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INSIDE Get a Life! Get Theosophy!!
A Beginningless Universe Explained
National President's Annual Report
2017 Convention Programme

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The Theosophical Society welcomes students or seekers from all walks of life, belonging to any religion or to none and who are in sympathy with its Objects. It was formed to assist in showing to people that Theosophy exists, and 'to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities'. Wisdom is known by a mind that is completely open. Therefore freedom of thought and open enquiry are given special emphasis in the Society. **Theosophy** essentially refers to 'Divine Wisdom', Sacred Knowledge, which is a transcendent state of consciousness. In a secondary sense, Theosophy is an ancient yet distinct stream of enquiry, exploring and interpreting the truths of existence in terms suited to particular ages, e.g. in the teachings of ancient India, ancient China, Platonism, Neoplatonism, and, since 1875, through the contribution of the TS. At the core of Theosophy is the principle of indivisible Unity underlying the diversity of forms.

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The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society

- I. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
~
- II. To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science.
~
- III. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being.

From the National President

Linda Oliveira



This issue includes a well thought out article on what Theosophy is all about – a useful refresher which draws on some teachings and principles that have been highlighted since the inception of the Theosophical Society. It demonstrates amply that Theosophy is more than purely theoretical; it provides significant guideposts for living. The second article, by an astronomer member, shares up to date scientific information pointing to the possibility of a beginningless universe. This should be of particular interest to students of *The Secret Doctrine*, among others. The annual report is also recommended reading. A great deal has happened around the Section during the past year, including the initial stages of an important marketing exercise. And we look forward to welcoming Dr Pablo Sender from the American Section to Australia next April. Places are now open for the School of Theosophy, for which early registrations are recommended (p.144).

The first article makes reference to living in the now as an important first step in personal growth. In a similar vein, the microbiologist Darryl Reaney once commented that ‘each moment is an undiscovered country’. This implies that we do not normally live within in the present. This moment is undiscovered because we do not allow it to reveal itself to us. The mind may move at any point

between past and future, disturbed by so many things which ultimately may be relatively trivial.

It is only right now that harmony, depth and joy exist. They are diminished to the extent that the mind loses focus. This is not unlike moving the dial of a radio. Only when the dial is centred on the correct frequency is there real clarity. Any other position on that dial produces more, or less, static. Similarly, our consciousness is full of static – that is, it is full of thoughts and feelings which are not of this moment and which may lack a certain degree of clarity.

Theosophy can be thought of as that Divine Wisdom through which we may attain profound clarity about the larger significance of the Cosmos, and our place within that. Theosophy is ultimately transformative and waiting be revealed from within. But to help us become vessels for such a revelation, the teachings of the Wisdom Tradition from all ages are essential and inspirational guides, pointing the way. To borrow well-known imagery from the Zen tradition, it is important not to confuse the fingers pointing at the moon with the moon itself.

Finally, I wish you all a peaceful and happy Festive Season and look forward to seeing many members at Convention.

Get a Life! Get Theosophy!!

Brian Harding

Photo by André Karwath Aka
Source: Wikimedia Commons



Theosophy is a way of life; it's about self-transformation, progressing on the Spiritual Path by which we return to the Source of our Being. So being a Theosophist means taking action, doing, living our Theosophy. That requires a lot of work. It's easy to get distracted from 'the steep and thorny road' and wander onto some fascinating by-way, or take what appears to be an easier road like the By-Path Meadow that Christian wandered into in Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress*.

Further, we are not to passively accept what others tell us – 'we are invited to share, to confirm for ourselves' the teachings of the Masters, John Algeo says. Dr Algeo adds: 'Theosophy is ... practical. ... [and] practice is doing.' So we are called upon to 'do' as well as to theorise. And doing for me means getting a life, 'getting Theosophy'.

The Evolution of Life and the Principles in Human Beings

To see how we can make a start here and now, we need to briefly summarise the wider picture. Many cultures and traditions have stories about how the world or universe came into being and how humans appeared. Science today has developed a widely accepted theory of evolution. HPB tells us that the 'Ancient Wisdom attributes the birth of Kosmos and the evolution of life to the breaking asunder of primordial ... UNITY into plurality, or the great illusion of form' (Blavatsky (a),p.110). The One became the many.

Consciousness was there at the beginning, descending as 'the life wave' or 'wave of consciousness', through levels of increasingly dense matter ('involution'). The densest level is the physical. This having been

reached, the life wave then begins the return journey ('evolution') back to its source in the One. As part of the life wave, we too reach our lowest level in the physical.

On our return journey, we pass through the emotional stage, often called the 'astral' – maybe it's better to say we acquire emotional attributes to add to our physical bodies. HPB uses the word *kama*, meaning desire, body. After the emotional comes the mental stage (or in Theosophical terminology – *manas*), acquiring the ability to think, to which I will return later. Beyond the mental level, the next sense to be developed is intuition. In Theosophy, intuition means insight rather than psychic hunches. When we have fully developed this stage, called in Theosophy *buddhi*, we won't have to go through the process we call thinking.

In all, following HPB, there are 'seven principles' or levels of consciousness in the human being. However, there are variations on this classification scheme. A comprehensive collection of such, from writers in transpersonal psychology and spirituality, can be found in Ken Wilber's book, *Integral Psychology*.

What this Life is all About

HPB writes (Blavatsky (b)) of the 'obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul

So our task at this stage of our evolution is to develop our mental capacity. This is the purpose of life right now. We have something to focus on *immediately* – we can forget the remote past and remote future.

through the Cycle of Incarnation'. We have already referred to the involution and evolution of the wave of life or consciousness. Human beings are an integral part of this movement.

HPB (Blavatsky (b)) tells us that no spark of the Divine can acquire an independent, conscious, existence until it has passed through all stages of phenomenal existence and, in particular for us, here and now,

acquired individuality first by natural impulse, and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts (checked by its Karma), thus ascending through all the degrees of intelligence, from the lowest to the highest *Manas* ... (p.17)

So our task at this stage of our evolution is to develop our mental capacity. This is the purpose of life right now. We have something to focus on *immediately* – we can forget the remote past and remote future.

The mental level can be subdivided into the higher *manas* which includes three sublevels and the lower *manas*

which consists of four sublevels. We only have to look around us to see that the majority of human beings live at the lowest level of *manas*, the one that is closest to the emotional level. We are heavily influenced in our thinking by our emotions and, in our reactions to events, the more rational, higher levels of mind are ignored. This level is called in Theosophy *kama-manas* meaning ‘desire-mind’, because at this stage the mind is used mainly for emotional fulfilment – yelling at someone, or even punching his nose, makes us *feel* good – at least temporarily! There are many occasions, in fact, when we simply *react* to situations rather than behaving rationally and making a sensible choice on how to proceed.

There is an emphasis today, in some quarters, on the Buddhist concept of mindfulness, which encourages us to live in the now and become aware of our surroundings and how we are reacting to them. This is a really important first step in our personal growth – to look at ourselves, study ourselves, and try to understand what we are doing and why. We may find that our mind has indeed become the slave of our emotions. Often, when we cool down and look back at what we have done, we feel really embarrassed or silly.

As we gain control over our emotions, moving ‘up’ through the *manas* levels

so to speak, we reach the fourth sublevel. At this stage we begin to be touched by the higher mind. We begin to operate independently of our emotions and try to ‘act for the best’ or ‘for the greater good’, rather than thinking just of ourselves. We still have emotions, of course; that is part of being human. But, most of the time, we do not allow ourselves to be ruled by them.

The higher *manas* (the fifth, sixth and seventh sublevels) – also called the Higher Ego, the Soul – is part of the real Self, the part of us that reincarnates, that makes what HPB called the ‘obligatory pilgrimage’. We may call this a level of pure Self-consciousness, untouched by the lower personality, the personal self.

At the very highest level of *manas*, we are touched by *buddhi*, the stage that lies beyond mind completely, the stage of insightfulness, usually called simply intuition. Here we have an increasing number of flashes of insight, most of which may last only for a short time. When we dwell permanently at the *buddhi* level, we will have become an enlightened being.

So how do we live this life?

Spiritual practice, then, re-capping HPB’s words, is about ‘ascending through all the degrees of intelligence,

from the lowest to the highest *Manas* ...'. In this last section, I want to consider the practicalities of the spiritual journey. What are the 'self-induced and self-devised efforts' to which HPB refers in the earlier quotation?

While all are free to follow their own path, in traditional Theosophical writings we find the avenues we may traverse are, broadly, three – namely service, study, and meditation. All these activities are ways by which we can raise or expand our consciousness, ways of living our Theosophical understanding. Let's look at them in turn.

Service

We saw earlier that most of humanity lives at the lowest level of *manas* (*kama-manas*, or the desire mind) where the mind is the slave of the emotions; it is used merely for our own emotional fulfilment. Our little (personal) ego comes first – reminds me of the phrase 'the me generation'. Materially, we need to have every available gadget to keep 'me' entertained.

But at higher levels of *manas*, we move away from ourselves and we begin to think more of others – how can we help others? And this is where service comes in. Serving others helps us move out from ourselves. Service



raises our consciousness to higher levels of *manas*.

But in saying this, I don't mean that we should be thinking of any reward for ourselves. We need to serve with no thought of reward. We are to serve for the sake of service, simply knowing that that is the right thing to do.

Service comes in many forms. It needn't entail giving lots of money, or many hours of our time. It can be a very simple act of kindness. Examples and opportunities are endless and over time they all help us in our 'ascending from the lowest to the highest *Manas*'.

Study

At first sight, this may seem a self-absorbed activity, but there's more to it than that. Annie Besant writes:

The seat of self-consciousness is moved from the lower mind to the higher by strenuous thinking, by the intellectual travail of the student, the philosopher, the man of science – if the latter turn [*sic*] his thoughts from objects to

principles, from phenomena to laws. (pp.14-15)

Note that to move from ‘objects to principles, from phenomena to laws’ is to move from concrete thinking to abstract thinking, to use modern psychological terms.

But I think there is more to study than ‘strenuous thinking’. It can be argued that the word ‘study’ has changed its meaning subtly in the years since HPB’s time. I believe it should be taken in the 19th century sense of ‘observe closely, scrutinise’. One thinks of the 19th century botanist roaming the fields observing flowers and insects with his magnifying glass, or even Sherlock Holmes with his, looking for clues. Study in this sense has little to do with book learning and obtaining university degrees. Radha Burnier, the then International President, wrote:

We are happy when people become members but we are much happier when they really study Theosophy in the real sense of the term: *study life, study our relationships, study how to give to other people what we have* (my emphasis)

The Theosophist, February 2012, p.33.

