

Vision

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Richard Clemas Ryman (Dick)

March 25 1913 - April 22 2011

***Founder of the School of
Philosophy in Auckland in 1960***

Although he often thought he had few friends, Dick Ryman had many over his lifetime and at the age of 98 had outlived most of them. One of his edicts was “family first”, and anyone who touched our small family was always considered to be part of it. At his funeral there were people from Whangarei, Te Puke, Auckland and Waiheke to honour his extraordinary life.

Dick was an only child, born to English parents in Hastings, New Zealand. He moved with his parents to Tuhara, a country area just out of Wairoa where, as a four-year-old he used to visit the single-roomed school near his house for companionship, until eventually he was barred because he was too disruptive.

In 1919, Dick and his family sailed to England to help his grandfather run the farm in Denton, Oxfordshire. At that time he and three other children were tutored by the Vicar at the



local vicarage. He enjoyed farming life, although no one could get used to the ‘wild colonial boy’ who constantly ran around without any shoes or boots on.

In the summer of 1925 the family returned to New Zealand where he continued his schooling in Wairoa in a two-roomed tin shed in the middle of a paddock. At the age of fifteen he came home one day and told his mother that he had secured a job at the local accountants’ office for fifteen shillings a week (about \$70 in today’s money). He worked between eighty and ninety hours per week! It was the height of the slump and the only

other money coming in was the twenty five shillings a week his father made milking cows in the Waikato. There was no work available in the town where they lived. The family also had a cow and a garden on which they depended for food and milk.

In February 1931 there was a major earthquake in Hawkes Bay, known as the Napier earthquake, which caused a lot of destruction. At the time, Dick was in a building in the main street. It took him some time to get out and when he finally did, he found himself face down on the road with two other people. He got onto his motorbike and went home to see if his mother was all right. After that he went to the local hospital to see if he could lend a hand. It was a total mess and took about three days to clean up.

My mother's father owned a farm which sustained a lot of damage during the earthquake. He lost his stock and all the fences, so the family moved to a small flat in the town while the bank repossessed the farm. During this time Dick and my mother Johny, met and started going to church dances, chaperoned by my grandmother.

In 1934 Dick left his job at the accounting office and started a job at the local freezing works. He worked hard, six days per week and became the office manager in two and a half years.

In 1937 my parents were married on a Saturday at my mother's family home in Hastings. There were only thirteen people present at the wedding. The vicar, the best man and the family. It was a busy weekend for my father because after work on the day before the wedding he cleaned the house they were going to live in, then set off for the wedding in Hastings in his Morris 8, arriving in the early hours of the morning, got married at 6 pm that evening, and left around 8pm with my mother making the five

hour journey back to their home in Wairoa. The following day my father went to work to make up the hours he had missed on his wedding day!

Dick was commissioned into the Army in June 1942 and was later transferred into the Air Force as a multi-pilot. On one occasion, while doing extra hours for navigation he arrived back at the airfield in complete cloud cover. In a flash of calm, total knowledge he knew he had to put the plane into a nose dive. Levelling off under the cloud he saw that there had already been a crash, but he experienced time stretching so there was simplicity in letting the plane down safely. He searched for that undoubting knowledge all his life.

For his ninety-third birthday, his grandchildren organised a flight with the War-birds in a Tiger Moth. They flew him around the coast of Waiheke.

In 1956 Dick moved to Wellington where he attended the first School of Philosophy class held in New Zealand. After a few years he and my mother moved to Auckland and in 1960 they set up the School of Philosophy in Auckland, which they ran for six years. They cleaned the rooms, made the tea, marked the register and collected the fees, which just covered the room hire and the tea costs. One of the founding members said recently that when he tried to pay the fees Johny had said 'Pay later. See if you like it first.'

One of the guests in my parent's small Orakei home was His Holiness Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, who had come to offer meditation to people in Auckland through the transcendental Meditation movement. He stayed for about four days.

Elsa and Jo Channing Pearce, friends of Dick's for over fifty years wrote:

"He introduced us to the wonders of work on Spirit in such a way that he was the example of it throughout

the years. No matter which way our spiritual journey turned he was there with wise council.”

From Harry Carter, a long standing member of the School of Philosophy:

“I write in sorrow for the loss of a fine friend, yet in gladness for the qualities he spread about us.

Dick left no doubt as to the honest intention in the material to bring the Truth to light. Also that men and women of goodwill would arrive at the Truth in any matter as far as was needed at any time.

We are told, ‘If natural duties are not attended

to by the wise then others will copy and absolute confusion will build up... So often as we attend to the natural duties, so often we place ourselves in the ranks of the wise’. (Shantananda Saraswati)

My happiest memories are of Dick in action in this way.”

In his last months Dick’s caregivers often picked up the Faber editions of the Geeta and Upanishads and read bits to him, questioning him about the Self and Spirit up to the last week of his life.

by Beverly Russell

Bookshop News



by Geoff Long

Well it’s been a busy six months for books. Not least for Don Worrall who managed to find time in his busy schedule to manufacture a new bookcase for Esplanade Road. This was no small task, but the end result is a much better unit which not only displays books clearly with viewing from both sides but also has CD designated areas.

Two new book additions worth a mention are the “Reminders” which is a series of extracts from Leon MacLaren’s lectures such as:

“What is the key that opens the heart? You don’t need a key, the heart is open, and it’s got a wide door, as wide as the universe, but there’s somebody in the way, guarding the door, and armed to the teeth! And this chap who’s guarding the door and armed to the teeth, is the...” and to find out the answer to this you will just have to buy the book won’t you!

