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INSIDE Everything Old is New Again
Spiritual Immigration
Inauguration of New National President
National President's Annual Report

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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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Mission Statement of the Theosophical Society

To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual self-transformation, and the Unity of all Life.

From the National President

Linda Oliveira



The title of the first article in this issue, ‘Everything Old is New Again’, seems somehow apt given that a period of renewal will inevitably occur next year with the administration of the new National President as from late January. See also page 142.

Renewal has definite cycles and can be seen plainly in Nature’s numerous modes of expression, including our spiritual lives. For one thing, modern Theosophical teachings reintroduced to the world the possibility of treading what is commonly referred to as ‘the Spiritual Path’, consisting essentially of successive renewals or expansions of consciousness which are described in our literature as Initiations. It is not for the faint-hearted. This Path is not something outside ourselves, but essentially a journey to the centre of our Being. It is enabled and fuelled, not by adding to the everyday self, but by transmuting all that is selfish into altruism. As Bro. N. Sri Ram, the fifth International President of the Theosophical Society, wrote:

Initiation is not the fulfilling of a personal, spiritual ambition, the

attainment of a height of greatness, or the coming into possession of extraordinary powers which one can imagine will be wielded for the benefit of mankind, but may in fact be for the pleasure in wielding such forces. Spiritual ambition is a contradiction in terms, and highly dangerous for the one who seeks to tread the Path. What is required, let us repeat, is ‘the talisman of a perfectly unselfish, self-forgetting, self-annihilating devotion to the religious [we might say the “spiritual”] good’ of humanity.’
The Theosophist, September 1995

Altruism plays out in numerous practical ways, and I hope that in years to come this spirit will remain alive and well in the TS centres around this Section, helping to shape and energise our Section’s work and usefulness. For we are indeed privileged to be custodians of Theosophy during this particular human cycle.

Renewal remains an ever-present potential but we need to realise this fact – and act on it.

Everything Old is New Again

Phillipa Rooke



Image: Aaron Burden on Unsplash

Are we, as humanity, on the edge of a precipice from which there is no going back? Have we come to the point now where we either learn to fly or perish? There are many around the globe who have come to the conclusion that in order for us to survive, and survive well, we need to make a dramatic shift in the way we operate, in the way that we view the world and our place in it. In short, our consciousness has to change.

This 'dramatic shift' in consciousness is being referred to today as a movement to a new paradigm. The term 'new paradigm' represents the notion of a major change in thought patterns. There have often been paradigm shifts throughout history. The impetus for such changes frequently occurs because a perceived crisis point is reached in a particular

field, requiring basic changes in the existing fundamental understanding. This may occur because of a new scientific discovery which makes existing presumptions obsolete, or else societally when enough people see the need for change to occur and 'tip the balance', thus paving the way for a general change in attitude. Some recent examples could be the acceptance of gay marriage, or the acknowledgement of women's rightful place in society. A new paradigm requires a meeting of minds and is a prerequisite to change. Another quality of a paradigm shift is that it is not linear in nature, but is a 'jump' in our basic understanding from one level of thought to another. This idea has been poetically expressed in the analogy of the caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. The caterpillar eats and eats, and if it keeps on existing in this way will eventually

destroy the very plant life upon which it exists. However, when it has eaten enough, it becomes the chrysalis. From the chrysalis, during which stage the caterpillar ceases to exist, emerges the butterfly.

The Old Paradigm

I would like to look at what, for our purposes, is the 'old paradigm', since shifting to a new paradigm does require a change from what already exists. Perhaps we can regard the old paradigm as the way in which the world currently operates for the most part, and name it 'the caterpillar'. What does our caterpillar look like? Our caterpillar keeps on eating and eating, which perhaps is what our consumer-driven society is all about. Our caterpillar does not stop to think about what it is eating, as its nature is to satisfy its own hunger. This again is similar to our consumer society, simply following and not always thinking about consequences. Let us look at coal as an example pertaining to the nature of our particular form of caterpillar. Many here in Australia would like to become clean and green and maybe use alternative methods other than coal to produce our energy. The fact that we still purchase the latest iphone, or the most recent model car, ignores the fact that one country can no longer produce these things from go to

woe. We are reliant on other countries to provide such products, and those other countries are reliant upon us to send them coal in order to meet our demands in these areas. So coal is just a small example of how our caterpillar does not think about what it eats. The world has become economically interdependent.

Our caterpillar, that old paradigm in which the world operates, sees only what is in front of its nose, or in this case, its mouth. At present it consumes vast amounts of airtime on various technological gadgets, which it believes are essential to its existence, to the detriment of knowing who and what surrounds it. It is so busy eating, that the finer energies of existence – the beauty in a flower, the wind in the trees, the delight on the face of a child – pass by unnoticed, or if noticed, are not engaged with, but merely observed as something separate from itself. The caterpillar is that part of each of us which sees itself as being separate from the happenings of this world. It is consciousness stuck in the activity of the small 'e' ego unable to expand beyond the bounds of the everyday mind. In theosophical parlance, it is consciousness operating under the influence of the physical, emotional, lower mental aspects of our being. That is the caterpillar, earthbound and acquisitive.



Impetus

And what is the impetus which will move us from the caterpillar stage to that of the chrysalis: that perceived crisis point, the prerequisite to change? There are too many signs indicating the future potential for, and current destruction of many forms of life on earth. We can see the signs around us now which have brought many people to the point of thinking that things have to change before we come to the brink of the precipice. Increasingly, there are many who realise the interconnectedness of life on earth on different levels, and the inadvisability of remaining within the current level of consciousness which has been the cause of much of the heartache in the world. One such group is the World Academy of Art and Science which is associated with the United Nations and held a conference on the theme 'New Paradigm and Planetary Engagement:

A Call for Responsibility'. This conference acknowledged that the first challenge was to awaken the human mind to the need for change.¹

Today, philosophers are telling us that western science, for the most part, has overlooked consciousness as being significant. They posit that consciousness does not lie within us, but in a fundamental interior quality of the world. There is a growing body of work pointing to the fact of a shared consciousness. The teachings of the Ancient Wisdom which is Theosophy have been telling us for centuries that the consciousness of which we partake pervades the entire cosmos.

The impetus for change involves us putting the various pieces of information together to form a compelling reason to change. Part of that impetus is happening around us, being enacted before our own eyes. Other inputs for that impetus are coming from science and philosophy. The Ancient Wisdom has always been there, but in our time has become much more widely available. Once we have the picture of our predicament completed, then comes the chrysalis phase of dissolution and rebirth.

Chrysalis

The chrysalis phase is about preparation for re-emergence in a different form. What needs to happen for the

old paradigm – the human being operating from the personal ego – to shift to something new? The impetus to consider this has given us the picture of the good and bad of the whole mess of the world – ‘the predicament’. We can see it. Knowing that a crisis point has been reached where humanity could possibly cease to exist, we then realise that change is required and need to sort out what to do about it. We see that human greed, selfishness and the desire for power have been the driving forces which have led us to the state of the world today.

But also in our time there is more and more evidence pointing to the fundamental unity of all things, which HPB applied to ‘the spiritual, intellectual or physical worlds – this unity is the one fundamental law in Occult Science’.² This unity is the cornerstone of Theosophical thought and cannot be emphasised too much. It therefore follows that the whole has to be influenced by the activity of a part, which has been ably demonstrated in the way activity in different parts of the world has affected our planet as a whole, bringing us to this predicament.

Theosophical thought has always emphasised self-transformation, human regeneration, as being the way forward. Shirley Nicholson wrote:

Numberless methods and disciplines have been developed and handed

down through the ages to bring about this conquest of the Self. Every religion has a path or way for sincere aspirants who want to plunge deeper than do more superficial proponents. Prayer or meditation, self-evaluation, service, and study all have their place. All methods aim at two essential elements in self-transformation: purifying the personal self and shifting focus to a higher level.³

Vedantic literature is full of inspiration for us to come to a state of freedom – freedom from the burden of mind’s accumulations.

The Yoga Sutras set out the process most elegantly. Vimala Thakar observed, when commenting on the Science of Yoga:

When prakriti (matter) is purified, it is brought on par with Purusha (spirit). When the energies of the perishable are converted and transformed into higher energies, those higher energies become the vehicle for Brahman, the supreme reality, to manifest itself.⁴

The Buddha’s teachings show a clearly marked path from suffering to the end of suffering, of awakening from ignorance to full knowledge.

The implications are wide and deep, if the Christ’s message of treating others

as we would like to be treated is put fully into practice.

Krishnamurti said, 'what I am in my relationship to another creates society and ... without radically transforming myself, there can be no transformation of the essential function of society ...'⁵

Self-transformation could be described as the movement from identifying with the individual self, to identifying with the universal: from selfishness to generosity of spirit. It is the process of purifying ourselves of anything which takes our attention away from higher possibilities, and moving to openness and receptivity; perhaps coming to a deep contentment which can quieten inner turbulence and allow things to be seen clearly.

I think the day is here when each one of us has to find leadership from within. The responsibility has shifted from that which comes from outside of us, to that which emerges from within each one of us. We have to try things out for ourselves, and not let them remain in the arena of the intellect. We have to experience what it feels like to be enough at peace for former barriers to drop away in order to see the essential nature of things, unpolluted by intervening thoughts about things.

Meditation can bring us to the heartland of tranquillity and contentment. Vimala Thakar said: 'Thought-energy

can be purified by learning to plunge into silence and the energy of silence. Thought-energy can be transformed by silence-energy.'⁶ Meditation assists in helping us see our lives, our relationships with one another, with Nature and the planet, for what they are.

Butterfly

What will the world of our butterfly look like? We will not actually know until it starts flying, but we can hazard a guess or two.

In 1955 N. Sri Ram said:

The world needs a wisdom which it does not possess, it cannot continue in the same old pattern which does not conduce to our welfare or happiness. The whole world and not only any one people needs fresh thinking on the basis of fundamentals and it is these fundamentals upon which Theosophy sheds its benign light.⁷

Theosophy in Australia, April 1955

In 1971, John Lennon famously invited the world to live as one.

In the early 1990's, Vimala Thakar wrote:

... the twenty-first century is going to be the century of the synthesis (of Spirituality and science). Gone are the days of mythologies and institutionalized religions. One global religion of human

relationships, of human values, a religion of love and compassion towards all and the sharing of the earth and its resources as members of one family, is going to take its place.⁸

In 1881, K.H. affirmed in *The Mahatma Letters*:

And we will go on in that periodical work of ours; we will not allow ourselves to be baffled in our philanthropic attempts until that day when the foundations of a new continent of thought are so firmly built that no amount of opposition and ignorant malice guided by the Brethren of the Shadow will be found to prevail.⁹

Can we take heart and work together with those Great Souls who are behind our modern Theosophical movement, to help bring about a movement to a new paradigm? There is no day but today, and there is no time but now, for us to work towards a regenerated human consciousness where heaven and earth become ONE.

