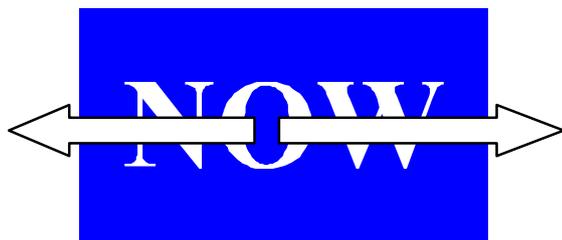


Issue 156—September/October 2011Backnumbers at <http://www.capacity.org/now/archive.htm>Email: awmann@optusnet.com.au

Websites:

www.capacity.orgwww.traherne.org

Phone 02 9419 7394

Next Harding Meeting—Saturday 22 October**Krishnamurti—Annual Queensland Gathering—October 9 to 16**See: <http://www.krishnamurtiaustralia.org/text/gatherings.htm>**CONTENTS****Cosmic Consciousness****The Present****The Empty Throne****Seeing****A Traveller's Tale****The Hierarchy as E-book****Where is mind?****A response to the Schloss letters****Letters to Carl (Letter 8)****Give Up the Story****Joan Relke****Garry Booth****Mark Beardmore****Jim Clatfelter****Margot Mann****Richard Lang****Beryl Starke****Robert Penny****George Schloss****Colin Drake**

Editors note

I had a bit of trouble with the last NOWletter which I overcame after some expert advice from Art Ticknor and Simon Mann. I hope this month will be trouble free but please let me know if you hit any snags. Some of last month's illustrations did not appear and later, when they did, they became visible only after a delay of ten or more seconds. If you get the blank boxes with little red crosses please allow time to load. Apologies to Joan Relke and Garry Booth for my delay in publishing the contributions they sent to me some months back and which now appear in this issue. There is always a danger of this happening due to my mis-filing and oversights due to the time delay between editions. I'm hoping a new procedure will prevent this happening in future but do not hesitate to let me know if I fail to publish something you have sent. A reminder that the aim of the NOWletter is to provide a vehicle for the views of people who usually find themselves in the audience rather than on the platform, so please keep your contributions coming.

Cosmic Consciousness from Joan Relke

A friend of mine in Fairfield, Iowa, sent me the following the other day. Thought you might be interested, too. John Wren-Lewis would have liked the description. It's such a pity he had to go when he did as more and more people are coming out with experiences like his. He once asked me if I knew of anyone who'd reached this state through meditation, as he was sceptical of its efficacy. I knew two people from my distant past, but was unable to contact them. Shortly after he died, I found the Fairfield group. I hope you've been keeping up with the batgap.com interviews.

This is from a very humble and modest Assembly participant (from the Maharishi Patanjali Golden Dome) who apparently has been witnessing his sleep, dreaming, waking—everything—all nonstop without a single break—for two years. He is also experiencing some of the things Maharishi said would be present in the state of cosmic consciousness—including an unbroken sense of eternal freedom, eternal liberation.

Joan Relke

Asked to share his experience with our group, he wrote:

"Cosmic consciousness arrived, softly and unexpectedly, as I exited the Dome one morning in November 2008. I was 64 years old. I had been doing Transcendental Meditation since 1973 and the TM-Sidhi Program since 1978.

How did I know cosmic consciousness had come? All I can say is it was clear that pure consciousness (pure "being") was with me as I exited the Dome. It was clear that soft transcendence, that feeling of unboundedness I had become accustomed to in meditation all those years ... was now with me in activity. Everything was different yet the same. This new element was with me as if dogging my footsteps--this new soft sweetness, this new purity, this new feeling of lightness, this new utter clarity.

As with most of us, I had a career to manage during all those years, and a family, with children, to support. But I made time for my program twice a day no matter what, even if it meant, as it often did, meditating in a bus, an airplane, a library or even more unlikely locations.

It never occurred to me to stop meditating, or even miss a meditation. I knew before my intro lecture was half over, that I would do this TM thing, and would never stop.

Over the years, I waited expectantly and patiently for "cosmic consciousness" to arrive. Always feeling it must be just around the corner.

As decades of practice elapsed and I grew older, I began to abandon any notion that I would reach cosmic consciousness in this life. I never stopped believing it was a reality, nor that Maharishi's TM and TM-Sidhi program could lead one there. I just stopped believing that it was going to happen to me.

While I usually enjoyed my programs, there was never anything "flashy" going on. As years passed, it even seemed that the multitude of changes I had noticed in myself when I first began

meditating ... had dwindled significantly or even disappeared. I felt like I was on a plateau. Like I was walking in place.

My general attitude was, "OK, it's not going to happen in this life. But I know TM is a good thing. I've always known that, from my very first meditation. So, I'll just keep doing it because I should go as far as I can in this life. Who knows, maybe next time around ..."

So, when cosmic consciousness tiptoed up to me that November day, just after I turned 64, I was absolutely astounded and delighted. It seemed so delicate, fragile, almost shy. I did not expect it to last. As days and weeks went by, the experience not only endured but grew in strength. I finally came to accept without any doubt -- it was here to stay. With that, I began to relax into it and just let it be what it was...without any expectations or preconceived notions.

I was as surprised as anyone that such a thing could happen to me. As far as I or anyone could tell from my life, I was as unlikely and undeserving a candidate for this as anyone I could think of. Even after years of meditating I still had flaws you could drive a truck through. I was nowhere near as well studied in the Vedic literature as so many around me. One might call my daily routine marginally ayurvedic, I suppose. But even that would be a stretch. Given all my responsibilities, I figured I was doing the best I could.