The presentation is light, down to earth, easily accessible, and packed full of humor; laughter of course being the best medicine for wellbeing!

The second book “Spontaneous Evolution” is the second of two volumes by Bruce Lipton whom many will have heard at a live presentation earlier this year. Considering the effect his talk had on the audience it is not surprising that his book is equally thought provoking and powerful enough to shake out some of the habitual ruts that sometimes occur in life . A short piece from the preamble gives an idea of his depth...

“In order to secure our future we must empower ourselves with the knowledge of who we truly are. With an understanding of how our programming shapes our lives and with knowledge of how we can change this programming, we can rewrite our destiny.”

And speaking of writing, there is a good supply of ink refills and Sanskrit pens now available.

Good reading!

Any queries please email Geoff at: advasco@xtra.co.nz

Auckland F

14-21 January 2011

This year, the Auckland School hosted its first residential Plato week under the leadership of Mr. David Horan of the Dublin School in Ireland. Thirty-six students were treated to an inspiring and fulfilling experience. Below are three student views of the event.

A Week with Plato by Elizabeth Crompton

We were on holiday enjoying the beach at Mount Maunganui, but we had put our names down to study Plato for a week, so back to Auckland we went. We thought reading Plato for a week would be rather challenging, but what a revitalizing and fascinating challenge it was. What Socrates does is take one on a voyage of Self-discovery. David Horan is the ideal leader for such a week, having studied Plato himself in depth. He is currently in the process of working on new translations of the Platonic dialogues.

The dialogue chosen by Mr Horan was "Theaetetus". The question Socrates asks is "What is knowledge?" We were warned we wouldn't be given an answer but could be shown what knowledge is. We divided into groups to pursue the study. One important aspect to watch was our own responses. What arose in our minds? Could we just read the words without interference?

After reading in our groups each morning we met together with Mr Horan to speak of our discoveries.

Mr Horan took the part of Socrates responding to each statement or question, often with another question. Some of us might have found this frustrating except that David Horan was such a polite and skilful teacher that hearts and minds easily opened.

During the week we were asked to consider the question. "What precisely is man? What actions and responses are appropriate for human behaviour and different from other creatures?" How profound yet immediate. How often do we consider such questions?

Each morning as we read Plato's dialogue we tried to understand what Socrates was saying; we watched our own responses; we sometimes got irritated, we sometimes felt enlightened but always willingly returned to the awakening practice.

The day was well balanced. After a morning of study, we had three hours free in the afternoon (apart from groups on duty attending to dishes for about an hour), to enjoy whatever form of recreation we preferred. We met for an afternoon meeting preceding meditation, then had a delicious meal followed

Plato Week

by a variety of excellent entertainment.

At the conclusion of the study there was an unexpected experience of total freedom. One felt cleansed, enlivened and refreshed.

Our everlasting gratitude must surely go to David and Frances Horan for travelling from Ireland to share their interest and expertise with us. We also must express our thanks to all those who made this week possible. It flowed so smoothly. Thanks to Lilian Beanland for her continued study of Plato in worldwide groups and for encouraging the Horans to come to Auckland and to Tess Stephens for her most efficient organisation. Also to the other tutors including Marita Brewster, from Melbourne, who helped with the study and not least to Cynthia Koks who looked after the kitchen with such devotion and calmness.

I found the week exceptionally rewarding and look forward to meeting with Plato and all the other wonderful company next year.



David Horan

The Theaetetus Question

by Marilyn Marshall

The belief is widely held that Knowledge is knowledge “of something”; that we can somehow capture it, neatly package it up and produce it at will. But in fact this is not so.

It became clear at the end of the Plato residential week to study the dialogue “Theaetetus” that not only could knowledge not be grasped, it could not even be described in words.

The 36 students attending the week and four tutors who led the study groups benefited from the careful and enthusiastic guidance of David Horan, a Platonic scholar and senior member of the Dublin School. It was truly inspiring to work through the Theaetetus using his translation.

The Theaetetus, like many of the Socratic discourses, is difficult to follow but as we

penetrated more deeply into it during group sessions, greater understanding began to unfold of both the dialogue and what motivated Socrates in his enquiry into the question of what IS knowledge.

A key aspect of Theaetetus is Socrates' likening of himself to a midwife, whose prime function is to bring things to birth. For all who doubt Socrates' motives in closely questioning people, shining a rather intense spotlight on their ideas, opinions and beliefs, it is crucial to appreciate this. Socrates says that he differs from the midwife in that he attends men's souls and not their bodies. Further, he says that *"the triumph of my art is in thoroughly examining whether the thought which the mind of the young man brings forth is a false idol or a noble and true birth."*

At the end of the dialogue, Socrates asks Theaetetus, a young Athenian, whether he

has brought to birth all that he has to say about knowledge, to which the latter with true humility replies that what he thought was knowledge was in fact wind and not worth bringing up. Socrates then tells him that if ever he conceives afresh, he will be all the better for the investigation he has just undergone, *"and if not, you will be soberer and humbler and gentler to other men and will be too modest to fancy that you know what you do not know."*

I found that these words had a powerful effect. On hearing them at the end of the week's work, the habitual desire to "know something about something" disappeared, leaving complete freedom. And in that moment, knowledge and freedom seemed indivisible.

As in many of the dialogues, Socrates had not given us the answer to the question but had shown us the way.

