



ED.05

Diary



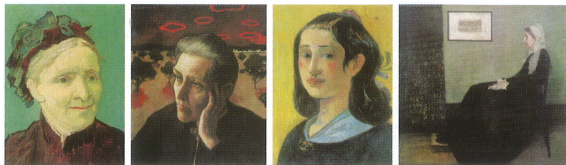
24 March 2009 - Thought I would start my new soft diary with a couple of papers art cuttings to see how it goes – Microsoft Photo editor – my new favourite friend! These are from Newsweek – One of my top ten jobs to be an image collector – rejected due to lack of a living!

Hard (good) game of squash last night. I like pushing the exertion limits – doesn't take too long unfortunately these days – reminds me of basketball and American football – run until you can run anymore, and then run a little more – conditioning they used to call it. Not that good for you I feel – eyes began to lose focus at times last night, or was it lack of eye ball co-ord? – no actually it felt like the walls were moving in and out at times! Garry had a bit of the same thing – black spots in his eyes. Need to do some longer range fitness stuff as well to develop overall fitness. Want to keep weight on however – Squash, swimming/running/ weightlifting – where's the time...!

Scully's funeral on the weekend – went and buried her ashes out in the field next to us under a new Frangipani sapling. Kids are great around death – Stella struts into the wake declaring “so how did Scully die?” Ewie was asking me earlier if Scully would come back to life after she was lashed – constant fringes of communication – mostly just the wrong side of the fringe!

Think this new diary will be a very visual thing – images from web, photos etc etc. My life (Life.) is becoming much more visual and feeling these days and less wordy. Stephen Hawking wrote about that didn't he – or was that equations – yes equations I think.

Still avoiding work – or being drawn to other things (anything but work!) it would seem. Am a bit stale – don't like the constant questioning of myself, my capabilities etc etc. I am not one of these incredibly capable people who can



manipulate perceptions to suit themselves (the Peter Hoard's of the world – although he has huge capability also!). I just want to be and to observe and to partake and not get to stressed and twisted and forced in the whole thing.

“When my I lay my head on a pillow, the earth strongly pulls me earthward.
The force is far fiercer than gravitation.
I flatten out like a flounder at the bottom of the sea.
Though my eyeballs keep rolling, I see very little.

If I were being pulled toward hell, there'd be some future pleasure.
But the bare ground has no intention of allowing such a luxury.
All it wants to do is to stick me to it's surface,
Lest I forget that I am made of dust.

Yet I soon fall asleep
And dream that I am leaping toward the sky.
I happily kick the street's asphalt with my Reebocks
And evade the electric poles to the accompaniment of someone's requiem.

I called the model plane I made as a boy 'Tottering Angel'.
It used to zigzag up, spin and plummet nose first to earth.
Ever since, the earth has been my teacher,
Telling me that I have no place to live or die except on the bare ground.”

Tanikawa
Modern Japanese Poet

Just go to the end of this book (selected poems) – really enjoyed it , could connect to a lot of what he was saying... good on all sorts of levels...

25 March 2009 - Singapore Business awards last night. For some reason can't quite figure out Peter Hoard asked me to go as a personal favour - ??? Probably to support Jenny. Black tie and S\$230 later – Shangri-La – always fantastic food but really – who cares about these things! The individual award winners were impressive in what they had done but a lot of it was probably good timing and right place – don't want to take it away from them actually, just don't want to get over-excited about it.

A bit of context is the Hewitt award for preferred employer in Singapore we are about to win. Given there was a survey done and we polled very well – all good stuff but Hewitt know us in Australia, this is their first survey here I think, a lot of it would have been directed by George Beaton to whom we pay money to consult on other business things... can't help but wonder – we are

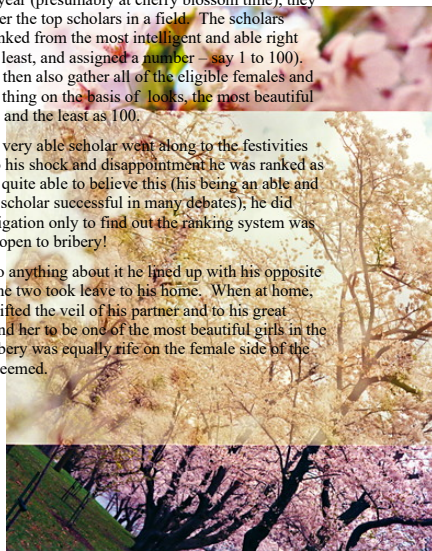
also paying S\$30k for an editorial in the recruitment section of the Straits Times (hence our invite last night). I actually think it is all deserved and good things to be doing but have trouble getting enthused about the whole deal.

26 March 2009 – Was told the story (Chinese fable) of Cherry Blossom Luck at dinner the other night.

Tao Hua Jin (Cherry Blossom Luck) – Somewhere in China each year (presumably at cherry blossom time), they used to gather the top scholars in a field. The scholars would be ranked from the most intelligent and able right down to the least, and assigned a number – say 1 to 100). They would then also gather all of the eligible females and do the same thing on the basis of looks, the most beautiful ranking as 1 and the least as 100.

One year a very able scholar went along to the festivities and much to his shock and disappointment he was ranked as no. 80. Not quite able to believe this (his being an able and well known scholar successful in many debates), he did some investigation only to find out the ranking system was corrupt and open to bribery!

Unable to do anything about it he lined up with his opposite match and the two took leave to his home. When at home, the scholar lifted the veil of his partner and to his great surprise found her to be one of the most beautiful girls in the village. Bribery was equally rife on the female side of the equation it seemed.



I like this story because of the Taoist connotations – act in the right way and things will come...

Very heavy work at the moment – mentally very difficult to stay motivated and am also feeling a little under the weather so getting tired and grumpy. Can't seem to let my mind rest – constantly thinking about things – work, kids, house renovations... Could do with some time off.

27th March 2009 – Shares are in what they call a bear rally at the moment – 20% (which is really only 10% as they were originally worth twice what they are now!), increase in a week or two. Could do with recovering some of those losses – will need to make house affordable.

If we sell Park Street - +550k, build on Abbotsford -500k, we will have gone pre-Singapore from having a 550k house and 150k mortgage to having a 800k house, 175k shares with (450k-50k)=400k mortgage. Net gain 800-400-550+150+175=175k! over 6 years of Singapore – saving around 30k per year ignoring house appreciation and super etc. Should be about twice that but investment in Abbotsford Street will not be so efficient – over capitalising of 200k in above figures which is where the differences are - but it's a lifestyle choice and something we really want to do!

Lay awake last night thinking what it would be like imagining living there – downstairs with the lights on in the living area doing what I want/need to do!



28th March 2009 – The world is a much better place when viewed to music. Walking to or from the MRT with music is a bit like a music video – you catch still frame impressions of the things around you on the way all with a lot more emotion and exotic meaning! Evidence you can distort the world as you see fit or need to. Good and Bad. Good or bad on the individual also – how to gauge how much you do that, how far you should take it? Life needs some denial of reality about it or nothing would ever get done!

Went to an art exhibition this afternoon – The Coffee Connoisseur just behind Boat Quay – how I would set up a coffee shop given the chance – last exhibition we saw there was with Richard and Alison – series of life drawings most of a particular woman who was actually there – a bit uncomfortable and funny at the same time – wouldn't say we were immature but the serious nature of the work makes things funnier than they should be at times – it was also an opening night hosted by Austcham president John Dick which didn't help the situation. A whole lot of ...well expat dicks all quaff quaffing – what a load of bullshit really!

Anyway this exhibition was by Ketna Patel – some nice prints for S\$400-600 and Perspex type works for S\$3-5,000. Neither of us liked them enough to buy them – think we will have to fall in love with something one day! Not about to buy for investment just at the minute!

Kids are starting to get a bit unruly – Stella is quick to let us know when she doesn't like something – what are we doing where are we going – boring – I want toys 'r' us – I want to buy something – Why can't we do that!?!?... Freya is getting into the twos and is less reliant and more apt to dig her heels in and protest as well! Ewan is the same frustrating emotional boy away in the clouds all the time – I can see so much of myself in him!

And who says I can't doodle on a soft diary – or at least browse for images I kind of like and rip them off!



CON-fusion: if you're not confused, you're not paying attention ASIA POP! art + furniture by Ketna Patel

See, Touch, Feel, and Sit on ASIA POP! by tcc

"ASIA POP!" by Ketna Patel is a collection of Asian street narratives. It has an unmistakable look - a boisterous yet harmonious visual cacophony that is plural and laden with many meanings. ASIA POP! takes you on journeys through the streets of Asia, from their lurid depths to their cultured heights.



This exhibition by tcc presents, for the first time, an opportunity for the viewers to interact with the artist's work. It is a metaphor for a larger phenomenon - Singapore is a cosmopolitan Ambassador to the rest of Asia; by being here, we are pausing at a cultural crossroad. A few minutes at the tcc, basking in ASIA POP!, is a few minutes dipped into our collective consciousness, where we hope your 'gaze' will make these stories come alive.

art + furniture will be on display till 31 March 2009
Venue: tcc "The Gallery" 51 Circular Road

Opening Hours:

Sunday to Thursday & Public Holidays 11am to 12am
Friday, Saturday & Eve of Public Holidays 11am to 2am

2 9th March – Every day – seems I like the idea of an electronic diary – or maybe it is I am on the computer every day and like the idea of avoiding work? – or creating something?

Pool at the BC this morning with the kids. I am not well and have a very short temper at the moment – seems sickness is just a background that comes and goes, affects my general mood and wellbeing but something that just gets put to one side. Easier in Singapore as you don't get the hugely runny nose you get in the cold dry air of Melbourne.

In at work now – end of year so must get budgets right. Everyone else too busy to ask – am I being too hard on myself – maybe – I can't bring myself to be unreasonable to people like Garry who would normally be called upon to do this – he has enough on his plate with Pavilion, a bit of a disaster job with Russell! Need to rely on him for that...

Mao's last dancer (Li Cunxin), is inspiring me. Not the hardship or any of that but the resolute ambition and want to do something. The sacrifice to get to an end goal. I remember that from sport when I was younger, never to his extent but going out and doing stair training, doing football training late at night in the cold and the wet, rejoicing in the sacrifice and enjoying the satisfaction and good will feeling towards oneself it gave. I need to get a bit of that sacrifice and discipline back in my life – right after I get over this cold!

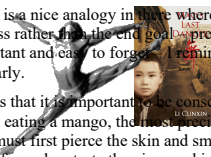
There is a nice analogy in *Avatar* where his teacher is talking to him about the process rather than the end goal – pretty simple and actually cliché but important and easy to forget. I remind myself regularly after forgetting regularly.

That is that it is important to be conscious of the process, and to enjoy it. When eating a mango, the most delicious of all fruits, one mustn't dive right in. You must first pierce the skin and smell the fruit, cut off the skin and taste that, even if you dare taste the pip, revel in the juices and aromas, and take your time doing it properly, taking the time to experience it good and bad and let it soak in. And then taste the flesh of the fruit...

Particularly true with the kids – slow down and enjoy the process, identify with them and experience the process with them. The flesh of the fruit will come. It is about building solid experiences also – experiences you learn from, that form foundations on top of which to build and reach higher...

He talks of days locked in personal practice trying this and trying that and of finally breakthroughs when he discovers it is about his weight distribution on a particular leg as he takes off – experimenting, experimenting until he gets it – perseverance and humility in the face of the challenge.

I am trying to stop biting my nails at the moment – was starting to get quite bad. I remember waking up from my accident coma and seeing my hands like they were someone else's – long hair on the knuckles and long (for me) nails and quick etc. Part of the problem is that I convince myself I am tidying them



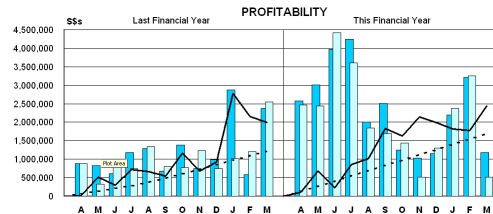
up when in fact I am making things worse – must force myself to do nothing come what may.

In at work with a big thunderstorm coming over from Clementi (...and Wessex estate), way, bit of Blondie playing on i-tunes, couple of kids around periphery of hearing and a fan back and forth to keep air moving - quite a vivid atmosphere stirring up the sub-conscious to wonder what is going on – feels like there are other connections behind the scenes becoming active... - and then all of a sudden it all disappears!... back to the reality of the everyday, in



fact the reality of an uninspiring day in at work on the weekend. Feel a bit cheated – will have to back track to a few more Blondie songs to try and hang on to it.

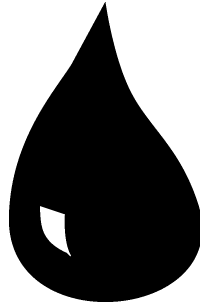
Looking forward to some truly free time without the shackles of work needing to be done hanging over my head tonight – all too short – will have to plan to



relax...

Accounts look ok for the end of year, 9+%profit. Cash flow poor but S\$6M in debt from MBSIR site staff which we are trying to get into the bank account. Also a lot of hidden contingency in the books – 650k real contingency (extra for profit shares etc which we will never see), and even more S\$1M+ for things like Fusionopolis 2A fee, Sports Hub success fee, and Southbeach payment that are in the wings! Hopefully enough to give us a bit of a buffer for a reasonable year next year. The biggest threat we face is non-payment of the MBSIR site supervision debts – really angry at others not having sorted this out – I got involved when was too late it seems... Not dead yet – if we receive by Friday with cheques dated 31st March then could get into last years books.

30th March 2009 – A five year old girl beheaded at her own birthday party by her obviously deranged 23 year old brother. How are you supposed to deal with that? What is life like? – five years old when you are just starting out in life and everything should be new and exciting and magical.



31st March 2009 - You hope that it is a lot worse in your mind where there is time to contemplate, time for the smiling image of the girls face to echo around your mind while you think of her innocence and vulnerability, her reliance on the people around her who should be loving and caring for her. Worse than in hers where it all happened in an instance before she really had a chance to comprehend what was going on... We are animals after all.

I am finding myself angry all the time at the moment. I am still not well, I am not able to keep up with email at work, I am constantly interrupted at work by people, and there are a lot of things not going my way... I need to try and relax, to try and remain nice...

Pasta LaBrava last night for date night. Little Italian place in Tanjong Pagar just around the corner from work. Old Italian guy who makes a point of seeing everyone who comes in, dropping by the table to say hello, paper table cloths with a basket of chalk, big white ceramic horses head majestically looking up from a prominent table to one side, curly mane full of life and being. Pasta la atmosphere...

1st April 2009 – Having a shit day

S&S%# list

- CDL payment Southbeach
- MBS Site Staff Invoicing
- F2A L&M dispute
- Pavilion Progress & Contract
- CREATE – Sathu
- GWB - invoicing & add work

2nd April 2009 – Lunch and a beer with Michael McGowan, an hour with email and music (earphones at the computer – this is tomorrow calling Bryan Ferry), a few quick win items ticked off the to do list and a mtg on OPG with Patrick over a beer and a scotch helped rescue yesterday!

The sound of a bit more eccentric behaviour broken up by the odd scotch – outside of work hours – is sounding like a good strategy to go forward with at the moment. I wonder if I will come out of a haze in a year or twos time and ask myself what happened there – what was I thinking!?!? Music is helping a lot – that's the reason movies have sound tracks after all is it not?

3rd April 2009 – Little girl of one of the façade guys was in on the weekend who only had one eye. The other missing and scarred. She would have been 7 or 8 years old and was playing with her brother and sister. Beautiful little girl but breaks my heart the emotional turmoil she will face growing up. Take something as beautiful and happy and energetic and vulnerable as that and push it through the social mincer we have to go through in growing up and learning to cope with the world. Learning to accept the realities. You want to take her and protect her and everyone else who faces that (is that a reflection on how I feel about myself – probably). I still face that every day – the questioning and failures and small successes, the wrangling with life and people and things – mostly internal probably...

Was joined at half past three in the morning last night by Stella. Sat up and had a little chat while I did some work – searched a couple of things on the internet together. She is convinced she hardly sleeps wakes up after ten minutes and stays awake the whole night – she doesn't believe me when we say we couldn't wake her for things like seeing the candles during earth hour – not for love nor money!

Ewie had a bit of a scare yesterday putting a plastic toy into the microwave – had a magnet and a metal core card to activate it – ensuing sparks and lightning

and flames... and tears! Found the metal core card on the bathroom sink looking worse for wear – obviously had rushed in to put it out ☺.

Quite proud of him actually having the knowse to know how to do it and being investigative and exploratory getting into boy strife like he should be.

Shares have resumed a bit of their rally which is good news – long way to go but hopefully some of them are sustained gains.

4th April 2009 – Called in yesterday afternoon to a bit of a stalemate on the retail canopies for MBS. Ended up working through the design of an anchorage off the cuff to get it to work with everyone present. Convinced it worked in the end and all was ok but a bit of pressure with MBS, the contractor, Meinhardt and our guys all sitting there around the table. Woke up this morning thinking about it at 3:00am – just this mornings excuse to wake up (it is always something!) – anyway this thing holds the tie back cables for a canopy the size of a football pitch – makes a big bang if it were to come down I think were the words I used yesterday! My god – hope everything is ok – must remember to get Juan to double check the concrete on Monday – Juan is pretty good so I am sure it will be ok!... yes sure it will be ok...

Transposed my to do list – realised that a lot of it involves the web and so far more likely to happen in this diary! Wikipedia – my friend!



Deism is a religious and philosophical belief that a supreme natural God exists and created the physical universe, and that religious truths can be arrived at by the application of reason and observation of the natural world. Deists generally reject the notion of supernatural revelation as a basis of truth or religious dogma. These views contrast with the dependence on [divine revelation](#) found in many [Christian](#),^[1] [Islamic](#) and [Judaic](#) teachings.

[Deists](#) typically reject most supernatural events ([prophecy](#), [miracles](#)) and tend to assert that God (or "The Supreme Architect") has a plan for the universe which that Architect does not alter either by intervening in the affairs of human life or suspending the natural laws of the universe. What organized religions see as divine revelation and [holy books](#), most deists see as interpretations made by other humans, rather than as authoritative sources.

Deism became prominent in the 17th and 18th centuries during the [Age of Enlightenment](#), especially in the [United Kingdom](#), [France](#) and the [United States](#), mostly among those raised as Christians who found they could not believe in either a [trine God](#), the [divinity](#) of Jesus, [miracles](#), or the [inerrancy of scriptures](#), but who did believe in [one god](#). Initially it did not form any congregations, but in time deism strongly influenced other religious groups, such as [Unitarianism](#) and [Universalism](#), which developed from it. It continues to this day in the form of classical deism and modern deism.

And Google, my other friend:



Rational Christianity – following excerpt from a Rational Christianity page which is pretty self explanatory:

Christian Religion: Is it True?

The Christian faith is being attacked like never before, with superstar atheists challenging the existence of God, while claiming that the Biblical God is a wicked tyrant.

Christian youth are abandoning the faith *en masse* as they enter their first year of college. They are finding that the typical Christian apologetics arguments simply don't work in the real world.

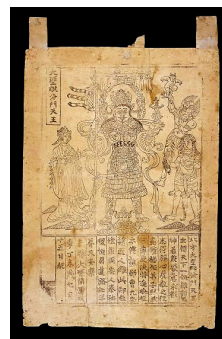
Students are learning the hard way that "Jesus loves me" simply doesn't cut it when debating the philosophical arguments for the existence of God.

But Christianity *is* true — and its defenders shouldn't be using poorly constructed arguments.

There is an incredible need for rational Christian apologetics to be revitalized with reason, strengthened through analysis and understood both philosophically and biblically. To fill this need, Rational Christianity was founded.

Hmmm – misguided individuals?– it is incredible the extent that people go to – especially the sites on rational Christianity – theologians gone wild. It really is a brainwashing type thing. Am I just stupid or are the parallels between Mao's communism and Islam and a hundred other cults and religions not just to plain in your face obvious!? How can they all be right, and why do you think everyone who has been exposed to one or the other happens to believe their particular belief is the right one?

Following up on some of the actual art pieces I didn't get to see on my Taklamakan trip:



Vaishravana with attendants
From the Mogao cave complex, Cave 17
Near Dunhuang, China
Five Dynasties period, dated AD 947
Wood block print, ink on paper
Height: 51 cm
Width: 32 cm
Acquisition number: # OA 1919.1-1.0245
Gift of Sir Marc Aurel Stein



Hand scroll painting of Kṣiṅgarbha and the Ten Kings of Hell
 From the Mogao cave complex, Cave 17
 Near Dunhuang, China
 Five Dynasties, late 9th-early 10th century AD
 Ink and pigment on a paper hand scroll
 Height: 27.8 cm
 Length: 239.9 cm
 Acquisition number: # OA 1919.1-1.080
 Gift of Sir Marc Aurel Stein

I like this sort of stuff as it shows the goings on of daily life – prisoners being dragged around in shackles etc..



Scenes of the heavens above Mount Meru
 From the Mogao cave complex, Cave No. 285
 Near Dunhuang, China
 Inscribed with the dates 538 and 539
 Western Wei period (535-556 CE)
 Ink and mineral pigments

I cant remember if I went into this cave in particular but it is pretty indicative of the artwork. I remember the beautiful flying Asparas especially.

*“Crying camels come out of the Western Regions,
 Tail to muzzle linked, one after the other.
 The posts of Han sweep them away through the clouds,
 The men of Hu lead them over the snow”*

Mei Yao-ch'en, 11th c. CE (tr. Schafer)

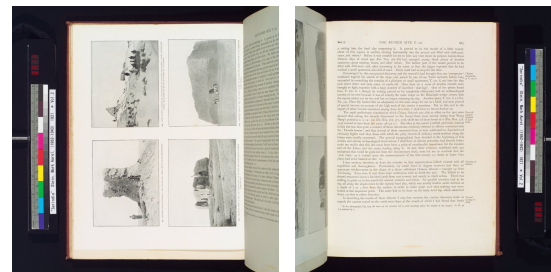
There are some fantastic book archives by some of the original explorers – searching under Mark Aurel Stein came across this one – incredible detailed scanning of the whole volume all hyperlinked to text etc. Brought it all back – nice knowing this is all out there, a bit like continuing the trip – getting to see all that went before.

<http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/VIII-5-B2-9/N-2/page-hr/0161.html.en>

<http://dsr.nii.ac.jp/toyobunko/VIII-5-B2-9/N-2/page-hr/0160.html.en>

The rapid preliminary examination which Chiang Ssi-yeh was able to effect on the spot soon showed that, among the records discovered in the tunnel, there were several dating from Wang Mang's period (A.D. 9-19; see *Doc.* Nos. 367, 371, 372), while two of those found at ii (*Doc.* Nos. 338, 339) seemed to date from the years 48-45 B.C. But what at the outset justified particular interest in this site was that quite a number of these documents evidently referred to officers connected with the 'Yü-mün barrier', and that several of them emanated from, or were addressed to, dignitaries of obviously higher rank than those with which the petty records of ordinary watch-stations along the Limes were usually concerned. The general topographical facts detailed at the beginning of this section, and certain archaeological observations I shall have to discuss presently, had already before made me realize that this site must have been a point of considerable importance for the western end of the Limes and the route leading along it. In fact, their evidence, combined with any indications that could be gathered from the documentary finds, soon led me to conclude that the 'Jade Gate', as it existed since the commencement of the first century B.C. down to Later Han times, had to be located at this te.

Records suggest location of Jade Gate.



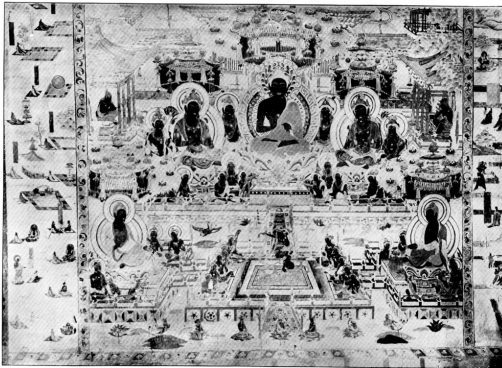
Records of
A. D. 17.

greatest care. On two of them, however, now *Doc.* Nos. 368, 369, Chiang Ssü-yeh was able to recognize a date of Wang Mang's reign corresponding to A. D. 17. No. 370, mentioning an officer commanding a thousand horse, also was found here. It is highly probable that all these remains of records came from some refuse-heap of Wang Mang's time and were gradually carried into the shaft by the winds which filled it up with drift-sand. As there was no hope, owing to the increasing damp, of any records or other perishable relics having survived further down, I did not sacrifice the time and labour needed for a complete clearing.

Shaft prob-
ably used
as dungeon.

The original purpose of this curious excavation puzzled me very much until Chiang Ssü-yeh and some of my Muhammadans put forward the suggestion that it may have been intended for a dungeon, the use of similar wells for the safe keeping of dangerous prisoners being still remembered in Chinese Turkestan. In the Central-Asian khanates, too, the survival of such methods of burying prisoners as it were alive is attested until the advent of Russian rule. No doubt, they could be paralleled from other parts of the East. If this explanation is right—and its correctness appears to me very probable—the narrow side opening or tunnel near the top of the well must have served as an air-hole and for admitting the prisoner, his food, etc. The fact that one of the inscribed slips recovered from the very mouth of this tunnel, T. XIV. i. 23, *Doc.*, No. 382 (Plate XII), has proved to refer to the burial of a man who had died after having been beaten recalls the horrors which this dungeon may have witnessed. It is a curious coincidence that the well-preserved wooden beating-stick, T. XIV. iii. 0018 (Plate LI), 20 inches long and of traditional Chinese shape,³⁶ with a two-inch wide blade and a handle, was discovered in a refuse-heap only about 20 yards to the east of the well.

Have enjoyed going through this, this morning. Sitting on the bed, laptop, old diary and Lonely Planet in hand kids and Ange on the other computers – club Penguin, Perez Hilton... Time to start the day however.



210. CENTRAL PAINTED PANEL REPRESENTING AMĪTĀBHA'S PARADISE, ON NORTH WALL OF CAVE IV, CHIEN-FO-TUNG.

The side scenes represent Ajitāsitra's story and Queen Vaidehi's meditations.

Enjoyed so much went back for another look before going to bed. Good book – would be lovely to have as a part of a collection. These are the things proper old English drawing rooms full of gilded volumes were made of no doubt. Unattainable (yet attainable), these days by plebs like myself. Read a bit more fascinated by what exactly the practice of burying prisoners 'alive' meant. Think it is locking them up in dungeons rather than the horrible alternative of proper burial up to the neck or similar – a bit unclear...

Read on to some of the caves he (Stein) found and looted – few images much better than anything left in place there now...

5th April 2009 – I am 40 years older than Freya, when she is 30, I will be 70! (with Ewan and Stella it will be 67 and 64...). I wish I had some more time with them at that age – hopefully it is about how much time you spend with them, if the will let you into their lives that is.



Tai Chi - The philosophy of the style is that if one uses hardness to resist violent force, then both sides are certain to be injured at least to some degree. Such injury, according to tai chi theory, is a natural consequence of meeting brute force with brute force.

Instead, students are taught not to directly fight or resist an incoming force, but to meet it in softness and follow its motion while remaining in physical contact until the incoming force of attack exhausts itself or can be safely redirected, meeting yang with yin. Done correctly, this yin/yang or yang/yin balance in combat, or in a broader philosophical sense, is a primary goal of tai chi chuan training.



Bought a cheap Tai Chi book at a sale this afternoon – visions of learning an exercise a month – will see how it goes...