In fact, we are urged to put life, ourselves, our relationships ‘under the microscope’. In a word, to be mindful.

So study, especially in my second sense, is an activity that moves us

beyond *kama-manas*; it forces us to think beyond ourselves and our desires.

Meditation

Ed Abdill, in his recent book *Masters of Wisdom*, gives some useful advice on how to meditate. First, he points out that we humans are really one-pointed in consciousness, in spite of claims to the contrary. He says,

We can focus on a book we are reading and at the same time be aware of what surrounds the book, but we cannot focus on the foreground and the background at the same time. This is true of meditation also. (p.199)

He adds: ‘although the ability to concentrate is essential in meditation, concentration is not meditation’. Again, playing gentle music, while a good way to calm the mind, is really best used as a preparation for meditation, before going on to meditate in silence. The same applies to visualisation. Neither is meditation thought or words; even a commendable thought such as ‘I am sending peace to the world’ is still a thought and not meditation. Ed refers to a free bookmark in the library of the TS in Wheaton that reads ‘Meditation is not what you think.’

The great teacher, Jiddu Krishnamurti describes meditation as:

a process of emptying the mind of all the activity of the self, of all the activity of

Meditation is silent and *unuttered* prayer or, as Plato expressed it, “the ardent turning of the soul toward the divine; not to ask for any particular good (as in the common meaning of prayer) but for good itself – for the universal Supreme Good” of which we are a part on earth, and out of the essence of which we have all emerged.

the ‘me’. If you do not understand the activity of the self, then your meditation only leads to illusion, ... to self-deception ... So to understand what meditation is, you must understand the activity of the self. (p.71)

Krishnamurti is, of course, referring to the activity of the lower self or personal ego.

HPB said:

Meditation is silent and *unuttered* prayer or, as Plato expressed it, ‘the ardent turning of the soul toward the divine; not to ask for any particular good (as in the common meaning of prayer) but for good itself – for the universal Supreme Good’ of which we are a part on earth, and out of the essence of which we have all emerged. (1889, p.10)

She saw meditation as the inexpressible longing of the inner, or true, Self for the Infinite. So the goal of our meditation is union with the divine. Meditation is a way of raising our consciousness above the level of *kama-manas* and on

to higher levels. And as we get more proficient at it, there is an increasing chance of experiencing insights from not only the higher levels of *manas* but eventually from the *buddhic* level.

To close, I want to emphasise that theosophy (small ‘t’) has been around for thousands of years, although the Theosophical Society was established in 1875 to promote a fresh understanding of it. And I hope I have shown that theosophy (small ‘t’) provides us with guidelines for living and growing as human beings; it gives us a life to live.

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The fundamental difference between *Manas* and *Buddhi* lies in the fact that whereas *Manas* is an energy directed outwards to different particulars or parts of a whole, and attempts to know them and their mutual relations, *Buddhi* has a different approach. It embraces the whole with all its parts from within. It knows the truth of a thing by identification with it, this truth being not merely the truth of what it is outwardly, the truth of its form, but also and primarily what it is in itself apart from the form, the truth of the indwelling life.

N. Sri Ram

A Beginningless Universe Explained

Kevin Davey

Photo taken under the wing of the Magellanic Cloud galaxy. Source: NASA/CXC/JPL-Caltech/STScI



The current model, widely accepted by cosmologists, is that the expanding universe in which we live formed about 13.8 billion years ago in a dramatic event termed the ‘Big Bang’. Since its formation the universe has evolved to its present form of billions of galaxies clustered into groups, each galaxy containing billions of stars.

The first stars formed were large and have all gone, destroyed in supernova explosions which scattered their elements throughout space. Some of this stellar material mixed with clouds of gas and dust to form new stars. All stars we have been able to observe show signs of those stars that existed before. All elements apart from hydrogen, helium and some lithium were formed in other stars. The iron that makes our blood red, the oxygen we breathe and the carbon in trees were all scattered as earlier stars ended their lives. Old stars create new, but this process will

not continue forever. Astronomers consider that the maximum rate of star formation peaked about 5 billion years ago (Heavens, et al) and fewer stars will form in the future. Most of the stars that will form in this universe have already formed: the universe is running out of the material required to make new stars.

How does this view fit with a short article published in *Theosophy in Australia (T in A)*, March 2015 (p.30), entitled ‘A Big Bang – or a Beginningless Universe?’ and which began with the words ‘The universe may have existed forever’? This short *T in A* item was based on a referenced publication from the web-based organisation physics.org. One thing is immediately evident: scientific evidence suggests that the universe could not have existed forever in its current form. Had it had no beginning it would have run out of stars very

long ago, unless new material was constantly being created ready to form new stars. Such an idea was promoted in the Steady-State theory by Fred Hoyle (1948) and Hermann Bondi and Tommy Gold (1948). These three were trying to reconcile differences between the ages of rock samples on Earth with the estimated age of the universe derived from measurements of its rate of expansion. In 1948, calculations which reversed the measured expansion of the universe led to the conclusion that it would have come into existence only 2 billion years ago, but some rocks were estimated to be 3 billion years old. Fred Hoyle is attributed with the first use of the term 'Big Bang' in a radio show broadcast in 1949. He intended this to be a derogatory term (Kragh), but this expression has stuck! The idea of a Steady-State universe does not fit observational evidence, while there are many indications that the universe did indeed initially come out from a tiny point.

The reference provided in *Tin A* is to an internet based organisation, Phys.org, that specialises in reporting science and technology news based on recently published scientific research papers. Phys.org's title for its report was 'No Big Bang? Quantum equation predicts universe has no beginning' (Zyga), based on a research paper written by Ahmed Farag Ali and Saurya Das

and published in the free access peer reviewed journal *Physics Letters B* (Ali and Das). In turn, Ali and Das's paper was called 'Cosmology from Quantum Potential', a far less dramatic or emotive title than that used by Phys.org. Ali and Das report on a theoretical fix to an issue currently confronting cosmology and high energy astrophysics. The current theories of physics break down when attempts are made to explain what happens inside black holes and the initial conditions encountered in the universe at the very moment it appeared. Both black holes and the start of the universe are currently designated as singularities, infinitely small volumes of space in which vast amounts of matter and energy can be stored. Neither Einstein's theories of General Relativity or those of quantum physics can satisfactorily explain the conditions within them. What happened before 10^{-43} of a second after the universe began is a mystery. While 10^{-43} of a second seems to be exceedingly small, it not only prevents a full scientific understanding of what happened at the beginning of our physical universe but also prevents exploration of what came before the event and from whence the universe came.

Ali and Das propose a complicated mathematical 'tweak', incorporating a quantum correction into equations

Geodesics in General Relativity explain concepts such as the bending of light travelling near massive objects, such as the Sun, and the true orbits of planets. Space-time is curved and particles such as photons, or planets, follow straight lines as they move through space-time, even though those lines appear to be curved when observed by us.

derived from General Relativity. Instead of using classical geodesics which describe the shortest path between two points on a curved surface, the authors used alternative quantum (Bohmian) trajectories. Geodesics in General Relativity explain concepts such as the bending of light travelling near massive objects, such as the Sun, and the true orbits of planets. Space-time is curved and particles such as photons, or planets, follow straight lines as they move through space-time, even though those lines appear to be curved when observed by us.

Singularities in modern cosmology occur when geodesics converge, forming a point: the singularity. In addition to signifying the compression of matter into a zero volume, infinities are invoked – matter compressed into

a zero volume will attain an infinite density and, as has been suggested, laws of physics break down. Using quantal trajectories Ali and Das do not say that the Big Bang did not happen; they suggest that singularities are prevented as Bohmian trajectories do not cross. This does not mean that the universe has always been as it currently is. This proposal still has the universe appearing in a Big Bang, but from a very very tiny, although not infinitesimal ‘hole’, enabling sudden release of energy which was able to become matter (Einstein’s $E=mc^2$, the equivalence between matter and energy, still holds), possibly removing the 10^{-43} second problem. Does this mean that time existed before the Big Bang suggested by Ali and Das? Probably not. Time started when our physical universe came into existence, as at that point changes that could be measured commenced. A clock, or better, a stopwatch which could not have been made before – as there was no physical universe – could have been started at Big Bang.

A full explanation of how Ali and Das extended quantum corrections involving complex wave functions and probabilities commonly encountered in quantum physics will not be outlined here. However, Ali and Das explain that their method seems to resolve a

number of cosmological issues, such as dark energy and dark matter, and negates the need for singularities, potentially removing the difficulties outlined above. They state that much work needs to be done to test and verify their ideas.

Addressing the concept of that 'Beginningless Universe' is a wonderful Theosophical exercise that can be used to compare Volume I of *The Secret Doctrine* and modern cosmology. Madame Helena Blavatsky addresses this in *The Secret Doctrine*, when she writes of:

An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human perception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression and similitude (p.14).

Then the Absolute being 'devoid of all attributes and ... essentially without any relation to manifested, finite Being' (p.14).

This is emphasised further with the words '... set out with the postulate that there is one Absolute Reality which antecedes all manifested, conditioned being.' (p.16). Then, the Stanzas of Dyzan, Stanza 1, part 2: 'Time was not, for it lay asleep in the infinite bosom of duration.' (p.27). Stanza 1, part 8

states: 'Alone the one form of existence stretched boundless, infinite, causeless, in dreamless sleep....' (p.27). These are surely words describing a state before the formation of a universe which is described in Stanza 3, part 1 as: 'The last vibration of the seventh eternity thrills through infinitude. The Mother swells, expanding from within without, like a bud of a lotus.' (p.28). This is followed by Stanza 3, part 2,

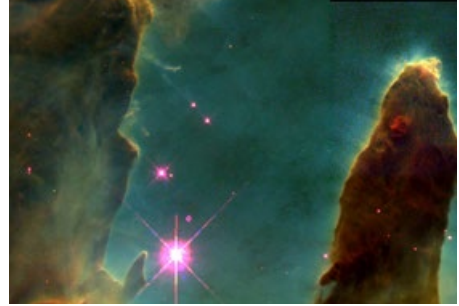
The vibration sweeps along, touching with its swift wing the whole universe and the germ that dwelleth in the darkness: the darkness that breathes over the slumbering waters of life.' (p.28)

and Stanza 3, part 3,

Darkness radiates light, and the light drops one solitary Ray into the mother-deep. The ray shoots through the virgin-egg; the ray causes the eternal egg to thrill, and drop the non-eternal germ, which condenses into the world-egg. (p.28)

This beautifully describes the formation of our physical – manifested – universe from some thing we cannot understand through the release of energy. Note that the term 'universe' is used in Stanza 3, part 2 before a manifested universe has arisen. It is common for 'universe' to be used to describe two things – one entirely vaster than our physical universe and beyond time, and the other which relates to our manifested, physical, universe.

