and envelop yourself in. The painting is simple and beautiful, catching the essence of something amazing.’

By Gyorgika Farelly Y7

‘When I went to the Roman Baths, I could almost feel the presence of the Romans, but I could not imagine how such an amazing feat was possible.’

By Hrishikesh Harish Y8



Orvieto Cathedral, Italy

After a session of meditation in Orvieto Cathedral these were the words that came to me:

‘There is a stillness that is, and will always be. There is security and protection where-ever you step. In meditation to be able to raise your eyes and be with Christ, there is a serenity there that only has to be found. All around you there is the safety of Love. You are one with God. One with All.’

By Lys Meurillon. Y7



Stonehenge

‘As Stonehenge shone in the sun my heart opened fully and jumped with a miraculous feeling.’

By Mehul Vinu Patel Y7

Sanskrit

by Geoff Long

In the Manor Born

'Nanpantan Hall' in Loughborough, was chosen as the venue for the 2010 September Sanskrit Week. What an ideal spot in the English countryside. A Victorian manor with wild pheasants on the front lawn, an orchard and much more!

We men got the stables-cum-coach-house as living quarters! Well it had actually been revamped into a self-contained unit with meeting room, kitchen and very comfortable beds.

The Week followed the format we are used to, alternating study, work, drinking tea and eating lavishly. The day began with a reading from the Gospel of Thomas by Richard Elias, who conducted the week. It was followed by a study of a verse from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, with dictionary work and discussion. After lunch we worked on the first part of Laghu, One a Sanskrit grammar text.

The weather was cool but fine, with open fires on two nights which were really more for effect as the house was very warm.

What of Sanskrit?

A lot of students round the world are doing a great deal of work on this language and the question here was how can such love be? One answer that arose was that maybe this love is actually held in the Sanskrit language itself and is released through the study and enjoyment of it, in which case, the study is its own reward at whatever level and in whatever measure, and as we have been reminded that there is no difference between Philosophy and Sanskrit study, this would seem reasonable. Those not already enjoying the Sanskrit language may like to try and see if this is so.

Some really interesting things came up. We all know about the Monier-Williams Sanskrit-English dictionary, but here are some things you may not know. Did you know that Spanish is the second most widely spoken language after English? Did you know that there is no Sanskrit-Spanish dictionary available anywhere? Well, thanks to the School in Argentina, this is changing as they have taken on the huge task of translating the English Monier-Williams Dictionary we are all familiar with into Spanish. Already the dictionary is available online in English. It is

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If there is enough interest (at least 8 people), we will start a new beginner's Sanskrit class next February. Options: 6pm before group for one hour, or a whole evening.

Those interested please contact Elaine Kearney 535-9096 or elaine@orcon.net.nz

still a work in progress but much is already available online on the website www.sanskrita.org. They have some really neat innovations- click on the voice icon and the word shown is pronounced! Look to the help box to the right and like magic, both dhatus (root forms of words) and other useful information appears both before and after Sanskrit words to help with the search.

It is going to be really good. The Monier-Williams dictionary has about 160,000 words and the Argentinians are about 5% through, but they need help to speed things up - not with the Spanish of course, but for people – anyone with an interest in Sanskrit and who has free time, to check that the English-based download is correct to the actual dictionary as this comes via Germany and needs to be carefully vetted. Once the text is confirmed, the Argentinian School will simply translate the English text into Spanish.

Anyone can log on and register as an independent checker anywhere in the world and do as much or little as they like. All help is gratefully received and all that is needed is an English Monier-Williams Dictionary, a computer on internet and a love for Sanskrit.

Practical Philosophy

Term 1 begins week commencing 7 February (Part 1 Tues 8 February and Thurs 10 February).

Term 2 begins week commencing 2 May (Part 1 Tues 4 May and Thurs 6 May).

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

The Opening of **St James Senior School** in Surrey

by Digby Crompton



Some time ago the St James Senior Boys School had out grown Pope Villas on the Thames at Twickenham and were looking for larger premises. Around the same time The Board of St David's School for Girls, in Surrey were in financial difficulty and had to close their school. St David's was offered to Mr David Boddy, headmaster, on the condition that St James would take over the debt. If they agreed they could have the school premises on 30 acres of land with a lake, for free!

It was indeed a great privilege for my wife, Elizabeth, and I to be among the few Aucklanders to attend the opening of the

Elizabeth Crompton, Digby Crompton, David Boddy & Barry Preston.

School at Ashford, Surrey, on September 23rd. The event was auspicious as it fell on the eve of the centenary of the birth of Mr. Leon Mac Laren, founder of the School of Economic Science (SES) and the St James Schools and which initiated these schools for children.

On arrival we were personally welcomed by David Boddy and were taken to the Chapel of St David where the School choir, conducted by Derek Saunders, sang various pieces including an exquisite rendering of 'Panis Angelicus'. David Boddy gave an address after which we were offered a tour by teaching staff.

They took us around the main building where they explained the transformation the school premises had undergone over the past year since its acquisition. They also showed us the facilities available for each of the disciplines offered at the school. What truly was delightful was the praise the Staff had for their headmaster, for bringing the whole project together in such a short time.

Following lunch we were asked to be seated for Purcell's Trumpet Voluntary which was played as we stood to welcome the platform party including guests of honour, Donald Lambie, Senior Tutor of the SES, and Tony Little, Headmaster of Eton College.