Good day down at Sentosa today, discovered a new beach – Palawan Beach which has great shade from big broad leafed trees that run along the back of the beach. Also a big active water fountain back up on shore just in front of some reasonable food court stalls. Big suspension bridge at one end of the beach that goes to the Southern most tip of the Asian Continent – bit of license in that call me thinkst.

Big thunderstorm around lunchtime just as we decided to leave. Shopping – ange is preparing for her Nepal trip, dinner at Ikea (across the road from the shops) and now finally quietening down. Sitting on the balcony, Tsingtao in hand, mosquito coil smoking away and the sound of some drums and horns or something someway off in the distance above the usual din of croaking frogs and crickets. Probably the Indian temple near Queenstown rd?

I keep getting these very strong flashback associations with white sun drenched sand and shallow beach water. I had one again today on Sentosa, an image of a curved bit of sand and crystal clear water, and focusing on that only – no tree line at the back of the beach no boats or anything else, just a view from above

only a photographers cut almost of the white and blue and gradual shades in-between. I had them when out on the little islands near to Sibiu snorkelling, bright sun to the point it is sterilising, clean white washed bits of coral.

The flashback is to a dream I had during the accident – I like to think during the coma but more likely the short period when awakening – the coma itself was deep deep nothingness! The dream had a beach – all sand and sea as I said, with an old plane landed on it. An old twin prop war plane, vivid because of the contrast to the scene around it. Strong shadow line and romantic associations – not nostalgic, this was real time, relevant to me in the moment like I was there living it as a part of my life.

Some time shortly after, hard to say how long, I was on board this plane or a plane very like it in some desperate trip. Beck was there with me. We were all the plane together but it was a surprisingly big space, more like the inside of a room. We all shared the same plight but were not really associated with each other. I knew Beck of course and that gave us some empathy together. It was getting progressively colder and more and more desperate as time went on. I had a feeling we were on some mission and heading to Antarctica. Maybe not a mission but something we had no real control over.

I have a feeling it related to television. I am convinced the nurses used to sit with me and watch television to pass the time whilst I was in the coma. I had lots of images of hair removal sales pitches by John Wayne! Other images of being on a light plane and cleaning up the Florida Quays or somewhere to help the local bird population – geese or pelicans or something of that ilk.

The sun drenched sand and sea scene though was particularly strong and has stayed with me – perhaps because it fits with my long term dreams of sailing a boat through islands like that, Australia to the States similar to uncle Brian, at some time in my life. Visiting the lagoon islands of Micro & Polynesia...

In searching for images, even found the exact plane – UC-45J. Used in WWII by the US Navy... Also if I recall correctly, the same plane in Lost Horizon where they crash landed into the icy mountains of the Himalayas – more television references...

8th April 2009 – Had a really nice night out last night with a sculptor we are working with on Marina Bay Sands, Antony Gormley. Hadn't realised but he is quite well known – did the Angel of the North and does a lot of participative sculptures involving people getting involved to produce things en-masse. He did that work with all the little clay figures with finger pressed eyes staring longingly up at you – cant remember where I have seen it (whether in the flesh or just in magazines etc but really like it).

The work we are helping him with is a mass of stainless steel bars welded together in a polyhedral framework around the negative space of a human body. He is being helped by an ex-Arup guy Tristan Schmidt who is very bright and right into programming etc.

Was a nice night because it was unexpected – tried to make some excuses as date night and not feeling well so restricted to a few drinks at the rooftop bar in the screening room. Ange came up as was date night and a few codrals and beers later found ourselves out at dinner – really interesting down to earth people with a genuine appreciation and enjoyment of life – very refreshing...

Suffered for it that night – food at Indochine wasn't that nice really and sat with me in my stomach tossing and turning all night while I tried to fight off this cold... as is usually the case however woke up feeling ok and back off



Antony Gormley – "Field"

into work to grind for another day. Few projects going wrong and possible lawsuits in the wind – Flyer (through no fault of ours!), Marina Bay Bridges, Fusionopolis 2A – really abhor having to deal with these issues particularly when they are the making others.

10th April 2009 – aam – Worked through some of the crap on f2A today with Peter Hoad – man I find that guy draining. Half helping you, half always scoring points to establish himself as number one – he pretty much is when it comes to hard logic and thinking on his feet but shit has no idea when it comes to empathy for people, or maybe he does feel it but just doesn't care – either way, not enjoyable. Sent off a response to JTC and got a nasty one back inferring we are in direct contradiction of previous advice, just this time without any justification – I must now go back and read previous stuff! Relying on others to cover all of that – can't read every f__ing thing, just no time. I hope I don't find any little bombs – pretty much knew we were changing stance but felt had to do it on the basis of being able to defend our position later on. Ran it past the other senior local guys as well who agreed. Ghosts of Chong Leong (and his voice on a phone!), here to haunt me...!

I really need a break to get my mind back in a state where I have energy and time to think. Still taking on too much, owning too many problems and protecting too many people – apparently! Think that sort of thing can't always be too bad – I don't know what things would be like otherwise – mind you a few other things totally in the toilet like Marina Bay Bridges! Maybe that is an indication.

Long weekend with the kids – need to relax – need to tie a few loose ends also!

Flyer party for the first anniversary tonight. Only one lady from the board there everyone else gone to ground! By all accounts GWC is close to broke which means GWB gone and SFPL in new hands (they are broke also). GWC have been siphoning funds off to other projects (Orlando and Berlin), which are both in the toilet as well! Whole thing is unravelling for Florian and Patsy, will that stop them from walking away very well off individuals – most likely not? Not for me that life I couldn't sleep at night. I can't now mind you but for good honest reasons and worries – things I am proud to be involved in. Feel like I have accomplished a fair bit with the group, the projects – in particular the Flyer but also Sports Hub (early days courting DPA etc), Marina Bay Sands, Fusionopolis etc etc. A lot of good stuff to my name and things I feel honestly proud of. Time to give a bit back to Arup and defend some of the shit going on, on others – if I am up to it. Dealing with Peter is not good for the self-confidence, seeing him and others I really am not up to it – I hope it is something that can be acquired or maybe just temporarily clouded by my lack of a clear mind?

- am – sent of an email late last night to some people in Aus which is going to be a little confusing as it is only part of the story! Will I ever learn! Take some time and send off the next morning – wanted to get it out before Easter

so I had a clear weekend... now have to learn to let it go, another pit fall for me.

Everyone operates on this whole perfection thing and defending their position – I find it hard because whilst I have a lot to offer I am very imperfect! Doesn't really match with engineering that well... hmmm... Here I am, and a little trapped if I want to be earning a living for the family. Need to try and keep being me concentrating on the good things I can bring, these don't always match with being the better than others however which is one my underlying sub-conscious wants.

14th April 2009 – Long Easter weekend – good but still tired and only made minimal in roads into my cold – going on and off for three weeks now (clocked by missing squash two weeks ago).

Weekend was spent like many others in a strange mixture of loving the kids to death and in getting frustrated and angry with them, growling and raising voices and naughty comers and the whole palaver! Ewie discovered the nibbled carrot this morning under the fridge and then we all went in to discover the Easter eggs. Chocolate for breakfast – three bowls of uneaten cereal – Ewan then, probably by mistake and over zealalousness more than anything else (he had just asked me to put away an egg for school tomorrow and then relented saying he changed his mind and will just have it now thank you very much), ate the eggs Stella had been saving – tears and accusations. Poor Ewan a little bemused and knows he did something wrong but unable to grasp the emotions being all mixed up with the excitement of chocolate eggs to be eaten!

Downloading of videos and a trip shopping this morning. Borders and books – I love book shopping. There is something about it – drifting observing taking in snippets here and there, time to absorb and see a bit of the spectrum of thought around us. Religion, fiction, literature, self-improvement... Kinokinoya is actually set out a lot better from this point of view – many more books on face display, and all over the place – you get a real feeling for what is current and in fashion, what is liked by and important to people, the coffee shop is right in side like a little cosy corner of your mind to sit in, there are a few ups and downs of stair but not enough to be disconnecting. The Japanese edge gives it something, I am not sure what, a bit of exoticness, a bit of culture, or is it credibility I am not sure? Anyway, find it tough these days in finding a book, ended up in the literature section, close on Jack Kerouac, and got "The Toilers of the Sea" – Victor Hugo. Will be a hard read I think but loved Les Miserables so much and "one of the greatest depictions of the natural world ever attempted" on the back cover helped a lot – the sea and humanity...

PM – Verandah café after a Development OH&S committee meeting at the British Club. Feeling like sh#%@ actually – not a bad day in that managed to get a few things done and the issues on rock with F2a seem to be in a clearer light. Peter Hoad has been a help albeit amongst all the grandstanding (perceived or real?), that I mentioned. I can never bring myself to trust him

totally, always have this nagging feeling he is talking in a patronising way about you behind your back. Actually he it is possible he is one of the most honest of them all and I just don't want the truth be told?

Who am I to know and in the end who am I to care, I just want what's best for Brendon after all – along with the rest of humanity.

Feeling fragile physically – feeling a bit pigeon chested and padded around the stomach latitudes – the odd palpitation or hint of as well – stress, cholesterol, indigestion, lack of good breathing method - ????

Good breathing – something I lack funnily enough – too pre-occupied on other things in my mind. Breathing should be something that runs through us pure and unfettered, instead I find it tortured and twisted through a maze of barbed wire, constrained and forgotten to eek out whatever existence it can on its own!

14th April 2009 – Feel like I am retracting from work. Culmination of self-doubts, of being too hard on myself and of no real interest – in what order of cause and effect I am not sure. A week off next week will hopefully help in clearing my head – hopefully.

15th April 2009 – Again bit like a broken record but finding any excuse not to work! Feel crap and probably should go home but have a lot to do – OP plans anyway – might try to get those out of the way and reassess then. Thinking of taking tomorrow off!

16th April 2009 – And yet... here I am again. Will go to the doctors today and get a haircut which will make feel a bit better – just have things that if they don't get done will stack up – interviews for another BA, appraisals for Budi which wouldn't be a problem but Peter Hoad is coming down on us to get complete – easy to say how he feels uncomfortable if anyone in his group is more than a few days behind then you have a group of 3 people!

Did our finances last night and things aren't going too badly – averaging 6+k a month in savings which is slightly better than planned as we haven't been spending the full travel allowances etc. First time in a while that the shares have come back as well. Property has taken a bit of a dive but it has been very good in the past.

Blah Blah Blah...

“The thinker wills what happens, the dreamer accepts it”

Victor Hugo (The Toilers of the Sea).

“Of Brahma asking Strength, ‘Who is stronger than you?’

‘Cunning’ came the reply”

Indian Fable.

18th April 2009 – First day with the kids (Ange in Nepal), a broken morning lie in bed, sliding down the hill on cardboard boxes for a bit and lots of computer and television I hate to say – it is very hot at the moment – all bathed in sweat anytime we venture from the house or exert ourselves in any way!

Shopping this afternoon and then the holiday can begin!

19th April 2009 – Nice slow wake up this morning. Kids on computer, me on the balcony, soft light, birds even seem a bit quieter and in slow sleep to wake mode.

Had to do a second take on the darkness of my eyes last night when I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror! Incredibly dark, this issue with working is really taking its toll. Draining my strength and energy out of all proportion to what it should be. Perhaps some of it is the time I spend in front of computers and television?

20th April 2009 – A ten year old girl raped and killed by her mentally ill father after authorities failed on a few warning signs – his parents even called his GP they were that worried about him – off prescribed medication and back onto cannabis apparently. Then there is the guy who was in charge of killing 15,000 people in Cambodia under Pol Pot – horror stories of torture, people shackled and left to drown in pits during monsoon rains.

More incense prayers to those who have suffered – helps me get a bit of closure at least. What is this place we live in, and how much a part of it are we unknowingly? Through lack of action, of ignoring crimes or of simply subscribing to the system.

What to do other than to live your life and try to make things better for your family. I would like to think that the world needs to operate on all of these levels to be able to advance. I would like to think that that reasoning was valid but don't want to confront the alternatives.

Look for a sign or a way Brendon?

Ewan lies awake in his bed with the light on until he falls asleep at the moment. Not sure how good that is for him. I feel for him a bit – and Stella – would be god to get them back into Melbourne I reckon, with a bit of extended family base and some more out there activities to do as a family...?

21st April 2009 – Back at the blue café. I have grown to like this place. I like it because of its honesty. The old guys who serve have obviously been here since time indeterminate, they are a part of the fabric of the place, as solid as

the bricks. There is no pleasing or impressing them, or upsetting by the same token I imagine, they just are, hold no grudges no discrimination against anyone, as unquestionable as the sea (that's a bit of victor Hugo shining through).

The cafes around will / may come and go, will charge a lot more will do well, or poorly depending on their lot in life but this place will just keep going... until it stops that is – I remember speaking to one of them about a for sale sign on the wall only to be told it related to a café business around the corner owned by the same people? Again that matter of fact manner that would see this place close if that was what was on the cards without any great fanfare or anything else, dying just the way it lived – more cliché's, feel like I need to be writing something of a little quality at least at the moment (Victor again!) – and am probably achieving the exact opposite...

They are just closing up and brought me out a milo in a foam cup – chai and coffee off already by the sounds of it.

The thing I like the most though is the view – from the shadows of the five foot way onto the corner of Khandahar and Bussorah Streets. Lots of people (these days – wasn't always so), talking chatting drinking coffee, smell of scented smoke from the big bong like things, I forget what they are called, look really cool anyway, music from some shop somewhere around – intermittent on and off, the odd motorbike which gives it an Indian / Pakistan street corner feel about it all... and free Singnet wireless!

Like most free things ended up being more trouble than it was worth – hope I have not just given out details that will enable some hacker to do unthinkable things to my life!

Actually persevered through fear of my identity and managed to extract the following images chosen from a few I think because of the blue road pavement in it – seems very real somehow and right here.



Back home – Minda will be starting to worry~

23rd April 2009 – Sitting in Julians old café (Bishan Park) killing time with Frey before giving the Flyer talk to Stells class at 11:30.

Freaky gust of wind blew over / through the house last night – lasted for 4 or 5 minutes with doors and windows banging, things falling over, in our flat and downstairs – difficult to know where the noises were coming from at times! Felt very supernatural, there for guilty consciences to dwell upon and obsess with. Kids slept through it all apart from a “daddy” whimper at one stage from Frey. Made it all the more effective just being me in the flat, visions of what and who in which order to grab if I needed to!

They even mentioned it on the radio this morning which is strange as the weather here can be extremely localised. A little blip or murmur in the natural order of things letting people know nature is still there... a rumble in the tummy, palpitation in the chest, something that threatens to warn of things to come?...

It rained heavily for a short period afterwards so must have been some sort of storm front passing over – few fallen trees and roads with plant debris either side of the driving lines.

Couple of ideas for the house. If we can't get away from the planning restrictions on boundary walls I need to get the walls as high as possible – what I don't want to do is to follow exactly as it would end up a product of something that is applied everywhere and very ordinary. I am thinking a double height wall on the East side staggered in and out to soften it and some recessed full (double storey) height windows – what you read is the solidness of the ends of the walls and the transparency of the recessed glass – would look great at night with these cuts of light up the wall face. Might be a bit hard on the size of the internal spaces however – 200 for the second (staggered) wall, another 300-400 for the glass an extra 100 to thicken the outer wall to 300 just to give it some mass... 600-700 mm lost internally on the lap.

The other idea was a large pergola or sun shade similar to the Australian school. Pergolas can encroach the setback so would have large columns again – 300, 350mm sitting just off the fence line in the line of the planting, running full two storeys and then dog-legging back over the main roof. Extruded aluminium blades to act as sun shading and give some texture and feel. Would hopefully feel cool in the summer and embracing in the winter?

Feel ashamed tonight – some kids were riding a dirt bike around the neighbourhood making noise etc etc when the kids were trying to sleep. Went out and went off at them – over reacted. Made me realise I have a lot of pent up anger inside of me that needs getting out. Too quick to jump to a conclusion and too quick to get upset. The only thing that will help that is more time away from work me thinkst. It (work) is turning me into someone I don't want to be – it is becoming my natural self and I need to stop it and be

the nice guy again which is where I want to be! God forgive me (and the kids too).

I went back out and apologised to them saying I was worried they would kill one of the younger kids – James from downstairs told me he had caught them ripping through the path at the front of the house at a great speed and the kids would stand a chance if caught unawares – which is about the definition of our kids (and most kids) mind sets – unaware!

Am I apologetic – I think so but also scared they might come back and do something to one of the kids – which if I were honest is the main thing! Society scares me these days – part through what I read and part through knowing the anger I am capable of – they both scare me!

24th April 2009 – aam – cant sleep – checking email – just the important ones has got me thinking again... I am over it, it has to be said! Perhaps if I had more confidence I would feel better about having to deal with all of these issues? I will go back, I will make the most of it and do what I have to. Will be a busy week or two with Fusionopolis 2A rock, the bridges, Pat Dallard in town and Peter Bailey also for the BU reviews – with an appraisal etc etc thrown in!

“How did we get so mean”

Pink



25th April 2009 – Ended up giving Ewan a smack last night – long afternoon at the Colbar, hot and strenuous trip over and back coaxing Ewan and pushing Frey. Extended bath time and getting late for them, Ewan just being vague and whingy and complaining / yelling at me calling me names (Dongk!). Had had enough and gave him five short slaps on the bottom – tears etc ensued. Seemed ok and spent a lot of time making sure he was feeling loved afterwards but he stayed up late not wanting to be away from me, think he felt bad as well...

Weekend again – swimming this morning, botanical gardens for lunch to pick up some tickets to the boat show from Grace, the boat show this arvo or

tomorrow (must remember to invite Lisa), and want to do the National Museum of Singapore Art Museum.

Found the old Elmo’s “keyboard-o-rama” game yesterday for Freya on the computer. Searched under Elmo and got a Google screen of little Elmo images sending Freya into squeals of rapture! She is such a happy little girl, constantly giving you smiles and wondrous squeals at different things she comes across. I am sure the others were similar but the memories fade quickly.



Did some image searches on Freya – strong mix of new age masseurs and motorbike models, along with dungeons and dragons type female heroines! Freya stark brought a little more normality to the collection – amazing time and places, I must do some reading on her travels.

27th April 2009 – Ange is back tonight – had a really good weekend with the kids – British club swimming, the boat show at Keppel Marina, swimming lessons Saturday morning (lost it with Ewie again but managed to find a middle point at the end and he got into the pool – no lessons but Stella was fantastic with hime getting him to put his head under with his goggles on – lunch at the Botanical gardens.

Time has gone very quickly which is perhaps a sign of how little time I have had to myself to just coast and ponder things!

Finished three basic versions of the house – preferred, staggered wall, and sunshades (the last two meeting the requirements of the planning regs more or less – we still have problems with the length of the boundary wall but it is not much longer than what is there at the moment and also not much longer than the neighbours so hopefully will be ok.

Still need to do quite a bit of work on the overshadowing etc. Need some of Anges input to make sure we are on the right track – will get an architect involved me thinkst just to bring some proper design to the equation.

Of the three I think I prefer the staggered wall because of the interest it creates internally – the internal space becomes a space with the outside being framed or contained in these fishtank like displays. From the outside it will hopefully be a lot of shadowline back lighting.

Coming up with external colours is another difficult thing. The prefreded scheme is a bit of an arrangement of boxes and each can be a different colour (rendered finish). The shade one however is a bit of a blank wall with windows – white sunshades but rest is a bit stark.

The staggered wall is an improvement but again lots of walls and making them all different colours seems a bit naff? Perhaps white walls and darker grey recesses. Should probably have some shading on these windows also but then starts to mess with the clean architecture?

28th April 2009 – Back at work – no surprises nothing has changed – lots of things coming through my desk – everything seemingly needing to be nurse-maided through! Not enough time, pulled in too many directions all at once. I also need to let more things slip to other people. It is hard to do and it is also important that some of this stuff gets done right. I need to spend a bit more time enabling the people around me obviously – stress the attitude of stepping up and asking for forgiveness later on...

Made the mistake of falling asleep book in hand for five minutes and all of a sudden not being tired any more! Victor Hugo is fantastic – it is like time travel to a world of real thought and consideration...

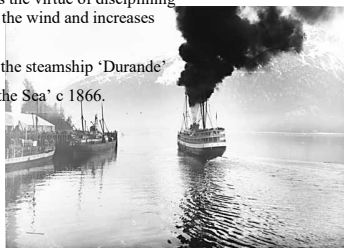
“The sea, in conjunction with the wind, is a composite of forces. A ship is a composite of mechanisms. The sea’s forces are mechanisms of infinite power; the ships mechanisms are of limited power. Between these two organisms, one inexhaustible, the other intelligent, takes place the combat that is called navigation.

Human will contained in a mechanism confronts the infinite. The infinite, too, contains a mechanism. The elements know what they are doing and where they are going. None of these forces is blind. Man must keep watch on them and seek to discover their route.

Until the law governing these forces is discovered the struggle continues; and in this struggle steam navigation is a kind of perpetual victory of man’s genius, every hour of the day, all over the forces of the sea. It also has the virtue of disciplining the ship: it reduces her obedience to the wind and increases her obedience to man.”

Victor Hugo on the steamship ‘Durande’

‘The Toilers of the Sea’ c 1866.



Have some time off coming up again – Friday is a public holiday and have also booked three days when mum & Dad are here in the second week of May. Forcing myself into a life – now to try and manage it all a bit better!

29th April 2009 - Up until 1:30 last night doing email and reading, back up at 5:20 this morning writing to do lists etc. Recharged batteries from the break with the kids are already looking shaky! It must be a change in attitude however – concentrate on making that happen from which the rest will flow I hope...

2nd May 2009 – Stella’s 8th birthday on Thursday just passed – took a second look at her the other day and she has turned into a beautiful little girl with her own personality etc. She really is beautiful, she cares and looks after Freya, fights but loves Ewan (they have some great times playing also, just Ewan is behind her mentally and physically!). Also had a look at Freya who isn’t our little baby any longer. I don’t want them to all grow up!

Bloody went for a swim with my mobile phone yesterday – that is likely to cost the better part of a thousand dollars – really pissed but there is not much I can do about it. I am hoping I am near the end of the contract at work and I might be able to see it over with a temp fix – will find out on Monday.

Did the paperwork for my appraisal yesterday. It is one time of the year when I get to reflect on what I have done and how the group has performed. It hasn’t been a bad year! Financial results were good – a lot of conservatism built into the books. Management team has done some settling in although this could be better! I think I am doing an alright job – we will find out I guess when I sit down with Peter Bailey to go through it in is eyes!

First run in a while this morning. Been feeling a few stress pains in the upper chest, nothing serious just not ideal. Need to manage stress a bit better – less of a control freak – less caring of what others think, more living in the moment... Felt quite sluggish – weighed down, few little groans from different bits in the legs, again, nothing serious just haven’t been used in a while and stretching out a little.

3rd May 2009 – Another lo hot day, exhausting with the kids! Ange and I have both been drawn to drinking – stormy weathers (rum and ginger ale), and gin & tonics. A touch of recklessness or abandon or a search for something, some state of mind, or again a shadow thereof? Does feel like a bit of a thing, a small miniscule adventure of feeling a pool of something larger than the human race has sought shelter in before? Brings back feelings of exhaustion after a day working on house renovations in Richmond, or of long days walking or

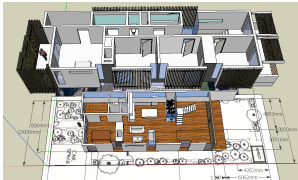


travelling in India or Nepal. I don't know just feels like something to do (that should be done), right now.

Good day today – lots of the kids entertaining themselves while we booked a holiday to Siem Reap. Trip out to the National Museum for an over priced lunch, consisting of an over cheesed toasted bagel pizza and S\$6.40 bottle of water (we don't serve tap water sir).

Ange has started playing a bit of the Blues Brothers off of you tube amongst a few others – we need more music in the world and less hard nose focus and concentration.

Been spending a bit of time on the house – reasonably happy with how things are working out – gone for the staggered wall option which adds a lot of interest to the internal spaces. Ange has come up with some good comments also – really informed stuff about balance and weighting of mass etc. We have these timber shades all over to provide some privacy at the front for the balcony and also to provide shading in other places. Hope we can achieve in timber without losing all of the natural colour. There are natural oil based stains and paints available which hopefully will let us...?



Danger the house is a little large for the block and imposing. Adding in some trees does it the world of good and it what we are after as well – sympathetic to the timber at a high level and great looking out into tree canopy.



I want to be drinking alcohol and listening to loud music again – back in the old Justin & Rosetta days. Back in Nepal drinking in a tea house, open future ahead, cares on hold for a bit – those were fucking brilliant times – Heathrow airport with our packs waiting to fly off to who knows what awaits.

Moments hard fused into our minds and psyches, if we could go back there, if we could be in those moments again. Plenty happening around us all again now but seem to be so constrained and so many strings attached.

Is there a drop out moment some time in the future – I think likely, I hope likely – perhaps the boat option, heading off to Micronesia, Bora-Bora etc... When will it come, it will be a while – some financial stability, kids not so reliant on us (a way of saying have to be prepared to risk everything not coming back – scary, essential, not sure...).

A little known and not inconsequential fact about the tropics is the way when you pick up a cold drink (alcohol again usually – the only thing that justifies the extra effort of ice), the condensed water on the outside of the glass gathers into driplets (ice cold driplets), and drops onto either your crotch or your bare chested mid-rift. Most upsetting, disorientates the together flow of whatever it is you have going on.

“And I said what about Breakfast at Tiffany’s, she said I think I remember the film and yes I recall I think we both kind of liked it, and I said well that’s one thing we’ve got...”

4th May 2009 – Woke up early this morning, Ewan has not been well, and now Stella as well – she showed a few signs on Thursday which we thought were brought on by her wanting to come home early for her birthday.

All a bit scary with this swine flu about – will have to get them checked out.

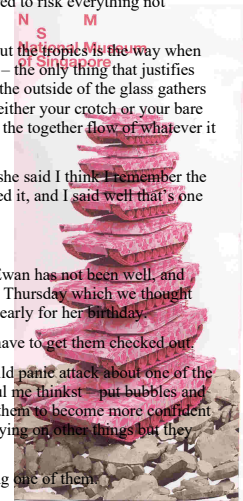
So anyway, woke up early and had a bit of a mild panic attack about one of the kids drowning – we will have to be more careful me think – put bubbles and swimming jackets on Freya and Ewan. I want them to become more confident unassisted so they learn a few skills without relying on other things but they are just too valuable to lose.

What to do? Frightens me the prospect of losing one of them.

Flicking through news.com.au - This is a photo of Martin Bryant the Port Arthur gunman. Chilling as I can look into his face and see what a beautiful boy he is – can see a lot of sensitivity in there, can dare I say it see a lot of me...

He is serving 35 life sentences for killing 35 people. There is a book out about him “Born or Bred” which I will have to get a copy of. The world contains so much sadness and tragedy – it is almost unbearable at times.

And the effects on those around him also – little sister, mum, Dad... (him).





Reading back through this (my diary), or looking at the pictures anyway makes me realise the volume and diversity of stuff we are exposed to through the web. All of it trying to be sensationalist in some way or another. It is a very rough ride for someone like me who tends to take things more seriously than I should, and for anyone growing up who doesn't necessarily have the skills in dealing with life. Again, that is me – if I had to define myself, it might be “growing up” – perpetually growing up!

Which only makes things like Martin Bryant all the more tragic as he may have been a victim of precisely that – unable to deal with the pace at which you are required to grow up and deal with life.