It is worth reflecting on the fate of our universe. When the concept of the expanding Big Bang was developed, the amount of matter contained in the physical universe was thought to be enough to slow, stop and reverse the expansion. The universe would fall back onto itself, reflecting the concept of the Great Breath in terms explained by the outbreathing as being like the rolling out of a carpet, and the inbreathing as the rolling up of the carpet. Since 1995 we have been aware of the action of dark energy – new energy being formed within the space-time of the physical universe as it expands, causing it to expand at an increasing rate. The physical universe, it seems, will not fall back into itself – it will continue to expand forever. Briefly, this means that our universe will, given time, become increasingly diffuse. Over time – a very long time – all matter will decay back into energy. The energy released will become stretched as the universe stretches – high energy x-ray light will become very low energy radio-wave light. This stretching will continue such that our universe will become indistinguishable from anything else – a state where no changes can occur, thus time will cease to exist. In essence it will dissolve back to whence it came. This matches ‘The Inbreathing (of the Great Breath) is regarded as a period of rest – technic-



Columns of cool interstellar hydrogen gas and dust - incubators for new stars.

Source: NASA

ally termed a Pralaya, literally a period of dissolution’ (Barborka).

Cosmologists suggest that this final state of our universe – a state which already exists within our universe, but is generally referred to as the vacuum state – exists everywhere. This exists even within you and me, within and beyond; and it is where energy releases, just as particles constantly pop into and out of existence. These spontaneous particles can be detected in laboratories around the world. It has been proposed that given the vastness of this vacuum space some of the energy releases can be immensely huge – big enough to form other physical universes (Carroll, 2010). As HPB wrote ‘The Eternity of the Universe in toto as a boundless plane; periodically “the playground of numberless Universes manifesting and disappearing”.’ (*SD* p. 16).

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While at school in England Kevin Davey had two ambitions: to study astronomy at university or migrate to Australia. Migration to Australia won out. Kevin became a teacher of high school mathematics and physics. He left teaching to establish a specialist software company, then completed a Master of Science in astronomy in 2010. Since then he has again registered as a teacher, taught subjects in the areas of astronomy and cosmology on a voluntary basis and presented a number of public talks on the subject. Currently President of Adelaide Lodge, Kevin has been involved with the production of the Lodge's radio programme, presented at the local Theosophy-Science Group meetings and led Saturday morning discussion groups.



The National President's Annual Report

1 September 2015 to 31 August 2016

Preamble

Once again it is time to review the Section's activities for a twelve month period; these have been extensive and varied. During the year under review, a number of activities of note included:

- The National Convention in January with special Guest Speaker *International President* Tim Boyd, who was accompanied by his wife Lily.
- The completion of the Section's first professionally produced promo video, filmed during the Convention week, which is now on the Section's website.
- A very well received tour by John Vorstermans from New Zealand.
- The well attended School of Theosophy at Springbrook during April, with morning classes presented by John Vorstermans on *The Mahatma Letters*.
- The first two meetings at the new National Headquarters premises in Surry Hills, one of which was a talk by visiting researcher Patricia Plummer from Germany about Louisa Haines le Freimann, a Theosophist and artist.
- A very successful open day at Blavatsky Lodge in May, following its move to St. Leonards in Sydney. This included the inauguration of its new premises, a celebration of White Lotus Day, and an

opportunity for over three hundred people to enter the Lodge.

NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

National President

During the year under review my travels and presentations enabled contact with many members around Australia, as well as enquirers, during visits to nearly all TS centres. They also provided opportunities to speak with *Presidents, Coordinators* and committee members about issues of concern.

This Section comprises Lodges, Branches, Groups and National Members. The National Society, through the National Headquarters, the *State Representatives* on the National Council and the *National Lecturers*, serves as an important point of linkage between TS centres and members, and performs many functions of which members may not be aware. Readers are invited to become familiar with some of these, which are mentioned further on in this report.

In addition to travels within the Section I attended the international General Council meeting in December, as well as a further planning meeting organised by the *International President*, Tim Boyd, to

help foster a larger vision and ideas for the work of the Society into the future.

A major commitment during the year was my ongoing work in chairing a General Council committee to review the Society's international Rules. This amounted to a total of approximately four weeks' work. It entailed meetings in Adyar with the committee, as well as two skype meetings and the development of a document with a set of proposed Rules amendments. The review of these Rules was completed during the year and has resulted in the most extensive set of proposals for International Rules amendments in a number of decades. They include, among other things, proposals for further clarification of voting procedures for international officers and members of the General Council. At the time of writing this report these had been completed and circulated to the members of the Council, along with the 2016 General Council agenda papers, for voting on prior to the Council's December meeting. The results will therefore be known in a few months' time.

In addition to travels within Australia and the General Council work, the following is a summary of my main duties within this Section during the year under review: arranging and overseeing the Annual Convention in Perth; developing and giving presentations to nearly all Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups; reviewing National Council policies; organising the National Speakers' schedule with several *National Lecturers* and one *International Lecturer*; organising and giving presentations at an event at Canyonleigh;

organising and giving presentations at the annual School of Theosophy at Springbrook; editing and production of four issues of *Theosophy in Australia*, in consultation with the Editorial Committee; a radio interview; writing e-Bulletins for email distribution in consultation with the members of the Electronic Media Committee; member of the National Council; member and *Chair* of the national Executive Committee; Director and *Chair* of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust; Director of The Theosophical Foundation; membership of several working committees; and a good sized volume of correspondence.

National Council

The National Council met in January in Perth and during June at the National Headquarters in Surry Hills. As at 31 August 2016 the National Council comprised three *ex officio* members (the *National President*, the *National Secretary* and the *National Treasurer*), along with six elected *State Representatives*, each of whom may serve up to three two-year terms.

Helen Steven – Tasmania

Franco Guazzelli – Western Australia

Phillipa Rooke – Queensland

Travis James – South Australia/Northern Territory

Dianne Kynaston – New South Wales/
Australian Capital Territory

Gary Betts - Victoria

Great appreciation is extended to the *State Representatives* for their voluntary service to the Council which included, among other things, several days of National

Council meetings during the year under review.

The following appointments were made by the National Council for a 12 month period in January 2016:

Chair of the National Council and *Vice-President* until January 2017 – Phillipa Rooke.

Executive Committee – see next item.

National Executive Committee

The national Executive Committee deals with the ongoing administration of the Section. It met monthly during the year under review except for January. As at 31 August its members included three ex officio members, the *National President*, *National Secretary* and *National Treasurer*, as well as the following members who were appointed by the National Council in January: Dai Trandang, Dianne Kynaston and Marie McArdle, along with Denise Frost and Marlene Bell who commuted to Sydney for meetings from Devonport and Adelaide respectively.

The members of the national Executive Committee are also required to be Directors of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust, which is responsible for the Section's properties.

In December, the national Executive Committee appointed Linda Oliveira as the Editor of *Theosophy in Australia*. At the same meeting, the Executive Committee also appointed several working committees: Rules, Finance, Electronic Media, and Education and Training.

Headquarters Staff and Volunteers

I would like to extend great appreciation

to the members of staff at the National Headquarters, with whom it is a pleasure to work, and to all those dedicated volunteers who are part of our immediate and extended National Headquarters team. The main tasks performed by each during the year were:

Dara Tatray, *National Secretary*: Reporting to the national Executive Committee, the National Council, The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd, and The Australian Section Theosophical Trust on matters pertaining to the properties owned by the Trust, matters pertaining to the Rules and matters pertaining specifically to administration and personnel; taking care of all routine business for these four entities; writing and distributing their Minutes and Agendas; ensuring that all their statutory requirements are met. Assisting the *National Treasurer*. Conducting the annual renewal of the Section's several insurance policies, including building and contents, group personal accident and public liability for all the Lodges/Branches and Groups comprising the Australian Section; ensuring that premiums are at an appropriate level for all Lodges/Branches. Overseeing the payment of wages, and paying all bills for the National Headquarters, The Australian Section Theosophical Trust and the Springbrook Education and Retreat Centre. Producing and/or distributing quarterly investment trust reports to members of the Foundation and to its investment partners. Working on the Budget and end of year financial statements with the *National Treasurer*. Preparing for the annual audit. Engaging

an excellent book keeper. Overseeing arrangements for the National Convention, especially regarding accommodation and any other matters not taken care of by the *National President*. Suggesting that David Nye of Brave Vision be engaged to provide the marketing and other advice sought by the *National President*. Supervising his work, jointly with the *National President* and in consultation with the *Education Coordinator*. Continual correspondence with the South Queensland Department of Environment and Heritage Protection regarding our license to operate a wastewater management system in the Nerang Valley; mandatory reporting of all breaches of that license to the pollution hotline. Dealing with many and varied Trust property issues, and assisting Lodges/Branches with the same. Arranging for the repainting of the Springbrook dining hall, in consultation with the *Caretaker*. Obtaining legal advice regarding leases at 13 Goulburn St Hobart; instructing the lawyers, reviewing the leases and specifying the many required amendments (presently ongoing). More enjoyably, running an event at Canyonleigh in June, giving several talks at Blavatsky Lodge; and running a six-week course at Blavatsky Lodge on the theme of the Canyonleigh event: 'Theosophy Raw and Unfiltered: the Vedas Past and Present'. Happily working with the Education and Training Committee.

Jennifer Hissey: entering data for the Online Public Access Catalogue; handling enquiries for material in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and

Archives as well as cataloguing work; networking with other libraries in Australia; liaising with Softlink in order to improve OPAC; *Convention Secretary*; extensive additional work in relocating books and archival material in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives; assisting with *T in A* mail outs.

Gil Murdoch: *Webmaster* for the Australian Section's website; adding to and maintaining a large amount of material on the website and web pages of several Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups; maintaining AV, sound equipment and data projectors; formatting and emailing out e-Bulletins and electronic versions of *Theosophy in Australia* magazine, updating the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals* and maintaining their search facilities; indexing the *Brahmavidyā* journal and maintaining its search facility, and continuing work on a new index of *The Theosophist*; assisting in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives; operating the sound system and making and editing audio recordings at the National Convention; organising production of Convention CDs and DVDs; assisting with *T in A* mail outs.