Plato Week

by Simon Laurent

A key quality of Plato's dialogues was brought to the fore during the week led by David Horan. This is that they seldom provide "The Truth" or the answer to some fundamental dilemma. Instead they are an exercise in using questions to cut through misconception and fuzzy thinking which confuse our innate ability to reason.

Mr. Horan himself demonstrated this art with wit and kindness when we met together. Any question from the floor was met with another question, and so the game would begin. The sport of true dialectic has rules, including the honest cooperation of the contestants and a joint desire to discover where the argument might lead. Many observed how hard it was not to take a position to protect one's own beliefs - or one's pride.

In Theaetetus, the subject of study, Socrates

used a mundane conversation between friends as a springboard to ask, "What is Knowledge?" He declares on the last page that they were no closer to an answer than they had been at the start, but the young Theaetetus admits that, "you have brought a great deal more out of me than ever was in me." In other words, the half-formed conceptions of what it means "to Know" had been drawn to their logical conclusions - conclusions that could not stand up to reason. It was fascinating for many to identify the same embryonic assumptions in their own thinking. The reading of the discourse thus became a study of one's own mind and heart. Far from being an arid intellectual exercise, group meetings to read passages from Theaetetus would sometimes dissolve into fierce debates. Credit must go to the tutors who fought to keep us on course.

Plato Residential with David Horan

13th- 20th January 2012

An invitation to read Plato: to meet with Socrates – to debate with Socrates – to be charmed by David Horan who has devoted many years to the study of Plato and who has translated from the Greek.

Are you willing to see what ideas rule your mind and your life?
Are you willing to surrender a few of them?

For those who love practical philosophy in action, join the Plato week next January.
Be prepared to enjoy to the full. Be prepared to let go and experience freedom.
Be prepared for anything!

Come to the Plato Study Week in 2012
(Registration forms available from October)

A contemporary Athenian luminary named Protagoras had purported to write a book entitled “The Truth”. His doctrine that “man is the measure of all things”, which we now know as Relativism, is systematically annihilated during the dialogue. The arguments here are worth study because Relativism is perhaps the most pervasive influence upon modern thought. Its effects can be seen in deconstructionism and post-modernism, and in social symptoms such as political correctness. Its end-game is to deny the existence of any absolute truth or any basis for a fundamental moral code; and as such it is at least as dangerous as its antithesis, fanaticism.

Plato is often dismissed as a mystical philosopher whose focus on archetypal forms has lost credence in the face of Aristotle’s scientific approach of deducing principles from experience. That is certainly the popular stereotype, but it could not be further from the truth. One frequent technique throughout the Dialogues is to use everyday instances, such as sickness and health, to give insight into how to reason about the nature of perception.

Plato’s ability to clear away delusions and prejudices is little understood. The participants at the residential week took some steps toward seeing how it could be made practical.

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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Stepping into the Unkown

by Geoff Taylor

Just over one year ago, I experienced the loss of someone close which opened up a raft of questions and enquiry into this natural but complex happening.

His Holiness Shri Shankaracharya states that *'When a person dies, that person is going back to the Father, and it is a moment of rejoicing rather than of sorrow, because he is attaining the ultimate state'*. I have never had any doubt as to the validity of His Holiness' words, but the grief and a multitude of other emotions I felt were very strong and made it very difficult.

Initially I looked to the *'The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying'* for some guidance, where I found this quote from the Buddha: *'Of all animals the foot print of the elephant is supreme, and of mindfulness meditations that on death is supreme'*: From this I could see the possibility of transcending the shock and loss.

Grief is hard to manage and unfathomable. It is something we will all experience at some point in this life time. I found it very difficult, but the practices taught in the School and scriptures provided the essential tools needed to manage the grieving process, and to gain a greater insight into this very misunderstood aspect of our human existence.

From an ayurvedic description of the return

back to the Absolute Dr Vasant Lad's book *'The Science of Self Healing A practical Guide.'* One can gain insight into that moment when the body returns to the elemental mixing pot. It helps to bring some light to the matter, and presents a general overview of this most natural and perfect process.

In summary, during the dying process the grosser elements gradually dissolve into the finer: earth into water, water into fire, fire into air, air into consciousness itself. With this last step there is a feeling of edgelessness. The out-breath, having become longer than the in-breath, has dissolved into Space and there is just a sense of vast expansion followed by a merging into pure being. With each step, the feeling of hardness or solidity of the body is diminished and identification with it loosened; physical comfort and discomfort cease to have meaning and the experience of bodily form or function finally disappears.

I found reading the book *Birth and Death*, which is full of quotes on death from His Holiness very useful. I kept returning to a small piece near the end of the book which I read and re-read many times and it gave me assurance. I have included the quote below.

The following question was put to His Holiness:

If my own death is not far off, I want to be sure that the thought of Param Atman and dedication of one's actions means that the wedding garment is being prepared.*

'You have already been betrothed, and you need not think about such things at all- in fact you have been initiated, and you have been visiting this future wedding place every day during your meditation. Your union is already established. When death, which has to come to all of us, comes, all one has to keep in mind is that this body is being discarded. Apart from discarding this physical body nothing else is being changed at all, and since you have established your relationship for all these past years, I think you will find that whatever situation arises there, it will not be strange to you at all; you will find it very familiar. You will be going to a place which is a familiar place, not new to you and you will not feel any hesitation or fear when you do enter that land.