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Phillipa Rooke is the President of Brisbane Lodge. She is a former National Vice-President and State Representative. Her theosophical passions include meditation, Eastern spiritual thought, and the ever-unfolding journey of discovery of the essential unity of all things.

Spiritual Immigration

Dianne K. Kynaston



Attending theosophical events such as the International Convention provides a venue for meeting up with theosophical friends from all around the world. It also creates an opportunity to have adventures outside the TS activities. The International Convention held in January 2020 in Varanasi, India, provided me with a chance to experience a pilgrimage, both physically and spiritually, in the company of fellow pilgrims.

Journey One – the Ancient of Days

The journey began as three pilgrims – Gerard, Bhavesh and I – gathered with our guide, Jerrindra, set off by car through the streets of Varanasi, and then by auto rickshaw through the narrow lanes that led down to the ghats.

Standing at the top of a ghat (ghats are steps that lead down to a river or lake) we gazed out across the misty view of the mighty Ganges River, where people have gathered on its

banks to wash their bodies and wash away their bad karma.

We made our way down the many steps that led to the water's edge, and the words of HPB's *The Golden Stairs* came to mind ... 'A clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect ...' et cetera. One can only begin on the spiritual journey by making an effort to start to take control of the personality – to clear its karmic baggage as much as possible.

Near the water's edge a Brahman priest conducted a Puja [act of worship – Ed.] over us – the bindi, or red dot, was placed between the eyes and the white lines of the markings of Shiva were drawn across our foreheads. We were sprinkled with Holy Water, whilst we made an offering of petals, yellow and red turmeric, and rice. We then placed lit candles with flowers in small dishes onto the surface of the Ganges. As I offered mine to Mother Ganga I evoked in my mind the goddess Saraswati for

wisdom, the goddess Lakshmi for strength to endure, and the goddess Kali to remove the obstacles of my negative traits.

Bhavesh had already bathed fully in the river, and I stood with my feet on the water's edge whilst the lapping waves of Mother Ganga washed over them. Gerard appeared to be in a blissful state as he pondered the next stage of our journey. Symbolically we had cleansed our personality and prepared ourselves for the next stage.

We then boarded a boat and began to travel along the river, observing the stream of life that pulsed along the banks – people bathing or washing clothes, priests chanting, sadhus and beggars seeking alms, cows grazing on rubbish, and cremations burning with intense flames. Seagulls accompanied us on the journey, like sylphs of the air swooping and diving in our wake, as we threw food to them.

We landed on the banks further along the river and walked up a small set of ghats, across broken land, and along narrow winding streets, wide enough only for two people. The way was very steep and reminded me of Christina Rossetti's poem *Up-Hill*: 'Does the road wind up-hill all the way? Yes, to the very end. ...'

Close to the top we stopped at a small shop where we were able to deposit our

bags, camera and coats in a safe place (maybe letting go of further karmic baggage). Once at the top we moved along a busy street, competing with cars, auto rickshaws and fruit barrows as we made our way to the Temple office.

At the office we had to present our passports and forms were filled out. We were also presented with scarves that marked us as pilgrims. Gerard remarked that it was like a form of 'spiritual immigration'. We also had to process through security at the gates of the Temple, similar to airport security.

As we entered the outer court, we were directed down a special path that ran concurrent with the one used by the Indian pilgrims. Gerard quipped that it was like going down the priority lane at the airport. We were also divested of our shoes, and thus entered barefoot, across a watery marble floor with a crowd of fellow pilgrims.

The temple was the Shri Kashi Vishwanth Mandir, which is possibly the oldest Shiva temple in India. Usually non-Hindus are not allowed into the inner sanctum of such temples, but we were accepted as pilgrims. Maybe the fact that we had undergone the Puja had prepared us for entrance. We moved in conjunction with the other pilgrims to the Shiva Lingam, at the base of which we placed wreaths

of flowers. We thus acknowledged the Godhead – the highest within us all. Next, we moved with the crowd into a small chamber that housed a statue of the goddess Annapurna, and thus paid reverence to the Great Mother by touching her feet.

We then walked around a small fenced area in which a very ancient lingam was buried, and the priest gave us a blessing. However, small monkeys suddenly jumped at us and grabbed from Bhavesh's hand a plastic bag which contained food. He managed to get it back – but did this represent the 'monkey mind' still trying to distract us on our journey?

Our goal achieved, we then began to wind back down the hill, picking up our bags along the way. We walked with a more vibrant step as we negotiated the narrow streets and broken land back to the boat.

On the return journey we travelled along the full length of over eighty ghats that line the banks of the Ganges River. After the intensity of the temple climb, the coolness of the air that arose from the river was refreshing and peaceful.

Symbolically, the three pilgrims had ended their journey. As *The Voice of the Silence* proclaims: 'A pilgrim hath returned back from the other shore.' (III:31)



Journey Two – to the Source

The day the TS convention closed I took another journey, this time by car, my driver being a local Indian. We drove for over five hours to the town of Gaya, traversing a green and fertile land dotted with villages, cows and goats. The road was a challenge for my driver, as it was also dotted with very large potholes and roadworks. On two occasions the road was blocked by a long convoy of trucks, due to a bridge being broken and undergoing repair. As a result, we had to bypass the trucks by driving down country lanes and through small villages.

Eventually we arrived at Gaya – a town overflowing with tourists from all over the world, along with a large contingent of Tibetan Buddhist monks and monks from other lineages, including monks from Thailand.

Gaya is also known as Bodhgaya as it is the site where Prince Siddhartha

sat under the Bodhi Tree and attained Enlightenment. After once again negotiating security operated by Indian military personnel, I entered the grounds of the Maha Bodhi Temple. Despite the many tourists it was a place of peace. I perambulated around the temple, went inside with a group of jostling pilgrims and stood before the statue of the Buddha. I then sat for about ten minutes under the flowing branches of the Maha Bodhi Tree in the company of other visitors sitting in

meditation. These trees live for several hundred years, and the current tree is said to be about the fourth generation stemming from the original tree.

I visited this sacred place as a worldly traveller, an immigrant moving from one culture to another, but searching within my heart for that experience of the soul as it migrates from the outer worldly life to the inner source of tranquillity.

Tribute to a Theosophist: Dianne Kynaston



I first met Dianne Kynaston in 1980, from which time her enthusiasm for Theosophy and the TS were readily apparent. She went on to become General Secretary of the Australian Section from 1983 until 1991 and subsequently served the Society unwaveringly until her passing on 21 September 2020. There has been a notable outpouring of feeling from TS members and others who have been inspired by Dianne's enthusiasm and dedication. For many years prior to her passing she remained active in the Section's national work and was a stalwart of Newcastle Lodge, although residing in Sydney. I attended many Conventions and various international TS Conferences at which she was present - most recently, the International Convention at Varanasi. She held active positions in the Northern Beaches Group, and latterly conducted study courses at Blavatsky Lodge, Sydney, up until the brief illness that preceded her departure from this world. Dianne's original research material on Australian artists, and others who were influenced by Theosophy, is held at the National Headquarters. She travelled extensively and enthusiastically, visiting various Sacred places. Her visit to the Holy City of Varanasi earlier this year helped inspire the above article. Perhaps, also, its beneficent influence helped Dianne accept this significant transition with an acceptance that was apparent. May she have a peaceful rest and onward journey. Linda Oliveira

The National President's Annual Report

1 JULY 2019 TO 30 JUNE 2020

Preamble

Presented in the pages that follow is my final Annual Report to the members of the Australian Section. As this period of three terms of office draws to a close, I would like to express deep appreciation for the support of members around this Section, which has helped to energise our mutual work. Together, we have achieved a great deal. The second half of the twelve months to 30 June this year, interrupted by the global pandemic, has been one of the most unusual periods, not just around the world, but also in the history of our Section. As a result, this report reflects the change in activity – both nationally and locally – due to lockdowns that have varied from state to state.

Highlights of note during the reporting year included:

- The very successful January 2020 Convention in Melbourne
- Some creative and innovative methods of communication with members by TS centres from March onwards
- The publication by the TS in Australia of an anthology of articles on Theosophy and Science by Dr Hugh Murdoch
- 31 presentations around the Section through the National Lecturing pro-

gramme, prior to the suspension of lecturing as from March

- Progress on editing a video about the TS in Australia, after relevant material was gathered together
- A very well received one-day event at the Canyonleigh Centre in November on the theme ‘The Treasures of India’ with attendees from Sydney, the Southern Highlands, Canberra and Newcastle
- Extensive work preparing for a bid in the Biodiversity Conservation Trust Koala Tender, for the property at Canyonleigh (See also page 123.)

NATIONAL ADMINISTRATION National President

During the reporting year, my travels and presentations within the Section covered seven TS centres in the second half of 2019, and one in early 2020 – approximately half of the Section – prior to the commencement of Covid-19 restrictions. In addition, I represented the TS in Australia at Manila in November for the Indo-Pacific Conference, and in Varanasi during late December/early January for the 2019 International Convention and the General Council meeting. Visits to the TS centres included,

as usual, opportunities to meet personally with members, Presidents and committee members to discuss any pressing issues.

The following is a summary of my main additional duties within this Section during the reporting period: Arranging the programme for, and overseeing, the Annual Convention in Melbourne, preceded by the National Council meeting. Developing presentations. Reviewing National Council policies and drafting or co-drafting new policies as required. Organising the comprehensive National Speakers' schedule up to the end of 2019 as well as National Lecturer tours, with some assistance from a member of staff. Dealing with some serious, time consuming issues in two TS centres. Editing and production of four issues of *Theosophy in Australia* (T in A), in consultation with the Editorial Committee. Final editing, formatting and overseeing the printing of a 314 page anthology of articles on Theosophy-Science by Dr Hugh Murdoch – a substantial project. Commencement of the preparation of my handover to the next National President including the development of a general manual for the President, preparation of guidelines for organising lecture tours, Conventions and events, and the selection of a set of relevant electronic files for easy reference on a range of matters. Provision of assistance to some TS centres, especially around the period of their Annual General Meetings, including advice on relinquishing Branch status and forming a Certified Group in one instance. 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. Ongoing liaison with TS centres around the Section. And dealing with a sizeable volume of correspondence.

National Council

The National Council met in January in Melbourne [Note: Its mid-year meeting took place in July - Ed.]. As at 30 June 2020 the National Council comprised the 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

Susan Lee – Western Australia

Barry Bowden – Queensland

Gaynor Fraser – South Australia/Northern Territory

Edward Sinclair – Victoria

Gerard Brennan – New South Wales/
Australian Capital Territory

Special 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, and correspondence in between meetings on matters of importance. One of the important functions of the National Council is its regular review of the national Policies Document, which continues to serve well as a guide to our national work, alongside the Rules.

The following appointments were made by the National Council for a 12 month period in January 2020:

Chair of the National Council and Vice-President until January 2021 – Susan Lee. Executive Committee – see next item.