Yet here IT was and IT was undeniable. I thought perhaps it was one of those 1% chances of a cosmic mistake I heard Maharishi talk about once. And for quite a while was sure that as soon as the mistake was discovered by the Cosmic computer, it would be rectified.

Two and half years later, to my increasing delight, the experience of cosmic consciousness has matured into something even grander. Being shines at me from all things and all people. My own Self is everywhere, in everything and everyone. The burdens, troubles and vicissitudes of life seem all but gone or, at least, drastically mitigated. In their place, is a lightness, delight, sweetness and ease ... that is absolutely indescribable.

Believe me, I know this is no accomplishment of mine. Any kudos for this are due to Maharishi and Guru Dev alone. This is not false modesty. This is the truth.

The only thing I ever did was to follow the simple (thank goodness) instructions Maharishi gave for the practice of the TM and TM-Sidhi program. Really, that's all I ever did. That it resulted in this experience for me ... is as miraculous as anything I can think of. Yet it's utterly real, utterly simple, and utterly available to all. That I know for certain.

If my life serves no other purpose, it is to demonstrate that, if this can happen to someone like me, it can happen to anyone. It can happen to everyone. That it did happen to me ... reveals the immensity of Maharishi's knowledge and remarkable power of his techniques--and of course the unfathomable silence, bliss, and sanctity of our beloved Guru Dev."

CONTENTS

The Present—from Garry Booth

Two years ago I asked myself what indeed is the present moment? What does it mean and how does it exist in time. Why couldn't I stay in the present moment.

In stillness I can sense the tranquility of the present moment but thoughts continually arise and transport me in time. Time and thoughts are inextricably linked and the present moment is veiled by my thoughts. The irony of it all – an ephemeral screen – my ego – separating me from bliss. To fully understand the present moment I had to understand time. To understand time I had to understand my true self.

It occurred to me on a classic sunny winter's day while visiting my favorite childhood playground at Long Reef, could this day I was experiencing be the same winter's day of my childhood and that I had "moved on." That there was only one moment and the passing of time, measured in planetary movements – in days, months, years - was a mere illusion.

Was I and everything else the embodiment of time? Could it be one moment since the Big Bang. Eternity in a moment? After all, if I was away from Earth there would be no such thing as days, months, years, seasons except in my own body time energy—biorhythms—measured by earthly clocks and calendars.

How can I experience the flow of time directly? I sat on the beach all day to experience the "flow of time" and discovered that my experience of time is completely subjective and related to what I am not doing or doing. Or what I am being or becoming. I felt time did not flow that day, I flowed.

Could it be a case of my time, your time or any individual-thing-time, whether active or at rest? Is this the true meaning of the "flow of time"?

My experience of time is by way of its absence, in the present. I decided to discard the word moment as the word moment has an association with movement. As Douglas Harding asked, "in this present are all my tomorrows and yesterdays?"

My actual experience of time flowing appears to be my own body time energy, from my awakening in the morning to falling asleep in the evening. Time has no meaning when I am asleep and yet my body energy is replenished to start the cycle all over again.

Everything in the Universe is energy, information and relationship suspended in the eternal infinite present. Everything is energy evolving, manifesting as the flow of time in the static present.

Time is a subjective description of measurement of the flow of energy in the eternal infinite present. No doubt it is very easy to mistake the measurement of time as time itself.

For human beings, thoughts, memories and aspirations for the future manifest as the illusion of time flowing—past—present—future. My emotional past exists as a memory and the future exists as a thought, an idea. The future is not "out there." The present does not move.

Everything in the Universe is riding on an "energy wave" pointing towards "tomorrow." Put another way, everything is going through an evolving cyclical process until all energy

is recycled or dissipated. From simplicity to complexity and return to simplicity, in the eternal infinite present. Put more simply in human terms—the aging process.

I, like everything else, am evolving in the eternal infinite present.

I, like the majority of human beings, have been conditioned into believing that the planetary movements represent the “flow of time”. If I switch my mind from the illusion of “flow of time” outside me to “flow of time” inside me I have made a paradigm shift whereby I see the external as the present and I become a traveler in the present.

I am energy, information and relationship manifesting as the “flow of time” suspended in the eternal infinite present—out of which everything arises and subsides.

I, like the majority of human beings, have been conditioned to believe that the material world is solid, that solids are solids. Science has shown us that solids are 99% empty space. The Universe is the same empty space on an infinite scale full of energy, information and relationships.

Human beings stand midway between the two infinities. The inward infinity suspends the outward infinity they are one in the eternal infinite present.

My enquiry into the present is inextricably linked to my true self, that is, beyond ego, beyond space and time. The eternal infinite present is where my true self resides, suspended within my mind and one with cosmic consciousness.

Despite my lifetime conditioning, despite the physical evidence provided by my senses, the sight of the sun setting and my clock displaying 5.15pm, my intuition tells me that I have lived another calendar day in the present.

The present is all that is and will ever be.

Consciousness is union of everything in the present.

The present is indivisible and suspends “time and space”—our Universe and beyond.

The present and consciousness are one.

The expansiveness and unity of consciousness is the same expansiveness and unity of the cosmos suspended in the eternal infinite present. When my life energy is expended “my time” in the cosmic playground of life, where one is the many, suspended in the eternal infinite present, will be over.