The only advice to be given at this moment is to shed all feelings of going into the unknown, and remain aware that loss of body is not a loss in any way. You have performed the deeds which this body could have performed in the best way and

there it ends. The future journey is going to be all right for you.'

After contemplation, devotion, prayer and meditation the process of dying was beginning to take on a whole new meaning and the path through the wilderness of grief and disillusionment began to clear. My appreciation of the practices in the school and the valuable words of His Holiness in relation to all aspects of our lives, including the dying process, deepened.

To finish this piece there is one other beautiful passage on the third to last page of Birth and Death where Shri Shankaracharya states:

'The guide is always with the disciple. There is no question of leaving him at all. The guide will never leave him unless he sees the disciple reach his goal of Self-realization.'

The passage ends with the most reassuring words:

'One can be very sure of being cared for.'

**** The wedding garment is symbolic of union.***

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
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.

Measure and Money

by Louis Boulanger

Money today; what a mindjob! We work hard for it, we covet it, and we never seem to have enough of it. Yet, we generally haven't got the slightest idea of how *money* originally came into existence, nor do we fully realise that what is considered to be 'money' today is a fraud, a pale reflection of its true self. Such ignorance is the root cause of our predicament: debt and delusion.

After all, if you *know* the truth about money, which must include its origins and true nature, you can no longer be fooled by the deceit. The money in circulation today is a trick of the mind, an illusion made possible only because of our ignorance. The monetary delusion that humanity now suffers from is not new. But its scale is. Never before has the monetary delusion been global.

Money is no good anymore because there is no limit to how much can be made, and no standard to maintain its value; in other words, it has lost its *measure*. Of course, we all use currencies as money, yours truly included. How else could we survive? By law, only currencies are legal tender in most places around the world. We use currencies because there is no choice in the matter. When it comes to monetary matters, there is no freedom of choice.

Because currencies are not redeemable on demand for a set unit of weight in gold, as would be the case if we did have sound money and freedom of choice, they are simply bank notes or debts of the central bank that issues them. Currencies only represent credit money or, if backed by the credit of a government (in which case the debt is then no longer that of the central bank that issues the notes but of the government), can also represent fiat money.

But how can money also be debt? Who pays the government debts if not the people with their hard earned 'money' in the form of taxes?? The mind boggles. But let us put aside the problems of debt and come back to the nature of money. What I mean by 'money' here are all the circulating currencies, none of which have any absolute measure and all of which are money only because they are declared by a sovereign government to be legal tender. That is not how things were before the monetary tragedy of the twentieth century...

Today, total confusion prevails, even among so-called experts, in the usage of basic words such as capital, money and wealth. There can be no reasonable conversation or debate if there is total confusion about the very meaning of those words in society. Yet, here

we are. We have confused ourselves beyond belief! We must walk away from this modern-day Tower of Babel and reconnect with the truth about money.

In his 1849 essay on money ('Maudit Argent!' or 'What Is Money?'), Frédéric Bastiat uses dialogue to good effect to argue that our mistaking money for wealth is the root cause of all economic errors. Not so much because any individual would make this error of judgment as such, but because it is a widely held (false) belief encouraged and reinforced by the State's influence over our so-called education.

The true function of money is to facilitate exchange. In order that economic activity may be multiplied, and accomplished independently of time and place amongst people unknown to each other, and repeatedly so, an intermediate agent has been by necessity found over time for exchanges – namely money. Money, whether gold or paper, is but a means to an end: wealth. Our habit of mistaking the means (money) for the end (wealth) is an error of the mind.

Sound money must also be a good *store* of value and unit of *measure*. But the value of money (sound or unsound) itself can vary. This seems to be where much of the confusion lies. Money is not the measure of value. Value is a measurement of human desire. Each person's scale of values is graded upon a different measure and no common *standard* exists between these various scales.

This aspect of human nature clearly presents the need for the establishment of an accurate and reliable standard of measure, for exchanges to be fairly valued for both parties. This is the role of a numéraire in a monetary system. Unfortunately, this has been removed from our system in 1971, when the United States government defaulted on its international obligations under the Bretton Woods Agreement, and it remains absent to

this day. We are drifting in uncharted waters.

Very briefly, what was the Bretton Woods Agreement? It was the global monetary system agreed upon by nations at the end of World War II. Under this system, the US dollar became accepted as the new standard for money. The Bretton Woods system **defined the measure** of the US dollar as 1/35th of a troy ounce of gold. Other currencies were pegged to the US dollar at fixed rates. Any trade imbalance between countries was to be settled in gold.

This system collapsed when US President Richard Nixon unilaterally announced on 15 August 1971 that the US government would no longer redeem dollars for gold as required under the system. All of a sudden, the world found itself using money without any agreed standard measure of value. In other words, what was once defined as a monetary unit valued at 1/35th of an ounce of gold, simply became a floating abstraction of the mind. Not only was the US dollar no longer defined; it lost its measure and became the symbol of the new monetary disorder we still find ourselves in today.

It is true that the US had an exorbitant privilege under the Bretton Woods system, as was argued by French President Charles de Gaulle. But it is also true that this privilege came with an equal measure of required discipline for the system to work as it was intended to. Unfortunately, the US abdicated their responsibility to maintain that discipline and seem to have gotten away with it. But the vision of forever floating currencies is just an illusion; sadly, it is an illusion we seem strongly attached to as we drift further and further away from sound money.