National Executive Committee

The national Executive Committee deals with the ongoing administration of the Section. It met several times during the year. As at 30 June it comprised the usual 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: Dianne Kynaston and Cassandra Au (both from Sydney), as well as Denise Frost (Devonport), Harry Bayens (Perth, until April) and Edward Sinclair (Melbourne), each of whom travelled to Sydney for these meetings.

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 February, 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, and Electronic Media and Marketing.

Headquarters Staff and Volunteers

The following information summarises the numerous tasks that have been carried out during the year by our valued and dedicated members of staff at the National Headquarters; and by the various committed volunteers who help form our immediate and extended National Headquarters team. Their friendship and support in our work together has been

greatly appreciated. The main tasks performed by all concerned during the year are listed here:

Dara Tatray, National Secretary: Extensive work preparing for a bid in the Biodiversity Conservation Trust Koala Tender for the property at Canyonleigh, an expression of interest having been lodged in November 2019, with the tender to close in July 2020. Liaising with HWL Ebsworth Lawyers regarding the voluntary deregistration of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd, and the eventual formation of a new company to replace the unincorporated association that is presently the legal structure under which the TS in Australia functions. Working with Maple-Brown Abbott on a new management agreement, on behalf of the Theosophical Foundation which is the Trustee of the Section's investments. Dealing with disciplinary matters, in some cases unfortunately resulting in membership terminations, which occupied all of the past twelve months. Temporarily closing the Springbrook Centre in March due to Covid-19, and dealing with the thirty or so accommodation hirers affected as the result. Working out ways in which to keep the National Headquarters running smoothly despite the Covid-19 office closure, including mail and telephone redirections. Running elections for six State Representatives. Calling for nominations in the election of the next National President. Reporting to the national Executive Committee and the National Council on matters pertaining to the Rules and matters pertaining to administration and personnel. Taking care of all routine business for these entities;

writing and distributing their Minutes and Agendas; ensuring that their statutory requirements are met. Taking care of catering requirements for Committee and Council meetings (prior to March 2020 when meetings went online). Reporting to the ACNC. Maintaining appropriate workers compensation cover for the National Headquarters, and maintaining appropriate Public Liability, Building/Contents, Association Liability and other cover for all Lodges/Branches in the Australian Section. Overseeing the work of the Section's bookkeeper. Advising Lodges/Branches on the interpretation of rules. Producing and distributing quarterly investment trust reports to seven investment partners with a beneficial interest in the Section's Maple-Brown Abbott portfolio. Overseeing arrangements for the National Convention, especially regarding accommodation and meals. Ensuring that the Section's website is properly maintained, by promptly attending to any bugs or glitches.

Jennifer Hissey: Cataloguing collections of TS libraries around the Section. Updating and maintaining the Online Public Access Catalogue. Providing material to external researchers from the Campbell Theosophical Research Library. Accumulating resources for archival and website use. Convention Secretary. Assisting with T in A mail-outs.

Gil Murdoch: Webmaster for the Australian Section's website. Substantial work on adding and maintaining material on the website and web pages of Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups. Helping train and advise designated Lodge members in adding events and programme

material for their Lodges. Maintaining AV, sound equipment and data projectors. Formatting and mailing out e-Bulletins. Updating the *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals* and maintaining its search facilities, including the addition of new index items from important theosophical periodicals. Maintaining the index of the *Brahmavidya* journal and its search facility. Continuing work on a new index of *The Theosophist*. Maintaining *Links to Theosophical Texts Online*, a resource for those seeking to find theosophical writings online. Assisting in the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives. Exploring the rendering of some theosophical writings into web format compatible with computers, tablets and smart phones. Assisting with T in A mail-outs.

Pedro Oliveira, Education Coordinator: Research for presentations to several TS centres and the National Convention during the reporting period. Extensive research and development of the script for the introductory video on the TS in Australia. Research for and maintenance of the Section's Facebook page. Communicating with National Members on educational resources. Responding to DVD and CD orders. Responsible for the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives and ordering suitable new titles for its collection. Helping with the reorganisation of the Launceston Lodge library. Overseeing the organisation of the second-hand book collection. Communicating with the Henry S. Olcott Library of the TS in America regarding the digital copies of several theosophical magazines. Member of the Education

and Training, and Electronic Media and Marketing committees. Assistance to the National President. Researching and preparing a number of e-Bulletins. Organising material for the book *Science and Theosophy* by Hugh Murdoch and processing its orders. Ordering and sale of books and study courses. Processing leaflet and brochure orders for Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups. Proofreading four issues of *Theosophy in Australia*. Organising T in A mail-outs. Answering educational enquiries from TS members as well as from members of the public.

Richard Larkin, Membership Secretary: Preparing membership reports. Maintaining the membership database. Banking. General office duties. Assistance to the National President, the National Secretary and the Education Coordinator. Editorial assistance with articles for publication. OPAC data entry. Cataloguing, downloading and editing material from other Libraries. Creating new book items on OPAC. Training on OPAC. Editing and uploading OPAC items to Libraries Australia. Assisting with T in A mail outs.

Rosanna Sheridan: Assistance to the National President, the National Secretary and the Education Coordinator as required. Assistance with arranging lecture tours. Extensive typing and proofreading of articles from *The Theosophist* for uploading onto the website.

Kay Schiefelbein: Caretaker, Springbrook Centre.

Beatrice Malka: Volunteer – National Treasurer. Member of the national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust.

Chair of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Ltd.

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 until December.

Denise Frost: Volunteer – member of the national Executive Committee and Director of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust.

Phillipa Rooke: Volunteer – State Representative Qld until October 2019.

Barry Bowden: Volunteer – State Representative Qld from October 2019 and National Lecturer.

Susan Lee: Volunteer - State Representative WA, elected as National Vice-President in January 2020.

Helen Steven: Volunteer – State Representative, National Vice-President until January 2020.

Gaynor Fraser: Volunteer – State Representative SA/NT.

Janice Scarabottolo, Dr Olga Gostin, Patricia Ossenber and Ruth Holt: Volunteers – members of Editorial Committee.

Simon O'Rourke, and Skip Pry (until October): Volunteers – National Lecturers.

GENERAL COUNCIL

The General Council continued its twice-yearly meetings. As usual, I reported to the National Council on the January meeting, which was held in Varanasi instead of Adyar this year. A few noteworthy items concerned the Adyar estate, and may be of particular interest to members who have visited the International Headquarters previously:

The TS Archives have been rehoused in a larger space within the Adyar Library and Research Centre.

In June 2020 a Theosophical Academy commenced at Adyar. This is a theosophical school based on the very successful Golden Link School in the Philippines.

Regarding the first five-year renovation plan, to date, the Headquarters building, Blavatsky Bungalow and Raja House have been completed. Renovations of Leadbeater Chambers, the main guesthouse, were in progress as at the time of the meeting, with the roof to be covered with solar panels in due course.

This year, due to Covid-19, the usual mid-year meeting was not held in June in the Netherlands. Instead I had the opportunity to attend an online General Council meeting during that month, with 29 participants from around the world. The main items for discussion were the leasing of Damodar Gardens at our International Headquarters to a specialist Indian education group, negotiations for which were underway. At that meeting it was also determined that the December 2020 General Council meeting would be held online once again, on 19 and 20 December.

MEMBERSHIP

Statistics

As at 30 June 2020 the Section had 761 members, a loss of 10 members over the 12-month period concerned. The main losses and gains in numbers occurred in several larger TS centres. See also the annual membership analysis at the end of this report.

National Members

As at 30 June, the Section gained 11 National Members, mainly due to the fact that one Lodge relinquished its Charter and became a Certified Group, the members concerned being converted to National Membership. Our National Members are appreciated and receive some communications from the Education Coordinator, as well as the magazine. Some also opt to receive our e-Bulletins and are forwarded items such as Adyar e-newsletters. We are always particularly pleased to see some National Members at our annual Conventions and other national events.

Letters to New Members

Newly joined members continued to receive the 22 monthly Letters to New Members from the National President. This set of letters was also placed online after lockdown commenced and is now accessible to all members who sign into the website as members. The full set has also been sent to Lodges/Branches in the past; and a reminder that some of these have been found useful for group study/discussion as well.

Exit Surveys

A few former members who had either resigned or been lapsed completed and returned the optional exit surveys which were sent to them by the National Headquarters. Reasons cited were usually of a routine nature, but sometimes issues with a local TS centre were mentioned, in which case centres concerned were subsequently notified for any action as required.

Theosophy in Australia

Four issues of the national magazine were printed in September, November, March and June during the year under review, its contents continuing to reflect our diverse membership. The magazine commenced in May 1921 as a continuation of *Theosophy in Australasia* which began in 1895. Its one hundredth birthday will therefore occur next year, which is a significant milestone.

CONVENTIONS

2020 Convention

Melbourne Lodge generously hosted this year's National Convention. Our annual gathering was held at St. Mary's College, just outside the Melbourne CBD. The theme of the Convention was 'A Dialogue with the Universe: Science, Wisdom and Creativity' with featured speaker and long-time member, Professor Emeritus Richard Silberstein. As always, various members of our dedicated team at the National Headquarters office assisted with the preliminary organisation of the Convention, and during the Convention week.

Looking Ahead

Although the National Council made the decision concerned slightly after the end of the reporting year, it can be specially noted in this report that the Council determined that the 2021 Convention, due to be held in Perth this coming January, would be cancelled due to Covid-19, and that instead the mandatory Convention Business Meeting would take place in Sydney in January 2021. This meeting will feature the inauguration of the new National President, followed by a short talk by the new President. It was also

determined by the National Council that the January 2022 Convention will be held in Perth.

EDUCATION

Education and Training Committee / Educational Resources

The Education and Training Committee comprises the National President, the Education Coordinator and the National Secretary. During the year the committee approved the initial script for an introductory video about the TS provided by the Education Coordinator. Images were provided and video footage was later taken for inclusion in this production, the editing of which is under way as this report is written.

The Education and Training Committee prioritised the following for 2020 for the Education Coordinator:

- The development of a packaged, curated selection of introductory material on Theosophy (to be supplemented eventually with medium and advanced level material); and
- The development of a study course on the book *The Science of Yoga* by Dr I.K. Taimni

Work was well advanced on the former by the end of the reporting year.

See also items on Springbrook and Canyonleigh Events, and item on new Theosophy-Science book.

Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives

Missing copies of *Vidya* magazine were kindly supplied by the Concord Grove Press in the United States. Duplicate

copies of the General Annual Report of the Theosophical Society for several years were lent to the Olcott Library in Wheaton.

We received from Dianne Kynaston a copy of an article published in an Indian newspaper on A.O. Hume, highlighting his work as the first General Secretary of the Indian National Congress. A new book acquired for the Library was *In the Presence of Krishnamurti – Mary’s Unfinished Book*, written by Mary Zimbalist.

Jennifer Hissey, our Librarian, continued, with Dianne Kynaston, her research on people in Australia who were influenced by the TS, including John (‘Jack’) Bean, who became General Secretary of the Australian Section in 1923. Another was Thomas Hammond Martyn, who was President of Sydney Lodge. She also discovered that Buddhist author, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, from Sri Lanka, had joined the TS in 1907.