Martin Bryant - Martin Bryant is the elder of two children of Maurice and Carleen Bryant. Although the family home was in [West Hobart](#), Bryant spent most of his childhood at their beach home in [Carnarvon Bay](#). Carnarvon Bay locals remember him as a quiet and well-mannered teenager, although he once pulled the snorkel from another boy while diving, and cut down the trees on a neighbour's property. He also had reportedly set himself on fire on one occasion. He was described by teachers as being distant from reality and as unemotional. At school he was apparently a disruptive and sometimes violent child, and suffered severe [bullying](#) by other children.

Descriptions of Bryant's behavior as an adolescent show that he continued to be disturbed. He was revealed to have an [IQ](#) of 66,^[2] equivalent to an 11-year-old and in the bottom 1.17 percent of the population. On leaving school he qualified for a [disability pension](#) and lived on a pension for some years, though he worked as a handyman and gardener.

When Bryant was 19, he had met then 48-year-old Helen Harvey, heiress to a share in the [Tattersall's Lottery](#) fortune, whilst looking for new customers for his lawn mowing service. Harvey befriended Bryant who became a regular visitor, and in 1990 she invited him to live with her in her [New Town](#) mansion. She was reported to have spent large amounts of money on him. In 1991, Harvey and Bryant moved together on a farm she purchased in [Copping](#), where they lived until her death in a [traffic accident](#) in 1993. Bryant

was in the vehicle at the time of the accident, and was hospitalised for several months with neck and back injuries.

After Harvey's death, Bryant's father Maurice moved into the Copping farm. Bryant returned to the farm after leaving hospital, and two months later Maurice Bryant was reported missing. A suicide note and several thousand dollars was found in his car, and Police divers were called in to search the four dams on the property. On August 16, they found his body in the dam closest to the farmhouse with one of Martin's diving weight belts around his neck. Although ruled a suicide by drowning, police described it as an "unnatural" death.

Bryant was named the sole [beneficiary](#) of Harvey's will and came into possession of assets totalling more than half a million dollars. Bryant sold the Copping farm for \$143,000 but kept a house in [Glenorchy](#) and the [Hobart](#) mansion he had lived in as a teenager. In 1993 his mother was granted a guardianship order, placing Bryant's assets under the management of trustees. The order was based on evidence of Bryant's diminished intellectual capacity

He has attempted suicide 6 times while being imprisoned.[6] For the first eight months of his imprisonment, he was held in a purpose-built special suicide prevention cell, in almost complete solitary confinement. He remained in protective custody for his own safety, until he recently moved detention centres a decade after his conviction.

On Monday 13 November 2006, Bryant was moved into Hobart's Wilfred Lopes Centre, a secure mental health unit run by the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services. The 35-bed unit for inmates with serious mental illness is staffed inside with doctors, nurses and other support workers. Inmates are not locked down and can come and go from their cells. Exterior security at the facility is provided by a three-wall perimeter patrolled by private contract guards.[7]



Newspaper coverage immediately after the massacre raised serious questions about journalistic practices. Photographs of Martin Bryant had been digitally manipulated with the effect of making Bryant appear deranged.

The more I read about this the sorer I feel for Martin Bryant. Bullied, exposed to money, deaths of people close to him (doubt he was involved), and then the prison side of things sounds horrific – would have been better for him to have been put to death?

I just looked up a few photos of what he looks like now and realised that he is only a couple of weeks older than myself. Perhaps that is why this has struck such a strong chord? There is also a lot of controversy over the photographic evidence surrounding the case. Hard to believe that it couldn't have been him – I hope...

11 May 2009 – Business Unit reviews last week. Went quite well – we are performing well, profitably and developing staff and operating at the right end of the market. Still need a few more people to ‘get’ what we should be – high end not necessarily large. Hmmmmmm... Not even sure myself sometimes but know that's what I want us to be seen as. Not really in line with the local perception of ideal which is winning and doing all the big jobs. If the size comes then great, if not then ... not!

Spoke with Peter Bailey (I have a lot of time for Peter – positive, not overly aggressive, good judgement, happy I think to be going with the flow a bit more rather than manipulating for its own sake – to make himself feel in control), about our return to Melbourne. I am keen it is Melbourne – earliest start of next year, latest, end of next year. He left it up to me to call saying there was no pressure, although it was obvious for Arup me staying a bit longer would be more comfortable for them.

I gave it quite a bit of thought – knowing Ange would prefer earlier rather than later (she told me late last week was the first time she let herself get excited about returning!). I am more comfortable with later next year rather than earlier. Late this year would put us under a lot of pressure in getting the management ready and other things!

Late next year will see us in a lot better position financially – hopefully will be better in terms of negotiating a salary also. It will give me more productive and good performing time here, will give me a better chance of preparing things for when I go – Andrew Henry will hopefully be back in play etc. Will give Ewan another year at a good school (as well as Stella), and life here is really enjoyable at the moment (for the most part). Even Ange admits to this with Choir, her Nepal trips etc. Hopefully it will give her the chance to do a little work and get something from an overseas country on her CV.

It also opens up the opportunity for us to take a month or two off in transit to reboot and live some real life – will be difficult to do this once back in Australia. All in all, later next year I think.

Met a couple on the weekend – the husband left his job just as things went bad, a banker, and they are now in real financial trouble with the wife probably needing to go back to Australia for 3 or 4 months to work as a nurse to keep them going – with the kids. Felt for them – horrible, but also gives you a little vertigo looking over that edge – we also are totally reliant on my job. Not too true as we have been saving pretty strongly and could spend quite a bit of liquidity to keep going – 12 months would be relatively easy without selling property.

If we are to renovate Abbotsford Street then it will be a little more critical! I should be able to get work elsewhere however and even come back to Singapore to work for Arup or someone else – must try to keep up my PE status – will look to see if getting PR status helps that argument at all!

Snuck in over the line with Mothers day yesterday getting a card etc made. Ange seemed a little appreciative – I am never sure, I don't put a lot of stock in those things or birthdays etc so much (for Ange and me anyway). Maybe I should. There is a lot to celebrate along the way – there is a lot to keep us too busy along the way!

Had Pat Dallard in town last week for filming on 'big, bigger, biggest' also – bit disappointed that they didn't end up speaking to me but not too worried

also. Never comfortable doing things like that and understand they need to zero in on one identifiable person – and Pat makes much more sense!

Did a site walk on MBS – fantastic, cant wait until its finished but it does seem all a bit unreal and difficult to connect to.



Casino Spine truss – Jing Gong Steel in the sky



Casino again with Towers – 4 days a floor!

12th May 2009 – Oh my god – back into it – the mind numbing drudgery of work... Perter Hoads with all the energy in the world consequently sapping from you at the same rate they burn it off. The logic of what is and what is

legal rather than what should be and what lies in peoples minds and psyches. I would love to leave all that behind and wander (aimlessly?) for a while amongst the world and mine and others thoughts. Step onto or into a few other paths than the narrow constrained one we walk. Into the back blocks of a third or other world to see what is happening. Those places are a long way from the reality of 8-6 schedules and school fees and and and...

This is where I tell myself it is what I make of it – the fish market story or the Cheese book – books people in the business world write to try and make sense of the world that ignore the reality of the mind. Can you imagine living your life believing all of that (forcing yourself to believe), and realising what it is about only at the end when it is too late.

I am probably one miserable step above that in that I don't believe it but have to suffer under the weight of it all around me, pressing in on all sides.



18th May 2009 – Nanny & Poppy in town – busy little flat – the kids love it although everyone gets tired – need to be careful don't do damage through butting heads! Stella is getting to the age where she has her own thoughts and feelings and ownership of life. Need to treat her like a little adult as she also has her own agendas and is smart enough to let us in on only what we need to know – or what suits her. Pushing will only open up a gap...

Bought my new Nikon D90 - fantastic – absolutely the right choice and glad I followed due process! – literally 2 minutes on the internet googling best price in Singapore etc and got from Cathay Pacific – good camera shop in Peninsula Plaza for S\$1700 almost S\$200 cheaper than the best price I found elsewhere and more than that from the mall shops I first enquired in!



20th May 2009 – Graduate interviews at the moment. Found myself struck silent for a moment for a moment yesterday when my eyes latched on to a 1987 date which was d.o.b. A full 20 years younger than myself! Here I am suddenly significantly older – I am the older guy that used to be around when I was younger – maybe not the Peter Haworth but definitely the Peter Hoad or

John Hamilton and many others that were around. Of course I am a lot different I tell myself – I am surprisingly young at heart and in appearance, people look at me and think that Brendon is surprisingly young for his position, has made it very young... signs of delusion me thinkst.

26th May 2009 - aam – Little Ewie's birthday – love him and his little battles through life to death. Not that they don't scare the b'jesus out of me – I hope he will be ok...

Few things scaring the b'jesus out of me at the moment – staying up to date at work, as well as the responsibilities. Not enjoying at the moment...

aam – Ewie has his Ben 10 Omnitrix watch and has been beeping all the way to school – a very happy boy. Was a bit of a slow wake up everyone tired from the heat.

Mum and Dad are over at the moment and it has gotten even hotter than it has been – very uncomfortable and sapping especially for them as they are not used to it. Have also noticed they have visibly aged since they last visited – almost 4 years I guess I just didn't quite expect to see it so much. Dad is also getting a bit skattier. We will be home at the end of next year – I hope that is enough time for them to get the full benefit from the kids. I think it should be.

29th May 2009 – Lasting image of Ewie's smiling face in the back of the car as they pulled off this morning after dropping me off for work. Ben 10 Omnitrix on his wrist – we have been sharing some great moments when he plugs on an alien and you get to hear them speak. You worry about them but seeing that and feeling the little connection and the warmth its hard not to believe everything will be ok. Watched a little video of him by the pool at Costa Rhu last night – again, nostalgic memories of the growing up – has been fantastic – got to start concentrating on those good times and keep them happening. Get back into the one on one sessions (with all of them).

30th May 2009 – Something struck me tonight and I am having a pit of a panic attack over it. It is Ewan's lack of confidence, and the fact that it may be caused by us growling at him so much. He is an incredibly frustrating kid as he is always off in his own little world and ignoring you.

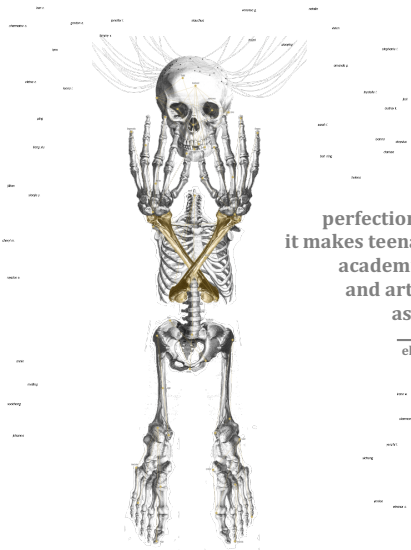
We have been hard on him from time to time. I remember blowing up on him a few times – the most notable when he went to the wet his pants on after I had asked him numerous times to go to the toilet. Might not even be his fault poor thing. Ange is constantly on his back – Mum and Dad were worried she was not coping – Se does a great job but sets her targets a bit high and ends up doing a lot of work without involving the kids as much as she should (much like her own mum!).

Anyway I have to be firm and strong with Ewan and constructive and forgiving and not yelling – might be one of the reasons he yells and screams so much to get his way. I feel absolutely terrible as I love him to death and am quick to tell him that at least when he threatens to run away or throw his toys out!

Hopefully he is young enough that we can still have a positive effect on him and build up some confidence. As Ange said give him some projects that he can be in charge of and do with us. I feel like I have let him down. Little Ewan let me take an oath not to yell anymore!...

1st June 2009 – Had a great day with Ewan on Sunday. Took a train out to LaSalle college of the arts. Bit of roti prata (and uncle coffee and cherry-ade), few markets, snake medicine sellers, all of that and LaSalle – the building with the crack in it. Very well done – beautiful concept and beautiful building – not too over the top – lots of grey and black and glass and steel – enough that lapses in detail don't matter so much as the continuum of materials overtakes the detailing.

Started looking through little glass panels in the floor to see some of the exhibits below – diaries wit and Angel drawn on one of them – then down to the galleries – fantastic artwork – final year diplomas, really enjoyed it. Then more galleries, clothing and fashion and then into the gallery with the Angel. How a building should be a little interactive and a little passive mystery for you to have or not have, to be there but not in your face...



perfection is regressive
it makes teenage girls anorexic,
academics neurotic,
and artists act like
assholes

elmgreen

Imperfection was one of the projects I really liked. Unfortunately not quite realised in the web page – great idea to submit an imperfection but too hard to do.

I would love the time to be able to indulge myself in my thoughts and contemplate endlessly what is going on around me. That is a little bit what this is about. – contemplation, contemplation, contemplation. Sit in the moment all my hard work around (before & after) has gone into creating. And contemplate unanswerable to anyone but myself (I am a very forgiving type of guy).

3rd June 2009 – Yet another horrific story of child neglect – leading to death (by starvation/mal nutrition). Christ it is awful, how can this happen in today's world? Why aren't there people who notice – family, friends, neighbours, social workers – a little bit of me on the inside gets twisted up and dies every time I hear of one of these things. I am sill lighting incense as a way to show a bit of remembrance, and help me get over them – make me feel that by remembering them there is a bit of closure, a small soul somewhere knows that someone else knows and cares...



A MAN charged with the starvation murder of his seven-year-old daughter has told a New South Wales jury his wife wanted to "get rid of the body". He said he saw his daughter just twice in the two months leading up to her death in November 2007, and cited his only concern from that period was getting enough valium to feed his addiction.

The NSW Supreme Court has been told the woman found the severely emaciated child dead in her putrid bedroom on the morning of November 3, 2007, but it was several hours before authorities were notified.

Medical experts have attributed her death to starvation and neglect.

Taking the stand in his own defence, the man said he first learned something was wrong when another daughter told him his wife was crying in the bathroom. He told his barrister, Mark Austin, that when he asked his wife what was wrong, she replied "nothing". "I said 'is she dead?', she nodded. I said 'how?', she said 'bull ants, bull ants'."

The court has previously been told the mother claimed bull ants crawled from the child's mouth after her death. The father told the court his wife then said to him: "We have to get rid of the body."

"I said are you f***ing kidding, that's criminal."

She was Stella's age – can you imagine the pain and sadness, the final weeks, months, days, moments... A huge feeling of hollow emptiness comes over me.

How do you figure out where do you sit in relation to all that? In relation to a young innocent vulnerable life/person who was let down in the worst possible way by the people who should have cared for her most. How do you reconcile what you should be feeling, what you should be doing...

5th June 2009 – Spending time worrying about the skypark. Technically reliant on other people as I don't have the time to look through myself! Have pushed for reviews which have shown up a few things – late in the day to be resolving! No choice I guess – have to work through. I think I must spend a bit of time getting up to speed technically myself.

Will see how I go today – relatively free day from memory so hopefully will be able to make some ground...

7th June 2009

“Melancholy is a twilight state in which suffering transmutes into somber joy. It is the enjoyment of being sad.”

Victor Hugo (The Toilers of the sea)

Funny thing I don't think I have ever heard a definition of melancholy. It is one of those words you pick up and infer the meaning of though hearing it in practice. Because it is a little of an oxymoron, there has always been that cloud of doubt over things.



pm – Still in a fight with Ange. Sick and tired of her yelling at the kids the whole time. She doesn't seem to be coping with them, getting way uptight and letting the smallest thing get to her. It then stresses me out and I find myself doing the same thing.

I feel like I am always the one making sacrifices – I take the kids away so she can have an hour or so to herself, I am the one who goes swimming with them or this or that – and it is now all just expected. We started arguing when I sick of all of the piles of half done stuff. Really gets me – shitty bits of paper etc that never get acted on.

She blames the kids but it is everything – even down to email where she clears nothing. Tied of it now, I don't have the energy. She is not communicative and wont ever talk through a problem. It looks more and more like it is going downhill – and I don't have the inclination to do anything about it – partly to

get back at her – she has no idea how hard work is and keeping all of that together.

I get home and find myself cleaning the house before I go to bed – crappy food – I had a bowl of soup, pizza and nothing for dinner over three nights. Wonder where it will go? Relationship and love I have with the kids is too strong for it to break up I think – who knows maybe she has something happening on the side and will take it out of my control?

Hmmmm... Seems the woman has all the power in these deals. She is so anal that she could never forgive and forget anyway – it would be a constant bloody road block in relationship. I have the feeling that Joh Barnett her friend who has split with Paul her husband a few times is the same – prudish and anal retentive. For fucks sake loosen up and breathe and live a little!

Bought a new book tonight – letters from Vincent Van Gogh. Thought it would be interesting to see if there were any insights into his creative world. Also thought it would be good for a flash back to when people actually wrote letters – had the time to spend corresponding properly – considered and thought out – like a lot of life must have been like back then I imagine – will see I guess.

“I advised you to destroy your books, and do so now; yes, do so, it will give you rest; but take care all the same not to become narrow minded and afraid of reading what is well written; on the contrary doing that is a comfort in life. ‘Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.’

Look for light and freedom and do not ponder too deeply over the evil in life.”

Vincent VanGogh
(from a letter to his brother)

8th June 2009 aam – I (we), are worried about Ewie and his physical development. Ange said one of the teachers picked up that his left and right sides seem to operate independently when he runs and does stuff like that.

I really want him to be ok at sports as that seems to drive so many other things. We have spent time trying to get him interested in playing with balls etc but he

hasn't got the concentration – gives up, or more accurately loses interest after a minute if that!

Woke up this morning worried about the old adage of show me the boy of seven and I will show you the man – we leave Singapore when he is six and a half! I wonder if we should go early for his sake? I don't think it will make much difference to tell you the truth.

They have the full sports stuff happening at school – better check he doesn't miss it all on a Wednesday or anything silly like that! He doesn't seem to have the same energy as Atella – maybe that is something – or maybe he is just not a physical boy – I wasn't exactly a natural sportsman – the opposite in fact I was dragged through the whole thing trying to do my best – got better but it was a lot of hard work – and a lot of it only happened when I was old enough and had the maturity to understand.

Hmmmm. Will have to pick up on the occupational therapy and see if it does any good.

I think (hope), it is a maturity thing. He struggles to put together coherent conversation etc, it is developing but not there yet. I can't remember what Stella was like at this age – maybe digging out some photos and videos for a few clues would be a good idea.

Go forward young Ewan!

am – At work – Stella is being mean to Ewan, Freya is in and out of tantrums, Ewan is being the best he can be – still fighting with Ange, all round wondering why I am bothering at the moment.

I can see where the kids get a lot of it from – me! The anti-competitiveness and wanting to call it a day and give up. Don't know if I have the energy to be anything other than who I am for them. Ange is not helping either constantly stressed and negative.

pm – Had an early night last night and still very tired! Had a feeling of pins and needles in my fingertips this morning at work. Strange feeling as it was quite sharp and distinct, just of a very low magnitude. Felt a little like I was touching something live. Normally you expect smaller things to be a bit dull or deadened, this was definitely not.

Another early night tonight – Freya was most disgusted with us turning off the lights and has gone to sleep on the lounge room floor in protest – not that going to sleep on the lounge room floor is out of the ordinary for her!

I wonder, am I at the end of my tether with work? I don't think so but it is taking a lot to get interested and motivated. I think I have drawn the kids parallel before – so boring!

9th June 2009 – The more I am around the more I believe there is some sort of connection or sense above the five we feel everyday. When you look at

someone, and they immediately sense it and turn your way sometimes, the little girl (who is my mum by the way), who was terrified as a kid when a small bird flew down a chimney and got trapped behind the glass of the gas heater – identifying and perhaps feeling that terror such that it stayed with her for the rest of her life.

In choosing a book the other day I read an interesting passage about Kelvin (the guy who came up with universal zero etc), who was quoted as having stated categorically that no machine may fly that is heavier than the weight of air.

Comforting that even people of that calibre can get things so wrong from time to time. As the book pointed out, he needed only to look at a bird for proof otherwise – perhaps there was some other definition of flight – or perhaps he was quoted out of context?

In any case, I like it.

10th June 2009 – A man beaten to a vegetable state (worse than death for the lingering loss of life and potential, and all things that are good & nice about people, all of that being thrust in the faces of everyone left behind to look after him), after trying to run away, after being refused help from people, and after finally cowering like a dog to protect himself... Christ, again words cannot express the emptiness and sadness and horror...



It is unknown why the chase occurred as Mr Highlands can no longer communicate or move any of his limbs or his head. Mr Highlands was screaming for help as he ran and tried seeking protection in a number of homes, but was turned away each time. He then rolled onto his back on the ground and put his feet up in the air in an attempt to protect himself.

Connelly then kicked Mr Highlands in the head at least five times, fracturing his jaw in several places and causing brain damage. When asked by police why he kicked Mr Highlands, Connelly replied: "Because he cringed up and rolled up like a bloody f...ing coward, like a bloody f...ing dog. That's what he did, man."

Connelly's defence lawyer Chris Wilson argued his client had been brought up in an abusive environment and had a drinking problem. While Ms Marco sought an eight-year prison sentence with a serious violent offender order, Judge Nicholas Samios handed down a 10-year sentence and a serious violent offender order.

Judge Samios said despite there being no weapons involved, it was the worst possible result from a grievous bodily harm offence. "You chased a man down who was calling for help and who wanted nothing to do with a confrontation," Judge Samios said. "You were not a youthful offender and you have a previous criminal history of violence." He also noted that Connelly was not remorseful for his actions at the time of the crime and had left the scene.

Date night tonight and Ange and I had a talk – or I got some of my concerns off of my chest about the negative stressed atmosphere we are creating around the kids all the time. Can't say it went well – Ange takes that stuff incredibly sensitively and defensively and I am tired and short and not very

understanding. My nature would be to forgive and to forget and work it out and renew very quickly. Anges is the opposite – it all gets taken deeply and in exaggerated form and sits in her for a long time. I worry that these things are slowly destroying our ability to communicate and get on, but I cant not do it any more than she cant not misdeal with it any other way if that makes sense!

Hopefully time and peoples natural ability to swerve from reality towards something they want to accept as life will help heal wounds or at least take us to a ground somewhere where we can both continue over the top of whatever mismatches with reality we bury under ourselves. I say that as I may do the same thing – wouldn't really know would I!

11th June 2009 –

“All around me are familiar faces, worn out faces worn out places....”

I like slipping into a few lines of a favourite song every now and then, escape from, avoid some work, revel in a little melancholy and Brendon. Ponder what is around me, feel a little. It must be a little similar to meditation or something, my brain telling me I need a rest or something, need to coast in-between gears?

I am enjoying the letters of VanGogh – cant quite believe they are real although it was actually not that long ago – late 1800's so perhaps they are...



11th June 2009 – Just had a meeting with an architect from Melbourne. Felt like I didn't quite click when I really wanted to. Felt like I looked away at the wrong moments etc and left a far to corporate image – not enough design focus... When am I going to feel happy in my own skin?

13th June 2009 – Just finished watching Yes Man – a Jim Carrey movie, as with most Jim Carrey movies, good, overacted in a few sequences (and over directed also), but reminded me of the philosophy of being positive – of taking opportunities. I think that is a large part of why I am here, say yes, don't be afraid of taking it on and then do your best and hang on for the ride. Sounds like a certain way to end up in trouble and perhaps I will but have gotten a lot out of it along the way.

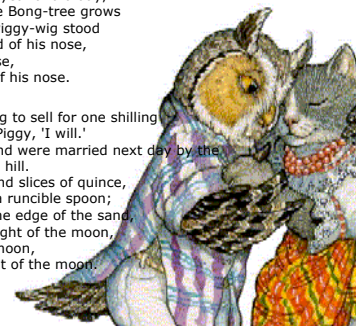
Actually it is not all that admirable, I do it within relatively narrow confines, I didn't go out there and follow photography or travel or those things did I. Must say though I have made sure I enjoy them and put work into them, and am pretty happy with what they have become to me.

Ange bought home 'The Owl and the Pussycat', illustrated by Jan Brett for the kids on Friday. Beautiful original poem by Edward Lear, beautiful illustrations as well. Rich and in sync – food for the soul...

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
in a beautiful pea green boat,
They took some honey, and plenty of money,
wrapped up in a five pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
and sang to a small guitar,
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy my love,
what a beautiful Pussy you are,
You are,
You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!'

Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!
how charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:
but what shall we do for a ring?'
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
to the land where the Bong-tree grows
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood
with a ring at the end of his nose,
His nose, His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

'Dear pig, are you willing to sell for one shilling
your ring?' Said the Piggy, 'I will.'
So they took it away, and were married next day by the
Turkey who lives on the hill.
They dined on mince, and slices of quince,
which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
they danced by the light of the moon,
The moon, The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.



They call Edward Lear a 'nonsense poet' but cant help but feel there is something behind all of that...

The owl being a wise (old?), man, the pussycat a beautiful (young?) girl. Piggy Wig someone of the court, a barrister or the like, and the Turkey who lives at the top of the hill some personage of power (government?).

14th June 2009 – Still doing it hard on the relationship stakes. Ange organised a picnic for Stella's class this morning (as class mum). She was stressed out about it and for some silly reason decided to start the kids on a painting exercise at 8:30 an hour before we needed to leave.

I was a little luke warm but sat with them and gave them some praise etc. When I started to help pick a few things up she had a go at me wanting me not to touch anything. I told to calm down and take a deep breath and the went off the deep end!

She apologised but I am worried about her. She is not coping and stressing her self out. She cant cut herself any slack at all. Doesnt help with people like Dr Zoran taking her aside to tell her Stella is a serious sad little girl who is not like the other fun bubbly kids he has in his office.

For Christ sake poor Stella's just been on a six month gruelling programme of reading every night – he f____ing caused half of it!

Not quite sure what to do. Ange is doing a great job with the kids but is feeling like she is getting nothing back, like she has no worth or no real life. Will just have to tell her this isn't the case and try to help her through it...

Just had a quick word and I think it helped. She is very hard on herself and is losing confidence (and maybe I am not helping on that front). We are both worried about Ewan, he is such a beautiful little boy. Worried that he cant old concentration, that he doesn't sense when other peoples space or feelings, worried that he will find it hard to settle in and make friends.

It is hard being a little boy it would seem... Tough to watch him struggle and to try to help him.

16th June 2009 – There seems to be a bit of a tremor running through my life at the moment – lost mobile phones, computers not working for a day, hard yards at home and at work. I hope it is just a tremor and not the start of the end!

Lin Ming has uncovered further design errors in the helix bridge – which is now 70% erected on site – Sh@%. We are going to cop I on that one and I am going to be in the front line of the copping – though none of it was down to me...



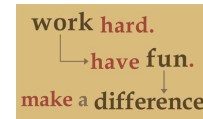
Recent shot of bridge in front of MBSIR.

18th June 2009 – It is still all happening at the moment, Chua has tendered his resignation to join a contractor for a lot more money (change of lifestyle to see what it is like), one of our bright young grads has decided to do a masters, there was an accident on Marina Bay Promenade site last night where a worker looks like he fell onto a reinforcing bar and it penetrated 2-3cm into his chest.

I seem to be involved in everything – it surprises me at times exactly how much and at what level I get involved – I don't know how I am doing it which is slightly worrying to tell you the truth.

Am I deluding myself that everything is OK? Am I being taken advantage of by people around me? Is it just that people trust me and want me involved? I really don't know – perhaps I should speak with Wah Kam and Lin Ming?

I have a feeling that this is what goes with the role of group leader. I could really do with Andrew Henry by my side to take a bit on at the moment – currently in infrastructure helping out on DTL3. Michael and John need him more than I do at the moment I feel



This little sign came with a line – 'The harder we work the luckier we get.' Reminds me of the other one 'Opportunity is about turning up' (or just being there or something like that. Believe in both of these but wouldn't want to rely on them...