Garry Booth

CONTENTS

The Empty Throne from Mark Beardmore

Hi Alan, Ah yes the 'empty throne'! (Referring to the article in NOWletter 155) I must admit I had either not heard of this one, or forgotten it. However, you are right in one respect, that 'early' Buddhists did not represent the 'Buddha' as a person. My take on it is this is because the 'Buddha' did not teach in the traditional sense of devotion to a guru, (though this all too human tendency has crept in through the millennia) but rather through a *system of*

liberation as liberation theologians might put it. Thus in the early days, this system was represented by the elephant's footprint (encompassing all the other beings footprints); as the stupa or chedi which represented the ideal of the Buddhist monk later embodied in the ideal of the Buddha's way of life, with his robes forming the lower part of the chedi, his bowl the domed part, and his walking stick¹ (also umbrella or glot – an ingenious umbrella type device used to ward off mosquitoes while meditating, the origins I am unsure of) the upper spike. And not forgetting the Bodhi tree itself, the term Bodhi meaning variously awakened/awakening/awake. This is a vital understanding most westerners and most traditional indigenous Buddhists often do not get. The teaching of the Buddha is a vehicle for awakening. Like the Harding experiments it *takes you there*. So with this in mind, how else would you represent it? An empty throne with curious onlookers fanning an empty space, and lions ready to roar is a perfect ethereal sculptural allegory. The Buddha whose name can be uttered, like the Dao, is not the true Buddha. But as seems the fate of all spiritual traditions it does not take long rolling around in the mud of the mind to accumulate a more physical body, after all are we not indeed made of *clay*? Despite the profound fact that we *are* in terms of our physical bodies being made from the elements, it also points to the conceptualisation of profoundly non-conceptual truths. And so not long after the throne was carved, a body was created to sit in it.

And who do we have to *blame* (the Buddhists like to go beyond praise and blame btw) but non-other than the Greeks! Those magnificent sculptors of the divine interpretation of human form². Some of the earliest (and most beautiful) images of the *Buddha* are to be found between the 2nd century BCE and 1st century CE in regions conquered by Alexander the Great 330 BCE, while the curly hair and *top knot* were inspired apparently from statues of Apollo from the same time. This Greek influence spread far and wide throughout central and eastern Asia with the two (now ex) giant Bamiyan Buddha statues in the ancient kingdom of Gandhara (what is now eastern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan) on the old silk road, exemplifying the process of artistic and ritual embodiment. It was a thriving centre of art, cultural and spiritual exchange that was home to several Buddhist monasteries between the 2nd and 9th centuries CE. While their destruction by the Taliban was decried by Buddhists and Muslims alike³, it is non-the-less pertinent to question the anthropomorphism of a tradition that states quite clearly there is no *anthropos* there in the first place, only an ever changing whirl of elements. Ironically they, the Bamiyan Buddhas, have become as *empty thrones*. Truly all that arises ceases, including all concepts and representations of Buddhism, Buddha, and the Buddhist teachings. Still give it time and I suspect we shall see glorified images of Mr Harding himself – with or without head remains to be seen...

Mark Beardmore

¹Though with latter 'embodiments' this became a seated Buddha, as well as various elements, a repository for reliquaries and a monument to the Buddha's life.

²This wiki page says it all really: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greco-Buddhist_art

³All 54 members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference joined in to protest to spare the statues and even have them transferred elsewhere - see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buddhas_of_Bamiyan

Seeing from Jim Clatfelter & LFY

Here's a quote from Gateway to Wisdom (1980) by John Blofeld, page 45. This sounds a lot like the occasion quote that Alan posted. (*Referring to Whitehead's 'Occasion' in NOWletter 155*) "He ceases to be a spectator and becomes a part of the scene like those tiny figures perched amidst wastes of rock and mountain one sees in Taoist paintings. Yet he does not feel himself to be an insignificant part of the whole scene, for the whole is mysteriously perceived to be in him, and he in it." Jim

I replied: Oh, excellent Jim. That captures it, the feeling that I first encountered in my early teens. The sense of my absolute unimportance in relation to the vast universe in which I found myself and this accompanied by a paradoxical awareness of absolute significance in some inexplicable way. Alan

In a subsequent exchange Jim and Chris provided some interesting comments on seeing:

Chris Cheney wrote:

Ha, character for Tao is "head gone" or "no head" character for temple is "seeing". So, "Taoist temple" = "no head seeing".

Jim Clatfelter then wrote: Quote from the Tao of Physics, page 35

"In Taoism, this notion of observation is embodied in the name for Taoist temples. Kuan, which originally meant 'to look'. Taoists thus regarded their temples as places of observation. In Ch'an Buddhism, the Chinese version of Zen, enlightenment is often referred to as 'the vision of the Tao', and seeing is regarded as the basis of knowing in all Buddhist schools. The first item in the Eightfold Path, the Buddha's prescription for self-realization, is right seeing..."

It is guan in proper pinyin. I looked it up on a Chinese Entymology website.

English Senses For guan1: to see / to observe / to behold / to view / to take a view of / to look / to inspect / sights / views / to display / a point of view / a conception

English Senses For guan4: a Taoist temple or shrine

I love that these Chinese philosophical views are based on vision and seeing. Even Daoist and Zen temples are for the purpose of seeing.

Seeing is not believing!