Several copies were received of the book *The Signs of the Zodiac* by Alan Pert, the author of *Red Cactus*, a study on Dr Anna Kingsford. We received from a member in New South Wales a link to an article on Florence Fuller’s painting ‘The Paper Boy’, originally posted on the website of the National Gallery of Victoria.

The Section’s Archives also provides material for research on the Society’s history, and biographical information on members who have made substantial contributions in various fields.

National Speakers’ Schedule

As well as much administrative assistance to TS centres from the National Head-

quarters, the National Speakers’ Schedule is a notable additional form of support. The schedule includes National Lecturers, the National President and the Education Coordinator, as well as International Lecturers. The restrictions associated with Covid-19 resulted in only half a year of touring during the year under review. Nevertheless, it was still possible to arrange a total of 31 presentations around the Section. It should be noted that this figure does not include the various additional presentations organised by the National Headquarters which were given at the National Convention, and at the national event held at Canyonleigh during the year.

At its mid-year meeting the National Council appointed the following members as National Lecturers for 2021, subject to their agreement: Simon O’Rourke (Sydney), Helen Steven (Hobart) and Perry Coles (Perth).

International Lecturer

With regret, due to Covid-19, I had to cancel the scheduled first tour of our Section by Dr Elena Dovalsantos from the USA this year. Elena would also have conducted classes at the annual School of Theosophy.

Book Depot, National Headquarters

Book sales from our special selection at the National Headquarters continued during the year until March at cost recovery prices, largely through information provided on the website.

Universities

University of Sydney

The Theosophical Society in Australia

continued to award the John Cooper Memorial prize to Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney, for work on the Perennial Philosophy in its Eastern and Western traditions, a prize which commenced in 2000. This year's Prizes and Awards Ceremony for The School of Literature, Art and Media (SLAM) was cancelled, with alternative options being explored. No undergraduate prize was offered by Studies in Religion at the University of Sydney for the 2019 prize. However, a PhD thesis by Jewell Homad Johnson on Kandinsky was sent for consideration. The Education and Training Committee agreed that a postgraduate prize of \$750 be awarded to this candidate.

University of Queensland

Since 2014 the TS in Australia has also made available a prize for research into the Perennial Philosophy in its Eastern and Western traditions to Studies in Religion, the University of Queensland. At the end of the reporting period no submissions had yet been received for the 2019 prize, although a postgraduate and an undergraduate prize were subsequently awarded.

Offer of New Prize - WA

The Theosophical Society Perennial Philosophy Prize is awarded to selected students of an undergraduate course on 'Philosophy East and West' at the University of Western Australia. In June, we were advised that there were no essays in 2020 worthy of the TS prize although it was suggested that one exam-essay answer would be a serious contender, especially if polished further. The Education and Training Committee decided that this did

not fit in with the intent of the Society to promote research into the Perennial Philosophy as mentioned previously, either through formal essays or else postgraduate papers. Dr Miri Albahari, who runs the course concerned, expressed the hope that a suitable paper would emerge in 2021.

NATIONAL EVENTS

Springbrook Centre

Unfortunately an event on the Bhagavad Gītā due to be held at Springbrook in 2020, which had been approved by the Education and Training Committee, was not destined to take place owing to the pandemic; the same also applying to the School of Theosophy, which would have featured Elena Dovalsantos from the USA.

Canyonleigh Centre

Dianne Kynaston ran a successful one-day event at the Canyonleigh Centre in November on the theme 'The Treasures of India' with attendees from Sydney, the Southern Highlands, Canberra and Newcastle. The Education and Training Committee determined not to hold a live-in event at Canyonleigh in late 2019 due to the proximity of the Indo-Pacific Conference which was held in Manila in November, and to help encourage attendances at the Conference. A 2020 event on the Bhagavad Gītā which was planned by this Committee could not be held.

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

Facebook Page

Posts during the reporting period include biographical information on American Theosophist and academician Renee Weber as well as an article by her, an

article on Alice Bailey and the TS, a quote from the Mahaparanirvana Sutra and from *The Key to Theosophy*, an announcement of talks by International President, Tim Boyd, at Blavatsky Lodge, as well as his visit with his wife Lily to the National Headquarters. Also included were The Cambridge Declaration of Consciousness, Alfred Deakin and the TS, and Dr Bhagavan Das' reminiscences about Annie Besant.

Other posts included When Annie Besant met Madame Blavatsky, The Core of Krishnamurti's Teaching, the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*, The Universal Yoga Tradition, a conversation with Ven. Samdhong Rinpoche, and the inauguration of the Adyar Library in 1886.

Further posts included the Resolution on the Freedom of the TS; a picture of the Buddha's statue at the Sarnath Buddhist Temple, Varanasi, India; a link to the web page of Madame Blavatsky's writings in *Links to Theosophical Texts Online*; an excerpt from the article 'The Message for "Me" ' by Hugh Shearman, *The Theosophist*, December 1981; and a link to an online edition of *Occult Chemistry*. Also included were 'Character sketch of Madame Blavatsky' by Col. Olcott; and lessons from the study course on Meditation, based on Adelaide Gardner's book *Meditation – A Practical Study*.

The page is now followed by 1,991 people and the posts during the period under reporting reached an impressive 96,860.

Members are encouraged to look at our Facebook page. You do not need to be a member of Facebook in order to browse

our many and varied posts. Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/austheos>

e-Bulletin

Our e-Bulletins once again provided ongoing announcements about events, inspirational quotations and additional information, typically resulting in a boost to registration numbers for TS events. During the year these Bulletins helped advertise the Indo-Pacific Conference, the November Canyonleigh event and the National Convention. Also included were items about the new members' letters on the website, information about the Theoscience website, two book reviews by physicist Paul Davies, and the anthology of articles by Dr Hugh Murdoch, along with the Subba Row medal, among others. At the time of writing this report, there were 671 recipients on the distribution list, an increase of 125 over the same time last year. A reminder, too, that members who do not receive e-Bulletins, and who would like to do so, can contact Gil Murdoch at the National Headquarters: web@theosophicalociety.org.au

OPAC

Electronic publicity for the holdings of TS libraries around the country continued during the year through the Section's Online Public Access Catalogue at: <https://austheos.softlinkhosting.com.au>

As at 30 June the following number of holdings were catalogued:

Adelaide	3879
Blavatsky	3204
Brisbane	3779
Campbell	2824
Launceston	1638
Melbourne	8099
Perth	4524

Resource lists of the most requested subjects are available from the search page under ‘Other searches’. Jennifer Hissey welcomes suggestions for further lists and can be contacted at: catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au
Do take time to have a look at this unique catalogue.

Marketing/Business Plan

Our website and Facebook page are the two main modes of outreach by the TS in Australia – see also both of these items. During the year I slightly revised and updated the leaflet on the TS Emblem and the booklet on ‘The Essentials of Theosophy’, both of which were reprinted. A consultant with relevant experience in the not-for-profit sector has yet to be engaged to develop a Business Plan out of the existing business model.

Website

The average monthly page views during the period under reporting was 9,471. The programmes of Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups were included on the site on a regular basis. The largest usage by country has come from Australia, the United States, India, China and the United Kingdom. The *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals*, which is appreciated internationally, had an average number of 3,314 hits for the period in which statistics were available. Other items that received good attention on the part of users of the website were *Brahmavidyā* – the electronic index of Adyar Library and Research Centre Bulletin and the magazine *Theosophy in Australia*.

Gil Murdoch, our Webmaster, besides his ongoing work on the Section’s website,

has uploaded the regular issues of *TinA* and e-Bulletins. The Olcott Memorial Library of the TS in America has kindly made available to us the online text of the ‘Blavatsky Lectures’ originally published by the English Section. Gil has also produced regular updates of the Union Index which now has 226,101 entries.

NEW BOOK ON THEOSOPHY-SCIENCE

From mid-March until the end of the year my major project was preparing the Theosophy-Science articles by Dr Hugh Murdoch, as previously approved by the Education and Training Committee, for publication as an anthology in book form by the Australian Section. The book was close to completion by the end of the reporting year. This project spanned several years, with much preliminary work undertaken by two other members of the National Headquarters staff. It proved worthwhile to use additional time available, while lecture tours and events were suspended, in order to help bring this project to fruition through final proof reading and corrections, formatting of the text, and arrangement of a cover design. Dr Victor Gostin, Convenor of the Theosophy-Science Group, generously wrote the Foreword for the book. [See also September issue of *Theosophy in Australia*, p.104, regarding the cost and how to purchase this publication.] This is possibly the first book to be published by the Australian Section.

SUPPORT Annual Fund

The members’ support for the Annual Fund has helped to finance various new educational and promotional initiatives,

which are not for administrative purposes, since the early 1990s. Once again, I extend appreciation to all those who have donated to the Annual Fund, no matter how small the contribution. During the reporting year this Fund was earmarked for the new introductory video which was under development at the time of writing this report.

Lodges/Branches and Groups

Requests for assistance were received regularly throughout the year from TS centres as well as members around the Section and were dealt with by members of staff at the National Headquarters.

The following items, most of which are dealt with elsewhere in this report, are additional forms of support from the National Society for our TS centres: the provision of a shared platform on the website helping to enable the promotion of our centres, the material produced from the Education and Training Committee, the National Speakers' Schedule, International Lecturers, OPAC and Marketing.

An International Society

International Links

Our international links are important, bearing in mind the interconnectedness of the Australian Section, and therefore all of our members, with our world-wide Society. At our National Convention in January members were invited to sign postcards of greeting to Sections and smaller TS bodies around the world, as well as a number of TS members. These are always appreciated. I also sent a number of messages of greeting during the year, on request, to some TS gatherings in

other countries, on behalf of the members of our Section.

Adyar

Several Australian members attended the Society's 2019 International Convention in Varanasi, as well as sessions of the School of the Wisdom, during the year under review. eNewsletters from the International Headquarters were forwarded to TS centres around the Section. A reminder, too, that the international TS website can be browsed at: www.ts-adyar.org

Indo-Pacific Federation

Since 2016 Gerard Brennan has been the President of the Indo-Pacific Federation, of which our Section is a member, and is currently serving his second term of office in this capacity.

A group of Australian members attended the Indo-Pacific Conference, held in Manila from 9-12 November 2019. This was a successful gathering, with 140 in attendance, including 40 from outside the Philippines. A highlight was the visit to the Golden Link School. International President Tim Boyd and his wife Lily, along with International Secretary Marja Artamaa and International Treasurer Nancy Secrest, were all present.

RULES

Elections for State Representatives

Elections for State Representatives were carried out in 2019. As there was only one candidate for each of the Electoral States, a yes/no vote was held and the following were elected or re-elected unopposed: Barry Bowden – Queensland; Gaynor Fraser – South Australia/Northern Territory; Helen Steven – Tasmania. At the end of the reporting period nominations

were called for the 2020 election of State Representatives for New South Wales/ACT, Western Australia and Victoria. The role of our State Representatives is an important one, constituting two thirds of the membership of the National Council and representing every member in their Electoral State at the Council's six-monthly meetings.

