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Greville Street Gatherings

We are thinking of opening up the Greville Street meetings on an occasional rather than our traditional monthly basis. **So, what about Saturday 2nd July?**

We are still a bit nervous about Covid, as octogenarians Margot and I are very much in its sights. We could plan to hold the meeting on the deck if weather permits and if covid seriously threatens at the time we could revert to Zoom. There is also the possibility of a pre-meeting RAT test for those of us deciding a face to face is the way to go

The new meeting plan was to call a meeting whenever someone has a bright idea and Dave's recent report of the recent publication of Iain McGilchrist's latest book is an example. I have put the Google Books review of the book on the next page and, as you will see, it covers much of the ground we have been involved with over the years. We can always

What do you think? Feedback please.

Iain McGilchrist's latest book

The Matter with Things - Our Brains, Our Delusions, and the Unmaking of the World By Iain McGilchrist · 2021
https://books.google.com.au/books/about/The_Matter_with_Things.html?id=9O-pzgEACAAJ&source=kp_book_description&redir_esc=y

This book addresses some of the oldest and hardest questions humanity faces - ones that, however, have a practical urgency for all of us today. Who are we? What is the world? How can we understand consciousness, matter, space and time? Is the cosmos without purpose or value? Can we really neglect the sacred and divine? In doing so, he argues that we have become enslaved to an account of things dominated by the brain's left hemisphere, one that blinds us to an awe-inspiring reality that is all around us, had we but eyes to see it. He suggests that in order to understand ourselves and the world we need science and intuition, reason and imagination, not just one or two; that they are in any case far from being in conflict; and that the brain's right hemisphere plays the most important part in each. And he shows us how to recognise the signature of the left hemisphere in our thinking, so as to avoid making decisions that bring disaster in their wake. Following the paths of cutting-edge neurology, philosophy and physics, he reveals how each leads us to a similar vision of the world, one that is both profound and beautiful - and happens to be in line with the deepest traditions of human wisdom. It is a vision that returns the world to life, and us to a better way of living in it: one we must embrace if we are to survive.

The above is the introductory review from Google books

A summary of his earlier book *The Master and his Emissary* appeared in NOWletter 152 – January 2011 <https://www.capacitie.org/now/PDFs/Now152.pdf> I hope to have something about the new book in future issues of the NOWletter.

Oft in these moments such a holy calm
 Did overspread my soul, that I forgot
 That I had bodily eyes, and what I saw
 Appear'd like something in myself, a dream,
 A prospect in my mind.

From The Prelude: Book 2: School-time

Wordsworth—Harding—McGilchrist?

The Website

My note about difficulties with sluggishness and occasional unavailability of our website: www.capacitie.org in the April issue led to a generous offer from Mark Rider to run the site from his server. This we plan to do following the completion of a face-lift and update by Simon Mann, now almost complete.

The World's fair beauty set my soul on fire. Dave Knowles

(The title (Traherne's words) comes from the cover of the Spring 2022 issue of the Traherne Association's Newsletter which arrived as Dave mused on 'things of spirit' and resulted in his contribution to their next issue. I think Dave and I are two of the three Australian members of the Association and I asked him if he would give us this version for the May NOWletter. Alan).

Prompted by musing on the Aboriginal "Love of Country" and its possible relationship to my "Love of the Peak District" invoked by my cycling all over it as a teenager, I have been considering what brought me to Australia and has me now pondering Aboriginal spirituality.

Three items come immediately to mind:

- Coming across Bruce Chatwin's "Songlines" on a cold winter day in Ottawa
- Encountering in A. D. Hope's poem "Australia" the thought 'Do out of the desert the prophets still come?'
- Reading F. C. Happold's "Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology" and in particular his chapter on Nature Mysticism and his extracts from Traherne's Centuries.

Putting these together my intuition suggested to me that spiritual prophets could still emerge from the deserts of Australia, Fascinated as I was anyway with nature's wide landscapes: the Derbyshire moors, the Canadian prairies, the distant mirages on the Etosha Pan it was not a big stretch to put Australia in my sights!