Sound navigation requires sound measurement. Measurement in economics is carried out in terms of currency units; only economic activities measurable in that unit of account are recorded. But, as experience

shows, the value itself of any floating currency fluctuates greatly. So what does that say about our measurement of economic activity, of 'economics' as a science?

Without a reliable and precisely defined unit of measure or standard to maintain its value, I would argue that economics is the worst of sciences. Indeed, in all scientific endeavours, precision in the definition of the unit of measure used has improved over time. The only exception is economics, in particular monetary economics. 'Money' today, is based on government fiat, which is itself a highly elastic measure.

What should have been seen in 1971 as an outright default by the US on its obligation to maintain measure in the monetary system, and the onset of what was to become monetary disorder, was instead quickly overshadowed by concerns about rapidly rising inflation. But what is inflation, if not a measure of the depreciation of the purchasing power of the money we use to determine prices? We became captured by the effect (price increases) rather than become aware of its cause (the removal of the discipline of gold redeemability).

Money, I find, has much to do with the level of ignorance that prevails in society. What we have today reflects that. William Rees-Mogg tackled inflation most insightfully, in my opinion, in his book published in 1974: *The Reigning Error – The Crisis of World Inflation*. He postulated that inflation is a disease of inordinacy. Like anarchy represents the inordinacy of the people and tyranny represents the inordinacy of the

ruler, inflation is an inordinacy of money. It is money without order.

He argued that the problem of inordinacy, like the problem of inflation, is far from being a new one: "*it is rooted in the nature of man, as inflation is rooted in the nature both of man and of money*". He also argued that because the inordinate is always insane and always ends

in destruction, the insanity of inflation leaves a mark of insanity on society: "*it changes a good society into one which, so long as inflation lasts, is wholly and fraudulently unjust.*"

"It is usually some quiet assumption taken for granted by men of every degree that blocks the road to the great advancements of which mankind is capable. These false beliefs, if they persist too long, are very dangerous to human progress."

- Leon MacLaren, (1910 – 1994), Scottish barrister and Founder of the School of Philosophy

Well, inflation is on the rise again, so it is high time that we bring measure to our money again. In other words, it is time to restore discipline in the governance of the global monetary system. After all, human institutions do require a limit, if they are not to become inordinate. For money, gold plays that role. Why? That alone could well be the subject of another essay. For now, let us simply recognise the historical fact that gold has always been and remains the only real global money.

It can be argued that the reigning error of the twentieth century was the rejection of the idea of discipline. John Maynard Keynes was the key protagonist of the sustained attack on the idea of discipline in money. He greatly abused his influence, in my view, when he declared that: "*In truth, the gold standard is already a barbarous relic*". In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

That vain idea of Keynes has done much damage since postulated (in 1924). We allowed this to happen, by simply letting

our guards down and allowing a persistent illusion to prevail. The true nature of money has been kept hidden from us through ignorance. But the consequences of our acceptance of that false idea are manifesting themselves more and more clearly. So, what matters now is that we carefully examine our quiet assumptions about money.

So it comes down again, as it always does, to that most fundamental choice we each must make every day of our lives: consider any new evidence presented for what it is or choose to ignore it. Lifting the veil of ignorance is our challenge. This applies to all things, money included. I hope that we will again, soon, return measure to money. Human progress depends on it.

Louis Boulanger is an actuary, investment strategist and an avowed advocate for a return to sound money. He moved from Canada to New Zealand with his wife Louise in 1986, to open an office here for an international consulting firm. Their two sons, Martin (21) and Philippe (18) were born in New Zealand.

Louis has been coming to the School of Philosophy since 1999. He has also been a student of monetary history since 2004. He travels extensively and is becoming a well known speaker on the international speaking circuit. He writes a newsletter on the ongoing monetary disorder and the role of gold. His email address is louis@lknow.co.nz.

Practical Philosophy

Term 3 begins week commencing 31 July (Part 1 Tues 2 August and Thurs 4 August).

Term 4 begins week commencing 16 October (Part 1 Tues 18 October and Thurs 20 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 \$150 for nine weeks.

For further information
www.philosophy.school.nz

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

Cultural Picnic 2011

by Tessa Stephens

This year, a Cultural event was held at 268 West Tamaki Road on Sunday 6th March. Advertised as a 'Cultural Picnic Day', it was similar to the 2009 event, which was based on the concept of an uplifting day in beautiful surroundings with lectures, music and artwork to feed mind, body and spirit.

It proved to be a successful and inspiring day. Dr. Grohmann, leader of the Canberra School, generously gave his time and expertise once again with two very stimulating talks: '*Philosophy and Science, a Question of Balance*', and '*Increasing Personal Energy and Enthusiasm*'. There were eight other presentations on offer ranging from '*Thoughts on the meaning of Italian Renaissance Art*', through to '*Can We Believe What We See?*'



After lunch we were entertained by talented young singers, Lauren Roscoe and Hannah Bryant, together with Samuel Ames accompanying them and also performing on the guitar.

Several rooms were hung with an impressive display of student art, exhibiting the depth of talent in the School of Philosophy.

The morning and afternoon presentations were



interspersed with refreshment breaks offering lashings of sumptuous food from Cynthia Koks and her team, not to mention some classy wines chosen for the occasion by Peter Lister.

These breaks also provided opportunities for meeting people from all areas of the School. Moreover, as friends and family were invited, it became a way of opening up to the community as well as an opportunity for nourishing intellectual, artistic and musical talents.