CONTENTS

A Traveller's Tale

The temperature In New York city was an unseasonable one hundred degrees in early June. Alan had helped George Schloss to self-publish some of his writings a few years ago, and one day we went to Newark to visit his widow, Antoinette who picked us up from Little Silver train station and took us for soup and a bucket of delicious steamers (mussels) at a boat club overlooking the water, and then back to her apartment with its stunning view of

the ocean. Some weeks later when we arrived back in Sydney, we received a box with six handblown glasses which had originally belonged to George.

The following day we travelled by metro to Battery Point, struggling to see the Statue of Liberty through the thick heat haze. Strolling through the tourist crowds, we stumbled on a

Sesame Street photoshoot, so we bought a coffee and sat and watched. A guy was lying on his side with his arm stretched up into a familiar-looking shaggy orange face with big white googly eyes, talking to a young girl. After a while we were asked if we would like to be in the show. One at a time, Alan and I got wired for sound and the shaggy orange face, called Murray, asked us the meanings of vaguely scientific words, like "balance", "magnify",



"observe", etc. When I gave the correct definition of "deciduous" there was much clapping and shouting, especially from Murray. Back with the sound guy to be unhooked, I said "that's one for the cutting room floor" and he said "I don't know about that. You're the only one who has ever got "deciduous".

A couple of days later, and still very hot, we met Chris Cheney by the Bethesda Fountain in Central Park and walked to a restaurant for dinner. Chris facilitates the LookForYourself email forum.

We took the train to Boston, where we sat at the same table in the hotel restaurant where JFK had proposed to Jacqueline Bouvier. That's what our waiter said. And Charles Dickens stayed at the same hotel in the 1850's when he was visiting America and making his views on copyright known. The key of his hotel room was in a cabinet in the foyer. That's what the label said. We drove a hire car from Boston to Concord, Mass., where we stayed for a few days, not far from where the gunshot that started the revolution was heard "around the world". Emerson's grandfather saw the defining confrontation at North Bridge, easily observable from the top story of the manse where he lived. Alan thinks it is very sporting of the authorities to have planted a couple of small British flags near the grave of the half dozen British soldiers who died there. Louisa May Alcott's family lived close by and her father, celebrated as the civil war hero of *March*, the novel by Genevieve Brooks, and who was always assumed to be away at the war in *Little Women*, actually never fought in the Civil War at all because he was busy at home being a Transcendentalist, along with men like Emerson, Hawthorne and Thoreau, and it was the young Louisa herself who nursed the wounded during that terrible war. It is possible that the illnesses she sustained then were responsible for her relatively early death. The story goes that although Louisa herself never married, the publishers of *Little Women* insisted that in the novel Jo must marry, so Louisa got some sort of revenge by marrying her off to a much older professor, a character supposedly based on her father, to thwart the romantics among her readers.

In the main street of Concord we admired a dog which the owner told us was an Australian Vizsla but the breed has nothing to do with Australia and comes from Hungary. However, we discovered her husband was Australian and came from Turrumurra. Later that evening in the same street we came upon a group of men dressed in white outfits with red sashes, bell-sticks and ribbons. Alan couldn't believe they could possibly be Morris dancers, prancing around in the home of the revolution. He asked one of them if they really were Morris dancers, ""Yes" came the reply in a strong American accent, "...nothing better!"

There were bathers at Walden Pond on the beautiful summer day we walked around it. We saw the foundation stones of Thoreau's basic one-roomed cottage, where he spent nearly two years proving he could live a simple life without all the unnecessary trappings of civilisation. He often visited friends, and they often visited him, which prompted one of the guides to suggest, tongue-in-cheek, that it couldn't have been much hardship for Thoreau, really, because he was a mere fifteen minutes walk from family and friends and probably took his washing home every Tuesday for his mother to wash. The little hut was built in a delightful spot on some land in the woods which belonged to Emerson. We drove to Amherst to see Emily Dickinson's house again. Dickinson died in her fifties from what, until recently, was thought to have been Bright's Disease, but which experts now think could have been untreated high blood pressure.

In Washington DC we lodged in a small bedroom with bathroom attached and our own entrance, called "The Green Room". It was part of a larger apartment, occupied by Barbie and Paul, but we never saw Paul. Barbie's promo said that they would pick up or drive guests to the airport in a vehicle powered with vegetable oil. When we asked about this as the time for our departure loomed, Barbie said "Does it still say that, I'll have to take that out because the car has broken down. Paul has to get up real early to move it from the side street before he gets fined and he already owes about three thousand dollars in fines." This caused transit problems for us, and because taxi companies wouldn't take our booking the day before, nor did they want our Australian mobile number, we decided to leave The Green Room in the dark at 4 am one morning, trundling our baggage towards the city centre, with warnings that Washington DC is the most dangerous city in America ringing in our ears. I found out later that Alan had put a credit card in his sock in case he was mugged, but fortunately, after a few blocks, with the little wheels of our luggage sounding very loud on the pavement, a cab pulled up and we were saved. I liked Barbie and think of her kindly every time I use the mint and honey lip balm she made in her kitchen. On her recommendation we ate shrimp and grits at the Busboys and Poets Restaurant, and saw an interesting alternative performance at the Woolly Mammoth Theatre. One day we had lunch in the Sackler Gallery, part of the Smithsonian, at the same table as a chorister from the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. She said they were in town to perform for just the one night, six hundred of them - three hundred choristers and three hundred ancillary staff, all travelling in buses. As we left she gave us one of her CD's.