Lodge/Branch Rules

Routine amendments to the Rules of TS centres around the Section were reviewed by the Section's Rules Committee during the year, for a decision by the national Executive Committee.

Notices of Motion

Three Notices of Motion to amend the Section's Rules were passed, with the results announced at the 2020 Australian Convention Business Meeting. The Rules amendments concerned the application for membership form, invoicing of Lodges/Branches for membership dues, and provisions regarding a National President not residing within commuting distance of Sydney.

LODGES/BRANCHES AND CERTIFIED GROUPS

Due acknowledgement must be made of the significant voluntary service to Lodges, Branches and Certified Groups which has been given during the year under review by many members around the Section.

The following is a summary of each Annual Report received from our Lodges/Branches and Certified Groups, this year reflecting the general restrictions around this country associated with Covid-19:

Hobart Branch, TAS (chartered 1889)

From mid-March until the end of June, the active members of the Branch formed a chat group on WhatsApp, sharing articles, quotes, comments and reflections. Several lunches were held at members'/friends' houses. The usual Tasmanian weekend seminar in Launceston was not held this year. Visiting speakers included, among others, the National President and the Education Coordinator. Talk topics included 'The Answer is You' and 'Taoist Philosophy'. A new, enthusiastic member who joined near the end of the reporting year commenced an update of the Branch's library catalogue and database. Also, from time to time a discussion topic was chosen with a particular emphasis on TOS ideals.

Melbourne Lodge, VIC (chartered 1890)

As part of its duties as host Lodge for the 2020 Annual Convention, Melbourne Lodge organised two concerts along with a most enjoyable day outing to Arthurs Seat and the tourist town of Mornington. Public meetings continued until activities were suspended. The Education Coordinator and the National President visited and spoke at the Lodge in August and November respectively. Some topics of talks and study groups were: 'Yoga Flow for Everyone', 'TheoSocial Discussion Group', 'Mandala Symbolism Workshop', 'Ancient Wisdom Modern Insight – Discussion Group', 'The Secret of Evolution', 'Self-Transformation Workshop' and 'Pearls of Taoist Wisdom'. As at the end of the reporting year the Lodge was still operating in Russell Street

Melbourne, awaiting completion of the renovation of its new premises which was delayed due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Library was closed as from April, with the Bookshop operating through online sales. The TOS hosted a seminar in September: 'Philosophical Tree – Kabala and the Healing Power of Trees'.

Adelaide Lodge, SA (chartered 1891)

Until the suspension of activities monthly members' meetings continued, as well as an active programme of public meetings. Study/discussion groups included 'The Secret Gateway', 'Ancient Wisdom – Modern Insight' and Secret Doctrine videos. Visiting speakers included, among others, National Lecturer Barry Bowden and the National President. Some of the programme titles were 'Reincarnation', 'Great Breath/Modern Cosmology', 'Body/Mind', 'Happiness Is', 'Demystifying How to Be', 'Scientists in *The Secret Doctrine*' and 'Harappan Civilisation and Theosophy'. The bookshop opened seven days a week except for Public Holidays and the nine-week closure from March until May. The Library was opened for several hours, five days a week, with the exception also of a nine-week closure. The TOS continued its fortnightly fundraising, an activity which ceased as from March.

Brisbane Lodge, QLD

(chartered 1895)

Programme highlights during the reporting year included public talks on 'Evolution', 'Ramakrishna and Vivekananda' and 'Tsung-Mi's Teachings on the Interpenetration of Opposites'. Weekly public meetings and monthly members' meetings continued. The following group

activities were held: 'Krishnamurti Study', 'Meditation' and 'Awakening Through Theosophy'. Twelve Lodge members attended a meditation retreat conducted by Barry Bowden at Springbrook. The roof replacement and exterior painting of the Lodge's heritage building were both completed. Public and members' meetings were suspended as from March. Also, the TOS activities included an art workshop, a visit to Sandgate Theatre and three short talks about the Order of Service at the Lodge.

Perth Branch, WA (chartered 1897)

Public and members' meetings continued through the reporting year until activities were suspended in March. Some of the Branch's activities during the period concerned were: 'Mahatma Letters', 'Esoteric Buddhism', 'Tai Chi Meditation', 'Meet Up', 'Hatha Yoga', 'Open Heart Meditation', a three-day event on 'Science of Silence' and 'Aspects of Yoga'. The National President and Barry Bowden both visited during the year. The bookshop and library opened for several hours each day from Tuesdays to Saturdays. Members enjoyed a free weekend at the Branch's Mt. Helena Centre with various Theosophical readings and talks. Also, the TOS hosted two guest speakers accompanied by fundraising dinners.

Launceston Lodge, TAS

(chartered 1901)

During Covid-19 restrictions, the President and Secretary kept in touch with members by phone and email, also forwarding newsletters and online offerings by the TS – both local and international. The library books of the

Lodge were sorted into relevant categories with the help of three dedicated Lodge members and the Education Coordinator, and are now housed at the home of a member for the time being. Some Lodge activities during the reporting period were: ‘The Power of Thought’, ‘The Secret of Evolution’, ‘Krishnamurti Discussion’ and ‘Discovering the Diamond – Inner Disarmament’. Visiting speakers included the National President and the Education Coordinator. Also, two members worked to raise funds for the TOS, resulting in donations to two worthy local organisations.

Blavatsky Lodge, NSW (chartered 1922)

The Lodge continued to sell second-hand books, CDs, DVDs and other donated items at minimal prices in the Lodge foyer. Books, CDs and DVDs were borrowed from the Lodge Library, the most popular subjects being Theosophy, Eastern and Western Teachers, and Mysticism. The Office Assistant helped facilitate the smooth running of the Lodge and assisted in the Library. Information posted on Meetup and Facebook attracted visitors to the Lodge and resulted in new memberships. A new e-newsletter, ‘Open and Alive’, was introduced after the curtailment of meetings to maintain contact with Lodge members. Weekly public meetings and monthly members’ meetings continued until March. Some of the Lodge’s study groups were ‘The Astral Body’, ‘Studies in Higher Consciousness’ and ‘The Fundamentals of Esoteric Philosophy’. Also, the TOS held well attended monthly meetings, followed by an open circle presentation by TS

members and representatives of charitable organisations.

Newcastle Lodge, NSW (chartered 1941)

After the suspension of its regular meetings in March, Lodge meetings took place using Zoom, with some members as far away as Canberra and the Southern Highlands in attendance. Due to unforeseen circumstances, it was not possible on this occasion for the Lodge to provide additional information about the first part of the reporting year.

Atherton Lodge, QLD (chartered 1950)

Atherton Lodge had its 70th birthday in April, a milestone which was marked subsequently in the Lodge’s newsletter. Unfortunately, Lodge meetings were suspended at that stage so a celebration in person could not take place. Visiting speakers at the Lodge’s monthly meetings included Simon O’Rourke and Barry Bowden. Some of the topics of presentations were ‘The Teachings of Pythagoras’, ‘Consciousness after Death’, ‘Who are You, Helena Blavatsky?’, ‘What is Memory?’, ‘The Science of Self Knowledge’, ‘The After Death States and their Similarities with Spiritual Practice’ and ‘Reintroducing Theosophy and the Theosophical Society’.

Sunshine Coast Lodge, QLD (chartered 2004)

Weekly public meetings continued. The Lodge’s Members’ Survey indicated that quite a few people would prefer daytime public meetings as well as discussion groups. An experimental daytime public

meeting on a Sunday resulted in an impressive attendance of 60. Also, more discussion panels are planned. Group study included John Algeo's 'Theosophy: an Introductory Course' and 'Foundations of Esoteric Philosophy'. The Lodge kept in touch with members and friends through the provision of weekly information by email and through its informative Facebook page. A supper was held during visits by the National President and the Education Coordinator and a library service was provided seven times through the reporting period. TOS members kept in touch online, and managed to visit and check on elders. Instead of the three regular annual events, there was one fundraiser only.

REPORTS FROM CERTIFIED GROUPS

Our various Certified Groups have been in existence for up to twenty-four years, and once again helped make the TS better known in their areas.

Blue Mountains Group, NSW (certified 1997)

The Blue Mountains Group continued with studies on *The Secret Doctrine*, which have taken place for a number of years, with a good average attendance. Other programmed activities concerned 'The Akashic Records', 'The Power of Thought Forms', 'Ponder on This', 'Sound Healing' and 'Theosophy'. Discussion on the subject of each meeting and related areas was encouraged during the Group's gatherings. Up until March, when activities were suspended, afternoon tea was also shared at a local café after meetings.

Canberra Group, ACT (certified 2019)

The Canberra Group was certified late last year after the Canberra Branch relinquished its Charter. During the reporting period there was one group study meeting on the theme of 'Wisdom Inspiration' early this year prior to Covid-19 restrictions. Social activities were restricted to Zoom meetings with Newcastle Branch and the TS in Russia. WhatsApp was tried as an informal chat medium but not used very much. International emails were forwarded to members and friends. A newsletter was prepared for the Group early in the year, with a shorter information Bulletin also provided in May. In March the TOS discussed its projects and read 'Preparing for Death and After' by Nelda Samarel from *Theosophy in Australia*.

Gosford Group, NSW (certified 1997)

Members continued to bring a plate to share on monthly lecture nights, as well as monthly study days held in private homes. Some members travelled to Sydney to attend TS activities there. Members were able to borrow from the Group's small library. Some of the programmes presented through the year were: 'The Self and its Bodies', 'The Infinite, Manas and Spiritual Development', and 'The Sage of Arunachala'. Meetings were cancelled for the last several months of the reporting year. Also the Gosford Group was saddened by the sudden passing of its former Coordinator, Marianne Fraser, in November.

Logan Group, Qld (certified 2019)

The Logan Group normally met twice a month, followed by shared coffee after meetings. Group study focussed on the 'Introduction to Theosophy' course by John Algeo, and volume 2 of *Talks on the Path of Occultism* which explores *The Voice of the Silence*. One meeting was on the theme 'Quantum Physics – Power of Thought'. Also, the Education Coordinator visited and spoke during the reporting period.

Mornington Peninsula Group, VIC (certified 2000)

The Mornington Peninsula Group continued to hold group meditation and social group lunches before its regular monthly meetings. A Christmas dinner was held as well. The National President visited during the reporting period. Topics of some of the presentations were 'Self-Transformation', 'Yoga Sutras of Patanjali – Science of Yoga' and 'The Way – Pearls of Taoist Wisdom'.

Northern Beaches Group, NSW (certified 1996)

The Coordinator of the Northern Beaches Group, located in Sydney, generously made her home available for meetings. Simon O'Rourke, Dianne Kynaston and the Education Coordinator gave talks to the Group. Topics of meetings included: 'Reincarnation Revisited', 'Theosophy and the Yoga of Wisdom', 'Shambala: the Ideal World in Myth, Religions and Cultures', 'The Spiritual Path in the Teachings of Pythagoras' and 'Theosophy: Objects and Propositions' – a discussion. After February, meetings were suspended.

