



Schedule of Services

Services are held every Sunday at 10:30 at Kirribilli Neighbourhood Centre

7 July

Martin Horlacher

"Unsung Heroes"

In this day and age, where the ones earning millions of dollars per year are generally actors, models, corporate CEOs and so on, what about the unsung heroes of society - police officers, fire-fighters, doctors, teachers, counsellors, and so on? Don't they deserve a little more?

14 July

Morandir Armson

"Religion and Racism"

A recent study, conducted by the University of Southern California found that members of some religious groups tend to harbour prejudiced views of other races. This may come as no surprise to many, but what role does organised religion play in organised racism? This talk will examine the role of religion in hate-groups and organised racist groups, and will seek to answer the question; how and why does religious discourse become entwined in the conceptual framework of hate?

21st July

Colin Whatmough

"Earth's Changing Climate"

Is the Earth warming? Are we humans responsible? The science research relating to these questions.

28th July

Rev. Geoff Usher

"An Intangible Thread"

Most people are familiar with the concept of "Six Degrees of Separation": the hypothesis that any two people, in any two distant, completely separate countries and cultures, can be connected by a chain of human contact of no more than six.

From **HaikuOz** <http://www.haikuoz.org/>

Submissions are welcome during July 2013 for the second issue of *Windfall: Australian Haiku*. Windfall seeks to publish fine haiku that capture the experience of urban and rural life in Australia. Guidelines for submission and subscription details are available at:

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pipe unlit  
beside the Diamond  
Sutra - what to think?

Jack Kerouac:

## Letter Writing

*Jan Tendys*

If you happen to make a factually incorrect statement or are caught out in an exaggeration in writing to a polly, always be willing to admit your mistake. It usually gives you another entrée to make the point you should have made more accurately.

Queensland has taken most of the restrictions off landholders with regard to looking after native vegetation & biodiversity on their properties. As a result there has been a distinct increase in land clearing and I wrote to Premier Campbell Newman about that.

His reply did not give any statistics, but was essentially an assertion that he trusted landowners to look after their land better than bureaucrats i.e. his government was right to get rid of protective regulations. Then, under his signature, came a hand written addition for me (genuine) saying: "Let me put it like this. Whoever has told you that 'Land in Queensland is being cleared hand over fist' is misleading you. In fact, its (sic) not only wrong but they clearly have a dishonest agenda. There has been and will be no return to broad scale land clearing in this state."

My reply:

Dear Premier Campbell Newman,

Thank you for your letter of the 18th June, 2013. I acknowledge that I did allow myself to get a bit carried away in accusing you of allowing land clearance to go ahead 'hand over fist' in Queensland.

However, I haven't your faith in farmers in general to care much about native vegetation beyond what is necessary for soil retention; or especially to care about biodiversity. This is particularly so in the context of inadequate government action to remind people that the former is part of fighting climate change and that biodiversity is valuable in itself and also for human welfare.

For example, Queensland has a very poor reputation with regard to getting the public to care about bats. The large fruit bats do an

excellent job pollinating various plants including trees, and insect-eating bats are invaluable in keeping down insect populations. On twitter I follow an entomologist who is very concerned about how global warming will allow greater mozzie infestations and tropical diseases particularly in the north of Australia.

If you are going to hand so much responsibility to farmers I hope you do more to publicise that global warming is upon us.

I note you say: "Unauthorised vegetation clearing practices can still be readily detected by satellite monitoring." The question is: what now constitutes authorised clearing practices?

Yours sincerely,

As usual, full name and address at the bottom.

I doubt if I will receive another reply but I have managed to squeeze in a few points additional to the first letter.

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Saluting the Entrepreneurial Spirit

Jim Scarfe

(The following is partly material from the inside flap of W.S. Robinson's memoirs "I f I Remember Rightly" ed. Geoffrey Blainey, and partly Jim's added notes *JT*)

For fifty years, W.S. Robinson linked Australian mining and metals with British money. A Scarlet Pimpernel of Anglo-Australian finance, he oscillated between and around Australia, the United Kingdom, the U.S.A., Canada, India and Burma, never resting long anywhere, shunning publicity and unobtrusively shaping Australia's and to some extent Britain's economy in the twentieth century.