From Washington DC we flew west via Chicago to Boise, Idaho, and stayed with friends in their beautiful new cabin in McCall. On 3rd July, the day before Independence Day celebrations, we drove to North Beach on the Payette Lake, where a crowd of young people traditionally gathers for the occasion - we thought of Bondi beach, although North Beach is

much smaller. Ten state troopers and the sheriff and some of his henchmen were keeping an eye on things. As we walked back to the car, one of the sheriff's men smiled and drawled "Have you had as much fun as you can handle?" We saw plenty of deer tip-toeing down our street and the guy over the road said a bear and her cub had walked past the night before - he woke up and saw them when his dogs started barking. In the Ponderosa Woods a moose ran off, with two small moose bringing up the rear. We didn't see many birds in America, mainly robins, blue jays and crows, and a lot of chickadees. To our dismay, the hummingbirds arrived in McCall after we left. At the fireworks display, one old-timer was heard to remark that he had never seen so much snow on the mountains on 4th July before. One day I put on my swimsuit and walked very slowly into the lake, and then walked out again. It was very, very cold. McCall is a snow resort in winter and a water resort in summer.

When we reached San Francisco, we drove to Skyline Boulevard to visit Greg who lives in a Zen retreat. He is going to Germany soon to visit a community of people he keeps in touch with. We had noodles and tofu for lunch, talked to the chooks, and saw the small lake they struggle to keep free of red algae. The following day, we drove to Sonora, home of the Diamondback Bar and Grill who make the best burgers in America*, but our other reason for going there was because it wasn't too far from the Grovedale entrance to Yosemite National Park, where in 1903, President Roosevelt promised to save this and other national parks for the enjoyment of the American people. The day we went, the President would have been surprised to see the number of people - Americans and non-Americans - who were in the Park. In the Sonora Museum we saw stories and sad pictures of the privations of the early settlers on the Oregon trail.

* Once I discovered the Diamondback burger, I had one every night for the length of our stay in Sonora. Among its appealing characteristics are: no cheese; small soft bun; large succulent burger cooked to perfection and not oozing fat; heaps of salad greens; sweet onion; delicious buttermilk dressing which you can add yourself; tomato, pickles, etc. and a glass of good red. I suppose a slice of beetroot would have been nice, but you can't have everything.

Margot Mann

CONTENTS

The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth from Richard Lang

Dear Friends, The original version of *The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth (A New Diagram of Man in the Universe)* by Douglas Harding is now available in our bookshop as a downloadable file.

I will speak from my heart about this book. This book is the book I would take with me to a desert island if I were allowed only one book.

It is, so to speak, a modern Bible of who we really are. Most people don't read the whole of the *Bible* (or the *Koran*, or *On The Origin of Species*, I suppose...) but are nevertheless profoundly influenced by such books. I believe *The Hierarchy* is of the same order. And

(like Darwin's masterpiece) it is a book that is independent of local culture or religion. It is a book for the modern planet.

Douglas Harding spent at least eight years writing this book (in the 1940s) - more or less fourteen hours a day, seven days a week. He saw who he really was and then thought, felt and wrote deeply, consistently, coolly, passionately, about what he had found - how it made sense and what it meant for the world.

C.S. Lewis called *The Hierarchy* "a work of the highest genius". I fully agree. Lewis only read the condensed version but he declared that it left him "roaring drunk". I've read both the condensed version and this huge original version (many times) and I am like Lewis. I am drunk with its genius.

I believe the publication of this book in digital form is the equivalent of the moment when the *Bible* was made available to a wide audience with the invention of the printing press. Now anyone with £20 to spend can dip into, and perhaps even read the whole of, this phenomenal book. Douglas took years to produce this one book (plus one copy). He finished it in 1950. In 1998 the Shollond Trust (with Crowquill) produced 300 copies. Thanks to the generous work of many volunteers, lovingly managed by my friend Navi Blight (supported by her husband Sam) the Shollond Trust can now from August 2011 offer this book to as many people as click the button on our website. Thank you friends, thank you Navi and Sam, thank you Douglas. It is a great achievement.

Douglas once said that although the universe is often a tragic and terrible place, even so, a universe that produces the music of Mozart is a wonderful universe, a beautiful universe. I say, a universe that produces *The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth* is, in spite of all the terror and tragedy in the world, a wonderful, beautiful universe.

Here's the link:

<http://www.headless.org/e-books/the-hierarchy-full-manuscript-scan>

Richard Lang

CONTENTS

Where is mind?—from Beryl Starke

(The following extract from Magic and Mystery in Tibet by Alexandra David-Neel was supplied by Beryl and provided a basis for some challenging dialogue at our last Harding meeting. Pondering the location of consciousness produces some interesting results. Alan)

"Another exercise which, however, seems to be seldom practised, consists in "displacing one's consciousness in one's own body." It is explained as follows.

We feel our consciousness in our "heart." Our arms seem to us to be "annexes" to our body, and our feet seem to be a distant part of our person. In fact, arms, feet and other parts of the body are looked at as if they were objects for a subject dwelling elsewhere.

Now the student will endeavour to make the “consciousness” leave its habitual abode and transfer it, for instance to his hand, then he must feel himself to have the shape of five fingers and a palm, situated at the extremity of a long attachment [the arm] which joins on to a big moving structure, the body.

That is to say, he must experience the sensation that we might have if, instead of having the eyes and the brain in the head, we had them in the hand and then the hand was able to examine the head and the body, reversing the normal process which is to look downwards in order to see the hands or the body.

What can be the aim of such strange exercises? The most frequent answer given to my questions will probably seem unsatisfactory by many inquirers, yet it is probably quite correct.