David Boddy invited the school and guests, approximately 1200 in all, to come together and in memory of Mr Leon MacLaren, we listened to pupils and staff recite a prayer entitled 'Lead me from untruth to truth'. This was followed by a recitation of the 'Lord's Prayer' by everyone and then the 'Universal Prayer'. Everyone then joined in the hymn, 'Guide me O thou Great Redeemer'. After that there were addresses from the headmaster and Mr Lambie interspersed with music and songs including Vivaldi's Gloria performed by the boys.

Significantly, students and staff at St James come from many different religious communities. These include the Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Islamic, and Sikh communities. This is significant for two reasons. Firstly because having such a diverse

religious representation 'under one roof' truly reflects the universality of the teaching which permeates the school. Secondly because for fifteen minutes twice a day the whole school stops in silent contemplation and does this, with respect to their own religious beliefs.

Representatives, from each religious community, led by the school Chaplain, Father Rob Marshall, gave offerings at the opening ceremony and joined in prayers for the unfolding of love, knowledge and wisdom for the welfare of all who come to that site.

The head boy then welcomed Tony Little who gave a light and good humoured address, which also contained some serious challenges. He then unveiled the 'Commemorative Shell' designed especially for the occasion. It will stand on a Clipsham Stone plinth in the magnificent entrance hall. Pupils distributed a commemorative gift box to everyone present: inside was a porcelain shell with the St James' motto "Calm, Courageous and Strong" engraved on the shell, with the traditional gold rope completing the St James logo.

The Chaplain led a short period of Thanksgiving and Silence for the provision of the new site and the ceremony ended with everyone singing, 'Now thank we all our God'.

The real privilege was to be present, with this singular sound of the real spirit of education, which would go out to all the affiliated schools around the world, as a firm foundation from which they can develop further.

A special thanks...

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

Also thank you to the 'Vision' team – Nicolette Farrelly (editor), Selwyn Daniels (proof reader), Marilyn Marshall (editing) and Andrew Iten (layout).

If you would like to contribute to Vision, contact Nicolette Farrelly
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Journey into Africa

by Gordon Howard

The first time that I took the road north to Springbok and on through 'Pofadder', everything was very reassuring. The wide, armoured tar wandered through mirages with the 'kopjies' (granite hills) up ahead, and 'dorpies' (small villages) came around the corner from time to time. It was all very organized.

Then, just east of 'Kakamas', we crossed over the Orange River, richly embraced with green vineyards, and took the dusty turn-off north through Lutzputs, Noenieput to Tweerivieren and the ever mysterious Kalahari.

I remember the shock coming over the brow of the first real Kalahari dune, with the desert ahead, and an endless red dust road before us.

Desert Oryx by Howard Gordon



This was really the start of the journey, the point where the adventure began. The distance ahead was vast, and though this road saw constant traffic, one had the feeling that if you were stuck, you might not be found for a week! It was a breathtaking panorama, littered with rocks and koekerboom trees, stretching into the vast distance and challenging the traveller.

Here comfortable civilization departs and the mysterious interior beckons.

Memories of Gondwana

Africa saw the Dawn of Human Civilization, and when we journey into this interior, it is a return to the hinterland of an ancient memory.

Here we find ourselves recovering the peace of time before history was recorded.

As the land teemed with species, so it also flourished with people.

Their spirits still call us to this age of harmony and balance.

On my travels into the interior there are holy places where the presence of our ancestors exert a most compelling mystery, a knowledge that is measureless, a calm without bounds.

This stillness, this grand reserve of Eden, fills us all with a most enduring awe. It is this

encompassing stillness, where the mind finds utter rest that I wish to bring to my artworks.

Not the fretted angst of a techno nightmare- but the hallowed stillness which allows the intellect to tap the energy of the greater mind.

Whenever I have the opportunity, a safari into the wilderness is like returning home.

The ancient peoples knew their part in the grand scheme of the creation, and celebrated their role in the great rhythm of existence. They understood this balance without requiring to tame or dominate it.

Today we all live on a tightrope of our own mythology, manipulating and orchestrating desires that often know nothing of measure or balance.

When first, we find ourselves sitting at a waterhole, miles from anywhere - our heads still full of the city: the initial impulse is to switch on 'the drama'.

Where are the animals? Why isn't there a whole ark of them at conference before us. Slowly it dawns upon us that they all drift in their own time, to take their turn. We begin to remember our experience of 'time' as children. Our senses re-awaken, our memory of the eternal returns, and with it the grand proportion of experience.

Auckland School Cultural Groups

Come – and enrich your life!

Economics	@ 27	Sat. 7.15 – 9.45 am	Russell Allen	276 8770
Forms of Government	@ 27	Sat. 10.00 – 12.00pm	Russell Allen	276 8770
Portrait Drawing	@ 27	Sun. 6.00 – 9.00 pm	James Hanna	846 9931
Plato	@ 268	Wed. 9.45 – 12.00 pm	Lillian Beanland	521 5054
Portrait Drawing	@ 268	Tue. 12.30– 3.30 pm	Paul Brickland	445 9012

New members to these groups are welcome.

For enquiries, please phone the group tutors listed.

At 27 Esplanade Rd, Mt Eden & 268 West Tamaki Road, West Tamaki.