Through great fortune, my career in Information Technology unveiled an opportunity to migrate from Canada to Australia and, soon after arriving, we cemented our arrival by visiting Uluru and climbing to the summit, at that time not knowing it was a sacred site to indigenous Australia. A walk through the Valley of the Winds in Kata Tjuta completed our sense of the mystery of the "Red Centre" though we actually settled in Walter Burley Griffin's "ideal city", Canberra.

Then, last year, an opportunity to audit a course from Charles Sturt University on "Aboriginal Cultures and Spirituality" came up which I took but, though interesting, did not give me the desired taste of Aboriginal spirituality 'in the raw', so to speak, but a view from a Christian missionary viewpoint which I was less interested in (an understatement).

David Tacey's "The Post secular Sacred: Jung, Soul and Meaning in an Age of Change" brought me closer with its chapters:

1. The post secular landscape
2. The mystical turn
3. A secular country (Australia)
4. The Aboriginal gift we will not accept

At this point reading has had to be my main source combined with my experiences in Nature's world and waypoints along my exploratory path have been:

Thomas Berry: "The Dream of the Earth"

Bruce Pascoe & Vicky Shukuroglou: "Loving Country: A guide to sacred Australia" (The CSU course book)

Max Dulumunmun Harrison: "My People's Dreaming: An Aboriginal Elder speaks on life, land, spirit and forgiveness"

Billy Griffiths: "Deep Time Dreaming: Uncovering Ancient Australia" (recommended by the CSU lecturer but only covering archaeological history, not spiritual matters - still fascinating)

Barry Hill: "Broken Song: T.G.H. Strehlow and Aboriginal Possession" (Strehlow's "Songs of Central Australia" inspired Chatwin's "Songlines") (The book covers spiritual matters in depth and is an inspiring biography.)

My current reading is the very impressive:

Iain McGilchrist: "The Matter With Things: Our Brains, Our Delusions and the Unmaking of the World" with its pertinent quote on page 1,904 (it does have 2,996 pages!):

"The Greeks, the Inuit, the Penan, the Chinese, the Indians, the intellects of the Western Middle Ages and of the Renaissance, the Australian Aboriginals, the Romantics, the Navajo, the Romans, the Blackfoot and the modern Japanese - and countless others - all thought, or think, that there is something speaking to us in nature. If we alone suddenly can't hear it, in the West in the twenty-first century, how do we know it's we who are right?"

which for me links Traherne's and the Aboriginal's relationship with Nature and spurs me on in my spiritual quest to participate in what Jean Gebser called "The Ever-Present Origin"

I realise this is mainly a list of my exploratory readings, at this point, although I live on Ngunnawal country, I have not yet had the chance to speak with its original owners. this may arise with a friend in my Men's Group who lives on Yuin country and exchanges ideas with the indigenous owners there who recently included 'Uncle' Max Dulumunmun Harrison who wrote "My People's Dreaming" (above).

I can though walk in Namadgi National Park & Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, both in Ngunnawal country and feel a shiver down my spine walking under The Aboriginal Rock Shelter - eerily reminiscent of the Roaches rock outcrop in the Peak District of UK.

There will be much more to say about Iain McGilchrist's impressive (for content, not size) latest book from Alan & me; we were both highly impressed by his earlier "The Master & His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World"; his current "The Matter With Things" promises to build further on this, venturing into Time, Space, Consciousness and the Sacred. I shall press on eagerly.

Finally, a little self-congratulation; Not only did I introduce Alan to Jean Gebser's "The Ever-Present Origin" I also introduced Iain to Gebser's work, references to which appear on pages 1856, 1906 & 2403 of "The Matter With Things"

Dave Knowles

*(I think there is an interesting comparison to be made between Aboriginal spirituality and Awen. Is Awen the Dreaming the West abandoned?
<https://www.capacitie.org/content/now/Now194.pdf> Alan).*

Why 'Capacitie?'