Some lamas have told me that the aim of these practices can hardly be explained, because those who have not felt their effects could not understand the explanations.

One attains, by the by, the means of these strange drills, psychic states entirely different from those habitual to us. They cause us to pass beyond the fictitious limits which we assign to the self. The result being that we grow to realise that the self is compound, impermanent; and that the self, as self, does not exist.

One of these lamas seized upon a remark I had made as an argument in support of his theory.

When he spoke of the heart as the seat of thought and mind, I had said that westerners would rather place thoughts and mind in the brain.

“You see,” immediately replied my interlocutor, “that one may feel and recognise the mind in different places. Since these Philings !{Foreigners} experience the sensation of thinking in their head, and I experience it in my heart, one may believe that it is quite possible to feel it in the foot. But all these are only deceitful sensations with no shadow of reality. The mind is neither in the heart nor in the head, nor somewhere outside of the body, apart, separated, alien to it. It is to help one realise this fact that these apparently strange practices have been devised.”

Here again we meet with the “clearing” process. All these exercises aim at destroying habitual notions accepted by routine and without personal investigation. The object is to make one understand that other ideas can be put in their place. It is hoped that the disciple will conclude that there cannot be any absolute truth in ideas derived from sensations which can be discarded while others, even contradictory to them, take their place.

From Magic and Mystery in Tibet by Alexandra David-Neel

CONTENTS

A response to the Schloss letters from Bob Penny

Thanks Allan for the Nowletter; and for the 20 or so years you've been producing it. Below is my response to the piece by George Schloss in the latest Nowletter (Issue 155). I intend

to follow this up with further letters or articles that I plan to write for future issues. After twenty years I feel ready to make a small contribution towards the promotion of Douglas Harding's brilliant scientific-philosophical work, which, as I see it, the world desperately needs.

I could not agree more with George Schloss about the importance of Harding's experiments, as a simple and effective way of Centring. I'm nearly 64 years of age, and twenty years ago Douglas Harding's *Head off Stress* book introduced me to his experiments; experiments which have transformed my inside story absolutely.

There are 25 experiments in *Head off Stress*, many of them delivered with great impact. I found Harding's small chart in this book, with a different experiment and daily practice for each of the seven days of the week, very helpful initially. I also found Harding's *The Little Book of Life and Death* to be a great companion book to *Head off Stress*. First and foremost, it introduced me to other aspects of what I am, in addition to my direct seeing of what's here, at the centre of my world, by way of the experiments. These other aspects are: What I appear to be, what I need in order to be myself, and what I feel I am.

After having studied both these books, and as I began to do my best to make sense of it all and to live it, Harding's *On Having No Head* book made much more sense to me, and it opened up new aspects, such as:

1. Linking the 'Headless' or Centreing experience to science, film, advertising, and to Zen and the other great spiritual traditions,
2. Summarizing Harding's initial workings out of his 'Headless' experience.
3. Displaying Harding's verbal map of the 8 stages of the 'Headless Way, and more.

The 'Headless Way' has Harding's experiments as its basic introductory tool. Practicing the experiments, which are also awareness exercises, is the way of proceeding with and living the 'Headless Way'. Practicing the experiments, and enjoying the 'Headless' experience through doing them, is what those of us who follow the 'Headless Way' have in common.

Harding's verbal map of the 8 stages of the 'Headless Way', contained in *On Having no Head* has provided me with confirmation and clarification of where I've been at, and how much further I've had to travel, along this very challenging psycho-spiritual path. In one sense there has been steady psycho-spiritual development; in another sense, the experiments landed me the goal of the true spiritual life immediately; this goal being to consciously be Nothing at the Centre, Nothing which is capacity for everything on show and in the limit Everything. At the goal immediately, but with plenty of work to do! This may sound wildly paradoxical. Well it is! The true spiritual life is, as Harding suggests, all paradox.

Those three books I've mentioned were all published by Arkana Penguin when I came across them twenty years ago. It's been only in recent years that I've gotten to more fully appreciate the fourth Harding book published by Arkana back then: *The Trial of The Man Who Said He Was God*. Harding has said this is his best book. Be that as it may, I have found this book, along with *Head off Stress*, *The Little Book of Life and Death*, and *On Having No Head*, to have been basic in coming to understand the personal-enlightenment aspect of

Harding's teaching. The other aspect of his teaching is summarized in his essay *The Universe Enlightened* found in a book of Harding essays, *Look for Yourself: The Art and Science of Self-realization*. This essay is a very brief summary of Harding's most far-reaching book, *The Hierarchy of Heaven and Earth: A New Diagram of Man in the Univers*. I would not be without any of Douglas Harding's books or essays.

Harding's books, taken together, give a wide-ranging demonstration of his own workings-out of the Headless experience; the Centring experience; the experience of in-seeing or Seeing; of seeing what we really are; seeing what we are here at Centre, for ourselves, in contrast to what we look like, out there, to others and in their cameras, and in our mirror. While we gain this Centring experience by doing the Harding experiments, his experiments are not THE way; they are a very good way; but one of a number of different ways to truly centre oneself.

I have found the accounts that I have read in Harding's books, of his own workings-out of the meaning of the essential Centring experience, very encouraging in my attempt, over the past twenty years, to live the 'Headless Way', being the new spiritual tradition founded and demonstrated by Douglas Harding.