Pedro Oliveira, *Education Coordinator*: preparing and presenting classes at the annual School of Theosophy; organising an event and preparing/presenting classes at the Springbrook Centre; development of additional presentations to several TS centres and at the National Convention; development of a new educational module on 'The Secret Doctrine: an Eclectic Introduction to its Study' for the Resources

Package; maintenance of the Section's Facebook page; responding to requests for educational material and general educational matters; responsible for the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives; reorganising the periodicals collection after the National Headquarters move along with Jennifer Hissey; member of the Education and Training and Electronic Media committees; assistance to the *National President*; ordering and sale of books and study courses; assisting with *T in A* mail outs.

Richard Larkin, *Membership Secretary*: preparing membership reports; maintaining the membership database; banking; responding to orders for DVDs and courses; general office duties; assistance to the *National President* and the *National Secretary*; OPAC data entry, cataloguing, downloading and editing material from other Libraries; assisting with *T in A* mail outs.

Kay Schiefelbein: *Caretaker*, Springbrook Centre and caterer for two national TS Springbrook events.

Beatrice Malka: volunteer – *National Treasurer*; member of the national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust; Director of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd.

Dai Trandang: volunteer – organising the quarterly mail out of *Theosophy in Australia*; work on the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals*, member of the national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust; Director of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd.

Gloria Yiangou: volunteer – assistance in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives, assistance with mailing out *Theosophy in Australia*.

Marlene Bell: volunteer – member of the national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust.

Ken Edwards: volunteer – member of the national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust until 15 January 2016.

Marie McArdle: volunteer - member of national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust.

Dianne Kynaston: volunteer – member of national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust; Director of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd., *National Lecturer*; member of Editorial Committee; *State Representative*.

Denise Frost: volunteer – *State Representative* until 11 September, *National Vice-President* until 14 January, member of the national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust as from 15 January.

Phillipa Rooke: volunteer – *State Representative* and *National Vice-President* as from 14 January.

Franco Guazzelli, Travis James and Helen Steven: volunteers - *State Representatives*.

Janice Scarabottolo, Dr Olga Gostin and Patricia Ossenberg: volunteers – members of Editorial Committee.

Barry Bowden, Simon O'Rourke, Dr Brian Harding: volunteers – *National Lecturers*

Barry Bowden, Marie Simpson, Laz Novakovich, Marie Bertelle (volunteers) and Kay Schiefelbein – catering for national events at Springbrook.

MEMBERSHIP

During the year the number of members in the Section declined by 45, bringing the total number to 820 (see the annual membership analysis at the end of this report). The bulk of this loss has occurred within three lodges. However, one TS centre expanded with an increase of 21 members. This continuing decline in membership is one of the reasons for the current move, at the national level, towards more active marketing of the TS (see item on marketing).

Theosophy in Australia

Magazines were posted throughout the year to those members who pay slightly higher annual dues in order to receive four print copies. Some extra copies continued to be posted to Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups for members to browse. Each issue of the magazine was placed online at the same time as copies were mailed out, with all TS centres advised accordingly. Those who chose to receive direct notification when the magazine is online were sent an email from the National Headquarters. Members who are interested in receiving these notifications can email Gil Murdoch, National Headquarters office, at: web@ausotheos.org.au

As receipt of the magazine is now optional, and as it is therefore no longer received by all members, an annual

package was posted in November to every member containing essential information required to be sent to all members under the Section Rules. Several of these items were previously included in, or posted with, *T in A*. A decision was made by the national Executive Committee early in 2016 to revert to the old system due to the volume of additional work and photocopying which had been necessitated in the National Headquarters office. As from November 2016 every member will receive the November issue of the magazine once more. This will therefore be complimentary for those who have chosen not to receive print copies.

National Members

As at 31 August 105 National Members were attached directly to the National Headquarters, an increase of 5 during the year. We continued to welcome a number of these Members from different parts of the Section to national events. The *Education Coordinator* wrote to all National Members, sending them an updated version of the Media Library for members, resulting in a number of requests for loans.

Exit Surveys

Some former members who have either resigned or lapsed completed and returned the optional exit surveys which were sent to them by the National Headquarters. Usually the reasons given were of a routine nature, but from time to time issues with a local TS centre were cited. Some of the reasons given in exit surveys during the year included a lack of transport in one instance, different interests in another, and some issues with two TS centres which

were then referred as feedback to the centres concerned, for action as required.

A Tribute

Four especially long-time members passed away during the year under review: Joy Mills (a former *National President* of the Australian Section from 1993-1996); Dr Geoffrey Miller (south-east Queensland); Yvonne Malykke (Life Member, Brisbane); and Ernest Wagner (Melbourne Lodge). They made substantial contributions to the TS over many years.

2016 CONVENTION

The 2016 Convention gave those present an opportunity to meet *International President* Tim Boyd and his wife, Lily. Tim's presentations were very well received, including an interview which helped members get to know him better. The theme was 'Today's World Problems: Insights from the Wisdom Tradition'. The welcome and general assistance which was given by members of Perth Branch, as our hosts, were greatly appreciated. This included afternoon tea at the Branch's attractive premises during the day outing. Also, eleven professionally produced videos of the 2016 Convention were uploaded onto the website.

2017 and 2018 CONVENTIONS

Plans continued during the year for the 2017 Convention, to be held in Hobart. Plans were also commenced for the 2018 Convention, which will rotate to Brisbane. A pleasant venue was found at the University of Queensland, which I viewed with some senior members of Brisbane Lodge during a visit.

EDUCATION

Education and Training Committee

During the year this committee discussed at length a number of items, including a review of the Resources Package and courses completed to date, future planning and courses, and future events. An idea was conceived for an 'Ancient Wisdom Series', a set of presentations which will be further developed.

The course on *Understanding the Psychic World*, prepared by the *Education Coordinator*, has been most successful, with steady sales during the year bringing the total number sent from the National Headquarters at the time of writing this report to **60**. Most of these were sold; others were sent to National Members upon request. Also, several TS centres have been running study groups based on the course. Another course which was drafted by the *Education Coordinator* during the year under review, '*The Secret Doctrine*: an Eclectic Introduction to its Study', was in its final stages of development at the end of the year under review.

Resources Website

Members who have not seen the national website are encouraged to check it out, including the 2016 Convention videos referred to previously. The site enjoyed increasing usage during the year under review. It continued to be particularly well utilised by researchers, judging by statistics for the resources pages which include courses, articles, search indices for periodicals and other material. Gil Murdoch, our *Webmaster*, continued

with regular updates of web pages of Lodges, Branches and Groups around the Section. It is a significant fact that usage has doubled since the site was updated in early 2014. The new appearance may well have been one factor in the increase, apart from the site's substantial content. The average number of monthly visits was 19,283 with the home page, the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals*, *Links to Theosophical Texts Online* and the Melbourne Lodge meetings web page being the most visited pages. The largest usage from countries outside Australia came from Germany, the European Union, the Russian Federation, China, Ukraine, Brazil and the British Indian Ocean Territory. Also, plans to give the existing site a facelift were put on hold, pending further consideration of a possible new dynamic website (see item on marketing).

Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives

Jennifer Hissey, our *Librarian*, provided assistance during the year under review to a number of researchers, both from Australia and overseas. 68 titles were added to the Campbell Library collection during the year. The move to the new National Headquarters office almost three years ago meant that a significant amount of work was required in order to properly house all library and archival material. This year, the housing of all items in the Archives was completed and the time consuming work of re-cataloguing was subsequently commenced. Also, a new issue of the *Campbell Library Newsletter* was issued in July, focussing on a variety of items. All TS centres, some overseas

members, and Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney were recipients.

National Speakers' Schedule

The National Speakers' Schedule is a significant means of support provided by the National Headquarters to TS centres around the Section. It includes *National Lecturers*, the *National President* and the *Education Coordinator*, as well as *International Lecturers*. During the year under review, a total of 54 presentations were organised around the Section by the National Headquarters. This figure excludes the additional presentations which were given at the National Convention, as well as the five national events which were presented at the Springbrook and Canyonleigh Centres during the year.

At its mid-year meeting the National Council appointed the following as *National Lecturers* for 2017, subject to their agreement which was subsequently obtained: Barry Bowden, Brian Harding, Dianne Kynaston, Simon O'Rourke, Skip Pry and Dara Tatray.

International Lecturer

In April we welcomed John Vorstermans, the *National President* of the TS in New Zealand, who visited four TS centres in this Section. He also conducted the morning study classes at the annual School of Theosophy.

Book Depot, National Headquarters

Members are reminded that we have a depot of specially selected books at the National Headquarters. Once again, this drew a small but steady stream of sales during the year, with our competitive prices.

Universities

University of Sydney

At the suggestion of Professor Carole Cusack from the University of Sydney it was agreed that, in future, Studies in Religion would select potential winners for the John Cooper Memorial Prize and the TS would subsequently confirm suitability. The 2015 prize winners were chosen accordingly and I attended this year's awards ceremony in late April. The undergraduate prize went to Giselle Bader for her essay on 'What role did magic and religion play in the domestic sphere of ancient Egyptian life?' The postgraduate prize went to Alan Boag for his Ph.D. thesis on 'Concealed and Revealed: Madame Blavatsky's "Lost Word" Key and Esoteric Eschatology in the Teachings of J. Krishnamurti'. Giselle Bader was present at the ceremony and was awarded the prize this year by faculty lecturer Dr Christopher Hartney who gave a brief and favourable summary, to the one hundred and ninety or so people present, on the influence of the TS in Australian society and on early 20th century artists in this country.

University of Queensland

In 2014 we commenced a new TS prize for research into the Perennial Philosophy in its Eastern and Western traditions, for Studies in Religion, the University of Queensland. No prize was awarded in 2015 as we were advised that no entries of sufficient standard were identified by the faculty members concerned.

NATIONAL EVENTS

Springbrook Centre

The *Education Coordinator* organised a

well-received event on 'Rumi's Mystical Poetry: All Life is One' in late October, with various attendees asked to contribute by way of readings, journaling and other forms of participation.

The 2016 School of Theosophy was held in April on the theme 'The Spiritual Path in Daily Life: Exploring *The Mahatma Letters*'. The guest presenter was John Vorstermans, *National President* of the New Zealand Section and *President* of the Indo-Pacific Federation. The School was well attended by a good sized, enthusiastic group of students. The *Vice-President* of the New Zealand Section, Renee Sell, was this year's scholarship student from that Section.