Toowoomba Group, QLD (certified 2007)

Meetings were held twice a month, with members' only meetings once a month. Theosophical discussions by Barry Bowden were held six times during the reporting period. Simon O'Rourke, Helen Steven and a couple from New Zealand visited. Internet events were shared, followed by some online discussions. Some of the topics from the Group's active programme were 'Some Lesser Known Kingdoms of Nature', 'Theosophy' – an open dialogue; and 'Looking for the Path'. The Toowoomba TS Springbrook retreat was held on theme of 'The Silence of Silence'. Also, the Group enjoyed an interview with the Education Coordinator on the ABC.

Wodonga-Albury Group, VIC (certified 1996)

Volunteer members continued to open the library at the Group's shopfront premises for at least two hours each day from Monday to Friday, which is an impressive effort. A discussion group was held on Wednesdays. As from March, the Group's activities were suspended.

THE THEOSOPHICAL ORDER OF SERVICE

The National Coordinator reports:

2020 has been a challenging year for most people and this has also been the case for the local Australian TOS groups. Even with the impact of the Covid-19 lockdowns significant funds in support of the national projects have been raised. The generous efforts of our TOS family have enabled the Australian TOS to

contribute a total of AUD \$18,100 to the following international projects.

Pakistan Home Schools	\$6,000
Pakistan student sponsorships	\$4,650
Syrian Refugees (via TOS-Italy)	\$3,000
Golden Link College Philippines	\$2,500
India:	
Olcott Memorial School Adyar	\$600
Animal Dispensary Adyar	\$200
Womens Welfare Centre Adyar	\$900
Odisha Girls' Home	\$250

In addition to this we also were able to follow up with the Bush Fire relief contributions made at the TOS AGM at the start of this year and in conjunction with local group activities, working towards the \$1 for \$1 pledge, a total of \$1,792 was contributed towards animal bush fire relief activities in Australia.

A very heartfelt thanks is given to the two other national officers. This year a rejuvenated Geoff Harrod has again given wonderful service as the National TOS Secretary and provided essential Web

administration support. Dianne Manning has continued to diligently execute the role of National Treasurer and we are again very grateful for her most excellent service. I would also like to extend a very hearty thank you to Jean Carroll who has been assisting the National committee as a very enthusiastic mentor over this past year. Her joyous presence at our various Skype meetings during this last year has been a true blessing. Lastly and most importantly, thank you to all the TOS members around Australia for your ongoing support for all this valuable work. Your efforts and loving participation at the local level has made it all possible.

George Wester
National Coordinator
TOS Australia

CONCLUSION

This brings to a conclusion my final Annual Report to the Australian Section. I trust that this has been found informative, and extend my heartfelt best wishes to our members and TS centres around this Section for the future.

Linda Oliveira

Results: Election of State Representatives

The call for nominations for election to the office of State Representative in each of the states NSW/ACT, Western Australia, and Victoria was made on 13 May 2020, with a deadline for receipt of nominations set at Friday 14 August. There being only one nomination in each electoral state, the following candidates were each elected unopposed, for a second consecutive term. Gerard Brennan, State Representative NSW/ACT; Susan Ingrid Lee, State Representative WA; and Edward Sinclair, State Representative Victoria. With most staff still working from home, the National Council gave permission to waive Rule 21 (5) in this election and forgo the Yes/No vote in the event of their being one only candidate in each or any electoral state.

Dara Tatray, National Secretary

Annual Membership Analysis of Lodge/Branch Membership as at 30/06/2020

Lodge/Branch	Members 30-Jun-19	Trans in	New	Rejoin	Total in	Resign	Lapse	Dec Trans out	Total Out	Members 30-Jun-20	Diff
Adelaide	76	1	3	3	7	4	11	3	0	65	-11
Atherton	12	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	13	1
Blavatsky	140	2	23	3	28	0	10	2	1	155	15
Brisbane	59	2	21	1	24	0	6	1	1	75	16
Canberra	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hobart	16	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	17	1
Launceston	17	0	1	1	2	5	3	1	9	10	-7
Melbourne	132	0	12	6	18	0	34	0	0	116	-16
Newcastle	13	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	14	1
Perth	175	0	32	4	36	25	21	2	0	163	-12
Sunshine Coast	37	1	0	0	1	0	9	0	1	28	-9
Sub Total	677	7	94	18	119	34	94	9	3	656	-21
National	94	21	14	5	40	1	19	4	5	105	11
Total	771	28	108	23	159	35	113	13	8	761	-10

Result - Election of National President



The call for nominations for election to the office of National President was made on 2 February 2020, with a deadline for receipt of nominations set at Friday 17 July. Two candidates submitted their nominations by that date, Barry Bowden and Stephen McDonald. Beatrice Malka and Richard Larkin were appointed by the national Executive as the scrutineers. They counted the votes on 29 September, as did the National Secretary. There were 537 members eligible to vote in this election, 273 of whom returned valid votes by the deadline of 25 September 2020. The results of the ballot are as follows.

Votes in favour of Stephen McDonald	146
Votes in favour of Barry Bowden	127

Seven votes were returned without ID forms, and therefore not counted. Two of those were in favour of Barry Bowden; and five in favour of Stephen McDonald. Had the margin between Stephen and Barry been even closer than it was, those unidentified votes could have had a material impact on the results of the election. The voting instructions could not have been clearer. Unless the ID form is returned the vote will not be counted. For perhaps obvious reasons, it is essential to establish that a ballot has been cast by an eligible voter.

The three-year term off office of the National President will commence after the close of the Convention Business Meeting on 25 January 2021, when Linda Oliveira will inaugurate the new National President.

I offer my congratulations to Stephen McDonald, and look forward to welcoming him to the national headquarters early in 2021. Congratulations also to Barry Bowden. It was a fairly close result.

Dara Tatray, National Secretary

Education

Pedro Oliveira, Education Coordinator

Practical Theosophy: Madame Blavatsky's Example



The great legacy of our Principal Co-Founder, H.P. Blavatsky, is not only her books and innumerable articles. Her great legacy is her own example of how to put Theosophy into practice. As she herself wrote in *The Key to Theosophy* (Section 2): ‘“Handsome is, as handsome does” could be paraphrased in this case and be made to run: “Theosophist is, who Theosophy does.”’

The following passages are from the article ‘Remembering HPB’ by Pedro Oliveira, published in *The Theosophist*, July 2010:

How does a person who is free from self-interest see the world? How does she see herself? If we are not free from self-interest we may tend to speculate about this matter, but speculation cannot take us very far. One possible answer to these



questions was given by Shantideva, a Buddhist teacher from the University of Nalanda in the eighth century CE. He wrote: ‘Whoever wishes to quickly afford protection, to both himself and other beings, should practise that holy secret: the exchanging of self for others.’

In her life and in her work Madame Blavatsky did practise that holy secret. There are numerous instances of her generosity, compassion and selflessness: for example, when she saw a poor woman sobbing, with her two small children, on the quay of Le Havre in France, just before boarding the ship that was supposed to take them to the United States. On approaching her she became aware that the woman had been swindled by a supposed agent for immigrants in Hamburg who sold her bogus tickets. Without hesitation HPB went to the ticket office and exchanged her first class ticket for three tickets in the third class.

She followed in her life the advice of one of her Teachers: ‘... the chief object of the T.S. is not so much to gratify individual aspirations as to serve our fellow men.’

National Calendar of Events



2021 ANNUAL CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING of the TS in Australia and INAUGURATION OF NEW NATIONAL PRESIDENT

Due to Covid-19, the intended 2021 National Convention in Perth is postponed until January 2022; and the 2021 Annual Convention Business Meeting will be held in Sydney.

Date: Monday 25 January

Venue: The Sibyl Centre, The Women's College, 15 Carillon Avenue,
Newtown, NSW.

PROGRAMME

- 10.15am:** Brewed coffee and specialty teas
11.00am: **OPENING** of Convention Business Meeting
12.30pm: **CATERED LUNCH** - time to catch up with friends in person
2.00pm: **INAUGURATION OF
 NEW NATIONAL PRESIDENT,
 Stephen McDonald
 CLOSE** of Convention Business Meeting
SHORT TALK by new National President
 'Nurturing The Theosophical Society In Australia
 - Our Legacy to the Future'



The Inauguration and short talk will be video recorded for uploading onto the website.

Registration fee: \$15 for lunch and the Inauguration of the new National President, no charge for Convention Business Meeting.

Registration form: theosophicalsociety.org.au

Registration deadline: Friday 8 January, subject to availability of places.

Early registration is recommended.

Car Parking: Car parking at \$15 per day is available.

Registrations and Car Parking Enquiries to: National Secretary Dara Tatray
by email only: natsec@theosophicalsociety.org.au

Next national events at the Springbrook and Canyonleigh Centres: TBA

Minutes - 2020 Convention Business Meeting

Minutes of the Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia held on Sunday 19 January at St Mary's College, 871 Swanston St, Parkville Victoria. Notification had been provided in *Theosophy in Australia* in accordance with Rules 12 and 13 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia. The meeting was opened at 9.15 am.

CONVENTION CHAIR

The Meeting was chaired by the National President, Linda Oliveira.

The Chair requested a show of hands when anyone wished to speak, requested that courtesy and consideration be observed, and pointed out that there would be time for discussion during the information session at the close of the Meeting.

1.ROLL-CALL OF VOTING DELEGATES AND PROXIES

Admission of Observers

It was resolved to admit Manfred May as an Observer to the meeting (moved Pamela Petersen; seconded Tony Buzek).

In accordance with Rule 15(2) of the National Rules, the names of the voting delegates and proxies must have reached the National Secretary on Form 4 by 5 January 2020 at the latest. Only those delegates so named by the due

date were eligible to vote at the present meeting. They were noted as follows:

- Helen Steven for Hobart Branch
- Phillipa Rooke, or failing her, Dianne Manning for Brisbane Lodge
- Gaynor Fraser for Adelaide Lodge
- Franka Hughes, or failing her, Ruth Holt for Launceston Lodge
- Tony Buzek, or failing him, George Ilkowiec for Newcastle Lodge
- Edward Sinclair, or failing him, Maria Jevic for Melbourne Lodge
- Barry Bowden, or failing him, Linda Oliveira for Atherton Lodge
- Joanna Teazis, or failing her Jean Carroll, for Sunshine Coast Lodge
- Pamela Peterson, or failing her, Peter Brereton for Blavatsky Lodge
- Sue Lee, or failing her, Franco Guazzelli for Perth Branch

It was noted that the Section's Lodges and Branches had already voted through the Lodge/Branch convention meetings and that no new significant motions could be moved at the present meeting.