The great power -- the spiritual, psychological and social consequences -- of the 'Headless' experience is not generally realized initially, and indeed it is generally not realized for quite some time after being introduced to it. Via Harding's experiments, this Experience is easy to have, however the meaning of the Experience is, as Harding himself has admitted, excruciatingly difficult to arrive at. He made it his business to extensively work out the meaning of the 'Headless' or Centreing experience; he worked it out for himself, and he worked it out for ordinary people in the suburbs like Bob Penny.

Judy Bruce, a long time friend of Douglas, put it very succinctly when she wrote that Douglas Harding brings together science and religion, philosophy and the senses, and eastern and western traditions. I add that, in proceeding to do the great things that Judy has stated, in addition to the brilliant new self-discovery tools of Harding's experiments, Douglas Harding brings together both verbal and pictorial communication, and he does this throughout all of his extensive work. Harding makes wide-ranging use of his many drawings, with his use of his drawings perhaps being a first in philosophy. Through his drawings, we get to see pictures and diagrams which illustrate the truths about ourselves and the world that we can see directly by doing Harding's experiments. Seeing these drawings and diagrams helped me to appreciate the essential Experience and its meaning far more-so than mere words alone could possibly convey.

In addition to this, the quotes from Tradition that Harding liberally and systematically uses in all of his philosophical work, have greatly influenced my thinking about the essential Experience referred to above. This has occurred because Harding has given me the opportunity to link this Experience, which I've enjoyed via his numerous experiments in a range of different contexts; he's also given me the opportunity to link this essential Experience with many old expressions, by Seers of this very same Experience down the ages. This means that by taking a fun piggyback ride on Harding's beautiful work, often laced with quirky humour, I've had the opportunity to rediscover numerous old and great

truths found in literature; and to confirm these old truths courtesy of the experiments, pictures and diagrams, that he so generously provides in all of his works.

But this is not all! Harding then goes on to build his own case, involving a great many aspects of life which he freshly inquires into. He not only asks the big questions asked by all the greats before him, whose answers, as he says, fill numerous inconclusive volumes and are of academic importance only; Harding also goes on to answer these questions all over again, in the idiom of our own time, and in ways that we can put into immediate practical effect in our lives.

In building his case, Harding uses robust reasonings; reasonings which invariably rest in science. He presents his case, clearly and with all the eloquence at his disposal, not for us to take on board at face value, but to carefully weigh up and decide upon for ourselves. He bends over backwards to give us the tools which will enable us to clearly understand what he's on about, and be in a position to decide for ourselves, on such important matters as the arts of life and death, happiness, health, stress and its easing, confrontation, love, surrender, sanity, spontaneity, ultimate-unity, and much more.

Harding's experiments, which guide us to see what we each are at the Centre, are generally recognized to be the most important aspect of his brilliant and strictly-indivisible four-pillared way of proceeding which is clearly on display in nearly all of his books. I doubt whether such effective and wide ranging teachings of true wisdom, and of a more realistic theology, have ever been available in the history of literature, as are now available in Douglas Harding's books and essays.

Bob Penny

CONTENTS

Letters to Carl—George Schloss

I am serializing these letters, one in every issue, the complete series is available in a self-published book The Language of Silence, Volume 2 available from :

http://www.lulu.com/spotlight/alan4mann?cid=cms_email_author_spotlight_confirmation

Alan

Letter 8 – May 1, 2004 Dear Carl, Since, hopefully, we're going to be able to touch all bases before we're through, I might as well pick up where we left off last time and consider this notion of differentiation, a most fruitful idea I picked up from Eric Voegelin years ago but have never got around to examining in any depth though I've been meaning to. Because I think it contains an important key to what the experiments, not so much "re-present" but, present historically. And if I keep emphasizing in any way I can, whether by means of italics, quotation marks, underlinings etc., their essential difference from anything that's come before, it's only because in my view—and I trust it's the view—they are different from anything that's come before. Witness what we're doing right now: how, notwithstanding their tempting tendency to encourage public speaking with their unique

method of delivering the message in person and in the 1st Person at that, they nevertheless insist on reaffirming the primacy of eye over ear by consigning their patented method of self-effacement to absolute silence which, by suiting the Word to the action instead of the other way around, enables them to head off the bugbear of all language (including this) and establish certainty in the midst of contradiction and duality.

Incidentally, although I know we've mentioned Voegelin in passing, I don't recall how familiar you are with his work, especially with the last volume of his brilliant *Order and History* entitled *The Ecumenic Age* which, aside from the influence it had on me, at least until I learned about Headlessness, can now serve, however unwittingly, as both a useful foil in exposing the subsequent divergences between us and, at the same time, help in delineating the newly-uncovered parameters established by the experiments. Briefly, where the evidence provided by both disciplines is in total agreement or, better yet, corroborates his hypothetical thesis with our living proof—namely, that the truth of reality is always and everywhere present and the same—what does vary is the degree of differentiation from its original compactness and our capacity to recognize it. Which as we or, at any rate, I learned in college is no more than to say that phylogeny, the development of the race, recapitulates ontogeny, the development of the individual. Or maybe, like the chicken and the egg, it's the other way round. Since they both go hand in hand and we're not biologists anyway, no matter. What we can say with certainty, however, since conscious or not we're always experiencing it, is that from first to last the development or, if you prefer, the circular "progress," whether individual or collective, from Alpha to Omega, from infant or primitive vision (small "v") as it evolves into imagination and its consequent symbolism in magic and myth, and then, having exhausted all avenues by way of adult reason and intellect and thought, finally ends, but not quite, where it started at the Gap but seen now from this side, from the near side—what we can say with certainty is that this Vision in all its fullness no longer has to pop up out of nowhere or, at best, the nearest blind alley, to pose in a glass darkly for the fortunate few but, in accordance with modern democratic principle—and, in this regard, the relationship between the two is no accident—is finally revealed as open and available to all and not just theoretically but at will.