I was asked "By the way, can you give more insight on the word Capacitie?"

(I have been through this in the past, so old hands can skip this item)

The word is Traherne's expression of what Shakespeare refers to as our 'glassy essence' and maybe what Gebser means by his use of 'diaphaneity'. I came upon Traherne as the result of reading R.H Blyth's *Zen in English literature*. (I later joined the Traherne Society which operates out of Hereford. Margot and I went to one of their gatherings many years ago. They were amazed that anyone could have arrived at their door as a consequence of reading a book on Zen). I then started reading Traherne and found a voice that spoke more directly to me than any other until Douglas Harding came along. The word 'capacitie' is taken from Traherne's lengthy poem 'My Spirit', from which I quote this extract:

My Naked Simple Life was I.
 That Act so Strongly Shind
 Upon the Earth, the Sea, the Skie,
 That was the Substance of My Mind.
 The Sence it self was I.
 I felt no Dross nor Matter in my Soul,
 No Brims nor Borders, such as in a Bowl
 We see, My Essence was Capacitie.
 That felt all Things.
 The Thought that Springs
 Therfrom's it self. It hath no other Wings
 To Spread abroad, nor Eys to see,
 Nor Hands Distinct to feel,
 Nor Knees to Kneel:
 But being Simple like the Deitie
 In its own Centre is a Sphere
 Not shut up here, but evry Where.

Traherne refers to our transparency at centre, as revealed by the Harding experiments, as 'capacitie' and I retained his spelling for the website as it makes a more direct target for the search engines than the current spelling. Interestingly, more evidence of Traherne's awareness of what we are on about occurs in 'The Anticipation' where in speaking of the Creator he says:

Whose bosom is the glass, Wherein we all things everlasting see.

Anyway, that was Traherne, and what he was concerned about was our inability to ‘enjoy the world aright’ until we recover our capacity for wholeness. A natural state of being we forfeit or trade in for our socialized selves. This seemed to make sense to me, but I thought it a matter of grace or spontaneous revelation (see Wordsworth on page 2) until I stumbled on Douglas who pointed out the obviousness and accessibility of this ‘aware space here’, Traherne’s ‘capacitie’.

Alan Mann

On Time from Joanna Malinowska

Many thanks for this. I always read Nowletter with pleasure, even if I do not comment anymore.

Now I will make a tiny comment on Time. When I was training to be a hypnotherapist, one of the subjects was NLP, which stands for Neuro-Linguistic Programming. One of NLP concepts is "Timeline", and it refers to how most of us experience or imagine Time. The concept is used for "Timeline Therapy". The interesting bit is that people experience the Timeline differently. It is often a straight line with the past at the back and future in front, or past to one side (most common left) and future on the other side (most common right). Rarely it is a V shape, with both past and future in front, but to the sides.

When I use the Timeline concept for the therapy, I first explain to the person the concept of the Timeline, then I ask them to imagine that they stand on the Timeline "Here and NOW", and I ask them in which direction are Past and Future. It can be used then to perform some complex therapy like to release the trauma from the past or change the outlook for the future.

And here is a fascinating exercise when this concept may lead to some deep realizations about the nature of our Time

1. Relax, close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, quiet your mind
2. Imagine that you are standing on the Timeline, Here and NOW. Notice in which direction is the Past, in which direction is the FUTURE.
3. Stay on the Timeline for a while, aware of the location of Future and Past
4. Imagine that you rise in the air, above the Timeline, and turn in the air 180 degrees, so you will switch your position in relation to the Past and the Future.
5. Go down and stand back on the Timeline, being aware of the new position of the Past and Future. Stay in this awareness for a while and open your eyes. Stand back and notice how you feel.

It may be a quite interesting experience, sometimes even healing (especially if someone was too much stacked in the past), but it may be also disturbing. Therefore, if it feels disturbing and disorienting, there is one more step:

6. Close your eyes, relax, stand on your Timeline, be aware of your Past and Future, rise into the air and change your position back, so your Past and Future are where they used to be. Stay aware of the restored direction of both Past and Future for a while, and open your eyes to your restored concept of Time.