Vote Allocation 2020

The National Secretary pointed out that in accordance with Rule 16 Voting at Convention, each Lodge is entitled to one vote irrespective of the size of its membership, and in addition to this, each Lodge is entitled to one vote for every 50 members

in Good Standing at the end of the previous financial year (30 June 2019).

Lodge Members in Good Standing	Votes
Adelaide.....56	2
Atherton.....9	1
Blavatsky.....115	3
Brisbane.....43	1
Hobart.....13	1
Launceston.....10	1
Melbourne.....80	2
Newcastle.....10	1
Perth Branch.....104	3
Sunshine Coast...26	1
Sub-total.....466	16
National.....84	2
Total.....550	18

2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE 2019 CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING

The Minutes of the Convention Business Meeting held on Sunday 20 January 2019 at Sancta Sophia College, University of Sydney were published in the September issue of *Theosophy in Australia*. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches voted FOR the Minutes of the 2019 Convention Business Meeting.

3. NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

It was noted that the National President's Annual Report for the Year ended 30 June 2019 had been sent to every member of the Section in November. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/

Branches voted FOR the Annual Report. There was no discussion on the report.

4. NATIONAL TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

The National Treasurer's Report for the Year ended 30 June 2019 had been sent to every member of the Section in November. The National Secretary reported that all our Lodges/Branches voted FOR the National Treasurer's Report. The Chair called for comment on the Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer pointed out that the Maple-Brown Abbott funds are managed according to our conservative asset allocation guidelines. Peter Brereton pointed out that if the unrealised loss had not been included in the profit and loss statement the surplus would have been that much higher, adding that he cannot understand why a balance sheet item (of unrealised losses or gains) continues to be included in the profit and loss. The National Secretary stated that if directed to do so by the Section's accountants or auditors, the unrealised gains and losses will not be included in future profit and loss statements.

5. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BALANCE SHEET FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019 AND AUDITOR'S REPORT THEREON

The Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the year ended 30 June 2019 had been sent to every member of the Section in November, minus the auditor's report, the auditor's report not

having been received by the date of the mailout. Nor was it received by the date of the present meeting. The income and expenditure statement, the balance sheet, and the budget however had been sent to every member. The National Secretary reported that all Lodges/Branches had voted FOR the Financial Statements and Balance Sheet. The Chair asked if there were any questions on the financial statements. Peter Brereton raised a question about the reporting period of ten months for the year end 30 June 2019. He was advised that the financial year was changed as the result of a vote by members at the previous Convention Business Meeting, including the affirmative vote by Blavatsky Lodge. Peter Brereton questioned the inclusion of a number of items under the heading Accounting Policies, pointing out that they are not in fact accounting policies, and should be included in the section on Notes to the Financial Statements. The National Secretary agreed, and added that henceforward the Section's annual financial statements will be in a new format in keeping with current practice for companies in Australia.

6. BUDGET FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30 JUNE 2020

The budget had been sent to every member of the Section in November. A motion that the budget be received was carried (moved Sue Lee; seconded Phillipa Rooke). It was noted that the National Council had approved the Budget at its meeting in June 2019. The National Secretary reported that

all Lodges/Branches had voted FOR the Budget. The National Treasurer pointed out that we had budgeted for a small loss. The National Secretary pointed out that she had budgeted for an expenditure on consultants and other professional, based on plans to obtain assistance from the relevant professionals in two areas: formulating a costed business plan based on the existing business model; and assessing the viability of the Springbrook and Canyonleigh centres, with a view to making them more profitable. The National Secretary reminded the convention that the year before, a member asked whether there were any plans to try to make Springbrook and Canyonleigh more profitable. She therefore thought it relevant to point out that in November 2019 she had lodged an Expression of Interest in the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) Southern Highlands Koala Habitat Conservation Tender, and that she had been advised that the EOI had ranked as a high priority for site assessment, which was due to take place in February 2020. More details about terms and conditions would be known after the site visit. The National Secretary stressed that the EOI did not commit the property owner to an agreement, but early indications were that it could prove to be profitable, at the same time as conserving the land in perpetuity, while not depriving the TS of the use to which it was currently put.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

It was noted that the National Council

had appointed National Audits Group Pty Ltd as Auditor for 2020, under Section Rule 23(4): ‘The Convention shall appoint an Auditor or failing such an appointment it shall be made by the National Council which shall determine the remuneration.’

8. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEWLY APPOINTED OFFICERS

The Chair reported that the following appointments had been made by the National Council at its recent meeting (18-19 January 2020) and by the national Executive at its meeting on 10 December 2019:

National Vice-President: (NC)

Sue Lee

National Treasurer: (NC)

Beatrice Malka

Assistant Treasurer: (EC)

Dara Tatrav

9. ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT RESULTS

State Representatives for Tasmania, Queensland and South Australia/N.T. The National Secretary reported that the results in the election of the State Representatives for Queensland (Barry Bowden), South Australia/N.T. (Gaynor Fraser), and Tasmania (Helen Steven) were declared on 16 October 2019 following the YES/NO vote in each state; there having been but one nomination per state.

10. VOTE ON NOTICES OF MOTION

Five Notices of Motion had been

forwarded to each member. All Lodges/Branches voted FOR motions 1 to 4 inclusive with the exception of Adelaide Lodge, which voted against Motion 2 regarding the provision of membership dues invoices by the National Headquarters, annually. Adelaide Lodge would like 30 days to pay the annual invoice instead of 14. However, the notice of motion was carried by majority vote.

All Lodges/Branches voted FOR Motion 5, with the exception of Melbourne Lodge which voted against Motion 5 which addressed the exceptional circumstances under which the National Society might move towards a swift membership termination, waiving the three weeks’ right of reply in certain circumstances. Concern had been expressed regarding the circumstance of an unsound mind, given the stigma attached to such a declaration, questions as to how such a thing would be assessed and by whom. Sue Lee suggested that it really comes down to conduct. The National Secretary pointed out that being of sound mind is a common feature of wills and testaments, and that the motion had been carried by a majority and could not now be rescinded.

Those concerned with the wording could not yet come up with a suitable alternative (the wording, and not the core idea being at issue). The National Secretary stated that the wording could be amended in future. All five motions were thus carried.

11. PLACE AND TIME OF NEXT CONVENTION

The Chair announced that the 2021 Convention would be held at St Catherine's College Perth from Saturday 23 to Saturday 30 January.

12. RESOLUTIONS OF GOODWILL

The Chair stated that postcards addressed to absent friends and well-wishers had been prepared ready for convention delegates to sign during the week.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

13.1 The National President announced that the National Council had re-appointed the sitting members of the national Executive, consisting of the three ex officio officers (National President, National Secretary, National Treasurer), and Dianne Kynaston (Newcastle Lodge), Denise Frost (Launceston Lodge), Edward Sinclair (Melbourne Lodge), Harry Bayens (Perth Branch), and Cassandra Au (Blavatsky Lodge).

13.2 A few questions were asked and answered about recent legal expenses. The suggestion was made (or question asked) about the Theosophical Society making a donation to a bushfire appeal. The National Secretary responded by

pointing out that making such donations is not allowed under the Rules of the Association. Victor Gostin pointed out that the Theosophical Order of Service is arranging for donations to be made to a bushfire appeal. Peter Brereton suggested that it was time to review the Section's business plan. The National President responded by pointing out that in due course that will be taken care of with the help of a consultant.

13.3 The National Secretary provided a brief overview of the possible incorporation of The Theosophical Society in Australia, which is more or less unavoidable given current legislation and current norms. This will entail the formation of a new company and transfer of assets from The Australian Section Theosophical Trust and The Theosophical Foundation. More information will be provided to each member in due course.

13.4 Lucille Crocker thanked the National Council and other officers for their work.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.19 a.m.



ANNUAL CONVENTION BUSINESS MEETING OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY IN AUSTRALIA

The 2021 Convention Business Meeting of The Theosophical Society in Australia will take place at 11.00a.m. on Monday 25 January at the Sybil Centre, The Women's College, 15 Carillon Avenue, Newtown, Sydney.

This notification is provided in accordance with Rules 12 and 13 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia.

AGENDA

Roll Call of Voting Delegates and Proxies
Confirmation of Minutes of 2020 Convention Business Meeting
National President's Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2020
National Treasurer's Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2020
Financial Statements and Balance Sheet for the Year Ended
30 June 2020, and Auditor's Report thereon
Budget for the Year Ending 30 June 2021
Appointment of Auditor
Announcement of Newly Appointed Officers and National Council
Members, and any Corresponding Retired Members
Announcement of Ballot Results: State Representatives
Vote on Notices of Motion
Place and Time of Next Convention
Announcement of Ballot Results: National President
Inauguration of National President
Any Other Business

Theosophical Order of Service

*A Union of those who Love
– in the Service of All that suffers.*



Even with the Covid-19 lockdowns around Australia the work of the TOS Australia has been ongoing. A total of \$18,100 was disbursed to the various international projects supported by TOS Australia and \$1,792 to local Bush Fire support projects. This was no mean feat and the local groups are to be congratulated on the outstanding result achieved this year.

Funds disbursement has been ongoing with receipt acknowledgements and some positive feedback being received. The responses from TOS Italy members were very lovely and heartfelt and I thought it would be lovely to share them with you all.

1: Today we received the generous donation. The kind help will give us the opportunity to keep supporting the little clinic in the Bab Al Salam camp. Thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts! Sandra and Stefania

2: It is our great pleasure to inform you that we have received the sum of € 1,723.80 meant to the Syrian refugees TOS project. Once again our heartfelt thanks to all TOS Australia members

for their tireless support and generosity! Wishing you all the Best, Patrizia Calvi, Società Teosofica Italiana

We are planning to hold a TOS Australia AGM in late January / early February 2021 and this will be done using either SKYPE, WEBEX or ZOOM meeting technology in order to facilitate member participation. It has also been suggested that the local groups may be able hold a local meeting at the nominated time and then as a group connection to the AGM meeting. This would then allow non – IT proficient members the opportunity to also participate. I am happy to receive any feedback and thoughts on these ideas.

As always, Loving best wishes to ALL.
Be Safe, Be Well, Be HAPPY.

Cheers, George Wester,
National Coordinator
email: tos.australia@gmail.com



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Self-Realisation

The state we call realisation is simply being oneself, not knowing anything or becoming anything. If one has realised, he is that which alone is, and which alone has always been. He cannot describe that state. He can only be That. Of course we loosely talk of self-realisation for want of a better term.

That which ‘is’ is peace. All that we need do is to keep quiet. Peace is our real nature. We spoil it. What is required is that we cease to spoil it.



Review ...



Nitya ... A Tale of Two Brothers,
Mahesh Kishore, SHF Publications,
USA, Cost – USD \$35.50 + shipping
& handling. Go to:

<https://shfpublications.com/buy-now/>



This book has to be one of the most extraordinary books ever printed. In many respects, it unravels a mystery at the heart of J. Krishnamurti's life.