Fruit farmer turned journalist turned stockbroker, he burgeoned into a versatile entrepreneur-cum-financial-catalyst. He was godfather - and more - to the Australian base metals industry, the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation, Australian aluminium smelting. For the pleasure of seeing a good idea get its

chance he helped to promote projects as various as Frank Whittle's jet engine, Santa Gertrudis cattle in Northern Australia and Jebson's titanium dioxide pigment.

From Herbert Hoover he acquired an abiding faith in low grade ore deposits provided they were big enough. He had a perceptive eye for technological and economic opportunity.

"I never inherited any assets and no-one gave me any capital," he wrote; although reputed a millionaire, he neither amassed nor tried to amass a private fortune.

He directed companies and argued for improving worker's conditions.

(Note from Jim: Especially at Broken Hill where relations between management and workers were deplorable when W.S. arrived there as Managing Director of the Zinc Corporation in the 1930's. He made a significant contribution to reducing Broken Hills' dust menace with the massive planting of trees and shrubs around mines and the town.)

He dined with Governors of the Bank of England and enjoyed the confidence of three Australian Labor Prime Ministers.

(Note from Jim: Hughes, Scullin and Curtin. Worked with Hughes very closely in WW1 to establish the Electrolytic Zinc Plant in Risdon, Hobart. His description of Hughes should be of interest to political historians. There is a very grateful letter from Curtin for a job W.S. did in WW2.)

Called by some associates a "socialist", he was elected a member of London's ultra conservative Carlton Club. A nervous novice in commercial air travel, he pioneered the use of executive aircraft in Australia. In all he flew more than a million miles.

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The Australian Dictionary of Biography: a full account of the extraordinary life and doings of this entrepreneurial patriot. (1876-1963)  
<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/robinson-william-sydney-8247>

**See also:**

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-8497.1984.tb00560.x/abstract>

(In reading The Australian Dictionary of Biography's account of W.S. Robinson, I couldn't help wondering what he would think of how Australia's manufacturing base, which allowed us to produce our own fighter and bomber plane in WW2 as well as our own car and many whitegoods and other items, has been so eroded by our embrace of globalisation. Let's hope it will prove worthwhile. **JT**)

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Robinson wrote:

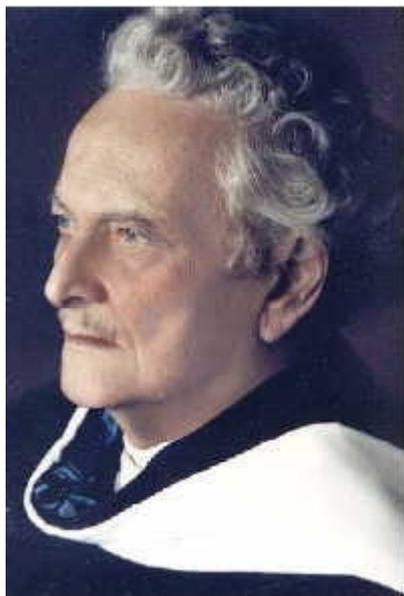
"Deaf men do not make good club members. Like my mother and two of my brothers, I became increasingly deaf. Club life lost its appeal, and my inability to hear what the other fellow had to say proved a pretty effective bar to companionship. I can only hear if the acoustics of the room are really good and I prefer to avoid all gatherings - particularly luncheons, dinners and banquets - when the overall total of those present exceeds six. I much prefer four, and have long since decided that two is enough, and even then I find the other person frequently resorts to signs, or worse still, asks, 'Are you on the air?' There is only one advantage in being deaf: one can shut out the noise of traffic in this roaring age of age of jets and automobiles. Overall, however, deafness is next to blindness man's most grievous enemy. His world becomes restricted to his hearing area

unless he has real friends willing to 'lend their ears'; I have been blessed with such friends."

Jim comments: "Pretty accurate - if deafness has a good side it is to be able to switch off noises which bother you. I do it often."