Just finished an exercise on our workload, we look busy for the next three months and once we factor in possible work, balanced until the end of the year at least.

That's one worry that has receded a bit although does rely on us making a few of these possibles real.

Stella had a really good report card last night –she really does seem to have turned a corner and is doing well apart from a few hearing issues and back the front letters/numbers etc which hopefully will come with time.

Even making a little progress with Ewie on different small things – sitting down to draw shapes or drawings as homework, the odd conversation that Ange has with him.

21 June 2009 – am

“ Art is a battle – it costs the skin off one's back. It is a matter of working like a bunch of negroes : I would prefer to say nothing than to express myself poorly”

Vincent VanGogh
(translated from the French)

Read an article on the Hawthorne effect that I quite liked – a while ago in the States they did a series of experiments on productivity in a town or district called Hawthorne looking at things like brighter lights, dimmer lights etc on productivity.



What they found was that productivity increased in all instances. The conclusion they drew was that it involved making the employees aware of their workplace and involved in the decisions to make it better.

As I write this of course I realise it may have had something to with the fact that people realised they were being measured! In any case I like the idea of playing around with workspace and providing a little variety and change.

I am a big fan of switching the lights off at lunch time to encourage people to rest or get out of the building – and save energy at the same time!

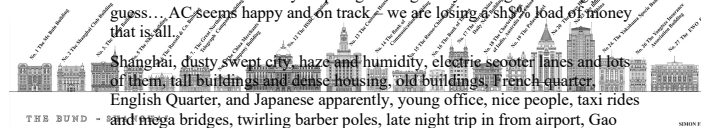
pm – Terminal 3 charging my lap top, uncle coffee, bottle of mineral water and a view of the tarmac and planes getting readied to go. Slip into that wonderful almost meditative state of calmness where time as Salman Rushdie correctly points out does some how warp to give you an experience in the present rather than the past and future we spend most our lives worrying over.

Nice fathers day – card and a Singapore toe nail clipper present from Ewan and some bikkies (Kingston and Monte Carlo) and Old Gold chocolate from Ange and the kids. Ewan was beautiful, he has been wanting to open it all weekend...

Worried that I have not left a back of my electronic diary on the computer back home – had meant to. Might try and log in remotely so I can leave one at work. Funny I feel the need to – I wonder if it is the accident or if it is normal, or something else... Sort of – I am not sure what you call it, fatalistic – could die at any turn?... People say that is what near death experiences teach you, to live every day as if it is your last. Cant say I do that as that in itself restricts you also!

Definitely would say I put as much effort as possible into everything – in a balanced way of course, which I think equates to the same thing. I never let being scared (within in sensible reason), stop me from doing things either. Happy to take responsibility and risk.

22 June 2009 – Day in Shanghai today on Pavilion which all went reasonably well – contractor under way on piling although only one rig – not a big job I guess... AC seems happy and on track – we are losing a sh\$% load of money that is all.



Shanghai, dusty, sweet city, haze and humidity, electric scooter laries and lots of them, tall buildings and dense housing, old buildings, French quarter, English Quarter, and Japanese apparently, young office, nice people, taxi rides and mega bridges, twirling barber poles, late night trip in from airport, Gao Feng and Claudia, Hotel Yahsin, Expo underway, Ren all over town along with clocks counting down – 363 days?, lack of English TV, couldn't make Al & Heather, Ship fog horns on the street next to the Bund (now a construction site), a bit ahead of itself, a bit bigger and newer (and at the same time not), than it needs to be, I don't know, impressive impressive but something not quite at one?

Could be the fact that I am staying out of the centre a bit nearer to the expo site but something feels a bit out of kilter – may time will fix it, I don't know. I like Shanghai all up however. Not sure if I could live here...

23 June 2009 – am

“...when on that last day he stood before his judges and faced death, some indefinable quality of godhood stood out in him, a heavenly radiance that lit up the Parthenon.”

Michelet on Socrates

Work from the hotel this morning – slow wake up, bit of time trying again in vain to find CCTV9, the English channel – Chinese volleyball was about as entertaining as it got!

Street noise coming in through a slightly open window providing fresh air of a sort and a connection to reality and the outside world. I-tunes and we are off...

pm - Back into that idyllic beginning of a flight sensation – hours to myself to do as I please ahead of me. The computer battery will last for a while and then there are movies, dozing, my book, all good...

Coming through the security checks I was pulled aside to be checked by the girl with the metal detector. Stood on a small pedestal briskly and lightly moved over with the hand held metal detector – hate to admit it but was really nice, like a cat stroked down its flanks!

The girl obviously did this hundreds of times a day and at the end and gave me a small tap on the lower back as if to say off and on with the next one. An intimate experience on the lightest level possible. Brought on a smile on the inside.

OK – stopping the daydreaming and onto a bit of work – 1354 emails in my inbox – aim to get down to 1200 over the next couple of hours before the batteries run out.

1284 emails - 70 down but some good ones done!

Gin & Tonic, The Pink Panther – I want to be back in the 60's with a stack of money knowing what I know now. Fantastic – Peter Sellers / David Niven, high society, chalets and skiing in the Alps, must have been fantastic.

25th June 2009 –



A HAUNTING painting of a sad and lonely little girl was all that was left, The Daily Telegraph reports.

When the starved body of a murdered seven-year-old girl was removed from the bedroom which had become her prison, the painting was the only artwork adorning the faeces-stained walls.

Landlords Chris and Deborah Alexiou, who had rented their Hawks Nest holiday home in New South Wales to the family, were distraught at the death of the girl, now identified by her middle name Ebony, and searched for her possessions to preserve her legacy.

With the painting they found four paper plates with the girl's swirls of colour and her name on them. "The paintings were the only thing that was left of her, there was nothing else, there wasn't even a photo in the house," Mr Alexiou said yesterday.

Grim legacy ... landlords Deborah and Chris Alexiou says the murdered girl had few possessions / The Daily Telegraph Mrs Alexiou said she wishes she could have done something to save the girl from her pitiful existence.

"I don't want her forgotten about ... she was a little girl and if I could have done anything to save her I would have," she said.

On Tuesday, Ebony's mother was convicted of murder and will be sentenced in August, while her father was convicted of manslaughter.



The Alexioux had to fight to evict Ebony's jailed parents and, when they finally won their case, they inherited the family's possessions. Ebony's art, which the Alexioux keep at their Gladsville home, holds the stench of her 2m by 3m cell. "I can't describe the odour, it is just horrible," said Mr Alexiou who had to clean the home, after the housing department, which had recommended the family, refused help.

A mattress from an old metal bunk was wedged in the window, the door was roped shut, the floor was covered in urine and faeces and the grey walls had only the one painting.

Mr Alexiou found photographs showing that, while their daughter died, her parents indulged themselves with a pool table, new furniture and Fostel. Family photo albums overflowed with pictures of their other daughters but none of Ebony.

"They bought their other daughters new beds, a pool table, everything else was new but they never bought anything for her. How do you do this to a child? You don't forget to feed your child," Mrs Alexiou said.



Oh God!...

Seven years old – Stella's age. I think about the kids around the dinner table (on the rare occasion they are all around it). I hope that this time in Singapore with Ange not working and us in the flat will be a good time for establishing family bonding. We do everything together and it is nice.

See how it goes with time I guess. Spoke with Ange last night (date night) about return, we both think it is great here (me more than Ange), it is time to go home though – we have pushed it out a long way and it has been good but time to make the move back to what we want which is Australia and camping and family and all of that. Picking it won't be easy... but must be done.

28th June 2009 – Good weekend with the kids, really feel like a family and all getting on. Stella seems to be in a good mood and she defines the tone of how everyone interacts.

Underwater world today, British club to say goodbye to Sash and Paul, Swimming lessons at Tanglin school and a bbq at Garry's yesterday. All good.

29th June 2009 – Death seems to be on the mind at the moment – Kiasu – "afraid to lose/die". I can't help thinking of one of the kids drowning or dying on a motor bike later on in life – without me being able to do much about it. I think it is the magnitude of the loss – would be destroying – I am not sure if I could go on mentally. Makes me think about what everyone (Mum & Dad and Ange mainly) went through when I had my accident.

Life is life I guess and makes it more important to enjoy every day of it. Never ceases to amaze me how long and varied it is – that's what would eat me up I guess knowing that they never got to try all of these things – Ange and I have been lucky – been re-inventing ourselves every 6 or so years, has been good.

Of course we will probably all go living...

pm – Enjoying VanGogh's letters. Enjoying the fact that he was so grounded in honesty and purity of painting. Everything thing he did was from the purest of motives, exploring, studying, self critique and learning trying to decipher what was what.

I wish I could say the same of what I am doing. I have tasted that in my younger days on things like Asia Centre and Portland Maritime Museum but these days it is applying the large principles if I get the chance and then managing them at arms length. I wonder if there is such a thing as an architect who understands and wants to work this way...

I do enjoy the business side of things and getting involved in an industry that is essentially building a new city in amongst the old. It is fantastic but it is often in compromised principles – which I think is one of the fundamental laws of things as you get involved in bigger and bigger work.

I would also not say that it is bad – a lot can be accomplished it is just that at the individual level, things – the experience suffers. These days the primary driver is money to keep a family going! – I am well paid I think – how do other people seem to be able to manage to do it so effortlessly? I feel for the young guys coming up in the profession...

30th June 2009 – Finding work hard again. Overcommitted and feel far too much is floating my way – I want people to pick up but fear by loading people they may leave! Perhaps Chua has put this into my mind, I am not sure but definitely feel a bit paranoid about things.

People are complaining that Juan was made an associate which pisses me off – saying that it is a western run company. There is a leaning that way at the moment because no one is stepping up to take on the responsibility. Too many high maintenance old women in the group!

If you want some seniority you need to step up and take some responsibility and some load. Feel quite disappointed in a lot of instances with people.

4th July 2009 – Presentation this morning on the flyer for ACES awards – pretty certain it wont happen because of the stoppage – I should have put some more effort into thinking how to answer on that but at the end of the day there is no easy answer!

It's a real shit as the same will happen for the presidents awards – they (and I wouldn't either cant award with the spectre of the photo of people being rappelled down from the capsules up against their recommendation for award based on ood design! A real shame and quite frustrating. Actually very disappointed in MHI I must admit – would not have attributed something as basic as critical systems through the same point of failure.

Walked Indie and snowy, Emily (our neighbours dogs), tonight while she is away. It was beautiful to get out into the estate and the real world. Movement

of air on the face, fantastic tropical cumulus billowing up hundreds of metres into the sky, pink stratus further up again and a mellowing end of day light.

Down to the kids struggling with, and stumbling over the dogs, the grass and the trees and odd car making its way through. Real, there, around me...



What does that say for a lot of the rest of my life? Not real and not there in front of me – off to the side somewhere in my minds focus like some TV show flickering away that you are forced to watch and involve yourself in to survive, get along, keep everything moving and everyone happy or appeased...

Scotch on the balcony while all sleep, i-tunes, internet, diary very nice...

5th July 2009 – Can you / Have you imagined the moment of your death. Your final moment on this earth. What would it be, it is likely some last dying breath, not very spectacular by any means, just there and then gone.

It is a bit confronting if you do it seriously. What will mine be, who will it be with? A bed I think. Perhaps with one or two of the kids, maybe with Ange? Most likely a hospital – ICU somewhere as it may be related to some lung deficiency (caused by the accident), that people think might be able to be helped / assisted?

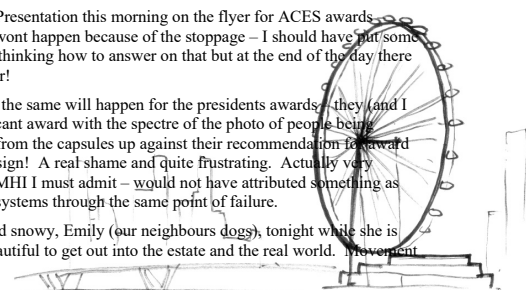
And then, I'm pretty certain nothing. Blackness, what bthere was before, just without me... I will have left behind memories and things done, accomplished, people touched or affected anyway which wont last too long. People created who will remember for longer, and not much else... not that that is a problem.

I will have created and enjoyed and interacted and had experiences and had some glimpse of what this world is about, of what we are about.

I reckon it would be worth some time meditating on this point, this moment in particular. It must say a lot about you the few seconds surrounding you actual passing from this world. At he very least it must mean a lot to you, it is what you would remember if you were to go on, to continue. Perhaps that is why there is Alzheimer's, something to mediate when you pass – now that is rubbish me thinks.

I am picking it will be quite an anticlimax, quite sad...

Searching for images of the final moments at death came across videos of stonings of women in Islam and other religions on a similar vane. My God



how do people get it so wrong. Not good. We are a savage race... must be borne of fear and paranoia, of fear of no control of being cheated upon and of not being in control.

I get a strong feeling of accumulating all of the things that are too scary for us to be told about as children. Please Stell, Ewie, Frey, I pray that you never need experience or suffer under anything approaching that.

6th July 2009 – All is not right with me physically I think. I am working too hard and not getting enough down time. Been getting little spots of pins and needles around my skin in different places – tingling pins and needles. Feels like there is internal strain around my system that is manifesting itself in these little wrinkles in the blanket around the place. Every now and then one of the kids will elbow me or something and it feels good – like a need a bit of an all round pummelling or something to get it fleshed out.

Feel it is stress related but the type of stress that needs to be thrashed out of the system, not massaged or relaxed out. I need to get hard physical in a controlled sort of manner (still feel a bit unstable at the same time – a bit precarious), if that makes sense.

So here I am in Muddy Murphy's waiting on Patrick for a drink – that's not going to help is it! ...but do have the Krabi holiday booked which will be f___ing fantastic. Phuket, Lanta Palace, Sand&Sea in Railay, planes, boats, beaches, limestone cliffs and adventure with the winx.



8th June 2009 – **aam** – unable to sleep due to dickhead clients PM on Create Campus giving us a hard time. The guy (Sathu), is out of control, bordering on abusive the whole time and giving us a really hard time over programme. We are not helping ourselves on that front unfortunately. Both Scott and myself are both overworked.

Don't quite know what to do. Will speak with Andre tomorrow – and maybe one of the Peters – Bailey or Bowtell. I simply have too much on my plate and need to give some of it up. Pushing something to Lin Ming or Wah Kam might be the only way to go!...

Not much choice just need to keep calm, not get personal, play as best as can. Quite hard when don't have the time and in a position of weakness – he has all the cards – clients ear etc.. At the end of the day this guy is a piece of shit and has really gone as far as he will go – I hope.

Looking back at the previous page with bits on stoning of women to holidays in Krabi – I (we) really have been incredibly lucky I life. What did I do to end up here – must try to be a nicer person to justify all of this.

Concerned about the shares – feel a bit like I am watching the crest of the middle bit of the W in a W shaped recovery (significant correction about to happen). Cant do anything but play the long game though me thinkst – must just ride it out and have confidence. Back to 70k down overall, was as good as 55k and as bad as 115k.

16th July 2009 – Back from Railay – good holiday although low season and weather all over the place- wind, rain, sun... Ferries were not running so had to take buses and cars everywhere which was a bit of a bummer but tolerable.

Got really tired on the last day and was pretty grumpy. Ended up giving Ewan a whack on the bottom which was absolutely the wrong thing to do in terms of self confidence and everything we have been trying to counter. Really upset with myself.

Hardly slept that night as a result and just made everything harder – been in a shitty place for the past few days including today – just swore at someone in the office! Hating work and the fact I have to be here. Upset and short with everyone – don't like who I am becoming. Perhaps need some time off to myself but not really practical – I bet Ange would like some also etc...!

“tell me teacher what's my lesson,
look right through me,
look right through me...”

Gary Jules (Mad World)

“How reluctantly
the bee emerges from deep
within the peony”

Basho

Desperately trying to stay in touch with some control but it seems there is a deeper problem I am struggling to address – flash points seem to override all else and I end up losing it.

17th July 2009 – Had a call ten minutes into my walk to work this morning to speak with Freya who was upset at my having to leave the house. Had a really good night with Ewan last night as well. Helping to restore my confidence a little...

“Nobly the great priest
deposits his daily stool
in bleak winter fields”

Buson

A reminder that I need to be thorough in my actions – attitude through everything.

19th July 2009 – Had a very good weekend with the kids. Gave them their trophies and certificates on Saturday – turned out very well – engraved the whole lot. Stella had the underwater swimmer award, Ewan rock climbing, and Freya beach combing. Ewan had a gold Oscar trophy, and Frey a fish – very cute. Neither of them let go of them for the rest of the weekend. I think / hope it has done a lot of good for Ewan’s self confidence – he has been talking about almost constantly. “I want to be a rock climber when I grow up”, asking how he can get more – brushing his teeth etc...

20th July 2009 –

“A world of dew,
and within in every dewdrop
a world of struggle”

Issa

Quite a few of these Haiku are ending up in here but they seem especially poignant when they come about for some reason. A bit like the stars I guess when reading the papers...

Feeling like a bit of a spoilt selfish child at the moment. Feeling jealous of Andre and the recognition/attention he gets from the board – also a bit pissed he is being paid so much and all the relocation stuff also – moving- even schooling etc! Must check with Grace.

Very stuck in the non-realities of everyday life moment you know. Should be out travelling, observing, experiencing. What are the non-realities? Maybe not when I have a family and need a place to bring them up in Melbourne when I return.

Thinking 200k in shares, 50k begin building in two and a half years time by which time shares +100k, savings +100k, 400k towards the new house, easy to get a loan for and wont need to sell Park Street. This would be ideal.

Liked this painting so much that I decided to promote it up to my next status. Something about the maniacal smiles, and all getting caught up in the blur between what is real and what is hype, and what works and what does not



– never all one end of the spectrum in that. How to decide where to sit. Gets decided for you by your basic nature in the end me thinkst. You can adjust only ever so slightly by what you can tolerate. As you get older and truer that becomes less and less.

22nd July 2009 – Haiku, 5-7-5 syllables, imagery drawn from Renso (a web of associated ideas). I think Haiku is so successful as it concentrates on beauty, succinctness and essence. That is enough to put a person in a place from which to explore or see, but not enough to constrain them at all in their thinking.

I have heard it said that it is borne from a moment of enlightenment. I think it seeds this enlightenment when it is read, or at least provides the potential.

23rd July 2009 –

‘Sabishisa’ – A sense of beautiful aloneness.

‘Furyu’ – Restrained elegance

Seems I am getting quite a bit out of my morning Haiku book. It is very well written – translated

24th July 2009 - I am starting to lose it – working too hard on too many different things. Let some information loose to Mike Barton from MBS yesterday which could seriously compromise me, and the Southbeach Consortium.

Fucking idiot Brendon. What are you doing.!? Perhaps I need some time off. Will look at taking a mental health day next week – cant tomorrow due to sports hub meetings.



Will call Mike in the morning and apologise for ever having mentioned this (and agonise and chastise myself constantly in every waking moment (and sub-

consciously in my sleep) over the next few days. Brendon, Brendon, brendon... Letting yourself down....

25th July 2009 – Sorted things out somewhat through speaking to Mike Barton about it – apologising and asking him to restrict who he tells – he had already told his boss! Anyway, leave it behind me – must be more considered in the future – keep on the moral high ground. Put it down to fatigue and tiredness and move on me thinkst...

“There are no rules for good photographs,
there are only good photographs”

Ansel Adams.



Been following a photography forum in Arup – people talking about photos opinions on what is good and bad from whence this quote was mentioned – I like it. The photo was taken in Yosemite 1942.

I like producing photos and looking at art (including photos). It seems to be for me however not for others. And that's ok, given more time perhaps, it could have been a lot more. Although I think I would prefer to get into painting. More earthy and more interpretation possible.

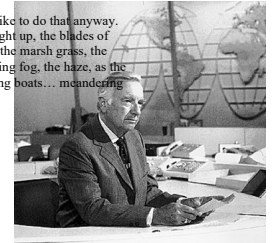
I would like given the chance to start a sketch book and produce a few things. Heavy emphasis on how things appear – similar to sketches in my paper diaries – distorted perspectives based on what is seen first or matters most or whatever...

pm – Walter Cronkite must have passed away recently, reading his obituary he was never happier than when sailing...

“than dropping anchor in an otherwise deserted cove just before sunset, of pouring that evening libation and, with a freshly roasted bowl of popcorn, lying back as the geese and ducks and loons make your acquaintance and the darkness slowly descends to complement the silence.”

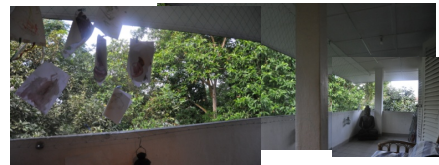
“you start a little before dawn. The first light. I like to do that anyway. The sawgrass rises to meet the day, standing straight up, the blades of sawgrass with dew on them sparkle. All through the marsh grass, the birds are rising ...and a little fog rises, the morning fog, the haze, as the dew boils away. And through all of that the fishing boats... meandering through the marsh grass, captain of the sea.”

Beautiful. That's what I want.



26th July 2009 – Up early to spend some time on the balcony. Was beautiful – darkness still with a suggestion of light in the sky. Light sound of birds not out and about rummaging for food but in their places speaking with each other about the coming day, calling it in, the cicada's continuing their chirping from through the night, and a light on and off breeze rustling the myriad of leaves ahead of coming rain showers; the sound moving this way and that as particular trees in the group move against each other.

Quite cool and ended up with a small left over mosquito coil from the night before and a blanket and fell off asleep. Train went through but missed that wit Ewan needing to go to the toilet... kids are an inescapable part of morning life around here.



pm - Good day with the kids today – down at Sentosa watching them play around the fountains at Palawan beach. Feeling pretty good about the little family at the moment – photo below was taken at the Arup family day at the zoo.



27th July 2009 –

“Nothing in the cry
of Cicadas suggest
they are about to die”

Basho

Seems these days not many people look for suggestions of about to die. They are in fact put to one side – perhaps ignored is a too strong a word, but put to one side as difficult to deal with.


29th July 2009 – Drinks last night with Mike Barton and Paul Gately. Introduction meeting for Mike really – drank a bucket load and fell asleep on the couch when I got home – woke up later in bed in my work pants not remembering how I got there.

Tossing and turning all night – partly as Ewan snuck into our bed and planted his feet on me for a lot of the time before I moved to his bed! Lots of revisiting and self recriminations about what I might had or had not said – I think I was fine on this point but was very beery as Ange pointed out when I got home!



I am not really cut out for all this sort of stuff – I am a lot simpler and just want something a bit simpler; I think...

...and a deep breath, and back into it.



30th July 2009 – Morning in early to look at the fees on Sports Hub (Lin Ming had done some work on these the night before), Morning and lunch spent in Malaysia just across from the second crossing inspecting Yongnam’s fabrication facilities, with the structural director from BCS – Keat Chuan, a nice enough guy who runs marathons and has plans to go to Tibet, back in the afternoon to sort out de-propping of the Casino roof with MBS (got a little short with the guys doing the analysis as there were no solutions, only vague problems), heard Nick from acoustics won Victoria Theatre which was the do or die job – really happy for him as the whole acoustics team deserved it and really needed the break, more time on Sports Hub fees and then off drop through home and to the development committee meeting at the British Club. Ten or twenty minutes to myself over an Indian dinner at the Verandah café and back home later to watch an episode of Entourage with Ange I hope – before bed. All in all not a bad day really although feeling the pressure on things to do just at the moment...

1st August 2009 –

“Searching storehouse eaves,
Rapt in plum blossom smells,
The mosquito hums”

Basho

Morning in at work – headphones on and in a world of my own slowly making my way through trail out of the week previous. I think a lot of my enjoyment in life (maybe not just mine but everyone’s), comes from the juxtaposition of different things. Rest is good as it is against the backdrop of hard work, the music on my headphones brings on a new vividness when it is listened to against the backdrop of the local streets etc on the way to work through the MRT.

This mornings Basho really dragged me away from this self centred world of headphones and into a mountainside somewhere in Japan. Made me think one of his secrets is not to put too much of himself into his poetry. Be a removed passive observer able to take him self into the scene without so much identifying or becoming a part of it. Maybe there is something of this in the path to enlightenment?

I will be the first to admit that I am quite self centred at the moment – it is all about Bren (and the kids – but even then them through me). Need to step back a bit perhaps Brendon.

pm – Dead tired this afternoon and here I am again up at night, cogs unable to stop turning. Sent off some work a little early to Peter Bailey and will have to do some easing of how it lands on Monday!



How many times do I have to tell myself to pause before I jump in. Struggling for time and just want to get things finished but there wasn't a good reason to push off prior to Monday...

So back to the land of the half dead – wandering mind. Bailey's Irish cream in hand – balcony, couch and mosquito coil, sleeping Ange and kids – at least it is not a bad way to do it if I must.

4th august 2009 – Eight years ago I was in a coma after my accident. Ewan, Freya, a move to Singapore, Principal and Director at Arup, I am glad I didn't miss any of that.

“Chilling Autumn rains,
Curtain Mt Fuji, then make it
more beautiful to see”

Basho

Brings back a strong association with clouds around mountains and rain drops dripping off the eaves of buildings. Peru and the Inca trail, and also up around Dhramasala in India.

I look out the window here to a slight haze and the waking landscape of city and of the port and Straits and I get nice associations also but I want to be back in the mountains travelling. Walking observing...

7th August 2009 –

“If a man is a gentleman, he knows quite enough,
And if he is not a gentleman, whatever he knows is bad for him”

Oscar Wilde – The Picture of Dorian Gray

11th August 2009 – Ewan is asleep on the floor of his bedroom under a few chairs and makeshift blanket covering, wanting to sleep in his cubby house. Stella is asleep in Ewan's bed, wanting I think to be with the other two for a bit of a break and to relive some of the bonds she has with them and that room (her own room is empty). Freya is asleep in her bed for a change. She appears to have toilet trained herself over the long weekend, proudly sitting on the potty last night for a -good half an hour wee-ing and poo-ing in increments!

Stella set up a whole imaginary race this morning with a couple of advertising leaflets “ther is going to be a race sat (start) today”. She then had two little forms to fill out for circling the person you were going to support – Stella, Ewan, Freya. They all did four circuits of the house, Stella on her scooter, Ewan transformed as Alien X, and Freya on toot toot.

I blocked Stell for a bit in fun and then did the same to Ewan when it looked like she wouldn't win, but she let Ewan win anyway.

Ange cracked it last night after Stell karate chopped Ewan one two many times this time throwing him across the room into a door or something. Banned all of the ben 10 and other violent videos for a while.

And I am back up after 45 mins of sleep fully awake and unable to turn off again. Life as usual in the house hold...

19th August 2009 – Shanghai filling for Garry who broke his leg playing football – really bad actually...!

I like visiting different cities getting a feel for them and seeing a bit more of humanity. As last time a feeling of dust and building, building, building leading up to the Expo.

Wide expansive asphalt desert type streets with half finished footpaths and kerbs full of dust and bits and pieces of the rubbish of daily life. Walking around at 10 o'clock you realise people are doing it hard. Crouched on a single chair in front of a computer in their single front shop – selling odds and ends or repairing motorbikes or whatever will get them through.

People working so hard they don't stop to think of the bigger picture and what they should be doing – sound familiar hey Bren.

People sleeping in the shop front they have been renovating during the day, or just on the sidewalk – cant be good for the soul being that open and exposed to life around you when you need to be resting.

The expo site is huge with a lot of security and on site accommodation however all the shops and food is outside meaning there are huge queues getting in after meal times – a bit silly. Buildings look fantastic – keeps driving home the differences with the work back home in aus...