Canyonleigh Centre

In November a successful and well attended one day event was run at Canyonleigh by Dianne Kynaston: 'Visions of the Eternal'. Participants included two non-members from Wollongong.

The *National Secretary* ran an event in June: 'Theosophy Raw and Unfiltered: the Vedas Past and Present'. She reported afterwards that the event proved to be very worthwhile, with a number of serious students participating.

In August a well received event was held on 'The Four Yugas: Cycles of Unfoldment and Learning'. Presenters included the *National President*, the *Education Coordinator* and Gerard Brennan, with a small but keen group of participants.

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

Facebook Page

During the year we experimented with a

few facebook ‘boosts’. For a relatively modest sum, a given posting can be much more widely disseminated, thereby attracting new interest in the page and the TS. For example, the 9 August post on ‘Professor John Smith and Theosophy’ was seen by 46,887 people and received 7,500 likes. The one on Hilma af Klint, on 7 September, was seen by 13,275 people and received 1,700 likes. At the time of writing this report, the page had 883 followers, representing an increase of 64% over this time last year. This page is likely to feature strongly in the future marketing plan for the TS. (See also the item on marketing.)

e-Bulletin

Four of these bulletins were emailed to our distribution list during the year under review, continuing to provide a variety of information about events, inspirational quotations, material for sale by the National Headquarters and interesting facts. At the time of writing this report, 494 people were on the distribution list.

Radio Interview

As a result of a request, I was interviewed for a community radio programme in Melbourne, JoyFM. This was aired in November.

OPAC

Our Online Public Access Catalogue operating from the National Headquarters continued to publicise electronically the holdings of TS libraries throughout Australia. Work commenced on adding Blavatsky Lodge’s sizeable collection to the catalogue, in addition to other routine maintenance work. The number of entries

for the following TS centres in the OPAC catalogue at the time of writing this report was as follows:

Adelaide	3615
Blavatsky	420
Brisbane	5780
Campbell	2570
Launceston	2115
Perth	864

Marketing

David Nye, who was engaged to film the videos at the 2016 Convention, also prepared and edited the Section’s first promo video which is now on the Section’s website. He was subsequently invited to visit the National Headquarters in June to film footage for some further short videos, and to discuss marketing possibilities with the Electronic Media Committee. The National Council responded positively at its meeting in June to a comprehensive report about his visit. There was considerable discussion about some of his general suggestions at the meeting, including the possibility of a dynamic website which could be designed from scratch, with considerably greater flexibility and capability than the current site. Such a website would also be of greater direct benefit to Lodges and Branches. David Nye had requested a business plan prior to formulating a tailored marketing strategy. A first draft business plan will therefore be prepared for the National Council, for eventual adoption, as soon as possible. Thereafter, a marketing strategy will be developed by David Nye to help make the TS in Australia better known, focussing on current digital technology.

GENERAL COUNCIL

In December I represented the Australian Section at the General Council meeting. Prior to the General Council meeting, *International President* Tim Boyd circulated a list of 28 accomplishments during 2014-2015 for Councillors to read. These included, among other things, the live streaming of the 2014 Annual Convention; the launch of a new TS Adyar international website; commencement of the digitisation of palm leaf manuscripts and archival materials; 6 new international volunteers at Adyar, compared with 1 in 2014; professional assistance from the TS in America with the Archives; and a wage rise for workers on the estate of 35% across the board. The General Council meeting was followed by a two day strategic planning meeting convened by Tim Boyd.

FINANCE

Annual Fund

Gratitude is expressed to all those who have donated to the Annual Fund, no matter how small the contribution. This Fund was used during the year for the professional video recording of several sessions at the 2016 Convention already mentioned (see previous item on 2016 Convention), as well as David Nye's visit to the National Headquarters in June (see previous item on marketing).

SUPPORT

Support for TS Centres by National Headquarters

In December I sent an annual letter to Lodge/Branch Presidents to remind them of the range of support available to them at the National Headquarters.

Requests for assistance are received periodically from TS centres. As a result of several requests, Lodges/Branches and Certified Groups were sent a set of 'Guidelines for Programmes of Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups of the TS in Australia' which were prepared by the *Education Coordinator*. They provide a number of suggestions for consideration and point to the wide scope of the Society's work. Also included were an article by Pablo Sender, 'Public Work of the Theosophical Society' (from *The Theosophist*, September 2015) and the White Paper provided by the *National Secretary*, 'Format of Meetings in the Theosophical Society'.

See also the following items:

Education and Training Committee, National Speakers' Schedule, *International Lecturers*, OPAC, Marketing.

International Support Adyar Security Fund

In accordance with the National Council's policy, \$7,000 was sent to the International Headquarters during the year out of the Adyar Security Fund, which assists with wages paid to workers at our International Headquarters.

Indo-Pacific Federation

At the end of the period under review, registrations had been filled for the Indo-Pacific Conference due to take place in October. Also, a proposal was received in July from John Vorstermans, *President* of the Indo-Pacific Federation, suggesting that a School of Theosophy be held alternately in Indonesia and Malaysia over a period of four years. In both countries it is difficult to attract members and Lodges

are closing down. Responses from the TS in other countries approached have yet to be circulated. However, the national Executive Committee of the Australian Section has suggested a one year trial, and has committed to the payment of expenses for one presenter at an initial School if the proposal goes ahead.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

It is important to remember our international links within the TS, which go well beyond constitutional ones. As usual, during the year I sent around the Section information on the 2016/2017 sessions of the School of the Wisdom, to be held in Adyar. This resulted in several applications by Australian members to attend classes at the School. Each year members at our National Convention are given an opportunity to sign postcards of greeting which are subsequently sent around the world. Invariably, a number of people respond with appreciation for this small but important gesture. During the year I also sent several greetings, on request, to TS Sections and associations in different countries, on behalf of our Section.

RULES

Elections of State Representatives

In the December 2015 issue of *Theosophy in Australia*, the results of the election of *State Representatives* for the Electoral States of Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia/Northern Territory were announced. As there was only one candidate for each of the Electoral States the following were elected unopposed: Helen Steven (Tasmania), Phillipa Rooke (Queensland), Travis James (South

Australia/Northern Territory). Gary Betts was elected unopposed as a result of a casual vacancy due to the resignation of the *State Representative* for Victoria.

REPORTS FROM LODGES/ BRANCHES

Hobart Branch, TAS (chartered 1889)

The Section's oldest Branch continued to hold public meetings weekly, except from mid-December until the first week in February. Members' meetings were held occasionally on Tuesday nights. Some Hobart members took part in the Tasmanian members' weekend retreat held in Launceston on the theme 'Living an Authentic Life – the Discovery and Practice of Virtue in an Indifferent World' presented by Brian Parry and Marie Bertelle. Visiting speakers included the *National President* and Barry Bowden. Subjects of their presentations included 'Kali Yuga: the Rise and Fall of Narcissism' and 'The Wisdom of *The Mahatma Letters*'. The library was open to the public twice a week and TOS members held occasional meetings and fundraising events.

Melbourne Lodge, VIC (chartered 1890)

Programme highlights during the year included visits by the *Education Coordinator*, Barry Bowden and the *National President*. Topics presented included 'The Learned Ignorance' and 'Future Destiny of Humanity'. The Lodge's fine bookshop ran a monthly activity entitled 'Conversations with the Author', introducing to the public various authors who discussed their latest books.

Some of the study/discussion groups held during the year were 'Holistic Study of Religion, Philosophy, Science, Cultures and Civilisations', 'Yoga for Everyone' and 'Meditation'. Members' meetings and public meetings were held monthly. The TOS held a seminar, a workshop and a picnic.

Adelaide Lodge, SA (chartered 1891)

The list of speakers for the year included Dr Victor Gostin, the *National President*, former *National President* Beverley Champion and Kevin Davey. Regular members' meetings were held, as well as public meetings on two evenings per month. The full list of study/discussions included topics such as 'Shirley Nicholson, *The Seven Human Powers*'; 'Ed Abdill, *The Secret Gateway*'; 'Meditation and Contemplation'; 'Theosophy Watch'; and 'Pablo Sender, *The Secret Doctrine: Esoteric Insights and Spiritual Practice*'. Foundation Day, Adyar Day and White Lotus Day were all commemorated. The bookshop and library continued their activities throughout the year.

Brisbane Lodge, QLD (chartered 1895)

Weekly public meetings and monthly members' meetings were held. Some of the study/discussion groups were 'Introduction to Theosophy', a Krishnamurti Group, *The Mahatma Letters*, a meditation group and *The Bhagavad Gita*. Two silent meditation retreats were held during the year at the Springbrook centre. Visits by international speakers Vic Hao Chin Jr. and John Vorstermans were programme highlights. Other speakers included Dr Victor Gostin, Dianne Kynaston, Barry

Bowden and Brian Parry. The Lodge's office was moved, with WiFi installed. The bookshop and library were both opened by volunteers six days per week. The TOS organised a fundraising concert and event, and fundraising stalls at the Christmas party and the AGM.

Perth Branch, WA (chartered 1897)

Perth Branch's membership has been expanding. A book study group was held fortnightly and a Meetup discussion group took place monthly. Two two-day retreats were held at the Branch's Mt. Helena Centre on 'Timeless Influence of Egypt' and 'Comparative Spirituality'. Reported highlights were the National Convention held in Perth and a visit by the *National President*. Bookshop and library activities continued and the TOS held three fundraiser programmes throughout the year. (See also the concluding remarks of this Annual Report.)

Launceston Lodge, TAS (chartered 1901)

Members moved back into their refurbished building at the end of 2015 and are enjoying the enhanced interior facilities. Gratitude is expressed by the Lodge to The Australian Section Theosophical Trust in its annual report, for largely financing this work. [The property is owned by this Trust - Ed.] Weekly public meetings alternated between midday and evenings. Study/discussion groups included, among others, *At the Feet of the Master*, the DVD course with Dr Pablo Sender on 'Esoteric Insights and Spiritual Practice' and 'Understanding the Psychic World'. Two social activities were held. Visiting speakers included John Vorstermans. A

day seminar, 'Walking the Labyrinth', was held at the Emanuel Centre which was also the venue of the Tasmanian members' retreat (see also the item on Hobart Branch). Programme highlights included visits by the *National President*, Barry Bowden and a presentation by a Lodge member on two articles in *T in A* by Dr Hugh Murdoch.