Special thanks must go to the dedicated team who put up and broke down the event, particularly to John Ferens, Graham Farrelly, Graham Soughtton and their teams. An occasion like this does not happen without a great deal of effort behind the scenes, and once again caterers, furniture shifters, cleaners and transporters made themselves available to help.

Thanks also to all those who supported the event by coming! Without you it could not have been a success. Though not intended as a money-making venture, the day brought in a modest profit of \$1,200.00. We look forward to seeing you again next year.



The Sound of Language

by Selwyn Daniels

The beginning of the St John's Gospel is one of the most well known parts of the Bible: "In the Beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God"

From the Advaita tradition (Advaita meaning "not two" or "non dual") come these words: "In the beginning was Prajapati (the Creator), and with Him was the Word and the Word was truly the Supreme Brahman (God)."

The Word in the Vedic tradition is OM, the underlying sound and order of everything.

In the Christian tradition the Word means the Logos or an underlying order.

Both traditions declare that everything in the universe comes from a word, a sound, which includes all forms, names and the sounds of language and speech.

The development of the Word into the sounds of language and speech was thoroughly investigated in ancient India. The discovery of the laws of the universe and the laws of grammar were recorded by the Sages in philosophical writings, grammatical texts and epic stories.

These treasures, originally in Sanskrit, have been translated into many languages but with some knowledge of Sanskrit, we in the West can have a better understanding of what they discovered, and of Advaita.

Vyaas Houston, an American, who promotes and has established an institute for the learning of Sanskrit, where I attended a

two-week course, writes: "Sanskrit is an extraordinary medium of expression; its body of literature is vast, encompassing more titles than any other language, including English. Its eloquence is unsurpassed - it is the vehicle for some of the world's most compelling sagas, epics and stories; it's most haunting poetry; it's great scriptures; and it's most closely reasoned philosophical treatises."

Some learning of the sounds of the Sanskrit alphabet and how they combine in Sanskrit grammar is helpful.

A teacher of the Advaita tradition, Shri Shantananda Saraswati, from whom we received advice about the Sanskrit language, said: "All that is needed at this moment is a real and sincere work on language. With confidence and slow speed one needs to keep to the study and wait for the light of reality to emerge. The light is already there, but the darkness of ignorance and doubts will ultimately come to an end.

Whatever has been given today and on other occasions should be able to help you to progress in a beautiful way. Peace and bliss would descend on all of you. It is necessary that the principles should be put into practical use so that one is able to help the nation in which one lives."

Mr Brian Hodgkinson of the London School in his book "The Search for Truth" writes about sounds of the Sanskrit language.

"Much attention has been given to the correct mouth positions, as given by Panini (the grammarian whose system of learning Sanskrit grammar is followed) and to the purity in sounding letters. Students

have found that their speech in many contexts has become more effective; in ordinary conversation, in professional work, at public occasions, and of course in tutoring in the School.”

It is at the physical level that we are mostly aware of the words that we say and hear. The human body is a perfect instrument to reproduce the sounds, and both the Vedic and Christian teachings tell us why and how this instrument should be used.

I discovered recently that through attending Sanskrit language classes for a considerable number of years and by hearing and practicing Sanskrit, these sounds have filtered into one’s use of the English language.

By invitation, I joined a group of readers and writers despite being neither in their sense of the word.

Monthly meetings are held where a guest writer delivers a talk on their style and the reason for their way of writing. At the last monthly meeting last year, instead of having a guest speaker, each member was asked to present some short piece of writing or poem of their own.

So what was I to write about? Philosophy? Language? a short story? some event from one’s life? Finally what came to mind was, why not present something about words and their use in the form of a short poem!

Somehow, something appeared on paper in almost one attempt.

When the day of the presentation arrived, two directions were remembered: *“let the written words be lifted from the page and, Let them do the work”*.

The words just floated out well-formed and free. There was space in the room and the words were in that space. They were not my words anymore. The audience was still and listening as One. After the presentation the opening words of St John’s Gospel came to mind: *“In the Beginning was the Word....”*

They mean much more to me now.

WORDS

“In the Beginning was the Word”

This phrase from the Bible we have often heard.

From this word a world of words did begin,

Words of happiness, words that made us sin.

Sometimes words of sadness that made us cry,

Sometimes words of laughter with which we reply.

Long words, short words in a story we write,

To get our message across the best we might.

When speaking a word we really did not mean to say,

In future we hope there won’t be a replay.

A word of thanks will brighten someone’s life,

Is this not the way to lessen fear and strife?

In well-formed words there is beauty,

Have you ever thought that this might be our duty?

Care for words, they were given to us to use,

Be careful or they might just abuse.

Our tone of voice expresses how we feel,

Sometimes up, sometimes down at heel.

How many types of voice are we using?

Sad, happy, gay, loud, soft, or maybe just amusing.

Our words are like a mirror of our mind,

Whatever we write or say should never be unkind.

There is no end to the world of words,

They mould our lives, let them be a friend,

The world will be better in the end.

(When spoken aloud, the words of this poem really come to life) Editor.