A bit more experimenting can bring some more realizations about the nature of the concept of Time...Enjoy With Love

Joanna Malinowska

What is This?

(I have a mysterious message in the line-up for material to be included in this issue. I didn't record the source when I filed it and I apologise to the reader who sent it to me. Alan).

From Harshad Parekh: Though Krishnamurti spoke passionately about psychological freedom for more than 50 years and thousands of people listened to him attentively, very few could understand and very few could taste the freedom and lived with such freedom? Why?

Krishnamurti asked David Bohm - " Is it the fault of the communicator (K) that the listener does not receive it instantly? Or is the listener incapable of hearing it? Would you say that the capacity to listen is far more important than any of this, than any explanations, or logic?"

Krishnamurti felt that he spoke from the state of complete freedom. He felt that there must be a different way of communicating and listening.

He said - " There must be some other way round all this intellectual business. We have exercised a great deal of it and that intellectual capacity has lead to the blank wall. I approach it from every direction, but eventually the wall is there, which is the 'me', with my knowledge, my prejudice, and all the rest of it."

To listen to Krishnamurti (or any other teacher), one needs freedom to listen, freedom from thinking and interpreting while listening. This kind of freedom is very rare especially among articulate intellectuals who know a lot, think a lot.

One needs simplicity, curiosity, attentive silence to understand quickly. That is the way Kondanna and Maha Kassapa listened to Gautam Buddha and even Angulimal was able to listen to Buddha in spite of his criminal background. And some people can listen without words too.

Ultimately, one cannot depend on any teacher. One can learn by direct observation of one's own chattering mind. In silent observation, the hidden or unconscious mind begins to reveal itself.

Generally, human beings are not interested in learning about their own mind. They like to know about other peoples' mind which they cannot know as long as they are ignorant about their own mind.

The Soul selects her own Society – Emily Dickinson (303)

The Soul selects her own Society —
 Then — shuts the Door —
 To her divine Majority —
 Present no more —

Unmoved — she notes the Chariots — pausing —
 At her low Gate —
 Unmoved — an Emperor be kneeling
 Upon her Mat —

I've known her — from an ample nation —
 Choose One —
 Then — close the Valves of her attention —
 Like Stone — *Emily Dickinson*

Bennett on 'Intensification' from Mal Mitchell

Just enjoyed your latest edition - and yes please, do keep me on the list!

One 'little but loaded' resonance for me came with reading your point on page 8 "**what is necessary is the intensification of Being**" - this chiming in with a point I read earlier today relating to "**an intensification of existence itself**" ... John G. Bennett, from his autobiography "Witness" (Turnstone, 1983 p.164)

And just in case you'd like a tad more context on that....! The bit I'm on is in the early 1930s and Bennett (in his mid-30s) is in the thick of struggling under Ouspensky's guidance, and is grappling again with interpreting and formulating a vision he'd had years before of the "fifth dimension".... "I saw how the eternal pattern of everything that exists has its own laws of development, only its unfolding is not in time; that is, it has not the property of succession. It is rather an intensification of existence itself." He then recalls Gurdjieff saying how two people "may look outwardly the same, but one may have incomparably more Being than the other." Flirting thus with ideas which, whatever their merits, are apt enough to be taken by the cuckoo to line a more subtly egocentric nest. Anyway, I'm finding it diversely striking to be journeying again through Bennett's autobiography all of 37 years after first reading it, when it had such a huge impact for me. Not least striking in terms of historical links and parallels, with JGB's take on the geopolitics of things a hundred years ago and onwards....]