Historically

speaking, the book covers the period from the time the two brothers were discovered playing on the beach at Adyar, India, until Nitya's death in 1925. It is not about the teachings of Krishnamurti per se. The events which led up to Krishnamurti's separation from the Theosophical Society and his development as a separate entity make for compelling reading.

The most significant relationship in Krishnamurti's life was with his brother Nitya. They were twin souls and the love between them has never been fully documented until now. People will be fascinated with

this story. It traces the lives of the brothers through the establishment of the Theosophical Society to the moment the boys were discovered playing on the Adyar beach in India, by C.W. Leadbeater and Dr Annie Besant. The book opens the door to a thousand questions and paradoxes. Were there actually spiritual Masters who directed the course of the world at this time? If so, to what degree did they influence the life history of the two boys? How did Theosophy influence the teachings of Krishnamurti and how did these teachings change direction after he left the Theosophical Society? What may Krishnamurti have known about himself that he never disclosed?

His beloved brother, Nitya, by his death, may have enabled Krishnamurti to fulfil his destiny as one of the most enigmatic, and spiritually profound teachers of the 20th century.

This book is beautifully written and meticulously researched. The views of the author are never presented dogmatically and readers are given the freedom to make up their own minds.

Trisha English

News and Notes

2020 International Convention 27-30 December 2020 Theme: ‘Cycles of Awareness’



The 145th International Convention of the Theosophical Society will be held *online* on the above dates. This is special opportunity for many members in this Section to attend an international TS Convention from the comfort of their homes. The main speakers will be:

29 December: Leni Robredo, Vice-President of the Republic of the Philippines

29 December: Ravi Ravindra, Professor Emeritus, Canada

30 December: Tim Boyd, International President, the Theosophical Society

For registrations, the latest programme updates and more go to:

<https://tsconvention.com/>



Inauguration and First Talk

A reminder that the Inauguration of the new National President, Stephen McDonald, and his first talk to the Australian members, will be video recorded on 25 January and subsequently uploaded onto the website. Keep a watch on: theosophicalsociety.org.au

Body of Lama Preserved After Death

The Central Tibetan Administration reports that Bylakuppe, Karnatakaka, a resident of Sera Mey’s Samnorling monastery in Bylakuppe, Geshe Ngawang Palsang, passed away on 17 October. Since then, he has remained in a *thukdam* or meditative state without emitting a sign of death or decay of his body, according to a report received.

Thukdam is a Buddhist phenomenon in which a realised master’s consciousness remains in the body despite its physical death. Though declared clinically dead, the individual’s body shows no signs of decay and is found to remain fresh for days or weeks without preservation. Scientific inquiry into this phenomenon began a few years

ago under the initiative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

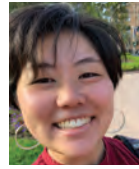
See also *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, Vol. 12, pp. 537-8.

University Prizes Awarded by The TS in Australia

The TS in Australia awards prizes to three universities for research into the Perennial Philosophy in its Eastern and Western traditions. This year it has awarded prizes for 2019 to two students at the University of Queensland:



Chara Scroope for the Honours (postgraduate) prize on ‘Īśvara in Sāṃkhya thought, and



Riona Moriya for the undergraduate prize for her essay on ‘Kālī: Making Sense of the Paradoxical “Terrible Mother”’.

Also, in October, instead of the usual gathering at the University of Sydney, the National President attended the online annual Prizes and Awards Ceremony for the School of Literature, Arts and Media. As mentioned in the Annual Report, the winner of the postgraduate John Cooper Memorial Prize, Studies in Religion, was Jewell Homad Johnson for her PhD thesis on Kandinsky.

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.

The Freedom and Responsibility of Lodges and Branches

The freedom of Lodges and Branches is defined by the scope of the Society’s Objects as well as its essential mandate to make Theosophy known as a practical living Wisdom, which can uplift human consciousness to a realisation of the Oneness of life. Therefore, although the Society has no official creed of its own and upholds freedom of thought, and while it is acceptable to invite some outside speakers who can contribute to the exploration of the Ageless Wisdom, it is not appropriate for our platform to be used by such speakers to actively promote other organisations or belief systems. Each Lodge and Branch was chartered by the International President to be a representative of the Society in its area. Its work and programme should reflect the character, altruistic ethos and spirit of the Theosophical Society.

Resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (2019)

Section Directory

It is advisable to check in advance to confirm resumption of meetings.

Australian Section National Headquarters

Level 2, 162 Goulburn Street,
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Ph: 02 9264 7056 / 9264 6404
Fax: 02 9264 5857
<https://theosophicalsociety.org.au>
Campbell Theosophical Research Library:
catalogue@theosophicalsociety.org.au

Australian Capital Territory

Canberra Group, Certified 16/11/2019
Meet: Emeritus Faculty, ANU
24 Balmain Cres, Acton
2pm, 3rd Saturday each month
Coordinator: Gordon Herbert
Tel: 0466 464 064
Email: canberratheosophicalsociety@gmail.com
Secretary: Barbara Harrod
Tel: 02 6254 1415

New South Wales

Blavatsky Lodge, Chartered 22/5/1922:
Postal Address: PO Box 319, St Leonards NSW 1590
Meet: Suite 8, 599 Pacific Highway, St. Leonards
NSW 2065 (entrance in Albany Street)
Telephone: 02 9267 6955
Email: contact@tssydney.org.au
<https://sydney.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>
Meet: 1.00pm Wednesdays
President: Rosanna Sheridan
Secretary: Pamela Peterson

Newcastle Lodge, Chartered 3/12/1941:
Meet: Morrison Room, 29 Highfield Street,
Mayfield NSW 2304
7.30pm 2nd Friday each month
President: Howard Gregg
Secretary: Tony Buzek
Tel: 0452 633 132
Email: anthonybuzek61@bigpond.com
<https://newcastle.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>

Blue Mountains Group, Certified 13/5/1997:
Meet: Members' Lounge, Blue Mountains
Cultural Centre, 30 Parke Street (above Coles),
Katoomba NSW 2780
Meet: every Monday, 2.00 - 4.00pm
Acting Coordinator: Jessica Gemmell

email: Jasmine de Vimes
tsbluemountains@gmail.com Tel: 0415 535 525

Gosford Group, Certified 11/11/1997
Meet: The Narara Community Centre,
Pandala Road, Narara NSW 2250
8.00pm 2nd Tuesday each month
Coordinator: Vivien Wareing
Tel: 0487 196 654
email: vivienwareing@hotmail.com
Secretary: Roni Ostergaard
Telephone: 02 4358 1413

Northern Beaches Group, Certified 2/4/1996:
Postal address and meeting address:
c/- 31 Riviera Street
Avalon NSW 2107
1st Saturday each month as from February 2021
1.30pm meditation, 2.00pm talk/discussion
Please email to confirm meetings.
Coordinator: Nila Chambers
email: nilachambers@bigpond.com

Queensland

Brisbane Lodge, Chartered 21/1/1895:
355 Wickham Terrace, Brisbane QLD 4000
Tel: 07 3839 1453
email: brisbanelodge@theosophyqld.org.au
<https://brisbane.theosophicalsociety.org.au>
Meet: 7.30pm Wednesdays, bookshop
and library open 6.00-7.25pm
President: Phillipa Rooke
Secretary: Dianne Manning

Logan Group, Certified 9/4/2019:
Meet: Meeting Room 2, Logan Hyperdome Library,
Mandew Street, Loganholme, Qld.
1st Friday each month, 9.00am - midday
Tel. 0418 755 496
Coordinator: Christine Gwin
email: logantheosophy@gmail.com

Sunshine Coast Lodge, Chartered 1/4/2004:
Meet: Buderim Croquet Club,
Syd Lingard Drive, Buderim QLD 4556
Note: This venue will most likely be changing
in February.

Tel: 0417 873 481
 7.00pm Thursdays
 Email: theosophy.sunshinecoast@gmail.com
<https://sunshinecoast.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>
 President: Joyce Thompson
 Secretary: Jean Carroll

Toowoomba Group, Certified 10/7/2007:
 Meet: Hospice Board Room, 57b O'Quinn Street,
 Toowoomba QLD 4350.
 Meetings on a Thursday evening once a fortnight
 at 6.30pm.
 Annual Springbrook retreat each Winter
 Coordinator: Gayle Thomas
 Secretary: Barry Bowden
 Tel: 0438 331 885
 email: gaylethomas8@gmail.com

South Australia

Adelaide Lodge, Chartered 26/5/1891:
 310 South Terrace, Adelaide SA 5000
 Tel: 08 8223 1129
 Email: president@tsadelaide.org.au
www.theosophical.org.au
 Meet: Members Meeting 10.00am 4th Friday of
 every month. Please contact Lodge for additional
 meeting dates.
 President: Gaynor Fraser
 Secretary: Ann Pritchard

Tasmania

Hobart Branch, Chartered 7/6/1889:
 13 Goulburn Street, Hobart TAS 7000
 Tel. 03 6294 6195 (please leave message)
<https://hobart.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>
 Meet: 7.30pm Mondays
 President: Helen Steven
 Secretary: Berry Dunston
 Email: helen_steven@live.com

Launceston Lodge, Chartered 12/1/1901:
 Meet: Salvation Army, 111 Elizabeth Street,
 Launceston
 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1.00pm
 Postal address: 28 Teggs Road, Gravelly Beach, TAS
 7276
 email: launcestontheosophicalsociety@gmail.com
<https://launceston.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>
 President/Treasurer: Franka Hughes
 Secretary: Ruth Holt
 Tel: 0418 346 526

Victoria

Melbourne Lodge, Chartered 9/12/1890:
 126 Russell Street, Melbourne VIC 3000
 Tel: 03 9650 2315 Fax: 03 9650 7624
 email: info@melbournetheosophy.org
<https://melbourne.theosophicalsociety.org.au/>
 Meet: usually 4th Saturday each month
 Acting President: Edward Sinclair
 Acting Secretary: Robert Mullaney
Mornington Peninsula Group, Certified 8/2/2000:
 Meet: Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House,
 Canadian Bay Road, 1st Sunday
 of the month
 (12.00pm meditation - 12.30pm lunch + library -
 1.30pm presenter + questions and comments)
 Coordinator: Alice Opper
 Tel: 0439 563 313

Wodonga-Albury Group, Certified 9/7/1996:
 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: tsperth@iinet.net.au
<http://www.tsperth.com.au>
 Meet: 7.30pm Tuesdays
 President: Franco Guazzelli
 Secretary: Victoria la Rondie
 (to 1 December 2020)

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

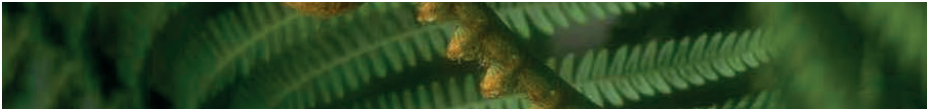
2184 Springbrook Road,
 Springbrook QLD 4213
 Tel: Office/Hall 07 5533 5211
 email: info@tsretreat.com.au
 Caretaker: Kay Schiefelbein

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)*



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.