Almighty Bruce

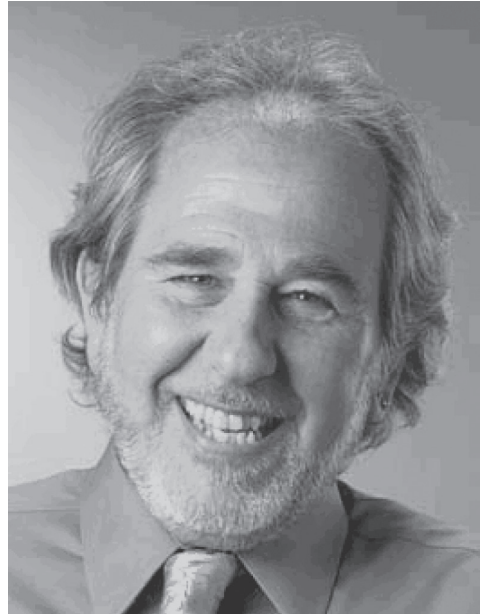
by Graham Soughtton

Dr Bruce Lipton would feel right at home as a member of a philosophic school which teaches an ancient wisdom that reality is in fact consciousness, and that everything is united in consciousness.

He has arrived at the same conclusion himself, by observation, in the field of cellular biology.

His 'eureka' moment of profound insight came in 1985 while teaching and researching in the Caribbean island of Grenada. While reviewing his understanding of the function of the membrane in the cells of living tissue he suddenly realised that it is not the DNA in the cell's nucleus that contains the cell's essential functioning intelligence, but rather the cell's membrane. Living cells respond, adapt, and even evolve according to the 'messages' they are receiving from their environment, and this happens independently of the DNA which holds the basic blueprint for cellular reproduction.

To a biologist trained to believe that the cell's nucleus containing its encoded DNA is the centre of the universe, the jolt to his whole belief system was the same as the Copernican



Bruce Lipton

revolution that the Sun does not revolve around the Earth.

Suddenly a whole vast vista of discovery and new understanding lay before him.

In his book *The Biology of Belief*, Dr Lipton says : *"That Caribbean moment not only transformed me into a membrane- centered biologist, it also transformed me from an agnostic scientist into a card-carrying mystic who believes that eternal life transcends the body"*.

Following this euphoric moment of insight came twenty years of study and research before writing *The Biology of Belief* in 2005, which has since sold more than 150,000

copies and won extensive praise from leading scientists, and spiritual philosophers.

The book succinctly describes how advances in quantum physics and biological science have come together to provide an understanding of our physical universe which is a long and welcome step away from the grip of the idea that nature is somehow some kind of machine which can be harnessed if only we understand its parts, and what fuel it needs.

Advances in quantum physics which show that energy and matter are completely entangled have informed a 'new biology' which is transforming our understanding of how cells and communities of cells interact with environmental factors.

Take the case of the human body. This is a community of trillions of cells.

Dr Lipton describes how each cell is intelligent. Each cell reacts to its environment in a manner which would enhance its ability to survive and thrive. But the body is also a complex electro-chemical system hugely influenced by its nerve centre, the brain. The brain receives signals from the body but also sends them. The signals it sends depend majorly on what we are thinking. Isn't it obvious that stress filled, negative thoughts are going to cause the body to release chemicals into the body and cause an environment that is quite different for our cells than loving and joyful thoughts would do?

Is our biology then an outcome of our beliefs?

Dr Lipton thinks so, and argues this case eloquently and passionately.

Those who were lucky enough to see him speak at the event in Auckland on the 24th of February, organised by the Ficino Educational Foundation, witnessed an inspirational prophet in full cry.

We hope he will return, because Dr Lipton has more to say.

He has done more than uncover a new view of the biological world. His studies in epigenetics (control above genetics) not only profoundly changes our understanding of how life is controlled, but heralds a new era of understanding about the link between mind and matter, and how we may consciously evolve both as individuals and as a collective species.

His latest book *Spontaneous Evolution* (2009) builds on this changing understanding of biology and opens up "a new and hopeful story about humanity's evolutionary destiny".

Here is an (edited) excerpt from this new and remarkable book :

"This is a love story. A love story for the entire Universe: you, me, and every living organism...

For millennia, our spiritual teachers have been pointing us in the direction of love. Now science is confirming this ancient wisdom...

When a critical mass of people truly owns this belief in their hearts and minds...our world will emerge from the darkness in what will amount to a spontaneous evolution."

The presentation by Dr Bruce Lipton in Auckland on the 24th February at Hopetoun Alpha was organised by the Ficino Educational Foundation, and sponsored by Pathfinder Book Shop. The event was attended by well over 200 people and over \$12,000 was raised for the Ficino School.

Both books, *The Biology of Belief* and *Spontaneous Evolution* are available in hardback and DVD from Pathfinder.

Links :

<http://www.bruce-lipton.com/>

<http://www.pathfinder.co.nz>

Ark in the Park

by Nicolette Farrelly

Recently I took part in a fascinating excursion with the Year 8 students of Ficino School. We visited the headquarters of a conservation project called Ark in the Park, which has been operating since 2003. It is located in the "Cascades Kauri Park, part of the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park which includes more than 16,000 ha of native rainforest and coastline to the west of Auckland.



Class 8 and teachers sitting along a 'Northern Rata'



Dr. Karen Colgan showing us one of the many traps used to catch bigger predators.



Angus Fenn holding a dead stoat.



Courtesy of Ark in the Park website:
www.arkinthepark.org.nz

numbers have been reduced to very low levels, encouraging native fauna species to return and allowing tree vegetation and re growth to flourish.

These amazing results have been achieved by the use of bait stations and ground traps. The bait stations, containing poisonous pellets, are placed on trees 50 meters apart along 100m grid lines as shown in the diagram and are aimed at controlling ship rats - *Rattus rattus*, possums and mice. Other predators are controlled by ground traps of varying sizes. These are stoats, ferrets, weasels and feral cats.