The Psychology of Buddhism

Rev. Dr. Ian Ellis-Jones

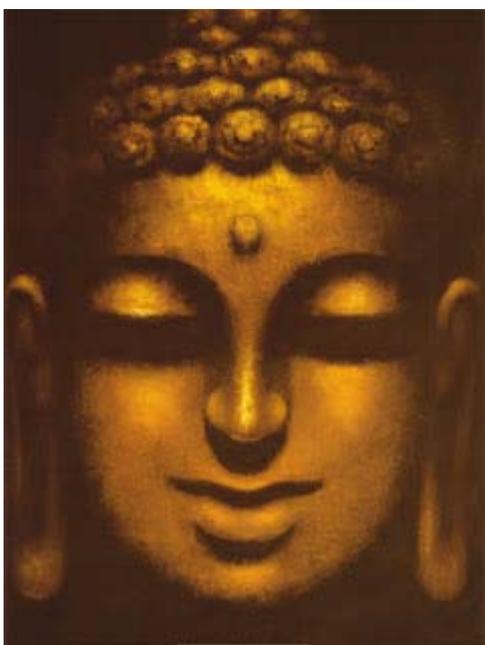


'Everything arises from the mind.'
Buddha Shakyamuni.

The great esotericist Manly Palmer Hall (pictured left) once wrote, 'In Buddhism we have what is probably the oldest and most

perfectly integrated system of what we now call psychology.' I think Hall is right. Certainly, there were others before Buddha Shakyamuni whose teachings were psychological in nature, but I don't know of any other person before the Buddha who had expounded such a clear, coherent, logical and empirically-based set of psychological principles and techniques.

Yes, first and foremost, Buddhism is applied psychology, the aim of which, in the words



of the Venerable Ajahn Chah, is to 'cure disease of the mind.' The Venerable Narada Maha Thera said something similar when he described Buddhism as 'a system of deliverance from the ills of life.' Alan Watts saw Buddhism as 'something more nearly resembling psychotherapy,' as opposed to its being a religion or philosophy 'as these [terms] are understood in the West.'

Specifically, the 'system' treats what Buddhism often calls an 'illusory [or a 'false'] mind' (that is, a mind characterized and dominated by wandering, oppositional and discriminatory thoughts) with a view to bringing into manifestation a 'true [or 'pure'] mind' (being a mind which is not in opposition to itself).

Buddhism has something distinctively unique and, I think, very meaningful to say about 'disease of the mind', and it is this — the root cause of our disorder, distress, sorrow, anxiety, stress, tension, insecurity, discontent, frustration, and general unsatisfactoriness' (*dukkha*) is ... attachment, craving, grasping and clinging of various kinds (collectively, *upādāna*) ... especially, clinging ... to 'mind stuff' in the form of, among other things, ideas, thoughts, feelings, beliefs, opinions and prejudices. All of this 'mind stuff' we then turn back on itself ... and on ourselves. That is tantamount to insanity but we are all very good at doing it ... most of our waking hours (if not whilst asleep as well). Instead of living by reason and direct experience (sanity), we are driven by emotional compulsion. Worse, we cling to the 'self' as self, and we even manage to convince ourselves that we 'belong' to that self, and that we are those myriads of I's and me's that make up our waxing and waning consciousness.

Now, some dispute that Buddhism is a religion. I think it is a religion ... at least in some of its manifestations, but not others. Be that as it may, Buddhism, as Watts stated, is certainly not a religion as Westerners generally understand the term.

Nor is Buddhism a philosophy as we generally understand the term, although it does contain much which is philosophical, as well as ethical and moral, in nature. However, that

which is philosophical in Buddhism is very much 'practical philosophy' ... with the emphasis on 'practical' or, rather, practice.

One thing Buddhism is not, is a 'belief-system.' I hope I have made that perfectly clear in my previous blogs. (The Buddha said, 'Do not believe, for if you believe, you will never know. If you really want to know, don't believe.')

Yes, first and foremost, Buddhism is a form of 'therapy' ... self illusion therapy or ego delusion therapy, you could call it. The basic premise of Buddhism is this — all of our problems and difficulties in this life arise out of our mentality. More specifically, the root of all our problems and difficulties — all our *upādāna* — lies in our illusory sense of a separate selfhood, in our misplaced concept of I-ness, that is, in a false view of who we really are. To borrow a couple of phrases from the 'Big Book' of Alcoholics Anonymous, the result of our misbelief in a separate 'self' is 'self-will run riot', and the regular practice — note that word practice — of Buddhism is able to relieve us of the 'bondage of self.'