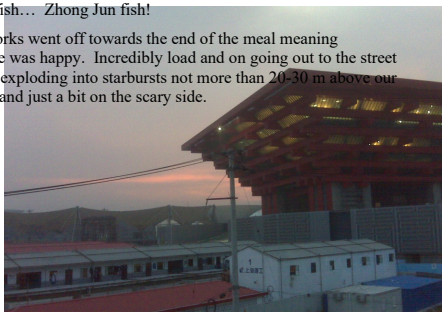
Dinner with China State Construction – the contractor on Singapore Pavilion tonight – Gao Feng translating for me bit by bit. Bit funny but bearable. There was a lot of food rolled out and a lot of Tsing Tao!

The premier dishes were a freshwater flathead, and a river fish from around Xian where the head guy was from. Very famous fish apparently – on par with Pandas and was even close to extinction years ago before they started breeding in captivity.

Not as nice as the flathead – its redeeming feature was that its spine was soft and rubbery and could be eaten – of course this was thrust in front of me, I can feel it wanting to come back up in the back of my throat even as I think about it.

Its name is Shung Jun Sie or something. On asking further Zhong Jun is derived from Shung Jun apparently (probably Zhong Mu in hindsight meaning China), and Sie is fish... Zhong Jun fish!

A barrage or fireworks went off towards the end of the meal meaning apparently someone was happy. Incredibly loud and on going out to the street the fireworks were exploding into starbursts not more than 20-30 m above our heads. Impressive and just a bit on the scary side.



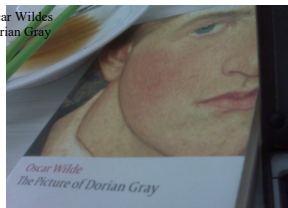
View of China Pavilion from common Expo site office

All in all I like Shanghai and China but it is wearing work. I must be getting a bit old or maybe I am a bit past the whole work thing happening at the same time. Actually I quite like the upheaval so maybe it is just tired and old.

21st August 2009 – am - Working in the hotel room this morning – meeting with the bureau cancelled this morning – bit of a sleep and a read, coffee just boiled and steady pattering rain after a few thunderbursts outside...

“We live in an age that reads too much to be wise,
and thinks too much to be beautiful.”

Lord Henry in Oscar Wilde's
The Picture of Dorian Gray



pm - It was all I could do to restrain myself from Burger King waiting for my flight – ended up spending about \$515 – probably twice the price for veggie dumplings, Udon Soup and some fried veggies. Beautiful and much better for me I would hope. Must spend more time doing real things in this life...

Saw Al and Heather last night who seem to a bit more of that sort of thing – Heather actually ran and won the Great wall half marathon! Mind you she is looking a bit over fit – I get a very strained feeling of control and wanting to be relaxed but not being able to.

They did some renovations at Victoria Street – would have said it was smaller than what we are planning and it cost them 800k – Might have seriously underestimated the cost of our place based on that!!

ppm – Tired and home.. and cant sleep. The fact that everyone seems to always be living fantastic lives in great places is on my mind. Hearing what Al & Heathers place cost them – and the beach house down at Blairgowrie – how do they do it?

Seems we are always a little behind. Don't get me wrong I am enjoying things and like where we live etc it just seems harder for us somehow. What are we doing wrong – how do people manage to afford these big houses and lifestyles?

Might look at prices of houses in the suburbs to see where we would be at if we took that route. I like the idea of Abbotsford Street however – close to the city lots of parkland and bike tracks etc.

Relax Brendon – take it a bit easier and enjoy things, don't get hung up on haves and haven't's etc. There is a lot to life and you have seen a lot of it. I know all that but it is still a bit disappointing somehow.

...Ok hopped on line and can get a really nice big place around Glen Waverley or Wheelers Hill for 600-700k which makes me feel a bit better. If we can pull off Abbotsford Street it will be all we could ever want. Lets not get too distracted, what will come will come. For Christ sake 8 years ago I was lucky to be alive!

23rd August 2009 – Just finished Dorian Gray – good ending. Good all round if not a little flowery. Really liked the insight into gentlemen's lives and how they thought, attitudes to the classes etc.

I am afraid I am one of the middle of the road 'less than extremes' that Wilde seems to not have much time for. I have plenty enough extremes in my life me thinkst – for me anyway. Kids, work, accidents, travels, etc.

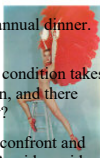
Been doing numbers on the house. Seems the thing to do will be to sell Park Street. Good investment but not so good cash wise. Positives for keeping Park street are the long terms investment value (when we finally sell), and the option to have the kids move in there when they go to Uni. Positives for selling are to reduce our debt, enable us to remove assets from our name and put into the trust – activate some of the accumulated loss by hopefully making money on shares and not paying the tax.

Have set up a few meetings with the banks on what we can borrow, with Steven Enticott and another Singapore (Aust) accountant on what the best things to do are.

Basically want to explore if worthwhile selling house to avoid capital gains – if in fact we can – think it does not apply while we are out of the country. Also we will need to sell and buy all of our shares – out of Ange's name and into the trusts name.

26th August 2009 – Structural Steel Society of Singapore, 25th annual dinner. Gala man, gala!

What a bizarre thing this world, this life,, the places the human condition takes you, a room full of 600 engineers... I don't know where to begin, and there must have been people who actually wanted to be there – surely?



28th August 2009 – The better part of a day (and a bit even), to confront and get through my email and other things that are waiting on me. Avoid, avoid, avoid... it is difficult when you emerge from the non-stop train of events that becomes your day when you are busy, into a lower pace and something where you can view real life fro. The real life of wanting to be and experience and coast and observe, its drawing force is too much...

Grit your teeth Brendon, almost the weekend, get into it...

31st August 2009 – Stella had a broken arm diagnosed on the weekend (buckle fracture – pimple on the x-ray as Ange called it), after a week of us not believing it – seemed ok when she was on the trampoline etc, just flared up when she didn't want to do something. Anyway Ewan karate kicked her on sat morning which flared it up again! Ewan has a deep sounding cough and so all the family except me are at home today! I worry about ange who seems to be hanging on in a bad mood as far as the kids are concerned...

Jacob was diagnosed with epilepsy last week and talked to mum a bit about it this morning. Explained some slowness and learning difficulties – cant believe it, beautiful little boy, its extremely unfair that he should find out he has to live with this. I cant imagine learning of a permanent irreversible thing like that that you just have to live with. At least he has a strong family around him, I hope he will be ok at school etc.

Makes you realise what an imperfect thing life is. Stella and Ewan have both been picked up with problems and singled out for early intervention etc. Ange does a good job on that it has to be said although better on Stella than Ewan sometimes I think. I have been trying to help Ewan a little but it is not easy – work seems to monopolise everything just to survive.

Didn't have a good night last night – up worrying about the fees on Southbeach – must find time to go through them sometime this week.

6th September 2009 – Sunday night 11:15 and cant sleep again – late night last night I think because I had my first red meat steak in over 15 years!

Tasted fantastic – going to do one serving of red meat a week from now on. Have a feeling it will help the diet etc. Still push for vege where I can...

Up thinking about our finances and the return to Aust – a lot to think about!

Option 1 – rebuild and sell 14P

Shares + 300k
14 Park St sale + 500k (allowing stamp duty etc)
Pay off 14 Park street loan – 75k
Building costs 38 Abbotsford – 800k

Net cashflow on return -75k.

Left with 38 Abbotsford Street -475k loan – 3.8 k monthly repayments

Option 2 – rebuild and keep 14P

Shares + 300k
Building costs 38 Abbotsford – 800k

Net cashflow on return -500k.

Left with 38 Abbotsford Street, 14 Park St -900k loan – 8.0k monthly repayments

Option 3 – buy in suburbs and keep 38A

Shares + 300k
14 Park St sale + 500k (allowing stamp duty etc)
Pay off 14 Park street loan – 75k
Buy in suburbs – 1,000k

Net cashflow on return -275k.

Left with 38 Abbotsford Street and suburbs house -675k loan – 5.4k repayments

How do all these people do it? I don't know – Better estimates on the network budgeting – will have to take a look. Am thinking we sell Park Street – and put 200k against shares to help make most of accumulated losses on the trust and hopefully to make a bit against the market!

7th September 2009 - A world of dew, and within in every dewdrop a world of struggle feels pretty apt right about now. Need to relax a bit and take it easy – a lot of it my own doing.

Last night's comparisons on financial options a bit simplistic – did some more detailed ones with budgets on spending etc. Have to say the option of buying in the suburbs has a lot of appeal in terms of savings etc. Building on Abbotsford Street will be a huge investment in terms of tying up money. We must do some exploration of lifestyle when we are back at Christmas time.

8th September 2009 –

“In the midst of this world
We stroll along the roof of hell
Gawking at the flowers”

Issa



I liked this, what line thick or thin, imagined or real separates us from what we fear? And is this the root of our motivation

9th September 2009 –

“A single leaf falls,
then suddenly another,
stolen by the breeze”

Ransetsu (1654-1707)

Stolen by the breeze. A nice image, quiet gentle, taken away without aggression and barely noticed. But stolen away nevertheless. Like a lot of things in life, youth, honour, relationships, lives...

Seems I am on a Haiku a day at the moment! Stayed up last night talking about what we wanted to do wrt moving back to Melbourne. Think we are getting closer to doing the Abbotsford street thing. It is what we want really and maybe the only chance we will get to do it.

The sacrifice is disposable money to do other stuff – holiday house, travel, possible private schools although if Ange works, we might be able to manage that. The thing is it will also force us to save – the area is fantastic – access to Studley park, Children's farm and all of that.

As long as we don't overcapitalise too much it will be a bit of a bank account. If things don't go so well, we can always sell and move out to the suburbs somewhere with a nice little cash difference! Hopefully after 5-10 years with inflation, the price of the repayments will lighten and there will be a bit more elbow room to do the other things – holidays etc I hope will be camping at Wilsons Prom or walking etc...

10th September 2009 – Finding it tough! Stella had an interview with a specialist learning teacher this morning who flagged she may have attention deficit passive – she has never seen a student behave like Stella apparently – switching off with a glazed expression.

Stella's normal teacher said she had not really picked up on this type of behaviour either. Must admit sounds strange but Ange is going to take her to a GP, and start the whole get her checked out neurologically etc.

The blinking episodes we had a while back she (the specialist teacher – not that I am a doctor but...), thought could be related to the her brain - not being fully normal in terms of all the connections or functioning etc. Must admit all sounds like black art to me and an over reaction but cannot afford to be too careful – Guess they are err-ing on the safe side which is what we would want.

All in light of Jacob's epilepsy – a bit scary but just have to work through things – at least we are well off and relatively strong as a family to cope with whatever may be in store.

12th September 2009 – Kids did their second lesson of Taekwondo today. Will be really good for them. Ewan especially – focus and coordination etc. He struggled today but tried really hard. He is just not there maturity wise – doesn't listen, finds it hard to remember and repeat, confuses left and right and his brain just can't seem to logically sort what he is supposed to do anyway. He tried really hard though and stuck it out which was fantastic – more than he would do for us at home, and in fact more than he would do when we tried to practice!

They have another private lesson tomorrow and we will see how it goes then. The teachers seem really good – patient and switched on – English is no always so good which makes it a bit hard from time to time for them to understand I think. Stella is really enjoying it and is a bit more mature and able to cope.

13th September 2009 – Been looking at places to go on our trip this morning – surfing google. Wudang mountains looks nice although I think it would more be for the travelling as opposed to any great sites or anything – which is fine, which is the point largely, actually. Reading through old diaries – fantastic – what a great time all of that was – going to the moon type stuff! Following extract travelling down from Xining (near Golmud), to Chengdu:

29 May 1996 – had to spend the night in Xining, slept on a bed that wasn't moving which was a bit of a novelty. What to say about the trip? The scenery changed from flat arid with the odd rugged hills to hilly arid. We travelled down valley for most or a lot of the way anyway which was all the same barren light brown stony dusty but with strips of lush green fields terraced around the place, the result of some serious irrigation I imagine. It soon got to the point where every near level surface had lush

green grass growing on it, right up to sally canyon edges where water had cut through the easily erodible ground. All looking very landscaped and picturesque with model haystacks everywhere and mud rendered houses with Chinese style roofs, the barrel tips pointing upwards at the ends of the gables. And everything looked really clean, no plastic bags or abandoned shoes to be seen anywhere! We stopped for an hour in Lanzhou a city the size of Melbourne and it looked quite nice. Very busy and colourful and relatively clean...

15th September 2009 – Day off yesterday – more of a mental health day than anything else. Made the mistake of going to a meeting with Sathu – the rouge PM on CREATE with Scott on fees – destroyed any sense of well being pretty much utterly!

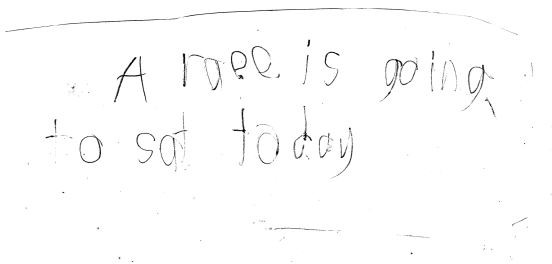
Motivation at work is hard at the moment – keep thinking back to travelling, planning the house etc etc. I need to find some pace in life that will act as a bit of a guide, a path...

Time to start meditating I think. Maybe a schedule of physical exercise and meditation.

pm – Doing slightly better today although dealing with people here is driving me up the wall. So slow and unresponsive – no one picking up on the issues and what needs to happen – like a load of wet blankets that I am trying to flip around! Arrrrghhhhh!

Reading the other short stories in Breakfast at Tiffany's – Truman Capote, and really enjoying. "A Christmas Memory" at the moment – really driving home the essence of simplicity in life and how enjoyable it can be. Pure, simple... How to get that into life?

16th September 2009 – How draining this having to go to work and to drag things across lines, prove that we should be paid, get intertwined into all sorts of problems, split time until it can't be split anymore and then continue to add things to the top of the pile already log jammed.



I have a bookmark at the moment of a small scrap of paper that Stealla had written on – 'A race will sat (start) today'. Beautiful – I want to keep every scrap of paper the kids scribble on, little windows, snapshots of their soul and their development.

17th September 2009 – Morning off this morning – Beanies sports day – poor things put outside to perform for the parents doing little running / jumping / plastic javelin tricks etc. A few of them I am sure felt it was a bit of a gold fish bowl – not helped as it was never that serious – Stell's team in one really for instance had more than other teams and everyone had to run meaning they never stood a chance!

I think apart from a little edge that way however she enjoyed having us there and being a part of it all.

Also went to a talk by a visiting French museum curator on Buddhist art and Dunhuang. Pretty funny really – full house, must have been 70 or 80 people there. Was trying to pick who's who. Think there were some young ex-pat mothers who all looked like they were doing a masters or PhD together. I spoke to one girl who was a visiting resident researching Buddhist art hangings from the US – she had lived for a year or two in Bangkok and Cambodia prior to coming to Singapore. Others looked like members of friends of museums or something – all seemed to be roughly familiar with each other – benefactors, who knows?

Above me, but I enjoyed it as I enjoyed seeing that whole side of things – the academic industry surrounding something like Dunhuang. Dry and quite intellectual looking I think at where the art came from and went to. Interesting but not at the pace and detail he was presenting it at. So much more to be had out of visiting the area and seeing everything – the Uighurs, the museums and how things are kept now, the locals and where civilisation has gone and how it interacts with its past.

And reading of the explorers and the history – travelling in time back to Ariel Stein and beck further to the original Chinese and the great wall etc. Have gotten a lot out of it – if I wanted to do something else it would be to do a proper trip out into the desert – the Taklamakan. Needs a lot of organising – transportation, permits etc. Again it would just be to watch the historians or archeologists or whatever doing their stuff – I am very much into experiencing the present with views both ways, not so much into the hard slow yards of research and exploration myself.

I have become that way somewhat – want the quick easy experience – maybe because I have been lucky enough to have it on so many fronts thus far in life?

Crap nights sleep last night – lucky to get 5 hours and tired today – just finished a kopi and kaya toast and time to head into work for an afternoon on Southbeach!

18th September 2009 –

“Life in this world
is brief as time spent sheltered
by winter showers”

Sogi (1421-1502)

21st September 2009 -

“The young don't feel any great need to wait for the Walk sign before they cross the street. They feel invulnerable. Over time, you better appreciate the consequences of each action. You see people get burned, you see friends fall apart, you go to a few heartbreaking funerals. You begin to realize that survival requires cunning, and as a hedge, as part of a long-term strategy for improving your odds, you wait on the corner until you get the signal to walk.”

Joel Achenbach

22nd September 2009 – Good weekend all in all – felt long as I was quite tired despite having slept not too badly.

Had a day out with Ewan on Sunday which was good – Freya tagged along – trains, airport, Funan to buy a disk drive and a picnic by the reverse bungee in Clarke Quay.

Ange said he seemed full of energy and good spirits afterwards, I couldn't really see it myself... Noticed he was feeling a bit left out this morning in the car – Stella brought a new remote control car for S\$9 (where is the real cost in that I wonder), and he wanted one.

Gave him the O2 to have a listen to music on and there was a nice little Ewan smile, happy to be included and to have something of his own.

Makes me wonder how things will go with Freya – she is not really at an age yet where all of that becomes a problem – at the moment if she wants she yells and screams and cries until she gets! None of this brooding over what could/should have been.

27th September 2009 – Good weekend – Ewan's art show on Friday night at AISS – auctioning off art pieces – Alan, Rhiannon's dad did some bidding and spent over S\$40k – most expensive piece being S\$36k! Very well off or in charge of the art budget at his bank!?!?

Saturday morning felt like the sports routine and very comfortable now knowing a few of the parents – Netball 8:30, Swimming 10:30, Taekwondo 1:30. Ewan has a bit of a tough time but the teachers are very good with him. Quite a bit of frowning and crawling around on the floor at times in his own little world but he needs the discipline, hopefully will help him focus and steady himself a little more.

Sat night Grand Prix – gave J Parrish my ticket for Friday night and he took the lanyard home to London with him – which turned out to be important! Had to spend a bit of time talking my way into the level 3 hospitality suites but was all ok in the end.

Sunday made breakfast with Ewan – eggs, and then British club for a swim and lunch. Sunday night the actual race for F1 – rooftop and level 3 of the flyer, up on the wheel – was fantastic and nice to feel a little spoilt and a part of the social set even though it was on the fringes – ticket sales weren't great apparently and we would have been invited as there was capacity!

30th September 2009 – Still tried and quick to anger at work despite me making some ground on the workload – or so I had thought – negotiations here have a habit of taking large backward steps!

Need that calming zen influence from somewhere and don't know how to get it. Almost need to trance out in some forgotten corner of the office but whenever a chance comes I can't seem to visualise a way of doing it – end up visiting others desks which is distracting more than anything else.

I need a walk to the shops to do or something of that ilk – maybe I will try something today...

1st October 2009 – aam – Another sleepless wakeup at 3:30 in the morning. Revolving thoughts of Southbeach, CDL and CJ, protracted negotiations and worrying about being able to make money on the job, Freys Stark and her Wadis and Beduin, Young Ewan and developmental issues with coordination and concentration – I really hope he is going to be ok. I must spend more one on one time with teaching him how to play sports etc. Light rain, cooler air and up wandering finally to write in the diary for a short while.

I felt yesterday at least I had made a little ground on not getting so irritable with people. Be a calming influence and try to go with the flow rather than fight it the whole time.



2nd October 2009 – One person can't be expected to take on thus much surely. I am going back and forth over the edge, into paranoia and out of. I want to scream for help, I want it to stop, I am not this strong, have not the judgement to deal with all of this...

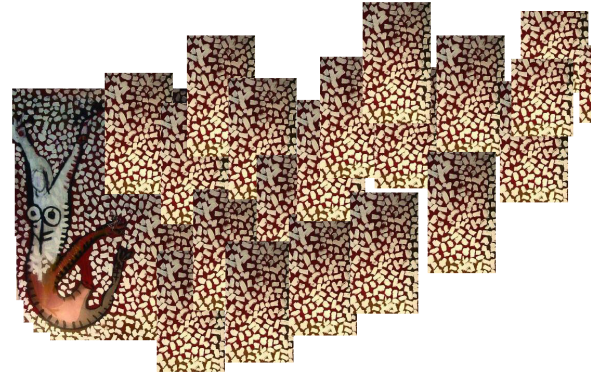
- Southbeach negotiations on C&S, ESD, Facades. I wake in cold sweats on the C&S fee being too low, on the risks of change and repeated value engineering etc etc...
- CREATE negotiations on getting paid, political games between SF (Steve Burrows), and Australia (Chris Graham), unreasonable PMs from JCPL, so surreal I am not sure if it is malicious personal attacks or benign Singapore box ticking – cant be surely!...
- Sports Hub Fee negotiations led by Andre but fees/hours from Lin Ming and I with Peter Bailey, Tristram, Dragages all circling the edges with gnashing teeth...
- F2a Bizarre risk adverse led crazy decisions from JTC and A-Star leading the project into a wasteland on heightened risk and unworkable budgets – dragging others contractors and consultants like crazed moths around a light unknowing? into the craziness also.

L&M arbitration on the back of dodgy figures around Ho chong Leong and Khoo Teng Cheong. We used to play that unreasonable position of power also it would seem – for others in me to clean up and cover the flack on...

- Operating plans pulled this way and that by huge possibles, SSH, Ashgabat, Southbeach – extreme feasts or famines on what margins? – imports and exports here there in up out around down?
- Pavilion a basket case of losses and consortium risks, SO duties staff coverages with Russell, Garry, thank God for Gao Feng.
- Juan on holiday, Garry away everlonger with a broken foot – Gladys not performing, feel like I am holding back a scree slope of tasks that keep cascading down to me.
- People, Kevin Leganza EDT6/7, Andrew Phillips EDT6, Soh PE Geo, William Wu PE, Fiona Yuen, contracts, packages, expectations Christ feels like a washing machine of people chewing time from me as I revolve thrashing this way and that.
- MBS Steel and QP duties, keeping BCA happy, trying to cover the technical, scared of the claims and errors floating around all our heads.

- Returns to Melbourne, succession plans succession issues...!
Poor economy, poor workload and contacts issues, re-invention around the corner. Re building Re financing, Re committing...

And that is not all! It is no wonder I wake at 3:30 in the morning, obsess with worry from time to time, have trouble centre-ing, feel overloaded and heavy under the complexity of the whole thing...



Haunted...ing...

I am not steady enough for this me thinkst. I am apt to burn out, spark and flare like small piece of space junk re-entering the earths atmosphere. Blaze a thin trail of screaming smoke and disintegrating metal, unheard by the populus, insignificant in the expanse of thin vaporous gas out at that distance, quiet and removed from the goings on below. Transformed eventually by a process soon forgotten, into a thin blackened crumpled shell... falling un-noteworthy...

05th October 2009 – Feeling a bit like I am stuck in a groundhog loop – apart from the kids who seem to happily ignore the reality of life and move forward come what may...! One of the redeeming things about being a kid I guess – redeeming and necessary I guess.

6th October 2009 – Feeling like I need a break – had a bit of a bitch and complain session with Peter Bowtell yesterday – he was very good and just listened although did say early on he knew exactly how I felt and I needed a break.

Kids are school holidays at the moment – no solace there! – decided to excuse myself from the office for a bit and sit with computer in a small Kaya toast stall nearby.

Do a bit of thinking, drifting and watching of people. Try to mentally relax for a bit.

Just read a short news article on a guy who travelled in china for a year - took a photo of himself each day to see the changes and has become a bit of a sensation on the web. Great photos – of the places he has been to as well I should say.

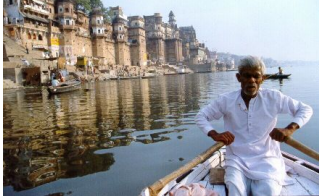
Interesting how the whole fame thing fits into that process. I imagine it would be one of the major influences and is probably going to create more turbulence for him than anything else from this point on.

Quite hard quick arrived fame and the shell it must leave to fill as time goes on.

Feel like Ange and I have had a lot of that experience – the travelling and finding stuff I mean. It is also the source of a lot of our strengths and of our weaknesses – feelings of difficulty accepting some of the more mundane necessities associated with life, of being other people and leaving things we love so much behind.

Will they ever come again – I hope so – I secretly like to think we will be able to give the kids some of that experience? Maybe a year off school or a boat...? Will be hard – not ideal when you are growing up losing years and friendships and all of that – Life is a tight elevator ride these days and hopping off for a short bit can be full of issues.

I ask myself if I would have been brave enough to do this when I was young, whether I would have had the perspective to understand it if it was offered, and even if it would have been a good thing. I then ask myself if I am prepared to make that decision for on behalf of the kids?



8th October 2010 – Quiet morning for some reason this morning. Woke up late having slept mostly (short delirium period on Southbeach 4:30-5:30 tossing in bed – Freya got fed up with me and moved down to the foot where

there was less going on), Ewan slept through – awakening and declaring he had passed from the night to the day with a sense of wonderment in his eyes, who knows what goes on in that boys head sometimes.

There was a soft low light as usual but somehow it seemed a little sleepier than usual, an old man sitting cross legged on a bench bathed in it with an air of spirituality and clarity compared to the darker green shaded trees and grass around him.

Office as quiet as usual, me more pensive, and work aversive than usual – I can feel the draw of the kopitiam shops, kaya toast and coffee and writing in my diary. But things to do alas! ...and I must force myself into them.

10th October 2010 – ppm – Just finished reading some of my diary around the time of my accident. Really gratifying – I know I wrote it so I can relate to it but the pure love for Stell – which is still there now in a different form.

It really drives home the intensity of the love for Ewan and Freya as well. Each of them in their own way incredible beautiful little beings. You couldn't have told me that you could multiply those feelings by three yet this is where I am...

Again melts the soul that vulnerability that something like that brings. They are so reliant on you, and you are so reliant on having them there. What incredible tragedies are borne from losses of family. I would not wish it upon anyone, anything.

Makes me realise I should write more about the kids and their growing up. Stella is in a lovely self confident stage at the moment – knowing things learning things becoming master of her (and all around her's – particularly immediate family's), world.

Ewan is breaking out of the little brother mould. Fighting with things like lack of coordination and attention span – all the things hid dad had trouble with... Ben 10 aliens, the gang of friends at school, getting teased by Stella, but slowly conquering things. As always forever talking and bouncing theories off of you 'right dad?'

Freya is just the beautiful ray of light – I am sure the other two were just as pure and just as beautiful but it defies belief just how lovely she is. She wakes with a smile and enjoys everything. Very strong willed and communicative although still on the verge of the consonants in words.

I am quite nostalgic about the accident. I can feel a draw back to those times. The face of the paramedic over me on the road, cold, and wet? Rehab in the Alfred the scary trips back for minor stuff – sore ribs and screws out etc. Middle of the night feeds and nurses looking after you.

It really is a place of intense emotion and of caring and growing and repairing. A place of harbour and shelter from the constant worry of the real world.

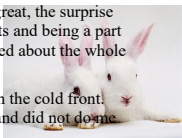
Reading about thoughts coming to Singapore also, the feeling it was the right thing to do etc. – and it definitely was, more than we could have ever known.

And I get those same feelings now, it feels like the right time to be going back home. For the kids, for Mums and Dads, for lifestyle etc. Feel like I, we have made peace with a lot of the things that inhabited our world after the accident.

Funny these feelings are very physical in a way. The feeling of finally being free from the accident when the last bit of metal was removed from my leg. Free to recover only on our own steam after that.

I think I will visit the Alfred ICU and Bethesda again on my return, in fact it will be one of the strong things on the list. To talk with people and share and let them know things can be ok. Selfishly also to see things again and to revisit some of those feelings, travel back a bit and see what is there.