Blavatsky Lodge, NSW (chartered 1922)

The annual report of Blavatsky Lodge notes that there was a smooth transition from its premises in Sydney City to the suburb of St. Leonards. The programme in the new location commenced in February and attendance at talks and discussion groups has remained constant. Library members at the end of the year numbered 178, including 92 TS members. 10 members volunteered their services in the library during the year. Weekly public meetings continued, as well as monthly members' meetings. Programme highlights included the Lodge's open day, attended by more than 300 people, and an all-day event on 'The Magic of Water, Evolution and Mozart'. Four meditation groups took place, as well as nine study groups. Visiting speaker Dr Patricia Plummer, from the University of Duisburg-Essen, spoke on the 'Life and Work of Louisa Haynes le Freimann, Artist and Theosophist'.

Newcastle Lodge, NSW (chartered 1941)

Meetings between May and July were organised as a series of study sessions based on concepts in the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret*

Doctrine. A regular members' study group was held using the study course on *The Key to Theosophy* prepared by the National Headquarters. Public meetings were held monthly. Visiting speakers included Simon O'Rourke, Gerard Brennan, Brian Harding and the *National President*. Subjects included 'Meeting the Fairie Queen: the Legend of Thomas the Rhymer', 'Doctrine of Emanation' and 'Theosophical Society? Never Heard of it!' The library continued to be housed in the home of a member. Lodge member Dianne Kynaston attended various TS activities during the year and continued her involvement with the TS nationally.

Atherton Lodge, QLD (chartered 1950)

Our northernmost Lodge met monthly during the year, serving Atherton and the surrounding district. Meetings were all open to the public. Social activities included dinner with visiting lecturers after TS meetings. Programme highlights during the year included visits by Vic Hao Chin Jr. and Dianne Kynaston. They spoke on 'Six Ingredients of a Happy Life' and 'Following the Heart to Enlightenment' respectively. A video of *International President* Tim Boyd's presentation on 'Urban Spirituality' drew many favourable comments.

Canberra Branch, ACT (chartered 1971)

This Branch held public meetings monthly in two different venues during the year, with an annual picnic in December. Programme highlights included a Dream Interpretation Workshop, 'After Death States and their Similarities with Spiritual Practice', 'The Holy Grail in

the Modern World', 'The Hidden History of the Original Australians' and 'What is Truth?'. During the year there was a group visit to the Branch's library, which is held at the home of two of the members. A small TOS group met four times, donations being raised mainly by organising joint social brunches for TOS and TS members. A Role Statement for the Programme Committee was adopted and a decision was made to advertise most Branch events on the ACT Government's *Communities Online* website.

Sunshine Coast Lodge, QLD (chartered 2004)

Our most recently chartered Lodge continued to meet at two venues – Buderim and Noosa. A few items are mentioned here from the Lodge's comprehensive annual report. Themes of two of the workshops held during the year for members and friends included 'Self-Culture' and 'The Aware You'. Some of the visiting speakers included the *National President*, Barry Bowden and John Vorstermans. Study/discussion groups included 'Myths of Our Lives', 'Understanding the Psychic World', and 'What Membership Means'. The Lodge's quarterly bulletin is now available online and a simple mobile app has been beta tested. The TOS held regular fundraisers throughout the year including film evenings, raffles and lunches. These were always well supported by the Lodge.

REPORTS FROM CERTIFIED GROUPS

Blue Mountains Group, NSW

The Blue Mountains Group met once a week to study *The Secret Doctrine*. This

small but keen group studies the text in a non-dogmatic way. The *Coordinator* noted in his annual report that much is gained in a group setting, compared with individual study. The *Education Coordinator* visited during the year, speaking on 'Consciousness after Death' and Dr Helen Lambert shared a report on the January National Convention held in Perth.

Gosford Group, NSW

Gosford Group continued to meet monthly except in January, members bringing a plate of food to share. Elderly members received phone calls and visits. Monthly book study took place at members' homes on a rotational basis and in August a DVD by *International President* Tim Boyd was viewed. The annual report expresses the appreciation of the Group for guest speakers who visit. During the year these included, among others, the *National President*, Dianne Kynaston and Pamela Peterson. Some subjects explored were 'Views of the Afterlife – what Different Cultures and Religions Believe', 'The Oneness of Life' and 'Why Bother Accessing Past Lives?'

Mornington Peninsula Group, VIC

After many years of devoted service to the Group, the *Coordinator* Daphne Standish stood down and this role was taken on by another member. The Group continued to meet monthly except in January, with an average attendance of 10-15. The *National President* visited during the year. Other speakers included Edward Sinclair and Daphne Standish. Subjects of presentations included 'The Art of Spiritual Renewal', a workshop on *The*

Divine Plan and ‘Zen and the Ox-Herding Pictures’.

Northern Beaches Group, NSW

The Northern Beaches Group continued to meet in a private home in Sydney. Speakers during the year included Dianne Kynaston, Brian Parry and Marie Bertelle. All sessions were held as discussions. Meetings were more regular by the end of the year, after some missed meetings due to the unavailability of some key members. Subjects discussed included ‘Knowing Others is Wisdom – Lao Tzu’, ‘The Self is the Dancer: Reflections from Shiva Sutras’ and ‘The Practice and Presence of Virtue in an Indifferent World’.

Toowoomba Group, QLD

The annual report indicates that this group held a regular study group on ‘Self-Culture’ as well as a weekend retreat at the Springbrook Centre. The Group’s public meetings normally took place once a month, with an average of approximately 15 in attendance. Speakers included Brian Harding and Barry Bowden. Subjects of talks included ‘Science of Self-Knowledge’. Some social coffee meet-ups also took place.

Wodonga-Albury Group, VIC

This small but dedicated group continued to open its library to the public for four hours every day between Monday and Friday, continuing an impressive level of service to the local community. In addition, a regular weekly meditation group was held, along with a weekly two hour discussion and study group. The core members of the group are mainly National Members, the *Coordinator* being a member of Melbourne Lodge.

NEW GROUP

The national Executive Committee approved an application by a TS member to form a new Informal Group in Sydney city. The group had been meeting for some months to study *The Secret Doctrine*, and had indicated an intention to develop an additional outreach programme.

THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE

The *National Coordinator* reports: Our national Theosophical Order of Service (TOS) has had a most encouraging year working together in altruistic service. Our groups, apart from working and donating within their local communities, contributed to the following:

TOS Islamabad - 4 Qandee Home Schools @\$1,100 (1 each funded by Brisbane TOS & Perth TOS balance from other TOS groups & Maple Brown Abbott)	\$4,400
31 educational scholarships @\$150 each (16 funded from a MBA donation of \$3,000 the remainder are funded by individual sponsors & TOS Australia, including interest from the terms of the Pat Bailey Bequest that is invested with MBA)	\$4,650
Mobility Aids Project, Assam Animal Welfare Dispensary, Adyar	\$750 \$1,000
HPB Hostel for Boys, Adyar	\$260
Olcott Memorial School, Adyar	\$2,000
Golden Link College, the Philippines	\$3,020

(This amount was forwarded to TOS in USA where the Kern Foundation benevolently matched all donations \$ for \$)

Total monies forwarded to above beneficiaries \$16,080

My personal thanks to all members and friends of TOS for the spirit in which these donations are given.

Jean Carroll

CONCLUSION

Great appreciation is owed to the many volunteers around this Section who have given their time and energy during the year in service to the TS. This has been very apparent during my travels. And here is some final food for thought. I have often heard members in TS centres ask what TS members are obtaining from their membership that members of the public do not also receive. Of course, there are opportunities to attend members' meetings and study groups, as well as national events at subsidised rates. However, one TS centre has come up with an interesting

system. Nearly all of its meetings are for members, public meetings only being held when a special speaker is available. Members of the public may attend up to four members' meetings, after which they are free to decide whether they wish to join. If not, they are welcome to attend meetings open to the public which occur about four times during the year, although special exceptions may still be made by the *President*. Membership is strengthening. A system along these lines, or some variation thereof, could even be worth considering by other lodges and branches. In some TS centres nearly all meetings are open to the public. The general philosophy behind this has probably been to make Theosophy readily available to all – which is a laudable objective. At the same time though, what are members receiving? Sometimes a practice may also be usefully turned on its head, leading to new possibilities.

Linda Oliveira



Awareness of the One comes to us neither by knowing nor by the pure thought that discovers the other intelligible things, but by a presence transcending knowledge.

Plotinus

Annual Membership Analysis of Lodge/Branch Membership as at 31/08/2016

Lodge/Branch	Members 31-Aug-15	Trans in	New	Rejoin	Total in	Resign	Lapse	Dec	Trans out	Total Out	Members 31-Aug-16	Diff
Adelaide	86	0	4	4	8	1	12	1	0	14	80	-6
Atherton	15	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	14	-1
Blavatsky	191	4	8	7	19	13	26	3	2	44	166	-25
Brisbane	67	1	3	3	7	1	13	4	3	21	53	-14
Canberra	19	0	3	0	3	0	1	0	0	1	21	2
Hobart	22	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	20	-2
Launceston	21	0	2	1	3	3	0	1	0	4	20	-1
Melbourne	130	0	7	6	13	0	22	3	2	27	116	-14
Newcastle	14	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	2	4	11	-3
Perth	145	1	43	8	52	6	22	1	2	31	166	21
Sunshine Coast	55	0	7	1	8	0	13	1	1	15	48	-7
Sub Total	765	6	78	30	114	28	109	14	13	164	715	-50
National	100	9	5	6	20	1	10	3	1	15	105	5
Total	865	15	83	36	134	29	119	17	14	179	820	-45



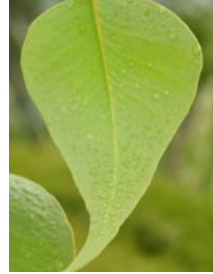
Gerard Brennan, a member of Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney, was elected as the new President of the Indo-Pacific Federation in October, for a three year period. We wish him a fruitful period ahead in this new position.



The 13th Triennial Conference of the Indo-Pacific Federation was held in Auckland, New Zealand, from 14-19 October. The theme of the Conference was 'The Why of the Theosophical Society'. Special guests were the International President, Tim Boyd, and his wife Lily. Twenty-eight members of the Australian Section were present, along with members from various other countries around the region.

Stray Leaves for Gaia

Patricia Ossenberg



There've been moments of perfect stillness
when I've seen with the soul
some stray fallen leaf, so still
there's a sense of having glimpsed the Eternal.

Poised moments of simple clarity
blur as thoughts begin
to scatter the whole, to chatter
away rare moments of peace.

On a quest,
the mind can pull feathers from the air,
will rationalise analogies, compare
soft new leaves
with a chick's downy breast.