The essence of Buddhism, in two words, is ... 'Wake up!' Yes, Buddhism is ... an 'awakening.' Buddhism is a set of humanistic principles and teachings which, when put into regular practice, enable us to overcome ('cure') our false view of ourselves — which is due to ignorance (*avijjā*) — and thereby experience a psychological transformation or mutation. We then overcome what Manly Palmer Hall referred to as our 'psychological astigmatism.' That is a condition in which we fail to see things as they really are because we are locked into certain habits of mind and modes of perception which are based on the supposed existence of a separate self. That is why Buddhism has been described as a teaching of 'practising within.'

Buddhism is a whole mind-body experience. Buddha Shakyamuni was a radical empiricist. He taught people how to realize for themselves enlightenment ... by direct experience. It is through the regular practice of mindfulness, from one moment to the next, that we experience — note that word experience — life directly ... without those mental filters and psychological barriers which we tend to erect be-

tween ourselves and the objects of experience.

Buddha Shakyamuni was very smart. He knew that it was impossible to directly cultivate 'happiness.' That is why he spoke in terms of the causes of 'unhappiness'. Do you want to be happy? Of course. We all do. Then correct the causes of your unhappiness. That is how Buddhist psychology works.

Although the Buddha was not a psychologist per se, he nevertheless 'discovered' and understood the unconscious mind (*bhavanga-citta*), the ego (*atta*), and ego fixation (*atta-vādupādāna*) ... some 2,500 years before Sigmund Freud!



Mushin - Empty Mind

That is amazing! Yes, if nothing else, Buddhism is an education. In that regard, the English word 'education' is derived from the Latin roots *educō* and *educare*. *Educare* means 'to rear or to bring up,' and can be traced to the Latin root words *e* and *ducere*. Together, *e-ducere* means to 'pull out,' to 'draw out,' and to 'lead forth' ... all aptly applicable to Buddhism, for the teachings of Buddhism, if diligently practised, will indeed 'draw out' one's innate potential to become a bud-dha.

Buddhism is also a praxis ... and a practice. It consists of various practices and activities by means of which we can better come to understand ourselves, others and the world. However, those practices and activities have to be enacted, practiced and realized in our

minds and bodies. We learn in Buddhism that our mind is part of the 'problem,' but it can still be used to faithfully report on the flow of life from one moment to the next. That is why mindfulness is so important. We are not separate from life. We can never be less than life. We are persons among persons, each part of the endless procession of life. We are not those waxing and waning I's and me's, those various 'selves' which we mistakenly take for the person each of us really is.

It has been said that, for the first time, Buddha Shakyamuni taught that not only was self-deliverance possible, it could be attained independently of an external agency. He said, 'I have delivered you towards deliverance. The Dhamma, the Truth is to be self realized.' Further, he encouraged his followers to 'come and see,' that is, to investigate for themselves whether or not his teachings worked.

No wonder Krishnamurti - who was not a Buddhist - could nevertheless say, 'The Buddha comes closer to the basic truths and facts of life than any other.'

Now, it really doesn't matter whether or not you're a Buddhist. The only thing that really matters is that you attain freedom from the bondage of self. That is where mindfulness is very useful, for it involves observing and releasing all those habits of mind that would otherwise preserve and maintain the illusion of a separate self.

Given as a talk at the Fellowship; this version taken from Ian's blog:

<http://ianellis-jones.blogspot.com.au/2011/08/psychology-of-buddhism.html>

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More of Caz's "Cats"

A cat has absolute emotional honesty. Human beings, for one reason or another, may hide their feelings, but a cat does not.

**Ernest Hemmingway**

You can't own a cat. The best you can do is be partners.

**Sir Harry Swanson**

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Haiku

Buson (1716-1784)

Ears of my old age;
The summer rains
Falling down the rain-pipe.

The slanting sun:
The shadow of a hill with a deer on it
Enters the temple gate.

The coolness:
The voice of the bell
As it leaves the bell!

Isao (present day haiku master)

With the influence of the wind
Each flower of cosmos will come
Out by each different way.

(All the above Japanese examples from Ian Ellis-Jones: "The Art and Spiritual Practice of Haiku")

Staying in bed on Sundy
The winter wind and cold are perishing
Spirit of Life at Kirribilli.