12th October 2009 – Rabbits arrived last night. Should be great, the surprise rabbit whisperer was Ewan who ran around cutting up carrots and being a part of it all feeding them patting them and generally being excited about the whole thing.



Feel crap – spent weekend sweating and going backwards on the cold front. Had a couple of drinks and a late night Sat writing in diary and did not do so well!! Need a break and some sleep it is clear.

14th October 2009 – Not been well last few days – same stomach flu came back to haunt me (and Ange at times in collateral damage!), and also cold that started in the head and moved to the nose is now in my throat.

Last two nights have been tumultuous sleeps tossing and turning a bit of a fight between my body and the sleeping tablets trying to keep it asleep. I woke up both mornings feeling like I was standing on a quite beach, lapping waves, warm soft sun and dark clouds receding on the horizon. A nice way to wake up although slowly degenerates through the day...



16.10.09

Lunch and couldn't be Bethesda looking out the laptop but field like writing all the same! These are particularly tough at the moment. Cannot shake this cold/flu – voice is raspy and now nose is running, seems to move in circles around my head, my throat + chest – my nose!!!

Lost my cool / temper again yesterday dealing with CJ on Southside this time... I walked out on me + refused to respond when I called after him. I reviewed up their programme in front of his junior + told him we would be working on the job. Ended up cooling down + talking through. Very emotional – got one down to talk which went better.

Not enjoying it but feel well get there in the end. Mine is on our side so not pushing too hard.

Need to get a bit of exercise time happening personally however so have taken a couple of holidays next week. Will stay at home and sleep with a well stage + computer – rest + recuperation – meditate + try to get my head in a better place. It is the pressure but more the sustained pressure, I have been

breaking point for a long time now, pushing hard on every front and not letting things not to let any opportunity slip by.

Hmmmm. Interest waning, what does the future hold for me...? Pretty sure it will involve the kids, also pretty sure it will involve the move back to Melbourne, selling Park Street and doing something with Abbotsford Street. Which will also mean it will involve sticking out the working thing (at Arup) for a bit also.

Its that last bit I am really uncertain on – in what form and how successful – business orientated, design oriented...?

18th October 2009 – Had a really good night on Friday night. Drinks at the over easy bar at One Fullerton to celebrate the first successful lifts of the skypark.

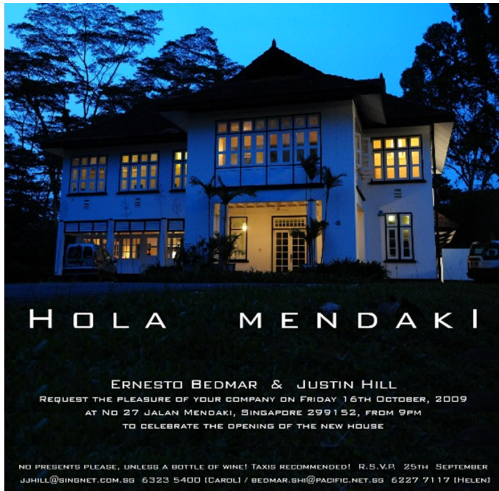
Arrived around 7:00pm to twilight, and watched the scene change to night. Beautiful view across Marina Bay to the panorama of construction work going on. 24 hr sites so everything still moving and progressing in relatively silent splendour as we enjoyed being a part of it all over a beer.

The Flyer, the double helix bridge, the big one in Integrated Resort complete with the first of the skypark lifts in place (a truss between towers one & two and the steel cantilever backspans on tower three), then BFC – Shirley came down (PM from BFC) which helped complete the feeling of involvement. Lights reflecting off of the bay, people eating drinking, taking photos – really lively and enjoyable place to be.

Then went off to a house warming – sort of. Justin Hill, really nice architect from Kerry Hill Architects, had just moved in to share with a new housemate in a stunning black & white just off of Mt Pleasant Rd.

Went with Shirley, and knew just enough people to feel a part of it all. The night went with a nice pace, never long enough to be boring at all interesting little things along the way.

Ernesto, Justin's new flatmate was obviously very well-to-do with rich beautiful art all over the place, and impeccably decorated interiors. Baskets of red apples, green apples and something yellow for instance, earthy and full.



The trip there was very round a bout with the taxi driver having trouble finding it. We first turned up at 27 Mt Pleasant Rd to opening gates and another huge black & white with a French family in a provincial style kitchen. The husband rolling around a glass of red inviting us in, the wife a little less sure and a girl a little older than Stella watching it all with amusement.

Huge house for a small family and we left them and a little unexplored adventure to go on our way – kind of nice in its own way somehow – the presence of an adventure never had, a path never explored, as real and as tangible as if we actually had of.

Always get a few mixed messages from Shirley who is very attractive but not so easy sometimes to relate to. Opted for catching a ride home with an

architect neighbour I knew – Fiona Nixon from RMJM – also very nice girl, and her husband Will.

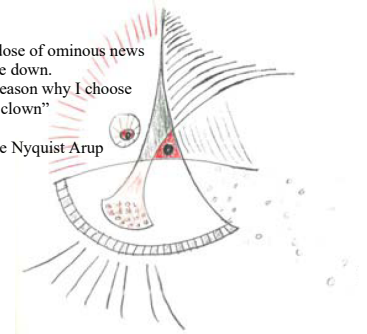
Ended up being a bit out of their way and we missed turn offs a couple of times which didn't help so felt a little bad. I think Shirley might have thought it was all a bit strange also – hope I didn't offend her, I just wanted a strong message about it being nothing more than acquaintances out for a drink. Never mind, happy in myself...

Still sick and gave in going to NUH to get some antibiotics – and a whole swathe of other symptomatic cures! Doctor thought, and is probably right, that I have been picking up lots of different viruses as I have been run down with work. Have taken off Tuesday and Wednesday to try and restore a bit of sanity within my now warped and buckled brain – really looking forward to it and hopefully that will help.

19th October 2009 -

“The daily dose of ominous news
Is getting me down.
That is the reason why I choose
to act like a clown”

Ove Nyquist Arup



22 October 2009 – Back at work after two days off. Was really nice apart from being sick most of the time. Spent time sorting out our financial arrangements on Abbotsford Street, and in playing with the new design based on suggestions Mozz sent through. Was the right thing to do getting her advice. Doing on your own, you end up following your nose too much, difficult to stand back and be objective.

Reasonably happy with what we have on paper now although everything a bit on the small side. 5 Bedroom house on an inner-city block, what do you expect I guess! Still a place for everyone in there and not so small that it is not workable I think.

Has the past two days helped my frame of mind and mental attitude – perhaps, I like to think so – some internal unwinding of tangled thoughts and things left undone, time will tell however I guess...

pm – I keep noticing this headache I have from time to time. It feel like it has been with me for days but comes and goes with some recognition of its presence – it must be associated with another feeling – stuffiness in my temples (now I am making even less sense). Sort like blocked ears but further forward in the temples!

I am quite emotional for some reason at the moment. I am sure I am going through lightweight depression, but brought on by pretty much thoroughly being sick of work at the moment. No chemical imbalances but just as bad?

I also find myself having more to live for now than ever before. The kids and images of us all in Abbotsford Street, my fear of dying and not seeing it all grows and grows... This cant be natural, hopefully it is brought on by the accident and associated feelings of fragility? My chest feels particularly fragile, slightly pulled muscle just under the left rib cage, there one minute imaginary the next. Paranoid feelings of cancerous decay through my body – again associations with the accident and how I was feeling afterwards? I hope it is that and nothing more sinister but it is a bit disturbing.

If I do pass away little ones (and Ang'e), remember as before, if there is a way I will be waiting. No need to hurry, time will be no issue I am sure, but I will look for a way to find you if there is one. Likely in the next not this one.

Hmmm... dark feelings.

24th October 2009 – Well, unwarranted overdramatic feeling of paranoia etc now over. Back into other life things to think about.

Life Thing #1 – Derek Cook an old friend from Arup who moved to the UK got in contact the other day – he usually writes once a year or so... Really like him full of reality and good spirit and willing to try anything etc etc. Things are dark here were some of his words, been looking for work for 9 months with a sum total of 4 interviews. Having a really tough time – wife kids etc I don't know how I would cope!

Makes me appreciative of having a job and the sense to stay in one I guess? Fills me with feelings of anxiety for him and all the thers out there in similar situations... Makes me nervous of my ability to cope should that come to me. I guess you cope because you have to in those situations. Lets hope I never have to find out.

Life Thing #2 – Saw Julie and Julia the other night, a story of a woman who turns her life around by following the recipes of Julia child – 524 recipes in 365 days (yes impressive). Anyway she blogged about it, became a bit of a hit – book, movie, the whole deal.

So I took a bit of a look at blog spot and had a Beeblebrox moment of shit this world is a huge huge place full of masses of people, each real and deep and full of life and thought and fuck am I in all of this anyway?

Side note of the balloon boy hoax story where a family got their young kid to lie about them staging a story where they thought he was in a weather balloon that the father had sent up on a bit of a home experiment. Media alerted follow weather balloon potentially with small child inside for hours before they found the kid in the attic. The family had been on reality TV and wanted to make themselves more marketable.

Most people live their lives like this, out of control desires to be famous and make and leave marks, be better bigger and more exposed than the next person. What does it all mean I wonder? Don't get me wrong I can understand why and can even feel the draw but what does it mean to all of us. Where is our life and what is its essence? Seems like Television is answering that for us these days.

If there is no lasting legacies and lets face it to all intents and purposes there isn't – the numbers are just too large, then if there is a meaning it has to be in the living somewhere, the moment? Maybe an angle in the kids – I'd like to believe that too but feel it is more likely they are just a part of the living.

Or there is nothing... in which case the living is even more important. And there are no big second chances out there – incredibly important to be enjoying the living then! No choice as they say in Asia. So Bren, keep doing what you are doing but for fucks sake stop being so melo-dramatic and enjoy it a bit more!!!

On the blog front, all a bit public for me. I enjoy my time with myself and the thoughts that come that way. And I hope someone will read it all one day – Children, grand children, who knows.

A few thoughts fro the day...

Every now and then I turn around and feel the heat, see the palm trees and register that we are living on the equator, in the tropics – fantastic.

Ewan spent a good hour or more in bed going to sleep – hope we are doing the right thing getting them into bed early. Must remember to ask mum. I feel Ewan is under mental strain from time to time. I hope it is just the pains of growing up and finding your way in the world.

Stella scored a goal at netball and was well chuffed. Won player of the week as well. Great – will really give her a boost I think. And she could probably do with it...

Cold not getting better – early night with Ange off to see a play with her friends.

25th October 2009 – Alex (Melchers) and Evita's wedding reception tonight. Joja Wendt played at the Tanglin club for him. Very nice. Always good to see Joja Wendt and Alex is basically a nice guy I think. Reception was very much about Alex mind you!

Bit of an glimpse into the world that is the Singapore ex-pat. Melchers is a pretty cut throat political organisation. Patrick was invited but not there, said a quick hi to Dirk Paulsen their MD who told me Patrick wasn't doing so well – in business terms. Will give him a call tomorrow but imagine he is not long for Melchers.

They give you a framework in which to do business and if you don't do it (& keep doing it it would seem), there is not much space for you.

Patrick had to break rules to do the Flyer I get the feeling, they made S\$30M out of it, continue to do well out of the skytower but nothing since. Incredible how every man and his dog jumped on the Flyer band wagon and claimed it as their own – Alex in particular!

When the chips were down it was basically Peter Purcell and Patrick (whose original idea it was), soldiering through. Alex came close to a nervous breakdown given it could have cost him his career...

Hmmm... Hard stuff all this business stuff. All very serious and very distorted, smoke and mirrors and not what it seems at first glance. Impressions are so important – it is in the end down to the sell. Of yourself, of the product, of the vision. Of course I still believe the best strategy is to rely on a heavy does of reality, but there is so much more you need to cover – and not a little bit of cool hard luck in there also!

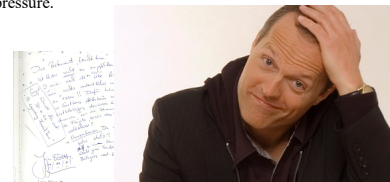
I hope Patrick is ok – he cleared 3M from the Flyer so I imagine he will be (should be)!

Funny I get the feeling I am in my descendency also... Weighed down by Southbeach and F2a etc. Must draw a deep breath, get better and keep going. Time to do it before I leave next year, just need to do it.

Perhaps come up with a time table of working after hours to discipline myself. The current dream is Abbotsford street. I really hope we get to do it. Living in it for 12 months is a good idea for more than just checking out the neighbourhood. Will give us a chance to get our feet on the ground work wise etc also, feel the currents and where they may be heading. A lot of senior people in Arup in Melbourne... A lot of senior people on the board all it seems far better and more foresightful than merely me...

This must indeed make a depressing read. It is my conduit to think and to talk and to offload stuff when frustrations run high so it is hardly a good indication of who I am. Having said that I spend a lot of my time here of late! Perhaps this is who I am. Read back a page or two Bren, loosen up and enjoy!

It is this whole fear of failure – not an option, must be avoided at all costs? Creates not a little bit of pressure.



Frank-

I am typing this to you at the library because I cannot afford a postcard and stamp. My family and I are living in a self-storage unit illegally. It's getting so cold at night. I want them to know I'm sorry, it's my fault, but I can't say it.

Sunday night – post secret night. Some people have real problems... I hope you sleeping well also Derek.

Neither my Ivy League degree nor the successful career that followed ever made me happy... The only thing that has worked is taking care of other people -- wondering what would make them happy and doing my best to make it happen.

And that is why I think being a dad is a good thing. And why it seems to be a priority just now.

And yes reading Post Secret on a Sunday night does make you feel less alone. Its another perspective. Away from the always going peachy, a little on the people with problems side true, but just a little more real, from real people with thoughts. I wonder if anyone I know sends in secrets?

27th October 2009 – 10+ hours of sleep last night to make up for the night before when I was in and out of sleep every hour or so... Feel ok, not great which probably meant I needed it. Will try again tonight – home early, early to bed.

Stocks seem to be peaking out – stumbling ready for a fall. I have this inane theory that the stocks and my fortunes at work are in direct reciprocal correlation. If I do well at work, stocks drop and vice versa. Carry over from growing up with a superstitious mother I think. I use this to explain things that I know are not explainable but it is easy somehow to wrangle things so feel better about things that don't go well...

28th October 2009 –

“...there were birds and crickets and lizards. I tried to collect them in the interests of zoology, but decided to leave them in peace when I discovered how unpleasant it is to put a living grasshopper into alcohol to die”

Freya Stark (A Journey in the Hadramaut)

I like Freya Stark because of things like this. She also has a nice understanding of the dynamics between cultures and people and applies it from an ethics base rooted in the treatment of individuals. Understanding how people might feel about being treating in different ways.

“And what is wrong with the human race, that, having bought at so high a price the fruit of the tree of knowledge, it cannot even use it to tell what it likes from what it doesn't? Not ignorance, but laziness and cowardice prevent us from knowing what we like. Left to themselves the untaught make lovely things, but when we begin to think that we ought to admire or despise, then the devil gets loose in the minds of the manufacturers in the midlands, and we accept the things they give us wholesale, as the East accepts the West; we think the thoughts of other people, too indolent or too fearful to discover our own: and the dear old Sayyid, who loves his carved doors when he looks at them, and finds happiness in his ancient town – the only city I have seen whose dignity and beauty no jarring note distracts – considers himself bound to bring our Western ugliness to spoil it for ever.”

Freya Stark (A Journey in the Hadramaut)

29th October 2009 – Went to early learning support meeting for Stella this morning at which they effectively told us that he was highly likely ADD.

They have had Ange running in circles around Stella for months – the better part of a year or more with vision stuff, aerobics and all of that. Poor kid is under a lot of pressure not to mention Ange!

Can't help but feel it is all too much and that they are causing stress and making the whole situation worse. I don't know what to do – I remember Mum saying she didn't think Ange was coping when they visited and I think the same. She constantly yells at the kids. The trouble is that I am no better.

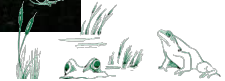
Are our kids that bad – maybe they are. Or are they just kids doing frustrating things from time to time – I don't know, I can't help think the latter but so many people saying otherwise.

The scary thing is Ewan is a lot worse than Stella – and again I think he has gotten worse as he has been ignored a little next to Stella. At a bit much – time to get back to Melbourne and a bit of sanity and normalness and support from family. Only a year left now – need to keep on holidaying and mixing it up. We haven't been away for quite a while – Ange never seems to organise anything.

I know it is the classic Dad thing to say but I just see the time she should have available each day and can't understand it! She always manages to watch all of her television shows however.

Again I can't judge or complain because I know how hard it is and she copes better than I do when faced with it. Mind you a lot of my frustrations come from switching gear between the stress and pace and endurance of work back to the kids which is a totally different thing – needs a relaxed easy going style not caring so much about efficiency or time!

3rd November 2009 – One of the things I am looking forward to about the house is the light well garden. I am picturing tree ferns and rockery and maybe a shade sail. In particular when the house is quiet and lowly lit and the lights are on in the garden uplighting all of the greenery.



Ewan apparently had a great day at school yesterday according to his teacher. One of his friends he idolises (Flynn), wasn't there and so this probably helped. They did a boat building exercise and he was first up and into it and had a great time. Dad got to do the repair work later in the day to much complaining anger that it wasn't neat!

And tonight was one of the first times I saw him show some good natured competitive spirit – racing Stella to the bath with a flying car race (and nipping under her to win!).

Just when you start to get really concerned and worry, there are little things pop up that make you think everything will be ok.

4th November 2009 – The odd person is disappearing from MBS now, both on MBS and Aedas' side. Questions on where the work is in the region etc. not something I would want to be faced with, looking for a job in this market.

Makes me feel for them, one of the disadvantages of being a contractor I guess, the advantage being the higher salary...?

5th November 2009 – **aam** – Up again, work on my mind. Concerned at our work levels next year. Will really come down to Sports Hub and Southbeach. South beach will be mostly HK for the earlier part of the year, and we are exposed as we bear the brunt of the meeting times etc at this end!

Te other job constantly on my mind is Create campus, more because we have a dysfunctional clients PM. Unbelievable piece of work called Sathu. Incredibly rude and obnoxious / noxious. We have done something to upset him at some stage I believe and he is making our life hell.

Rambling half-sensical emails with a million and one accusations and criticisms, of which there is a sprinkling of half truths and truths and subjective things it is difficult to prove or otherwise.

Aimed at us and other consultants on the job too mind you. Perhaps it is because he thinks his company should have been doing the job? Being way over the top when it comes to contracts and deliverables, and over critical, not taking the time to understand himself on what goes on, on the job.

We have not done ourselves any favours, I feel quite let down by Scott who is great but gets bogged down in things and is unable to follow through on actions. The result is we are seen as not performing and at fault. Frustrating and results in loss of sleep.



Complicated politics as JCPL are owned by JTC for whom we are doing another project – Fusionopolis 2a. That is equally dysfunctional for different reasons. JTC have really ballsed up the procurement – over specifying (along with A-Star their main tenant), and then throwing out to D&B to try and manage to risks (despite having completed tender documentation).

We have not covered ourselves in glory taking on some amateur - "Pl less" professors on the

vibration front (on JTCs request), and generally through the inept design management of Khoo and Chong Leong fucking up the design in and around the place.

Lots of effort and time to drag back into a half decent state – but it can only ever be half having started from a low base! It is a crying shame as these projects are great projects – good engineers would kill to be involved in Aust! They are just done poorly!

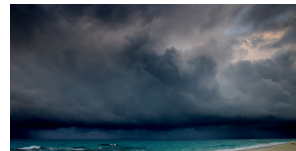
It seems we are still getting rid of the inadequacies of the old practice – what a long road ridden with minefields etc some of which are still out there hidden in waiting. John Loaders 5 years to see real change and 10 years to become a proper Arup office was just about there. Working through the less than ideal people you have on the books, on which you rely on at every level, is a fight of natural retribution unfortunately. You never really get there either, not until the senior guys are proper senior Arup people which is a gigantic undertaking.

9th November 2009 – Busy weekend, drinks & dinner with Sportshub people Friday night, Wilton Close bonfire with kids, leaving drinks for Carlos on the Saturday night, and then rugby sevens with Patrick on the Sunday. A lot of alcohol and quite poor eating! Along the way.

Have decided to start eating select red meat on the basis that am getting less comfortable eating fish – over fishing issues etc, and red meat good for you in respects, and probably not so bad on animal cruelty – comparatively I guess.

Bought ourselves a new flat screen TV which I hate to admit I really really like – all the technology as much as anything else!

Enjoying myself all in all but there is a not insignificant part of me that just wants to hole myself up somewhere and observe for a bit. I spent a couple of minutes watching a big storm envelop bits of islands and the sea and ships out of Keppel towers this morning waiting for my coffee to pour!



Beautiful – I could feel the cold, and the tang of rain on my skin, smell of salt and sand, sense the warm enclosure of tent or hut nearby. These are the things I love in life, perhaps because of the contrast to normalacy admittedly but there is no denying they penetrate the soul, and also that they represent a minority currently!

This image is not literally representative but stirs up all the same feelings.

pm – Squash tonight and my old EON fm favourites tape in the car – fantastic, Queen, stairway to heaven, let it be, Don McLean, Take a walk on the wild side, Eagles. It is a beautiful thing seeing people do stuff really well. The rugby players on the weekend, the songs of the 60's and 70's – singing and air guitar to myself – sublime and enriching. Gets you back to believing in human nature and good things again. All the things that Sathu and Jinsen and a thousand other narrow minded small Singaporeans are not – real and honest and uplifting.

That Hadron collider that keeps breaking down – bit of a worry. People from the future coming back to stop us using it without more knowledge – of course if we had used it incorrectly in the first place they wouldn't be around to know!

Unless of course they were from a parallel dimension and had the foresight to save other dimensions from their fate? What would be the benefit in that – correct don't know and feels very against the natural way of things – perhaps it is to improve things. Perhaps we did a lot of damage that could have been prevented but did not kill us at the time!

14th November 2009 – Difficulties in controlling my thoughts still. Mind runs when I am trying to sleep on work, on family, on the future and whatever. I do need to control it would seem.

I get scared about Freya or Ewan drowning at the pools – just a moments not noticing and under, no way up. Ewan has been close at the botanical gardens the time he fell into the fountain, also at the Jurong town Hall pool – tip toeing stretched neck above water! Freya went under last weekend at the British club and I jumped out to pull her back up just in time. Was on it quickly but could have easily been the other way.

Might talk to Ange about a floaties policy tomorrow – just too valuable to miss and these lessons are making her more and more comfortable in water but not really improving her capability to get her self out of trouble!

Friday Night was the ACES awards at which the Flyer won for C&S excellence. Was a good night with all of the real people behind the Flyer – Patrick, Peter Purcell, Winston, Nanjo, Henry Steen (d?), Phil.

Went on to the dinner and dance – which was also good. Very well put together – nice Italian restaurant with places to sit, places to eat and a central courtyard to have a few drinks etc.. The theme was glamorous which worked well also – few people got dressed up, but didn't really matter if you didn't as long as no jeans etc. Turned up about 10:30 or 11:00 and still going strong – people



looked like they genuinely had a good time.

24th November 20011 – Hanging out for Christmas and being home with the kids – Wilson Prom camping and Appletree Drive. Still planning on moving back end of next year – hope it will happen. Australian Government has changed taxation laws which means we might pay quite a stiff tax penalty – might affect things a little?

Haven't had any pressure as yet from arup – will be interesting to see if I do, I have already voluntarily extended for a further year to cover MBSIR. I hope not but who knows.

Sleeping a bit better at the moment – maybe because I am more tired, or some of the work has started to settle ever so much (a little). I am not keeping up on email but am not really caring in a big way – try to catch the important ones and if any slip I am sure I will hear about it!

27th November 2009 – “A Fortune Teller Told Me”, Tinziano Terzani, at the moment. Great idea, a journalist who told by a fortune teller many years earlier that he would be involved in an airplane accident in the year 1993 decides to avoid flight for the whole of the year. Good book and well written but it covers a lot of really horrible stuff in the world.

I know it is out there and actually I want to know about it but it is horrific at the same time, I am grappling with whether I want hear about it in this book – as good a place as any I guess.

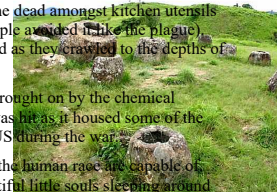
On Bangkok : “where one person in five has no proper home, one in sixty, including newborns, is HIV positive, one woman in thirty works as a prostitute, and someone commits suicide every hour”

And worse on Laos where he goes to some lengths to describe the gentleness of the people : “The Vietnamese plant rice, the Kmer stand there and watch, and the Laotians listen to it growing”, and then talks about some of the atrocities of war that have ravaged the country. About visiting a cave where people lived, in hiding from the Americans who relentlessly bombed the planes, in which a small plane succeeded in making a direct hit with a phosphorous bomb.

Over 400 people died apparently (no survivors), phosphorous on the walls, walking over the bones, large and small, of the **dead amongst kitchen utensils** etc. that were still lying around (the local people avoided it like the plague). Imagining the havoc, the cries of the wounded as they crawled to the depths of the cave never to come out of it again.

Stories of children with terrible deformities brought on by the chemical warfare of the Vietnamese war where Laos was hit as it housed some of the primary supply routes to the enemies of the US during the war.

Again with the incomprehensible things that the human race is capable of. Again, how to marry that with the three beautiful little souls sleeping around



me in the house? Feelings of I don't know what, nausea of a form?, rise up and through me leaving traces of anxiety and intense sorrow and sadness for these unremembered people and their innocent children.

27th November 2009 – Filming this morning for “Build it Bigger” – National Geographic or Discovery Channel, I am not sure which on MBSIR. Was good but I worry about those things. My nasal voice and bony gaunt pasty face are not made for television unfortunately.

Got on very well with the interviewer/host – Danny. Really nice easy going confident guy full of compliments and immediately easy to relax around – not so much of the “action” stuff that winds up the nerves on the Flyer shooting when it happened. They were really happy with everything – lets wait and see what happens when they get the footage back to the editing room in New York!

Hopefully the fact that I enjoyed myself was a good sign, and that I got on well with them will mean they be kind in the editing....!

29th November 2009 – Had a interesting chat with a guy (Toby), at one of the kids parties on the weekend. He and his wife run a life coaching business, centered around meditation etc. He had been an ordained Tibetan Buddhist monk for ten years or so.

The book that first got him into eastern spirituality was the Tao te Ching. We talked a bit about how well it was all received by the west at an intellectual level and the disconnect with ritual based practices here where it originated! Not unlike Christianity in the West...

I love all that stuff and exploring it, life the universe and everything. I wonder if there will be time for that in my life at some stage – become a reader or teacher or practitioner? I am fairly happy with where I am at the moment and don't feel a great need to cut anything short just yet. Hopefully I will know when it is time.

He was talking about meditation as creating a space to be used as you want. The Dalai Lama used it to go to higher places, he uses it to inspire his art with visions etc.

He suggested I use some of the imagery of our walking to as a starting point – for meditation, visualise being in those places and going there. Good idea – pretty simple really in hindsight. Might do some from time to time.

Those of us who are awake anyway and sense some bigger picture or timeframe or whatever...

30th November 2009 – Some really vivid dreams lately, last night was clinging onto some aeroplane platform, or something like that with bits of leg being dropped and me trying to save them all from falling off the edges – unsuccessfully. It was night time with faint red light about the place.