That said—and so far so good—we can more than go along with Voegelin's acute analysis of the vehicle par excellence that determines this differentiation and that vehicle is history. And by history is meant, following Hegel, not just ordinary history—records, chronicles, journals and so forth—or even reflective history—what in the West, at least, has, since the Greeks, since Herodotus and Thucydides and Aristotle, passed for history, the appraisal of the coming-to-be and passing-away of all things—but what the Bible knows as sacred, Hegel himself as philosophic and we nameless or, better yet, name-free though hardly speechless types and only recently graduated from the school of Hard Nots with our majors in religion or theology or metaphysics or just plain what have you, can now proudly point to as our degree in no degree, our stake in absolutely no-thing. Quite simply, in contrast to so many but by no means all his colleagues, for Voegelin the essential meaning of history does not derive from a survey or assessment of a series of events, however significant, but rather from the revelation of the Presence to whom it belongs. And as we and we alone ,

that is to say, we as All One are now in a position to absolutely verify and verify absolutely, as far as he went he was quite right in his claim that, by myopically if not rudely overlooking the ME (more formally, if still somewhat familiarly, addressed as I AM), what usually passes for history does indeed only tell the half of it. Less, if we take into account what the experiments have to “say” about the reality of 3rd Person perception, of so-called observation pure and simple, presumably but mistakenly free from the encumbrance of an overriding participation. In any case—and again so far so good—Voegelin also comes, as we do, as we *must*, to the perfectly justifiable conclusion that any account of the stored and storied memory of human behavior in time must, by extension, include a reckoning of man’s participation in the divine presence and that this movement has a final, an eschatological direction. And there in that word “direction” as distinct from, if not quite opposed to, such unqualified concepts as “goal” or “end” or “destination” and their teleological associations, is where we, or at least I, however reluctantly at first, have had and still have to part company with him. Just as, overstaying my leave and come to the end of the page, we two—you and I—must, by pre-agreement, part, though fittingly enough and happily in our case, only for the moment. George

CONTENTS

Give Up the Story from Colin Drake

With regard to awakening we are often told to ‘give up the story’ of oneself as an individual object with a history which helps define what one ‘is’. This is good advice for, when investigated, this story is just that—a fictitious story—when applied as an indication of who, or what, we truly are. At the surface level we are the mind/body which is experienced as a flow of thoughts (including mental images) and sensations. As such, this is ever-changing and the story cannot even be applied to this as this is not a static being, or object, but a collection of multiple parts which are continually dying and renewing. At the deeper level we are that which experiences this ever flowing torrent of thoughts and sensations, that is to say awareness. For experience consists of the flow of objects and the constant conscious subjective presence, which is awareness. So at a deeper level than thoughts/sensations we are this awareness which is never bound by any story concerning the past, future, or the state of the body/mind.

It is this identification with the story that causes most of our mental suffering and anxiety, which is a joke for the story is not a true reflection of ourselves at any level! It consists of a collection of memories, a distorted view of who we actually are, not accepting ‘what is’ and needless projections into the future. As such it can be seen to be a multi-strand fiction, identification with which can only cause suffering and anxiety. The solution to this is not to give it any weight but to see it for what it truly is—just story!

It will continue to come up but any attention that is lavished on it only feeds and strengthens it; when ignored it is starved of attention and its reoccurrences will slowly peter out. By ignored I do not mean suppressed, for this will also strengthen it, but just

allowed to 'come and go' with no weight being given to it. As soon as you start telling yourself another story about what it means, or how it has (or will) affected you, you are back at the surface level of the ego. If the physical feelings, the story evokes, are too strong to ignore they can be defused by going completely into them, without any other 'story', and noticing that they are just sensations which have arisen and will subside quite naturally. It is the telling of the story that prolongs, feeds them, and invites them to recur.

When life is lived moment to moment with no story we experience it, and the world, as it truly 'is' rather than through the distorting filter created by the story. This filter is like looking through a darkened window, which when it is removed allows the light of awareness to pour in revealing existence in all its glory. We then realize that all of our mental suffering concerning the past and future is just a story with no reality, and when seen as such it dissolves effortlessly. Also identifying with the deeper level of awareness is a great aid in this, as awareness witnesses the flow of thoughts and sensations without being affected by them. The story, itself, is experienced as a combination of thoughts and sensations and, when identified with awareness, these are just like clouds which scud across the sky, or waves rising and subsiding in the ocean, leaving it totally unaffected.

There is obviously no problem with the story if it is held in context, as what it is—just a story, and a fiction at that, not even a documentary! For memories are unreliable as indicators of what actually occurred and are ever changing, as are our worries about, and projections into, the future. So if you like a good story, in which you even appear to star, by all means enjoy telling it—just don't believe it!! Just as we can't rely on other people's stories about themselves and who, or what, they are ... The TV show 'Who do you think you are?' is aptly named as it relies on our ancestry for who we think we are, but we are never who we think we are; only That which is discovered by Self-Inquiry, or investigation into experience, which reveals the Awareness that underlies all reality.

Colin Drake

[CONTENTS](#)