Mal Mitchell

'Oneing' – Dame Julian & Mal

(As result of me writing to Mal about his contribution above he replied with some further information which I found particularly interesting. Alan)

Still on this general theme, I've just put together a little selection of 'met(ː)a' poems - you may recall me banging on about / couching things in terms of 'm e t (ː) a' previously as a

lens/ energy map/ etc integrating the traditional idea of 'metta' with the various meanings of the prefix 'meta-'. In one of them I needed a new word to describe what I was trying to characterise, and came up with '**oneing**'. I thought it unlikely to be an original word as such and was interested to google on it to check. The main thing coming up was how Julian of Norwich used this word back in the 14th century, amid all the horror and terror of the Black Death. Looking up more about what she had to say, I did very much appreciate her core message eg. "**By myself I am nothing at all, but in general, I AM the oneing of love. For it is in this oneing that the life of all people exists.**" Aye! Altogether, we surely can variously benefit from other's ideas and energies, whilst the crucial idea-energy loops we need to most closely attend to are whatever's afoot in ourselves. Anyway, here I go banging on and on again... enjoying the sound of my own writing... Enough!

Mal Mitchell :-)

Notes on Krishnamurti

Alan: I have a long history of involvement with the work of Krishnamurti and with others interested in his work. In recent times we have included NOWletter contributions from Trisha English who has a much closer connection with people who were close to Krishnamurti. Consequently she is able to provide background to his occasional odd behaviour, actions which seemed to be in conflict with his teaching. As an example, I include here an email exchange with Trisha dealing with Krishnamurti's oft-repeated claim that he never read anyone else's work.

Trisha. I've just finished a second reading of Moody's book *The Unconditioned Mind*. I must have read it years ago, because I had underlined various things. One of them, in passing, was that Krishnamurti spent days reading the Old Testament. (He always claimed never to have read anything, if you remember). Also, Lutyens claimed that K was entranced with the life of the Buddha by Carrus which I bought. After many years of study, I realised that K said he never read anything to put a stop to "debate" and people imitating him. You will never find a passage in the teachings where he quotes someone else!

The "learning mind" has to be free to enquire, and he claimed - rightly to my mind - that you can't learn anything if you are carrying a load of preconceived material in your head. We all do it at times, but that doesn't excuse what might be called our unconscious motives for doing so!!

Alan. Thank you for that Trisha, another insight into the weird world of Krishnamurti. I understand the reason for him not quoting but why lie about it? Maybe I'm on the defensive because I dig out quotations all the time and then justify it on the grounds that others have found more eloquent expressions of the inexpressible than I can offer. Coincidentally, a short time after your message another arrived with the following row of quotes:

- The shining of the mere object, as though with a voidness of one's own nature, is samadhi. Patanjali
- As long as I am this or that I am not all things. Eckhart
- To sit in the Throne of God is to inhabit Eternity. To reign there is to be pleased with all things in Heaven and Earth. (Don't know who said that)

- That greatest is which nothing seems. Traherne
- For one of superior intellect, the best thing is thoroughly to comprehend the inseparableness of the knower, the object known, and the act of knowing. Precepts of the Kargyutpa Gurus

To which I could happily add a few by Krishnamurti himself.

I can't help seeing his denial of reading as a sign of spiritual snobbery. An attempt to demonstrate that the world teacher wouldn't have to rely on others! Particularly interesting that he read the bible as, for example, 'Dwell in me as I in you' can be read as a version of 'The observer is the observed'. So, thank you for setting me off again. On a sunny pre-breakfast wander this morning I was surrounded by a family of Grey Fantails, flitting around me as they tried to work out what I was. I told them I was having a bit of trouble with that question myself.

Postscript from Trisha in response to a draft of the above which I sent to make sure I hadn't misquoted.

Trisha: Many people used to come to Krishnaji and they would begin the conversation by giving him a lecture on “what Buddha said”. Or some other guru. After a while K would interrupt the narrative with a sharp interjection: “What is your question Sir?”

He had a way of communicating to people that they were simply mouthing platitudes from their conditioning. Oddly enough, over time, this made his own inner circle of devotees very nervous. The dialogues with Pupil Jayaker for example, are so painful to listen to because she would ask her questions with exaggerated tentativeness conveying an atmosphere of artificiality. She no doubt wanted to convey the impression that she was “serious” about her enquiry.