And another getting into an elevator, and then realising it was going sideways. I was late for a meeting and had gotten into the wrong lift. It then turned into a roller coaster of a ride down winding up and down tracks criss crossing and falling eventually to the ground where I got out looking for the way back – N1 or N2 or something like that - a very unremarkable city streetscape... All the way down the elevator trip I had my head on someone's shoulder – a man in a suit next to me. This ended up being my pillow I realised when I woke.

Maybe not deep dreams – had been playing with lego all day and the wonkavator is a bit of a recurring theme with Patrick, but vivid. Perhaps a lot of hidden meaning around them...?

01st December 2009 – Had a training session on mentoring this morning. Had all the hallmarks of being a waste of time however the lady was quite good, if not a bit seventies new age... She had done a lot of work in neuro-science which was really interesting. Made me want to study up on it further.

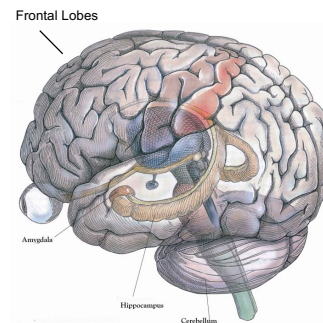
She was saying that the frontal lobes are where we do all of our logic and analytical thinking processes. It is an intensive activity which takes a lot of effort and energy and the brain tries to avoid it if it can.

The fall back, and in fact the part of the brain where messages first are received is the Hippocampus. A small kernel towards the rear. The hippocampus operates on the principle of auto pilot. It is a repository for all of the standard reactions to things and just plays them out in response to recognised events.

A filing cabinet of standard reactions that are enacted without much thinking. This explains why when you tell someone how to do something it doesn't really sink in. It is the Hippocampus just providing a standard response to an instruction – to follow.

When you are then required to do it again, the thinking background is not there, you are looking for the instructions that are not forthcoming.

The frontal lobes are also not good at multi tasking, the energy goes up and the efficiency goes down. The hippocampus on the other hand is good at this as it is just playing out predetermined reactions without much thought. There were a few other things also relating to the hippocampus. When we get scared the immediate reaction is for the



brain to panic and fight or run. Hence the blood being redirected from non vital functions like digestion to the major body muscles getting ready for this – i.e. the feeling of butterflies people often feel.

4th December 2009 – Been doing a bit of thinking about the house. It would be putting a lot of eggs into one basket. Abbotsford Street would basically become our investment vehicle. Would Hippocampus e of hundred thousand into shares in the name of the t. going back to square one, new house, new mortgage etc! How do other people do it I don't know. I think they must be earning a lot more than I am, or get assistance from families etc.

I still think it would be a good thing to do. Inflation takes over and things get much more manageable as time goes on. We haven't bought and sold too much so we could move to the burbs in the future and get cashed up – perhaps buy a holiday house if that was what we thought we wanted.

Need to talk to dad, to Steven Enticott and the banks when we get back. Might have a word with frank and Peter as well.

05th December 2009 – Having a bit of a panic attack over work. Am way over committed. Anytime anything real comes up and I need to spend an hour or two solving it I am just sent do far behind in keeping up with email etc, it becomes difficult to recover.

I am going to have to get aggressive next week and remove myself from the office to try and catch up. I committed to do stuff for ACES which I dread as it is not my strong point but I will have to work my way through that also.

Agggghhh – I hate it.

pm – Good day with the kids. They really love Christmas and everything that goes with it. Decorating the tree, lights around the place, Christmas string with postcards etc up on it, and off to Melbourne for pressies.



Image above is Jessica Watson's tracking site.

Putting all of our money into Abbotsford Street will mean my French Polynesia on a yacht dream is probably not going to happen. Bit of an empty pit formed in my stomach when I came to that

First time I have realised a life dream may be out of my reach... I guess I have had a lot of that sort of stuff – even down to the tropical beaches. Choices need to be made and I look at the kids and they take priority. Sadly I feel like a little part of me is dying.

Who knows what will happen in the longer term – might not be on a yacht but might make it there some other way shape or form.



Maybe it will be to retire to one of these places one day? Rent out the house and set up here with some solar power and a global internet connection (we are talking 10 + years?!?).

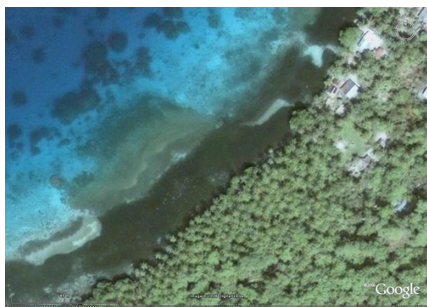
Maybe it will be through work or some sort of aid programme, or maybe it will be a form of further study?

Surfing a little on google came across people who do this as a hobby – fantastic. Imagine finally getting to a place after studying it from space for so long. The realness of the sand and salt, and dirt tracks that wind into the forest and corrugated iron shacks. The blueness of the lagoon and the heat of the sun, sweat around the back of your shirt. The falling of night and burning fires, local food and mosquitoes.

How old is too old I wonder – I feel great at the moment – never better in fact. Plus 10 years = 52!, + 20 = 62. Should be able to do stuff at that age I hope. We stretched ourselves when we bought Park Street and everyone thought that was expensive – mortgage was well under control after 10 years – in fact blown out of the water, but that was after Singapore etc and an increasing salary.

Also a lot of inflation. House prices double every 10 years and so the value of money should effectively halve every ten I guess. We can protect against the downside of unemployment through holding some liquid investments. I can always come back to Singapore to work I hope – with Arup or someone – lots of firms look to set up offices here as a gateway out of Australia.

Hmmm, the more I talk, the more I don't think it will be a problem this Abbotsford Street commitment. Mind you I am easily convinced and especially when it is me doing the convincing.



Lukunor Atoll - The populated motu (1,000+)

www.evs-islands.com/2006_10_15_archive.html

Saturday night, quiet with a scotch in hand. Lovely.

6th December 2009 – All up a good day but lost it with the kids and Ange again this morning when Freya was refusing to come. Ange wouldn't let me leave her to try and get her to realise that she had to come to stay with us. Screamed fuck at her in the street asking for some support!

I have got to stop losing it with people. This happens in a more stifled form at work with clients from time to time also – total different level but loss of composure all the same.

I have to do something about it. As well as exercise once every two days I am going to try to meditate every other day. Start with 10 minutes and work my way up. Focus on breathing and imagine myself somewhere on our travels.... See how it goes, hopefully it will bring some calm, enough that it flows out into the rest of my life also.

10th December 2009 – Been playing with getting my fortune told. Like the idea of additional interest it throw up in my life – things that I might do differently – inspired obviously by this journalist who avoided air travel for a year.



I think I have decided not to. I don't want to hear things I don't want to hear (i.e. the next few weeks are a bad time to travel!) – I would have a high propensity to worry them and all of that – perhaps! I like to think I am above that but what is the gain? Need to think a bit I guess.

I could envisage it rolling along until one day I happened to be outside a geomancer and everything felt right and it just happens.

It is a shame they took the old weight and fortune vending machines out from Tanjong Pagar Plaza – they would have done for a while. Might go looking one lunchtime to see if there is one hiding around a forgotten corner (in an air of mystery), somewhere!

11th December 2009 – Went to an exhibition of Ketna Patels work last night – a sort of end of year sale or clearance of a lot of her work in her studios in Holland Village. Really like her stuff although there is a lot of it. She is on what she calls an Pop Art project at the moment.

Anyway, rarity of rarities Ange and I both liked a print – “Tears of Milk”, and decided to buy it. Ketna was there and explained the background to it all which was fantastic.

Its background is around the reading of the palm and how your palm changes through life. Affected by all of the things that influence you and pass around you. From the old and earthy to the left of the painting and the new and

modern to the top. The bottom of the painting is the river of life flowing past, the blindfolded girl is the innocence being attacked by the leering men with the image of a prostitute.

The tears of milk are supposed to be an analogy to milk teeth you lose as a child. Tears(not real), like growing tears as you mature and change.



She told us it was early in her productive career and her real painting style (this is me). One of two submitted for an ASEAN art competition. She won the Singapore prize. It is her real painting style not the pop art 'project' she is currently in the middle of.

The original is two metres square (the largest size the competition would accept). It is still her favourite work and the original is with a private collector in London somewhere.

All great stuff to hear and could have been sales talk (we had already decided to buy!), but listening to her I believe everything she was telling us. It is an organic painting rather than the juxtaposition of imagery you see in her pop art.

13th December 2009 – Sunday morning in at work, three working days left until we leave. Christmas in Appletree drive with Nanny & Poppy and the kids, Wilsons Prom, an overnight hike to Oberon bay, break from work, time to be real, I cant wait!

27th December 2009 – Whoosh – into Melbourne, the Prom, Christmas, boxing Day Shopping, Appletree drive, Jill & Ed, Family photos with Sally, session with Rosemary on the house, with Raymond from NAB on money, Steven Enticott on accounting. Like a fast forward section on a tape whizzed through at barely audible or understandable rate to the post Christmas week. Our old life sucked down a plug hole somewhere to be replaced by this non-reality of the moment around Christmas.

28th December 2009 – The Prom was beautiful. Managed to get the same campsite as last year which was great. Stellas favourite tree became the centre of a bird catching exercise, hilarious as she tried to enlist Ewan, coming up with plans and huddling on how best to work things. Lots of other kids top play with this year which was great.

Highlight (or Ange and I anyway), was the overnight hike to Oberon Bay. Kids complained a little but not too bad – mainly as we kept them going with lots of lolly stops along the track.

Fantastic to be out in the bush and stunning visually. Crystal clear water, huge beaches, blue blue oceans, wildlife etc. Went out a one night (to release Ewan's pet clam – which had fallen out of favour after releasing a shot of water or something, probably a death throee?! – back into the ocean), and the low light, amazing oranges, purples and lues of the sky that end up infusing into everything, and pureness of the beach I can still feel. Quiet real...

Incredible stars at night whilst out there also – better than in Tidal River even. Black and bright white through a veil of blurred eyes and warm cold feet on cold sand and twigs etc. Stolen views during middle of the night toilet runs!





You could see the evidence of the fires that had gone through but they didn't seem too bad. Mostly up through the North of the park apparently. All the black boys were flowering wit big kangaroo tail seed stalks having sprouted. The banksia seeds had all opened in the fire and the bush was regenerating itself.

The parks people don't allow burning off so the firefighters treated it as a low priority to let it burn through and clear out a lot of the undergrowth.

Caught up with Craig & Jo as well which is always good. They are heading to a point where they can effectively retire to the farm with Jo dining some teaching. They have done very well for themselves – Craig works very hard and spends a lot of time away from the family doing tenders in different places during the week then home on the farm with them on the weekends – soon to be permanently home by the sounds of it. They will sell their place in Sandringham and be effectively debt free with 300k in the bank!

29th December 2009 – We are opting back into the servicing a mortgage option! A lot of eggs in one basket although this will be the only chance we really get to something like this and most of it will be recoverable through selling the house if we ever need to!

Visited Jackie and Richard today, they are also doing really well and are enjoying things. Went for a walk down to the Barwon river – absolutely beautiful! Always like seeing them as they are just so down to earth and seemingly together.

A lot of second thoughts over the house and the architecture – are we doing the right thing – feels very small or more 'compact'. Perhaps we should make more effort to open up and get some wow factor happening. Will have to accost Mozz and see what she thinks. Hopefully the sheer amount of light will be the wow factor. Honestly I don't know what else we do, we seem to be pressed for space in all directions - all of the living areas are upstairs and still the ground floor feels small – it is 270 odd sqm which should be huge – is it – I don't know, will have to do some measuring of spaces and perhaps lay it out real size to get an idea?

02 January 2010 – Again... waiting for a plane... that lovely feeling of pause, of time. The time at Mum and Dads has been great but haunted a bit by a lot of unspoken tension. I get the feeling they are unhappy with us. I am a little unhappy with them!

The seem very judgemental on the parenting front. Dad went as far as to draw back a deep breath at one stage in a very dismissive tone saying "well your making your bed, you will have to lie in it". Really pissed off. Prior to that it was all about us only being here for four days a year and "maybe we should be listening to what they say as it might have some merit". We were actually listening to what they were saying it is a pity they were not listening to us.

They (Dad in particular), was insistent in coming up with reasons why we were wrong and Stellas eating habits were a huge problem.

Had the distinct feeling Beck was the prodigal daughter and could do no wrong. Perhaps unrelated but Dad told me he was setting Beck up as a director of the super fund etc in case anything went wrong, and then there was the video played of Beck ad libbing being a bit silly "Beck always does that which explains why the kids are so well adjusted"... Not very subtle or perhaps just innocently misplaced!?!?

Funny on the outside looking in it was all the classic stuff you hear about with kids visiting their parents. For some reason I never thought it would be like that with mine. Far too well adjusted and just let things happen in a relaxed supportive type of way. Live and let be and all of that.

Some nervousness from Mum but definite energy that way from Dad. And me feeling I wasn't particularly in the mood to forgive or act in a way that was above it all, a bit of self indulgence and selfishness on my part... Anyway what will be will be, it will be uch better when we are back and doing things on our own terms rather than staying with them for visits.

"There are houses,
But none live there.

There are Roads,
But no travellers.

There are stairs,
But no one climbs them.

The black crows seem unarmed,
But within the fruit

The worms are there.
Only at Angkor there is feasting.

But of humanity none remain.
Save those who stand where lies the
The shade of a rain tree.

The Buddha Prophecy,
Cambodia..



An old poem recited by a Cambodian explaining the fortelling of the Khmer Rouge genocide. The evacuation of Phnom Penh, the Khmer Rouge in black pjama uniforms, bearing the fruits of peace however being flawed. Angkor the only place untouched by revolution and very few survivors.

The more academic version shows similar reflections of reality – around the middle of the Buddhist era (1957 this would have made it), a palace of gold and silver will be erected at the confluence of four rivers (a failed casino was

built), after which there will be a devastating war and blood will run as high as they elephants belly (The American war and then Pol Pots massacres). Religion will be eliminated (Pol Pot banned all religion), then will come a man disguised as a Chinese (Sihanouk returning from Beijing), accompanied by white elephants with blue tusks (the white UN vehicles with blue bereted soldiers on board)...

I like this. I like it foremost because it somehow lessens the horror of the Khmer Rouge atrocities which leave me with an empty feeling somewhere in the pit of my soul. Really personal stories of cruelty and torture and painful unjust deaths. It somehow does this by placing all of that in a larger framework of ages, and better than that in the prophecy of local lore and religion. Hmmm?

I also like it as is if true above logic and everyday life. It opens up doors of higher meaning and levels etc. I feel these things exist. I feel we are moving away from them for the moment as we get more and more technical. Unlike Tiziano Terzani, I have no great problem with this as if they exist I am sure we will come back around to them. We will rediscover or perhaps discover from other angles, other approaches, ones that make more sense are better understood and will be better able to be used for the good of all.

Hmmm...? Too comforting – I don't think so although that self convincing is always a pitfall.

Melbourne had some great storms while we were there. Thunder and lightning, heavy torrential rain, drizzle so light that it seemed to form a part of the atmosphere rather than being something that moves through it.

I am looking forward to getting back and the couple of years settling in and building our house. I really hope we get to do it and it all goes well.



The winx club all seem pretty good although I worry about Ange coping from time to time – not helped by my parents unsubtle intimations. I think about how we were left alone so much of the time and hope that at least we are spending a lot more time with them. The effort Ange puts into the education and development issues is extraordinary. Ewan will need a lot of help on that front and will not be as willing a student as Stella currently I that's for sure.

I took him to the toilet today to wipe his bottom properly after he stank! Managed to play down the stigma and he was willing and appreciative as a result for me to help him. Gives me some hope that things will be ok.

ppm – Got talking to Ray who takes photos and writes for Atlases. From Abbotsford (Park Street), and a geography teacher in State system teaching at Melbourne High School.

Nice guy who was on his way to Colombo and had spent quite a bit of time in London and a bit in Singapore. Interesting talking to him, one of these bits of the jigsaw puzzle of the world that floats around you. Flotsam and jetsam of conversation and glimpses into the cogs.

3rd January 2010 - Bit of shopping today and organising of things. Found myself around Arab Street after going to Funan to find it is not worth fixing the Ipod, and Bras Basah to find out it would be better to use someone in Holland Village (to frame Tears of Milk)!

Sitting in Golden Mile Foodcourt out back of Keypoint and the mosque. My favourite little vegetarian place is closed – they are so successful they have stepped it back a bit into semi-retirement me thinkst - good on them.

Japanese instead and will soon head over to my mates at the blue café for a cup of tea and sweets. I love floating around the areas like this, you get the feeling there is a lot going on, a lot to observe and mysterious undercurrents of the way people live. Quite tumultuous at the mercy of a lot of things and yet simple and resilient in a go with the flow type of way (more of a forceful flow here, you don't get much choice!).

I am feeling I have had enough. I actually find Australian culture equally interesting at the moment to be in. Particularly as it involves or will involve us building a place and setting up longer term things for our future lives.

I have always been happy with my own company and just at the second am feeling it would be good to have someone to talk to intimately. Someone I could lie back with, stare at the ceiling with, or out a window with and talk the troubles of the world and the meaning of life and all of that.

That's the other slowly rising realisation, I don't want to go gently into that good semi retirement night. I want to accomplish something on the meaning

of life front. I want to do a bit of experimentation with different things, meditation, Tai Chi, nature etc...

And why not now? Because now is for living. That is a part of the Hindu system I do believe, play out your place, or live your life – perhaps not as forcefully restricted as Hinduism would have it but there is a lot to be said for actually living a life and enjoying it along the way. To sacrifice some of that in order to experiment with understanding the mechanics of it is a good thing (living), would defeat the purpose somewhat wouldn't it?

At the very least it has got to be a good sign that I want to live my life rather than taking too much time away from it to explore in self indulgence. So what will come of it I wonder. Perhaps a book, or perhaps just this – for some great grandchild to read should they have the fortitude and patience (hello there if you are reading)?

Moved spots and a bit of Ah Balling soup – glutinous rice balls with red bean filling in a peanut soup. People down here in the hawker centres, seemingly scratching out a living (some of them do very well apparently but hard to tell). Sweating and toiling over stoves and rice pots in a groundhog day loop. You need a special pace of life about you – a speedily lived life totally in the hippocampus! When does that other light shine through? As with most aspects of life, stop to think about it minute to minute for too long and it would send you insane, or at least to an early suicide...

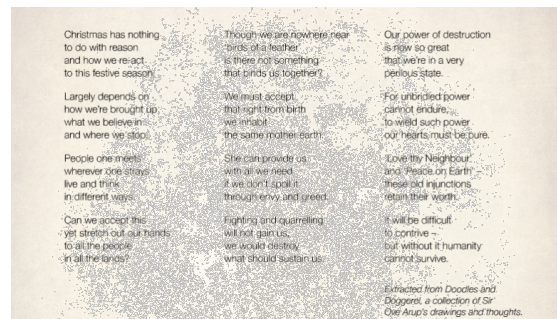
...and back at the Blue café. Previously I would have started sketching, would really like to start surfing the web for a collage of images instead but cannot be bothered connecting through free web just now – never seem to be able to get it going. So a few words instead.

Bussorah Street, heavy black skies up behind the mosque, rain on its way. Palms green and hanging it seems in anticipation. Jamal Kazura Aromatics, Sasha's teddy bears, and Ambrosia – Divine Pleasures, the Mediterranean Lounge. Ambrosia is one of those places which starts with all the best fundamentals, shutters on the open windows, cushions and rugs but then falls short with a struggling menu and some bright flashing red LED light strings to try and make the place stand out a bit. Tourists, locals, pretenders like myself, the old muslim men on a day off, or just off in the blue café with younger protégés (late forties, early fifties), serving instead. Taxis cruising through big green LED signs indicating they are looking for fares. Colours of Arab Street fabric stores just out of sight and a few different underlying beats from musics from who knows where. A rickshaw full of junk pedalled past in an unbelonging scene (these days anyway), the man beckoning to passengers, quite where they would sit no-one seems sure, they would need to nestle in amongst the old Elmo soft toy and the bags of rags and other cherished and misguided collections. Also just out of vision, sleepy Sam's and the wandering back packers immersed in a druggy gentle flow of life. Living in perpetual eddies on the side of life proper – sounds wonderful doesn't it.

Reddy orange tiles, restored and aging shop houses, Alaturka the Turkish place that struggles beside the doing it all too easy B Bakery. Couples talking, stopping to consider where they go next. A brief breeze flittering through helping to ease the heaviness of the air for a few seconds ahead of the oncoming storm. A place very at home with itself but in which few are really at home for longer than a transient passing.

Is that death I can sense around the corner, or just a passing of this stage of life? I do feel dangerously as if I have come past points where I would be happy to pass on. I don't know how I can say that with the kids lives ahead of me – of course if is far from the truth on that front – the exact opposite in fact – I have more to see ahead of me than ever before! There is something there however. The life I had growing up is at a stage where I can leave it lie in peace perhaps?

04th January 2010 – Just saw our Christmas card – amazing he was thinking this so succinctly way over a quarter of a century ago...



9th January 2010 – out for a drink last night with Shirley. Nice to talk architecture for a while although was feeling a bit down on our house afterwards – difficult to afford good architecture when you have limited block sizes, quite onerous space wants and limited budget!

I wont show her our plans as she wants to do something way out there. Kept trying to tell her that subdued and conservative is what we are – and what we want to live in.

She was telling me that I mumbled through the whole of the skypark talk I gave before Christmas and that it was really quite bad – up there in the

emperors clothes was the expressoin! She was a bit tipsy so took advantage to get an honest opinion. Ouch!

I need some annunciation lessons or something. Will obsess over that one for a little while although not as much as I would have in previous times which is a good sign.

Organising the trip up Kota Kinabalu. Time is so tight I will need to do it through a tour which will cost almost S\$600. Given I am getting flights over and accommodation for free as a part of the ACES dialogue with Malaysia it is still pretty good.

Over 4,000m high. Tiny bit concerned over my lungs, I will have to take some of Ange's AMS meds and watch myself closely. Should be ok I think, but will write a few goodbye notes and back up things like this in places they can be found just in case! Having to do on my own in the end (apart from the guide), which is a bit of a bummer but that's how it is. Andre pulled out after cutting his feet to bits in plastic mountaineering boots around Mount Cook in NZ! – might be just as well – could be feeling pretty inadequate! I did a fitness burst before Christmas and was feeling ok, and did the Oberon bay walk loaded up to the max and with kids in tow also which should help too.

Must say I am really looking forward to it.

Still on Tiziano Terzani. Had a nice passage about the demise of Chinese culture and the great loss in the disappearance of a valid alternative to Western culture:

"Not by chance it was the Chinese who discovered that the essence of everything lies in the equilibrium between opposites, between yin and yang, between sun and moon, light and shadow, male and female, water and fire. It is by harmonising differences that the world works, reproduces itself, maintains its tension, lives. So in fact there is some reason to regret the end of communism – not for itself, but as an alternative, a counterweight. Now that it no longer exists there is a great disequilibrium, and even the side that thinks it has won no longer has the tension that stimulated its creativity"

Tiziano Terzani
"A fortune Teller Told Me".

11th January 2010 – Kota Kinabalu all booked and ready to go! Should be great although concerned I might be offending ACES by not golfing with them – have to do my own thing too!

Got a bit worried about fitness last night and ended up doing a quick circuit of Woking rd (at 4:30am!), more as a test to see how I felt than any hope of building up fitness from here – 3 days in... Felt slow but not too bad – what is

more of an issue is an impending cold that seems to be developing – take it easy over the next few days.

I actually left a note for Ange and the kids in case anything were to happen. Plane crash, heart attack, lung problems? Death is becoming more and more of a feature concern in my life as I get older.

13th January 2010 – Hmm... the cold that often follows the return to Sing from Aus has arrived and seems to be gearing up to peak for my KK climb! Seems to be mostly in my throat and I am trying to get as much rest as I can without taking the piss at work (ACES mtg last night and home at 10:30 – meeting most of the day today before flying out.

19th January 2010 – Well, gear up it did and hit full blown right as I began my climb, along with the rain. What began as very atmospheric cloud and mist at the bottom of the mountain soon turned to steady light rain interspersed with torrential downpours throughout the ascent.

Result was a very wet Bren, pushed to his limits! Did the first couple of km fairly robustly even starting to think I was feeling stronger as I went. That didn't last and I ended up slowing right down, taking breaks every 15-20 steps on the way up. My pint sized guide (ex-porter Nani), had to bear with me the whole way... a little embarrassing although I had warned her I was not feeling well.

Got to the hostel where we were to stay the night utterly exhausted and dropped into bed and some rest and drying out for an hour or so. Another couple in my dorm room collapsed on another bed were testament to me not being the only one. The walk was actually pretty bloody hard – straight up staircase without a break really along the way of more than 10-20m at a time.

I was unwell but it would have been tough going in any case had I been fully fit. As it was it was 5-6 hours of hard cold sweat soaked slog up the rocky staircase/path.

The hostel was a large three storey hostel type building at around 3,200m. A few others around it, it was however the largest of the lot and seemed to be where most people were staying. My actual lodging was another 15min further up, and I would have been up for making that trip to had there not been a cancellation and I managed to be upgraded to stay there!

All around was the roar of waterfalls cascading down the mountain around us. I took a bit of solace from the fact that it was all rock – very little mud but it would not have been hard to imagine the place being washed away. Nani came back in to tell me that should the rain continue there was no way we would be able to proceed up the next morning – too much water, the ranger would not allow it – crossing raging torrents on rock etc...

I didn't sleep at all that night (from 8:30 till 2:00 the next morning), just lying there eyes closed listening to varying degrees of rain wondering about going,

not going, what others were doing, and who knows what else, just lying there happy to be relatively warm and not moving!

Two am came and I got up to a few others moving about the place. Light breakfast of tea and toast and lots of conjecture about going, not going amongst the cohort. In the end I bucked up and went out with Nani, following the ranger into the rain and roar of waterfalls, headlamp on, wanting to give it a shot at least. I would have regretted it had I not tried at least.

Many (most), decided to call it a day but looking back behind us there was a good 10 or 15 people with us. We ascended for about 40minutes after which I really began to feel it. Back to the frequent stops of the previous afternoon. Rather stupidly I had not taken any cold and flu tabs and so was feeling particularly bad. No energy at all, nauseous and light headed. Nani kept pointing out the seemingly ever increasing roar of the waterfalls seeming to indicate that the it was very unlikely we would be able to make the summit (either because she believed it, or because she was worried about my ability to make it - or her patience in seeing me painstakingly try!).

In the end it was clear it was going to take me a long time to get up there and that I would expend all of my available energy in doing so. I was likely going to go through the whole vomiting stage etc., there was the concerns over my lungs being untested at that altitude, it would have been miserable and likely we would have been forced back by water in any case.

I took the difficult decision to cut my losses and descend!

It was clear Nani felt it was a good idea although quite what the motivation was still a little unclear. It could have even been that she was just happy to get back into bed for an hour or two rather than face the wet protracted expense of effort in pushing on to a cloudy wet uncertain summit to which she goes twice a week!

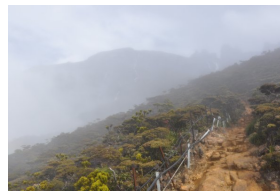
So back down to the hostel, no remaining dry clothes but at last an hour or two or three of sleep. Had given up counting time by that stage. A better breakfast, some tabs and then back down in earnest. Four out of the hundred or so odd people staying there had actually made it apparently – to blanket cloud and buffeting wind and rain... but they had made it.

Disappointing but no real regrets, it was the right decision.