There is no control fencing as found in other projects so regular checking of traps and bait stations is crucial for the ongoing success of the project.

We were greeted and looked after by Dr. Karen Colgan. She is a medical doctor, who has been giving part of her week as a volunteer to the project since its beginning.

She was very knowledgeable about the project, and gave us a short power point presentation

covering the main facts and figures, why and whereof of the project and showing us examples of the natural wildlife which has come back to the park as well as the predators.

After the talk we went exploring. It was so interesting to watch the Ficino children point out native flora and birds asking many relevant questions. They were very engaged throughout the day not least because Karen was able to answer all their queries and point out further facts of interest.

We were treated to a delicious lunch and morning tea all provided by Karen, which was really very humbling. We thanked her for her time and gave a donation to the project.

I urge anyone interested in finding out more about this project to make further enquiries via the website or by phone. Every weekend volunteers meet and are given jobs such as maintaining bait lines, checking traps, weed removal, bird monitoring, and track maintenance and planting.



Kauri tree

When the Child is Teacher

by Fiona Craig

Every life is exceptional. Common threads unite us but there are endless variations on the human theme as expertly observed by students at Auckland's Ficino School during an exercise on biography writing.

Late last year when teacher, Dawn Roscoe, invited this biographer and her partner to engage in some dialogue with her year 7 students on the process, it was refreshing to hear some of the students' work read aloud.

When reviewing their literary efforts later, I was impressed with the assortment of individuals they'd chosen to write about and the different approaches they'd taken to unwrapping their subjects. Whether describing a grandmother, a teacher or the local parish priest, the writers had reached for the interior of their subjects and brought light to bear on their discoveries. In their innocence, they had stumbled upon the most critical ingredient of biography... truth. Unadulterated, it jumped off the page in one work after another. Take young Lys Meurillon's opening paragraphs on her subject:

'Astrid is a lady of great power within herself, controlling many feelings and emotions that have come across her long life. She gives each small matter its own time, never less, never more. Whether it's putting pumpkin seeds in the compost or preparing for her next performance.

I think there are many differences between what is inside her and what she chooses to show. I have never seen her in a complete panic (apart from when she leaves things behind). This remarkable calm is what stands out in her. It seems to make her full in a way.'

Truth and insight draw Lys' complete work together and each sentence is like one of the pumpkin seeds she mentions, fleshy and fruit bearing.

Despite having found aspects of the process difficult - especially transforming their recorded interviews into a coherent manuscript - the students' characterisations were fresh, spare and vital.

Arion Hudson's depiction of a parish priest was a good example. He told of how Father Martin had come to New Zealand in the 1950s. Scrutinising the wares of a Suez Canal market trader, en route, the priest had pointed to an item and asked, 'How much?'

'Too much, too much,' he'd retorted on hearing the price. 'How much too much?' responded the trader in broken English.

These indelible words would eventually become the title of a book Father Martin penned in his later years. Why? And you can almost hear the 83-year-old's sigh when he confesses, 'I feel that in a lot of life nowadays there is too much noise, too much rush, even too much to eat I suppose. Too much all sorts of things.'

In two well paced pages, Arion conveyed the humanity of the priest with a deftness beyond his years largely through the selective use of direct speech and some quiet commentary of his own.

When it came to question time, I was asked if I'd written about anybody famous. I'm frequently asked this question and the simple answer is no. It's the interactions, family associations, sense of place and myriad events
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A Big Swim

Indeed

Mr Preston passes the finishing post at the end of a 2.6 kilometer ocean swim in Mt Maunganui. Combining participation in the event with a weekend staying with his daughter Vivienne, who is now working as a doctor at Tauranga Hospital, provided a very satisfying interlude out of Auckland at the end of March. Starting training for the event at the beginning of the year Mr Preston was pleasantly surprised at how quickly he was able to achieve the distances required for preparation and fitness and the official time of 1 hour 2 minutes was an improvement on the pool times!!

When asked why?. Mr Preston responded: “It is good to keep the body fit and strong and to keep the energies up to be better able to meet the demands of the physical world without



undue stress and strain. As long as it is not obsessive but just part of a balanced life.”

(When the Child is Teacher continued)

of an every-day life that really engage me. By crafting narratives around the lives of people I might pass in the street, I'm creating a social reference point which I hope will be of value in the future. In the immediate term, it's hugely satisfying to be with an individual as they remember.

I confess to having felt a little nervous about speaking to a class of 10 and 11 year olds but I was rewarded for my courage. It is said the person in front of you is your teacher and the Year 7 Ficino Class proved the teacher of teachers. As biographers they will go far. Everyone has a story after all. The challenge is to encourage others to appreciate that and then help them tell it.

Fiona Craig and partner Tony Kay run a small publishing house on Whangaroa Harbour in the Far North specialising in the writing and production of biographies and memoirs. The couple maintain regular contact with the school through distance learning and participation in residential study and meditation events.

Ficino School Fair



Another fabulous day out this year as Ficino School hosted its fifth Fair. Although the weather looked dicey for most of the day the crowds were at least three times the size of last year's. Now gaining a reputation for quality, visitors on the day were not disappointed by the mouth watering range of cakes, preserves and international food on sale. There were many fun stalls and activities for everyone with the water dunking machine 'tipping' the popularity scales amongst the children. The profit for this year was close to \$40,000 and will be divided between our Library upgrade project and fundraising for the 2012 Renaissance Trip.