Nevertheless,
bold patterns adorn nature's varied halls,
striding through time, in play and jest
as if to belie earth-spirit's call
that all is not well.

Better not deny the soul
her subtle ways
weave timeless patterns into wholes.

Better not deny the soul
her rhythmic grace
the rise and fall of every breath.

Better not deny the soul's
compassionate role,
better treat lightly on the Earth.

National Calendar of Events



National Convention, Hobart

Sat 21 - Sat 28 January 2017 for TS members

Theme: 'Eastern Spirituality, Psyche and the Human Journey'

Registration: \$40, required both for live-in registrants and day visitors.

Registration deadline, live-in delegates: Friday 25 November 2016

Cost: subsidised price of \$735 for seven nights

Canyonleigh Centre, Bolitho House, Tugalong Road, Canyonleigh, NSW

Sun 26 February 2017 10.30am-3.30pm for TS members and non-members

Theme: 'Some Glimpses into Western Esoteric Traditions'

TS members and friends are welcome.

Registration cost: \$10 per person, catering not provided

Bring: vegetarian food to share for lunch and drinks

Enquiries to: Dianne Kynaston, diannedeva@gmail.com

or 02 9969 1087

Springbrook Centre, 2184 Springbrook Road, Springbrook, QLD

2017 SCHOOL OF THEOSOPHY

arrivals Tues 25 April – departures Mon 1 May

Theme: 'The Yoga of Theosophy' for TS members

The Theosophical tradition has developed a wealth of teachings about the spiritual life that constitutes a distinctive system of yoga. This path is particularly relevant for today's world, since it is not meant to be trodden on retirement but in the midst of our daily life. We will explore the practical aspects of Theosophy and their deep theoretical foundations.

Guest Presenter: Pablo Sender, Ph.D., USA.

Cost: \$300 for accommodation, meals and tuition

Early registration is recommended.



Registration forms and further information about all events organised by the National Headquarters are at: <http://austheos.org.au/whats/>

Results - Election of State Representatives



Election of State Representative for NSW/ACT, Victoria and Western Australia

The deadline for receipt of nominations in the above named election was 20 September. As there was only one candidate in each of these states, the following were elected unopposed, in accordance with Rule 19(5):

Gloria Yiangou — NSW/ACT
Franco Guazzelli — Western Australia
Kenneth Edwards — Victoria

The term of office for State Representatives is for a period of two years from the declaration of results. The State Representative will represent the Lodges/Branches, Certified Groups and members in the electoral state in all meetings and affairs of the National Council. They shall also liaise with all Lodges/Branches, Certified Groups and national members in their electoral state and represent their views to the National Council and to the national officers, as appropriate. As well, they shall receive and deal with representations from individual members within their electoral state, and refer the representations where requested.

Election of State Representative for Victoria

With the resignation of Ken Edwards due to the pressure of other work for Melbourne Lodge, it was necessary to conduct an election to fill a casual vacancy under Rule 18(3)(a). This took place on 28 September, with 21 October the deadline for receipt of nominations. As there was only one candidate in this election, **Kari Torgersen** was elected unopposed. Her term of office coincides with that of the State Representative she had replaced.

2017 Convention Programme

The Theosophical Society in Australia 21-28 January, Hobart 'Eastern Spirituality, Psyche and the Human Journey'



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Sat 21 January

- 7.30pm Welcome, Introduction – Key Speakers, Workshops
Greetings to the Convention
Tea and Coffee

Sun 22 January

- 7.30am Morning Attunement
9.15am Official Opening of Convention
ANNUAL CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING OF THE
THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA
Roll Call of Voting Delegates and Proxies
Confirmation of Minutes of 2016 Convention Business Meeting
National President's Report for the Year Ended 31 August 2016
National Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 31 August 2016
Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 31 August 2016,
and Auditor's Report thereon
Budget for the Year Ending 31 August 2017
Appointment of Auditor
Announcement of Newly Appointed Officers and National Council Members
Announcement of Ballot Results:
- New South Wales/A.C.T., Victoria and Western Australia
Notices of Motion
Place and Time of Next Convention
Resolutions of Goodwill
Any Other Business
INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION SESSION
2.00pm The Theosophical Order of Service
'Yoga off the Mat – the Journey to Perfection'
– Jean Carroll, Ro Dallow, Travis James and Lucille Crocker
4.00pm PUBLIC TALK – FEATURED SPEAKER, Dr Bruno Cayoun
'The Core Mechanisms of Buddhist Spirituality'
7.30pm Dianne Kynaston – 'Tibetan Landscapes': an Audio-Visual Presentation

Mon 23 January

- 7.30am Morning Attunement
 9.15am 'The Way: Pearls of Taoist Wisdom' – Linda Oliveira
 11.00am 'Creating Your Life: Buddhism Working' – Sue Lee
 2.00pm Workshop for Lodge/Branch Committee Members, 'Co-Creating a Lodge/
 Branch Programme'. Facilitators: Denise Frost and Harry Bayens
 4.00pm 'All Roads Lead to Rome: The Human Journey in Vedānta'
 – Dara Tatray
 7.30pm 'Adept at Science: Some Reflections on Science in *The Mahatma Letters*'
 – Kevin Davey

Tues 24 January

- 7.30am Attunement
 9.15am Short talks:
 'The Human Journey' – Denise Frost
 'The Divine within the Spark and the Spark within the Divine' – Helen Steven
 11.00am 'Search for the Inner Self'
 – Barry Bowden
 2.00pm Workshops
 Georgina Fode: 'Mythology and Archetypes in our Lives'
 Jean Carroll and Lucille Crocker:
 'Annie Besant, Service and Transformation'
 2.00pm For National Council, national Executive Committee and Lodge/Branch
 Committee members – special presentation on TS marketing by videographer
 and marketer, David Nye
 4.00pm 'How Modern Neuroscience is Affirming Ancient Wisdoms'
 – Berry Dunston
 7.30pm International President's blog and recent TS videos

Wed 25 January

- 7.30am Attunement
 OUTING AND PICNIC Mt. Wellington - Mt. Field National Park - Richmond
 7.30pm Classical Concert:
 Michael Fortescue and Friends playing string quartets

Thurs 26 January

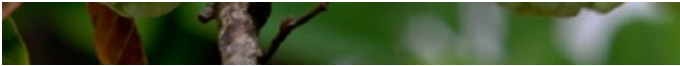
- 7.30am Attunement
 9.15am 'Shantideva – a Buddhist Adept'
 – Pedro Oliveira
 11.00am A Conversation with Axel von Krusenstierna and Berry Dunston
 1.30pm The Theosophical Order of Service: Annual General Meeting
 FREE TIME
 7.30pm 'Climate Change' – Dr Grahame Crookham

Fri 27 January

- 7.30am Attunement
- 9.15am Short Talks:
 ‘Plato’s Cave: Out of the World of Shadows into the Light’ – Lynette Muller
 ‘One Path, Many Paths, No Path’ – Dr David Allan
- 11.00am Workshops
 Harry Bayens: ‘Understanding Conflict’
 Phillipa Rooke: ‘Exploring Pathless Spirituality’
 Marianne Fraser: ‘Why do so few people remember past lives spontaneously?’
- 2.30pm Q and A
 Kevin Davey, Sue Lee, Ruth Holt and Gloria Yiangou
- 4.00pm Perspectives on the Convention
 Invitation to 2018 Convention, Brisbane
 Closing of Convention (National President)
- 7.30pm Concert – Billy Whitton and Jamie Taylor

Sat 28 January

Departures



‘When you want to enter quietude, first tune and concentrate body and mind, so that they are free and peaceful. Let go of all objects, so that nothing whatsoever hangs on your mind, and the celestial mind takes its rightful place in this centre.’

The Secret of the Golden Flower
 VIII, 8



Theosophical Order of Service

Jean Carroll



Welcome everyone to our final report for 2016. Our groups have continued to implement the key points from our Five Year Plan, i.e. building closer ties within our local communities and our theosophical lodges. Some of our groups are now featured in lodge programming, whilst service on a local level strengthens an awareness of the wisdom teachings.

Our founder Annie Besant, like Madame Blavatsky, saw altruism as essential to living a spiritual life. Annie Besant perceived altruism as being in two stages, firstly the action in helping others and being conscious of the result of this action, and secondly moving to a more spiritual state of action, where there is no sense of self, i.e., a move towards unity or no separateness.

Our groups, apart from working and donating within their local communities, have been willing contributors to the following projects: Qandeel Home Schools Pakistan, the Golden Link College in the Philippines, plus several projects in India – the Animal Welfare Dispensary, HPB Hostel for Boys, educational support for the Olcott School, and the Assam Mobility Aids Project.

The TOS in Islamabad is one of our key international beneficiaries. With help from our financial managers, Maple-Brown Abbott, we are able to support thirty-one scholarships annually. Both TOS Perth and TOS Brisbane donate sufficient funds to enable us to support an additional

home school, bringing the total number of schools to four. TOS has been supporting these two projects for just over ten years. Mr Mushtaq Jindani has supplied inspiring reports on the success of students. We also have received encouraging news that after a lapse of some years TOS has once again commenced workshops in Islamabad. To date this year there have been two such events and we congratulate them for the example of their topic, 'Mind Science', and the light they are sharing in raising consciousness.

In October 2015 TOS National organised a tour to the sacred sites of Cambodia. I am pleased to report it was an amazing trip, with such a strong sense of compassion and caring amongst the 21 participants. Our TOS raised \$675 from this tour towards the national projects abovementioned.

If you are interested in social welfare, education, the care of animals or the environment, or would like to receive our electronic newsletter, please contact Jean Carroll: tos.australia@gmail.com



Qandeel Home School students Islamabad

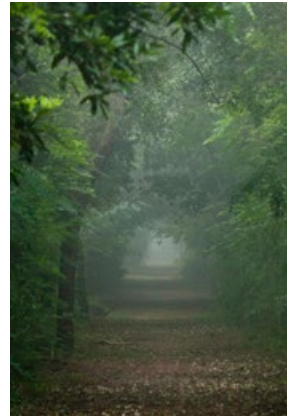
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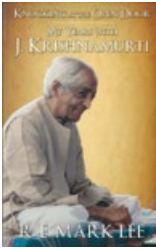
There is a thing confusedly formed,
Born before heaven and earth.
Silent and void
It stands alone and does not change,
Goes round and does not weary.
It is capable of being the mother of the world.
I know not its name
So I style it 'the way'.