I have never read or heard any dialogues without an awareness that K didn't like to converse with women. He would slam hard with: “No, Madam” and immediately ignore any issue raised. Mary Zimbalist was perhaps the only one who could survive in such dialogues because he had no doubt schooled her beforehand.

In her last TV interview, long time devotee Mary Cadogan said that there were only two people who could ever go deeply into questions with K, one was David Bohm and the other was Rajagopal.

With this background, you can imagine how devastated the devotees must have been when K announced to them in a recording, as he was dying, that no one had understood the teachings. And no one had the right to act as his successor or interpreter of the teachings.

As soon as K died, according to Moody's account in “Krishnamurti in America” Erna Lilliefelt, a strong willed woman who had played a leading role in the establishment of the K school in Ojai, and perhaps the prime mover in convincing K to sue Rajagopal for various charges, tried to have the famous tape erased. The actual transcript of this tape, occurs in Lutyens final biography of K “The Open Door” and in Scott Forbes book “Krishnamurti Preparing to Leave”.

Whatever you may think of Krishnamurti, he did not countenance any contradiction to his views.

Collateral Damage, a story by Margot Mann

“That’s just bad parenting,” her father said. The masked plover looped and dived while its partner walked quickly along the road, both birds attempting to distract passers-by from their baby. At the sound of its parents’ warning scissor-like screeches, the tiny bird froze, and then, when the danger passed, it ran across the grass as if on wheels. Ella reflected that these birds don’t have real nests, the female simply lays her eggs in a shallow hollow in the ground. She had once seen their eggs, brilliantly camouflaged, looking like the small grey stones they were sitting amongst on the side of a road, just centimetres from annihilation by car tyres.

Yesterday there were three young birds running and pecking on the nature strips beside the road while their ever-vigilant parents screeched warnings and dive-bombed potential danger in the form of people or dogs. Cars didn’t seem to worry them. But today there was only one baby. Ella scanned the nature strips up and down the street, looking in vain for the other two tiny birds. She was sad at the thought that probably a cat had got them. Bad parenting, her father said. As Ella watched the adult birds’ ceaseless efforts to protect their offspring, she pondered the concept of parenting. Did good parenting just mean your parents always knew where you were, or did it mean more than that? She thought about her own parents and felt the merest flicker of alarm that her father might find out that she met Matt for a coffee when she told him she was meeting Josie. Everyone she knew told their parents white lies. It just made life easier for everyone.

Ella remembered the crash. She sometimes went for days without thinking about it, but in the months after it happened she would often wake suddenly from a nightmare, sweating, disoriented and very frightened. She knew her parents were worried about her at the time. For them, it wasn’t just the horror of a midnight door-knock from the police, it was also the aftermath, when Ella spent hours in her room and missed many days of school. No one had died, and the parents of the four teenagers involved all agreed that Jack drove responsibly and it wasn’t his fault, although Ella knew that her explanation that Jack was the designated driver did not help her own cause. (Designated driver? her parents asked. She didn’t explain.)

She heard a loud screech and looked over the balcony. Someone was walking their dog along the road and the parent birds were instantly in distraction mode, dragging a wing along the ground and then flying, wide-winged, at the intruders. She spotted the baby bird as it stood, quite still, near the hedge. When the danger passed, it ran across the grass like a small mechanical toy. Ella decided you could argue that cuckoos were effective parents: the female laid an egg (usually only one) in the nest of an unsuspecting, often quite small bird and then flew away, her job done. The hatchlings of the host were pushed out of the nest by the bigger baby cuckoo which then ran its foster mother ragged in her attempts to feed it. Ella acknowledged to herself that you couldn’t compare birds with humans, but she came to the conclusion that every living species cared for its offspring as well as it could and that some collateral damage was inevitable.

She sauntered inside and found her father watching the cricket on TV. “I’m going to a movie with Josie, Dad. Back soon,” she said. Her father replied “Don’t be late.” He didn’t look up.

Margot Mann