Eric Stevenson

Our War in Afghanistan

Jan Tendys

It is still to be seen whether a new government will change the arrangements of the Gillard government for the bulk of Australian troops in Afghanistan to return home shortly.

Has it been worthwhile? How does one balance the deaths and maimings on all sides with the hope of a new democracy which will accept education for women and all that implies? Or will we be watching the return of the Taliban? Whatever is the case, nothing will detract from the bravery of those who fight for their own and their country's ideals.

"There is a time for reciting poems and a time for fists." says Roberto Bolaño in The Savage Detectives. Will it ever be thus?



Amnesty International Australia

<http://www.amnesty.org.au/>

Women in Afghanistan

Refugees' rights

Weapons and rights

Indigenous rights

Individuals at risk

Countries in crisis

Torture and terror

Violence against women

End the death penalty

Arms Trade Treaty

In a historic move, with the culmination of more than 20 years of campaigning by organisations including Amnesty International, governments at the United Nations have adopted an Arms Trade Treaty.

The Treaty will prohibit states from transferring weapons to countries when they know those weapons will be used to commit genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.

In the UN General Assembly, 154 states voted to adopt the treaty just days after Iran, North Korea and Syria – three human rights-abusing countries under some form of UN sanctions – tried to block it. All three voted against the treaty and 23 other states abstained.

“The world has been waiting a long time for this historic treaty. After long years of campaigning, most states have agreed to adopt a global treaty that can prevent the flow of arms into countries where they will be used to commit atrocities,” said Brian Wood, Head of Arms Control and Human Rights at Amnesty International, from the UN conference in New York. “Despite Iran, North Korea and Syria’s deeply cynical attempt to stymie it, the overwhelming majority of the world’s nations have shown resounding support for this lifesaving treaty with human rights protection at its core.”

The treaty also obligates all governments to assess the risk of transferring arms, ammunition or components to another country where they could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Where that overriding risk is real and cannot be mitigated, states have agreed the transfer will not go forward.

“When you think of the huge economic interest and the political power in play for the big arms producers and exporters, this treaty is a tribute to both civil society, who championed the idea to save lives and reduce human suffering, as well as the governments who heeded that call,” said Widney Brown, Senior Director of International Law and Policy at Amnesty International.

More on Treaty: <http://www.un.org/disarmament/>

THAT LIVES IN US

If you put your hands on this oar with me,
they will never harm another, and they will come to find
they hold everything you want.

If you put your hands on this oar with me, they would no longer
lift anything to your
mouth that might wound your precious land –
that sacred earth that is your body.

If you put your soul against this oar with me,
the power that made the universe will enter your sinew
from a source not outside your limbs, but from a holy realm
that lives in us.

Exuberant is existence, time a husk.
When the moment cracks open, ecstasy leaps out and devours space;
love goes mad with the blessings, like my words give.

Why lay yourself on the torturer's rack of the past and the future?
The mind that tries to shape tomorrow beyond its capacities
will find no rest.

Be kind to yourself, dear – to our innocent follies.
Forget any sounds or touch you knew that did not help you dance.
You will come to see that all evolves us.

~ Rumi ~

(Love Poems From God: Twelve Sacred Voices from the East and West by Daniel Ladinsky)

Would you care to join Spirit of Life Unitarian Fellowship?

Membership is open to all adults and includes this newsletter. *Full membership \$50 concession \$20* . If you would like to join us as an active member of Spirit of Life, please ring **0466 940 461** or consult our website www.sydneyunitarians.org . Please note that all membership applications are subject to approval at a meeting of the Committee. Ask Rev. Geoff Usher or Ginna Hastings for an application form at the Sunday service.

If you have a news item or written article you believe would be of interest to the congregation, we invite you to submit it for Esprit.

It would be helpful if items for publication, including articles and talk topics with themes could reach Esprit editor by the 15th of each month: jtendys@bigpond.com or hand to Jan Tendys at the Sunday service.

Do you have a topic of a spiritual / ethical nature that you would like to share with the congregation? As Unitarians, we support an "Open Pulpit" and invite members of the congregation to lead the service if they so wish. *Please see Caz Donnelly at the Sunday service*

Fellowship contact 0466 940 461