Tao Te Ching, XXV



Review

Knocking at the Open Door: My Years with J. Krishnamurti Mark Lee, Hay House, India, 2015



Earlier this year it was a pleasure to meet Mark Lee in Ojai, California. Mark has been a teacher and Principal in Krishnamurti schools as well as the Executive Director of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America. Last year he published a biography about his years with a world figure who has sparked controversy with some over the decades, yet who has also greatly inspired others.

Mark Lee was attracted to deeper questions in life from his teens and as a young man he met J. Krishnamurti in Switzerland in 1965, describing him as ‘the most elegant and intelligent person I had ever seen’. The occasion concerned was a talk to some two thousand people, who were ‘hushed,



alert and ready’ when he entered – a pattern familiar to this reviewer, and which is said to have been a frequent occurrence throughout the philosopher’s many years of public speaking. Mark observed that the talk was ‘powerful and the atmosphere in the tent was of another world, a world of subtle and sensitive delicacy and heightened senses’.

After the talk, Lee recounts that a car pulled up to him while he was walking back to Gstaad along with a few others. A short dialogue ensued, initiated by the person who was in the passenger seat. This happened to be J. Krishnamurti, who invited him to lunch. So commenced an apparently coincidental event, leading to what was to become a lifelong journey for Lee.

This book is written with candour and philosophical sensitivity, including a number of eloquently written passages. Lee is not afraid to include criticism of his subject when he considers it warranted. The biography traces Mark Lee’s relationship with Krishnamurti over some five decades and is peppered with interesting

incidents. It also mentions other individuals who were associated closely with the philosopher; Mark Lee's meeting with the woman who was to become his wife and his lifelong partnership with her; some historical matters concerning the Krishnamurti Foundation and Krishnamurti schools; and many examples of Krishnamurti's philosophy on education and other matters, including a collection of some of his 'sutra-like statements'. Of particular interest is the account of the philosopher's passing and the arrangements he requested in

that regard. Some facts which may not be so widely known include Krishnamurti's possession of healing power, his decline of the offer of the Templeton Prize of one million dollars, and the fact that Jawaharlal Nehru and his daughter, Indira Gandhi, were two of his high profile friends.

This book is a fascinating read, providing valuable insights into the man himself as well as his Teachings. It would make a worthwhile addition to Theosophical libraries.

Linda Oliveira

News and Notes

Why are all Australian Members Receiving this Issue?

Each year, under the relevant Section Rule, every member must be provided with a number of items of information prior to the January Convention Business Meeting, e.g. the National President's annual report and the annual accounts. Receipt of print copies of this magazine became optional at the beginning of 2014. Last year an annual package was posted to every member in November providing the relevant



information for the Convention Business Meeting. *Theosophy in Australia* was published separately in December, excluding the annual report. Due to logistical considerations it has been decided to resume publication of a November magazine which will include the annual report. This issue is being sent to all members, accompanied by other material which is required under the Rules. Members who are not paying to receive the magazine along with their annual dues are therefore receiving one

complimentary copy of *Theosophy in Australia* this year.

The Secret Life of Koalas



A recent issue of *Highlife*, a magazine on country life in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales, included some interesting information about one of our National Members. Charlotte Stahl, who will be well-known to many who have stayed at the Society's Canyonleigh centre, was featured in an article headed 'The Secret Life of Koalas'. Last year her large, adjacent property was officially designated as the Southern Highlands Koala Sanctuary. This is part of a koala conservation project. Dedicated environmentalists, Charlotte and her family are carefully managing their forest to help it return to its original state. The property was also nominated for a Landcare award in the 1990s for its sustainable forestry practices, and was gazetted as a wildlife refuge in 1997 by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

School Detention replaced with Meditation

A recent story has highlighted a completely different way of treating schoolchildren who misbehave. The Robert W. Coleman elementary school in Baltimore has something called the Mindful Moment Room. This is producing tangible benefits as an alternative to punishing disruptive children or sending them to the principal's office.

An online report reads:

The room looks nothing like your standard windowless detention room. Instead, it's filled with lamps, decorations, and plush purple pillows. Misbehaving kids are encouraged to sit in the room and go through practices like breathing or meditation, helping them calm down and re-center. They are also asked to talk through what happened.

(www.upworthy.com accessed 2/11/16)

Comments of up to 200 words on items in this magazine are welcome and may be published.

The use of one gender to cover both genders is avoided as far as possible in this magazine. However, quotations from writings in which one gender is used in this way are printed as originally written. This applies both to older writings and some contemporary ones.

Section Directory

Australian Section National Headquarters

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 6404
Fax: 02 9264 5857
www.austheos.org.au
Campbell Theosophical Research Library:
campbell@austheos.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Branch, Chartered 17/7/1971:
Postal Address: c/- 27 Reveley Crescent,
Stirling ACT 2611
Meet: Friends Meeting House, cnr Bent
& Condamine Streets, Turner ACT 2612
7.30pm 1st Monday of month (Feb - May, Sep - Dec)
2.00pm 1st Saturday of month (June to Aug),
Emeritus Faculty ANU
Discussion Group 2.00pm 3rd Saturday of month,
Emeritus Faculty ANU
(Please confirm by email or telephone)
President: Dr Grahame Crookham
Tel: 0490147020
Email: tificrook@tpg.com.au
Secretary: position vacant
Telephone: 02 6288 7656
Email: janton@netspeed.com.au

New South Wales

Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:
Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 2065
Meet: Suite 8, 599 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards
NSW 2065 (entrance in Albany Street)
Telephone: 02 92676955 Fax: 02 9283 3772
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au
www.tssydney.org.au
Meet: 2.00pm Wednesdays
President: Marie McArdle
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:
Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,
Mayfield NSW 2304
7.30pm 2nd Friday each month from March 2016
<http://www.austheos.org.au/newcastle/>
President: Tony Buzek

Secretary: Jane Wilson
Tel: 0452 633 132
Email: gnlodgetheos@gmail.com

Blue Mountains Group:

Meet: Senior Citizens Meeting Rooms
Upper level, Central Arcade
81-83 Katoomba Street, Katoomba
Meetings every Monday, 2.00pm
1st Monday of month - Public Meeting
Subsequent Mondays - *Secret Doctrine* Study Group
Coordinator: Donald Fern
Tel: 02 4757 1910

Gosford Group:

Meet: The Neighbour Centre,
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month
Coordinator: Marianne Fraser
Tel: (02) 4339 7118, 0400 713 273
Email: marifraser256@gmail.com
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

Northern Beaches Group:

Postal address: c/- The Manor,
2 Iluka Road, Mosman NSW 2088
Meet: c/- 22 Laitoki Road
Terrey Hills
NSW 2084
8.00 pm 3rd Friday each month
Coordinator: Dianne Kynaston

Queensland

Atherton Lodge, Chartered 27/4/1950:

Postal Address: 14 Herberton Rd,
Atherton QLD 4883
Meet: Meeting Room, Community Services
Tablelands, 38 Mabel St, Atherton
2.00pm 2nd Saturday of month except Jan.
President: Max Brandenberger
Secretary: Chris Pang Way
Tel: 07 4091 5156

Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:

355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000
Tel: 07 3839 1453
Email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au
www.theosophyqld.org.au
Meet: 7.30pm Fridays
President: Brian Harding
Secretary: position vacant

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004

Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556
7.00pm Thursdays
RSL/CWA Hall, 123 Poinciana Drive, Tewantin
7.00pm Fridays
President: Janet Blake
Tel: 0416 442962
Email: theosunshinecoast@gmail.com
Secretary: Joyce Thompson

Toowoomba Group:

Meet: 49 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba
1st Wednesday at 7pm and 3rd Sunday
at 2:30pm each month
(Meditation 1pm & Study Group at 1:30pm)
Annual Springbrook Retreat each winter
Coordinator: Gayle Thomas
Tel: 0438 331 885

South Australia*Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:*

310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
Tel: 08 8223 1129
Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au
<http://www.austheos.org.au/adelaide>
Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday of every
month. Please contact Lodge for additional meeting
dates.
President: Kevin Davey
Secretary: Marie Paul

Tasmania*Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:*

13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000
Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)
www.theosophicaltas.websyte.com.au
Meet: 8.00pm Mondays
President: Helen Steven
Secretary: position vacant
Email: helen_steven@live.com

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:

54 Elizabeth Street, Launceston TAS 7250
Postal address: as above
email: launcestontheosophicalsociety@gmail.com
www.austheos.org.au/launceston
Meet: 1st and 3rd Wednesdays and if applicable
5th commencing 1.00pm for meditation followed
by meeting at 1.10pm / 2nd and 4th Wednesdays
commencing 7.20pm for meditation followed by
meeting at 7.30pm

President: Jenny Haslem

Secretary: Ruth Holt

Tel: 0448 397 246

Victoria*Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:*

126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624
email: meltheos@bigpond.com.au
Meet: Saturdays
President: Ken Edwards
Secretary: Edward Sinclair

Mornington Peninsula Group:

Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,
Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
of the month 1.00pm - 3.30pm
(meditation - lunch - Theosophy)
Coordinator: Alice Opper
Tel: 03 5976 3815
www.austheos.org.au/centres/mpg

Wodonga-Albury Group:

Meet: Shop 6, Tower Place, High Street,
Wodonga VIC 3690
1st Tuesday each month
Library hours Mon-Fri 10.00am-2.00pm
Coordinator/Secretary: Denis Kovacs
Tel: 02 6024 2905

Western Australia*Perth Branch, Chartered 10/6/1897:*

21 Glendower Street, Perth WA 6000
Tel/Fax: 08 9328 8104
Email: tsp Perth@iinet.net.au
<http://www.tsp Perth.com.au>
Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
President: Harry Bayens
Secretary: Carole Ann Webster

Mount Helena Retreat Centre:

1540 Bunning Road, Mt Helena WA 6082
All enquiries to Perth Branch
Tel: 08 9328 8104

**Theosophical Education
and Retreat Centre, Springbrook, Qld**

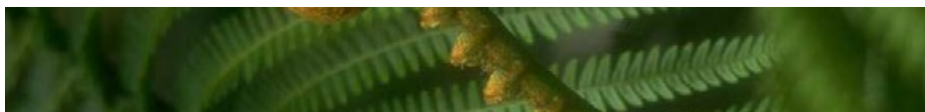
2184 Springbrook Road,
Springbrook QLD 4213
Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211
email: info@tsretreat.com.au
Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none of which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H.P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

*Resolution passed by the General Council
of the Theosophical Society (1924)*



Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organisation entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title, ‘The Theosophical Society’.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organisation.

*Resolution passed by the General Council
of the Theosophical Society (1949)*