The rest of the trip down was spent wet on the outside from the rain and drenched on the inside from perspiration. My legs held up well although were a little wobbly at times. They were to be sore for quite a few days after and in fact are only now starting to ease.

An afternoon watching movies in bed prior to the ACES/ACEM dinner that evening – fantastic! One of those rare time where you feel you deserve the rest and have time and capacity to take it - totally enjoyable.

And the ACES dinner and meeting the next day was worthwhile also – a little unexpected I have to admit, although the longer I spend with these guys the more time I have for them.



Back to the chaos that is work. It is taking its toll, I have overcommitted in the past and am having to see a lot of it through. I must now start working my way out of it... in preparation for not being here.

22nd January 2010 -



"Two brothers - aged 10 and 11 - have admitted to grievous bodily harm charges after their victims were found bloodied, bruised and "waiting to die" in a wooded ravine near Doncaster.

The Sun reports the court heard how the brothers used "bricks, stones, pieces of wood, glass, barbed wire and cigarettes" to torture their victims, only stopping because their arms were "aching" and they "were tired".

After allegedly being sexually abused and urinated on, the 11-year-old victim told his nine-year-old friend: "I can't see and I can't move my body."

"You go and I'll just die here."

The court was shown videos and images of the attack, with a sound grab of the 11-year-old attacker saying: "Hell of a picture" as they took close-up photographs of one of the boy's injuries.

The accused boys worked together to carry a 13kg stone to the scene of the attack and drop it on the 11-year-old boy's head, the court was told.

When asked by detectives why they carried out the attack, one boy allegedly said: "Cos there were nowt to do."

Their victims had been placed in foster care just three weeks earlier and had been lured to the ravine with promises that they would see a dead fox."

Reading the original article, one of the boys was in a coma when he was rescued – air lifted to a nearby hospital. Not much to be said actually, horror and sick to the stomach that kids, humans can be like that. Deep guilt that someone should be subjected to that while I sit here with everything going great, with all of the good things in the world happening to me.

God help those little kids and give them some good stuff in their lives to come. God do something for the kids who did it, make sense of it somehow (they were from an abusive family apparently), get them back closer to a normal life as real people somehow...

Fills me with fear for people, for our kids, for others out there who could find themselves in a situation like that – drawn to see a dead fox – something almost poetical and epitomic of childhood adventure... turned into something stomach turning and terrible. God send help or something to people who end up in that scary place, grant them something.

Sat down the other night to plan our year. Seems we will stay to the end of the year but do more travelling during the year. Otherwise we spend a lot of time with me working and the kids on holiday and then missing school in the final term. Should be great, but will spend a bit of money and I am already finding

it hard to keep my head in work – I am on the way out already! – Not true entirely but it is a battle...

Reading the "Book of Tea" at the moment, Okakura Kakuzo. Quite good although not as close to the mark of an absolute classic as I had hoped it would have been on early promise. Very good having said that.

Good chapter on the appreciation of art. Talking about our particular idiosyncrasies dictating the mode of our perceptions it talks about the tea masters collecting only objects which fell strictly within the measure of their own individual appreciation.

He relates the story of Koboti-Enshiu who complimented by his disciples on the admirable taste he had displayed in the choice of hi collection. "Each piece is such that no one could admiring". It shows that you had better taste than Rikiu for his collection could only be admired by one in a thousand. Sorrowfully Enshiu replied that "this only proves how commonplace I am. The great Rikiu dared to love only those objects which personally appealed to him, whereas I unconsciously cater to the taste of the majority. Verily, Rikiu was one in a thousand among tea masters".

Now not entirely on the mark. Appreciation and beauty are more complex than the individual. The world is a complex place and how do you exclude that from any particular human psyche. The two are inextricably linked as is the whole of society on all sorts of different levels, conscious and sub-conscious.

I would prefer to take the view that there is no right or wrong, essentially no absolute beauty or plainness, or even ugliness. There is only enjoyment and non enjoyment. There is purity and non-purity. Each has its place and appeals to individuals or to the masses, is true or untrue, however in the end it just is and should be taken for that and not judged to harshly one way or another.



24th January 2010 - Had a great weekend. Afternoon at the British club, Day at Palawan beach Sentosa, time thinking about the house and commenting on the plans etc. Today especially was nice, really happy with where we are. We have done ok on property and are trying our best to create something that will be us and liveable and nice.

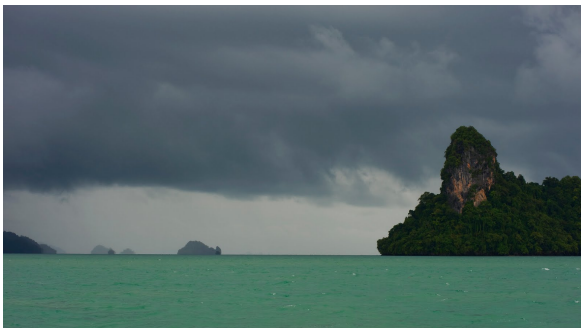
Not easy and a high risk it wont turn out exactly as we want but it will be ours at least!?!? ...and will have given it a go.

Watching grand designs and looking through architectural websites – amazing homes, more in amazing places. Would be great one of these days to do something like that. Find a stunning natural site and create some great architecture to go with it.

Perhaps when we retire, or maybe that will be to a boat – same thing really. Went to take a look at the “round the world Clipper race” boats today with the kids while Ange did some shopping. Beautiful down there. Carribean, Reflections underway, Keppel Marina, if we had the money and a longer commitment, I would be tempted.

Mind you SS33 for two juices and two lemonades... hmmm.

...and this pic from Fred & Judy sums up why I would like to live on a boat – seeing that weather good or bad, getting to know the earth and places and be amongst its inner workings, its glorious times, its tempests and its indifference to mere mortals such as ourselves. Learning its ways and getting to know it on an intimate basis.



Senses of foreboding – breathing in and living amongst that and all the other moods of the earth. Felt that today at Palawan, something tangible, to breathe

and live... and that's what I did, closed my eyes, listened and felt and breathed in that flow, and felt it, absorbed it.

And shruuueerrek – back into the reality of work tomorrow.

25th January 2010 – Ange a bit stressed this morning over the kids going back to school. I probably didn't help by telling her to calm down etc! She really isn't handling pressure well at the moment around issues to do with the kids.

Melbourne had a bit of that about it as well, opinions on raising from grandparents etc - I also had trouble dealing with that! Might suggest she speaks with cap, and try to support her a bit myself also – she is doing a great job, just feel she is overly hard on herself and puts herself under this pressure. Creates situations that don't need to be situations.

“Let us be less luxurious
but more magnificent”

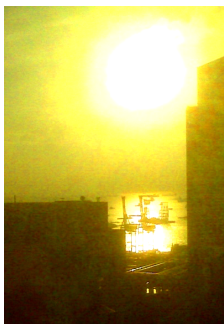
Okakura Kakuzo,
The Book of Tea.



Came across some Japanese tea house design whilst looking for art in tea houses – fantastic. Small little well thought out projects. Simplicity and soul – something the Japanese do so well. One of these days I will create a little tea house somewhere. Somewhere to sit and observe, and to reflect and to be, and enjoy tea! This particular one sways in the breeze apparently – it is a Takasugi-a tea house designed by architect, in Chino, Nagano Prefecture.

26th January 2010 – **aam** - Waking up in cold sweats at the moment worried over work load in the second half of the year. There are a couple of people who are not really up to it technically, or organisationally.

How do you put someone on performance management when you know it is an impossible task? Just make yourself better – more technically capable - cant do, at least not overnight anyway, more organised – less impossible but also hard in any real time frame, and even harder for them to show or demonstrate it...?



am – I like the office first thing in the morning – cup of tea, quiet, new day ahead still with time and hope of getting things done..., the straits and ships moving past slowly creating a wide perspective on life, a feeling you can comprehend and conquer anything at this scale. It is only when you get down to the micro-reality real time movements, traffic noise in the streets or the up and down of a yacht on the waves and the water on the deck do things retreat to the boundaries of human scale.

28th January 2010 – I don't know what it is but anytime Tristram is in town I seem to do something stupid – this time was telling him that Pavel was based in London only to have Pavel introduce himself 5 minutes later! Uncomfortable silence whilst neither of us recognised him – well me at least, who knows re Tristram. Dick Brendon!

29th January 2010 – What a frustrating day! Cannot get an Australian lawyer in Singapore to witness the guarantor statement for the swap of the loan from the trust to Ange. Cannot even get someone to talk to me let alone sign it.

Have been trying to get onto our bank contact leaving 3 urgent messages throughout the day and sending him emails to no avail. The same bank whose personal bankers let this sit for 2-3 months before giving me bum advice on which forms we needed in the first place. And when it comes to looking at the actual information, they got all of that wrong as well. The incompetence when dealing with what forms pales when you look at the incompetence when looking at the financial facts and correctness on paperwork!

Tried the Australian embassy where there is a pumped up scared little man who has been given the rights to sign by the Australian government but only as

a notary. Not his fault and entirely understand that but for the few minutes before we established that fact, he was giving me a hard time because the loan documents had no space between Mc and Niven where as my passport did.

And that seems to be the sum of it. Lots of pathetic little people, scared to talk to other people directly shielding themselves with receptionists or though just not returning calls or answering phones - scared to step out of little boxes of comfort to do something real and person to person.

It wont matter too much in the end just another 5-6 months of capital gain we need to wear on the house and pay tax on! If my cosmic theory is correct, it is all for the best anyway! We will see, if we don't end up paying net tax for the trust, then it probably will be.

30th January 2010 – Netball this morning, Taekwondo this afternoon. Some of the parents start to really get into netball, walking up and down the sidelines coaching and cheering etc. Just seems a bit over the top.

Ange has noticed that Stella hasn't been chosen to go on the first half for netball now for a long time – 8-10 weeks, and she wasn't chosen again this morning. There does seem to be a bit of an in crowd thing happening. For some reason I never seem to be quite there? How funny, and just edged with a little bit of annoyance actually if it starts to affect the kids. I hope that's not the case. Have to give them the benefit of the doubt I suppose.

5th February 2010 – Thinking about the façade to the front of Abbotsford Street. Needs to give privacy, allow views outside (open-able), be earthy and warm, and not too two dimensional (and look good). Big ask?

I remember the Pamela Anderson façade to Sam Newman's house in Melbourne. Not particularly us but I like it as an architectural idea.



ppm - The nights tend to get away from me at times. Anxiety and worry – over what I have done, how I have acted during the day, about what is to come... I feel tired at the moment, not in a physical sense so much (although I am), but in a mental sense. I find myself thinking back on things I have done in a bit of a mental fatigue stupour, a bit like remembering drunk behaviour from a night out the previous night!

Why did I act like that, why did I let myself get away from me like that. Brendon, you need to concentrate and be aware of yourself and your actions, focus, be aware. Instead I slip into distracted patterns.

I am bored? I am fatigued and ready for a change I must say.

Krishnamurti talks about violence and the eradication of violence in his book I am reading at the moment. Have to say he drifts ff from time to time also, and in this case I disagree with him. Violence as violence is a pretty stark black and white view of the world.

Violence I think is nothing more than a form of energy, as are most parts of our lives. Love, commitment, worry, concern, hate industriousness, everything, they are all just different facets of the same thing - a complicated three or more dimensional continuum off of which light or feelings reflect in different ways, different angles but essentially the same thing. And they are all bits of ourselves, components of being here and alive - consciousness.

In a similar way to how I perceive some aspects of Buddhism, in trying to remove or suppress some of these feelings, you can find yourself stripping away layers of what you are, of your essence of life if you are not careful. I don't mean to take away from knowing the quiet inner core of yourself, be it blank or full of rich wondrous detail or whatever, I think that is incredibly important, just don't throw away the rest of it to get there.

Take the negative aspects of violence and jealousy and anger and all of that and try to observe it for the simple energy it is. Energy that is manifesting itself in certain ways that could in different circumstances. Understand why it is taking the form it is taking and try to do something about it. Ride it out or re-direct it or side step it to change the subject, but don't suppress it superficially, it will come back to bite.

7th February 2010 – Just stumbled across a house in Surrey Hills, a few streets away from Wattle park with lots of living area for the kids, seemingly nice gum tree views around it etc.

Actually didn't stumble – was looking but the first place we have seen that we would think of buying. Made me step back a little to think about what we are doing. Are we over capitalising on Abbotsford Street to build a house no one will want to buy for the price we would want from it.

Are we denying the kids a suburban life close to other friends etc? Would they play in the streets and immediate neighbourhood if we were in a place like that rather than Abbotsford Street.

I think the access to the Children's farm and the parks around the Yarra would mean they would have plenty of space to play in and explore. I actually don't think it would be any more dangerous than places like Wattle Park.

I think maybe they would lack friends their own age playing in the streets? I think they would have enough space in our Abbotsford street place – just – no

big parties or things like that? They would spend a lot of time in the back room, and have time in the TV room also? We might spend a lot of time ferrying them to friends places around Kew and the like.

Wouldn't be too different to where Al and Heather are, not quite as good as Peter Bowtell's place but we couldn't afford something like that. Similar to Franks? Will have to do some research when we move back – see where other kids their own age are around the place. Next door for a start but will that last? Would be similar to Andrew & Jenny in Park street – I am sure there would be other families around the place – we will see I guess.

The awkward ages might be 16-19 when they want party space and space away from parents? Before that should be ok – still kid kids that would be involved in school based activities mostly, and after that they will be out and about a lot more, getting cars etc.

They will have access to the city also – as will we – and myself in particular wrt work.

Hmmm... I think it will be ok – we will just have to try it. See how being back in Melbourne goes – we might et itchy feet again who knows – all of that crap. All the reasons for trying it out for 6 months to a year just to get a feel for it, and us, and how we feel about the whole thing.





Very nice the more I look at it. Don't think we will be rushing into it though. If anything might just mean we look a bit more seriously when we return for opportunities.

I think we would really regret not taking the opportunity of trying something for ourselves in such a great location like Abbotsford Street – children's farm and all of that.

Sounds a bit funny, and hopefully not naive but being in a compact house I hope might keep strong family ties together – much like here at Woking Road, love living in close proximity to the kids. Having the room downstairs may mean we would never see them!

8th February 2010 – Squash tonight – nearly vomited!. Felt light headed and heart felt weak – wouldn't say pain or tremors or anything but ever so slight discomfort, like a very slight contraction , not enough to call tight even just aware something was there. Maybe take it a bit easier next time.

On a brighter note, I got home to a stray dog in the stairwell – hanging around Sheela and George's. His name was Shakey and found out he lived at 1 Wilton Close just across the big green field from us. Beautiful old brown Lab – took him home much to his owners relief. Jumped into the car no trouble at all and off – very everyday.

And on a sadder note it looks like the long standing goldfish are going. Got home to no gold gold fish and the brown one at the bottom of the tank breathing heavily – not much to do but to turn on the pumps and saturate the

thing with oxygen? Bit sad – I think I will push for the stone bottomed pond again with a bit more space but less views – see what Ange thinks. She liked them having breakfast with the kids but?...



Post Secret

“One time, in the second grade, when I had nowhere else to be, I took a walk in this field behind my school, and it was the most amazing feeling ever. I've spent my entire life since then trying to relive that moment.”



...Can't say it is a single moment, but I can totally relate to that feeling...

11th February 2010 – Just had lunch with Patrick. Always good talking to Patrick, he is looking for things to do and was pondering another skytower. ... Came up with the idea of Cambodia, Siem Reap. Donate 15% back to people of Siem Reap, get 5 year planning approval on the basis of if the people don't like it or it is not working out then they can un bolt it and take it away.

Good idea the more I thought of it but political minefield – how to even start!? I think he is going to go off and see what he can find out about who owns what there...

He was amazed that I would leave Singapore (told him intending to leave at the end of the year). What for? Money, money, money... and he is right will be a lot harder but need to do it. For the kids actually! I wonder if we will last, I think we will but lets not get any preconceived ideas either way.

Floundering this afternoon – should be working, want to be sleeping, am writing in here instead! Motivation issues.

14th February 2010 – Up early again. I am very worried about Southbeach. Far more complicated than we had ever thought and the HK/Sing aspect is costing us dearly – doubling up on meetings etc...

Not quite sure what to do about it other than to monitor very closely, and try to see what can be done – there will be some extra money in PEGeo – HK – HK are fairly lean so it may just be Singapore? We need the work pretty badly in any case...

Halong bay trip today. Ange Googled the weather last night, from 26 and sunny to a week of rain and sub 12-15 degree days with the odd “check your flights” warning thrown in there! Recall when Peter went it was full on mist the whole time and they didn’t see much at all!

As long as we are safe I will be fine with it but will be a shame – and I worry that it may not be safe!



This is what it is supposed to look like – I wonder what is in store for us!?

19th February 2010 – A mother gassed two of her three children just recently to avoid them going into the custody of their father on Christmas Day. Carbon Monoxide and sleeping pills – the eldest, 16 years old survived... Awful. Another 12 year old boy stabbed a 13 year old at a school in Queensland, there are rumours that one may have been bullying the other.

Fills me with sadness and emptiness, and questioning about things, about people – including me. Five lives ruined – inextricably altered for the worse,

descended upon by sadness and horror, open wounds it is hard to imagine time healing.

I burn incense these days for each little life lost that way (not sure if I mentioned that previously). Helps me think about these people – they deserve to be thought about – and at the same time not get too obsessed with them. Mum told me someone burned some candles for me when I was sick. A nice thing to do and I really felt appreciative – felt like there was something (someone), else out there on my side.

20th February 2010 – Hanoi last week...



I like this wood block print – Nguyen Tung Ngoc (a local Hanoi artist so the little gallery I bought it from told me...) – I like it because of the cold yet enclosed feeling of the streets. Stone paving, communal housing around paths and courtyards, arching trees eek-ing out a living here and there to provide some cover and one-ness within the whole scene. People, buildings, trees, and sky – cold, likely grey or empty blue, the cold of the first buds of spring – which happened to be when we were there.

Hanoi was great. A city I could really take a liking to. Not a loving but a real liking – Parisian architecture, bread and bustle, motor bikes and shops on shops, street food, and cafes, and the trees of the block print in and around turning outside into in, creating a feeling of human space (and that harmony between the different elements I mentioned).

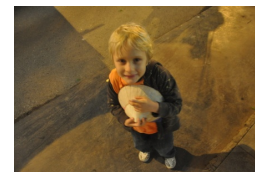
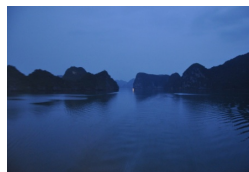
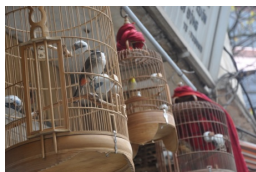
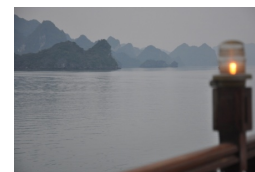
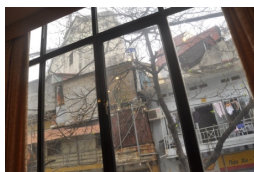
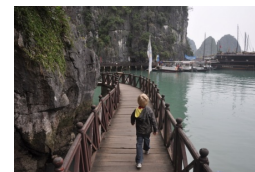
Chinese New Year or the Vietnamese equivalent, so not much was open. Made for things being a little quiet which was not all bad, but probably would have been best with a bit more going on.

The trip to Halong Bay was fantastic and well worth it. Stunning limestone (karst?) scenery, thousands (1,960 apparently) of islands rising out of the Asian China Sea. Visibility wasn't too bad – that light mist pretty typical of Asian seas – likely seas at this latitude, doubt they know where they are!

Kids loved it and were ran around excited as hell, loving the idea of a boat to live on for a night. Stell has really come into her own and Ewan is making huge strides also. We shared a cabin and did a bit of bonding. I am getting better with them although still lose it every now and then when they don't listen and misbehave!

Local kids seem so compliant – which I don't think is a good thing. There was another little girl on the trip who wore her life jacket the whole time – every time I saw her anyway.

Climbed to the top of a little island lookout on one day, and had a look at one of the bigger (Surprise), caves on the next which was also pretty good. It was more the being out on the boat the whole time. Incredible scenery drifting past you all the time, eating to it, going to bed to it, and waking up to it. Constantly changing and beautiful.

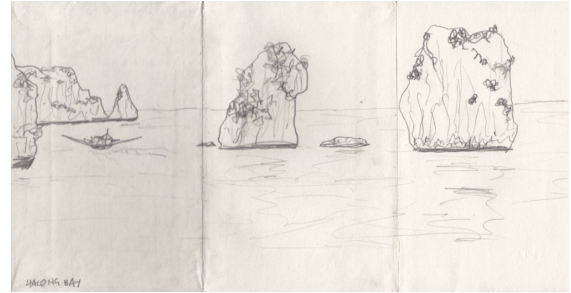
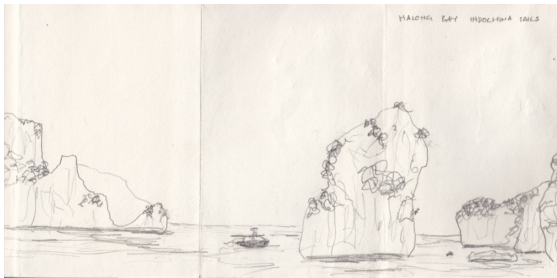




Such a beautiful place – lots of photos... Even the views out of the hotel room window – in amongst it all – soaking it up in amongst the less than romantic practical realities of the kids.

Had to laugh at times, Ewan licking a piece of red chilli to end up with a quivering bottom lip and tears, water and bread and a cry on Mums shoulder. Stella cool as a cucumber but excited and leader of the pack, Freya, queen of all she comes in contact with!

There was a lot more I would have written about but decided to leave the computer at home. Perhaps I should get a smaller travel companion just for my diary – liking the electronic format.



And up late again it seems – will pay in the morning, Ange is not well will get up and give kids some brekky and set them up with a movie perhaps. Can't seem to still my mind – don't particularly want to, I want to write and potter around thinking, pondering – nothing dramatic or anything just cruise for a bit and enjoy being here.

Gave the kids Certificates of Completion for the overnight walk to Oberon Bay at Christmas this afternoon. Got little medallions made up – love seeing them so proud and appreciative. All deserved as well, was a big couple of days. Freya's had her running along the beach – she really got into it taking off at break neck speed exploring and running.

If I had the discipline I would like to write a book someday. Not sure what about – I would like to be a bit of a life writer – World According to Garp type stuff, but that is just a romantic ideal (not a good reason to write a book), and I am too impatient, this I know that through writing this – never take the time to make it interesting or funny, just there. Again, ambling, pottering and cruising, enjoying the time in a distracted meditation?

Reminds me of that Leunig cartoon – everybody feels they have a book inside of them somewhere waiting to come out... Yes I have been reduced to that, the stereotypical subject matter of humorous satirical comment on society...



21st February 2010 Think I enjoy this diary as it is a bit of an ends to surfing the net – exploring in a meandering kind of way what is out there – and there is

a lot. It could be over imposing, and threatening even prospect, using it as a vast pool in which to dip, into which you can wander – or whatever but having it there as a background is comforting, and interesting. Thoughts bounce off other thoughts and images and ...things.

Sungai Buloh this morning before picking up the new rabbits – Shine passed away while we were in Vietnam. Betty said she was off her food and they can get intestinal problems that come up very quickly. Everyone a bit sad although I don't admit one of those things and not shedding too many tears!

I saw a crocodile or alligator at Sungei this morning – was a really nice little trip – bit of watching of the alligator (a kid according to Stell who is quite into relating to other things her age in life), toast and coffee and juices, and a walk around the mangrove boardwalk.

The new rabbits are Grace and Willy. Willy is an ashy brown colour, will be quite nice getting to know two new members of the family, hope bright is ok – he is a rabbit after all, wont be tying himself up in mental knots internally or anything I am guessing – that pleasure is reserved for self conscious creatures like us...

pm – Just finished watching “Up in the air”, George Clooney is someone whose job it is to fly from city to city firing people on behalf of others. Quite good, not a start middle ending film but a lot in there on the way through.

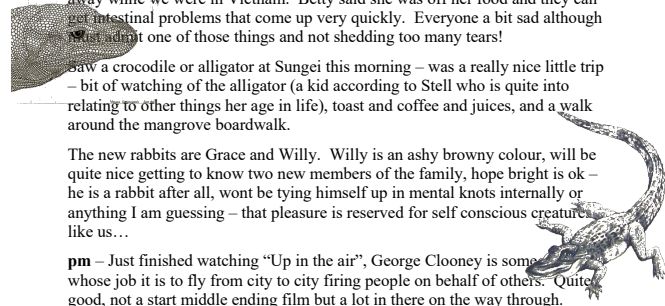
Of course cant help but make you think and not a comfortable thought for someone like me who has been in the same place for twenty years now. Seeing people go in the UK, it is not out of the realms of possibility! – and it would be scary – hopefully in the end good, but definitely scary (especially given the commitments we are about to get into over the coming years)...

I have six months notice – I also have the options of consulting, joining others, returning to Asia where I have experience of working here – etc. etc. etc...

Wont be making a living of writing in my diary that's for sure – thinking more and more, this is just a pastime and sounding board. Nice to have and enjoyable – maybe be read by one of the kids one day when I am old and senile?

It is not for my deepest darkest or lightest thoughts even. The stakes are too high. Human nature is not good at dealing with those things in cool hard light – not others around me, nor my own. I don't live in denial (I think), but I do live with secrets that are mine – coiled tightly around an inner core that is me. How far I am able to penetrate that core myself I don't know – no one ever can – I like to think quite a way...

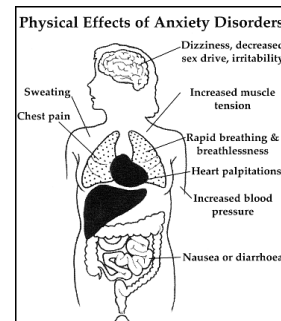
I am happy with who I am and the choices I have made even though there are a lot of things I would like to be that I have given up (or away perhaps). In the movie George Clooney's character talks about a backpack and what minimalist stuff you would have in it. Ange asked me what would be in mine, and the



only real answer is family – and I can say that honestly – which makes me feel good...

22nd February 2010 – Hmmm... work again. I could feel the anxiety levels building and really don't want to be here, or more accurately really want to be on holidays still.

Work is necessary and I would be feeling the anxiety levels no matter what I was doing I think. Lucky for the moment I have a job where I get some satisfaction and get paid well.



ALLEVIATING DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

General depression is very common in the modern age. Because of work, preoccupation, heavy work, official conspiracies, unhappy office colleagues, wrong actions, people disliking one, inferiority, one's personality may become damaged. To come out of these feelings, one should recite the following 111 times in the morning, blow on the water and then wash one's face with this water:

الحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

Allhamdulillahi rabbi 'alameen wassalamatu wassalamatu 'ala Rasulihil karim

Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds,
and prayers and peace upon His Noble Messenger ☞

As ever Google image search comes up with the goods.... Both the symptoms and the cure.

ppm - I have felt all of these over the past few years here ranging from diagnosed hypertension to constrictions across the chest and “panic attack” type breathlessness at night - waking up struggling with where your next

breath will come from not a comfortable feeling, minor heart palpitations, and butterflies and nausea. There is a lot going on and a lot to worry about, and a lot of it at my doorstep to worry about.

My concern at the moment is a focus on SSH that will leave the rest of the group struggling – it is a big beast that needs feeding with new work...

23rd February 2010 – I am a member of the Design Safety awards committee for the BCA. They convinced me to put in the Flyer which was a mistake – fantastic project but the bloody thing broke down didn't it!

Also I mistakenly left the submission to others with only a cursory glance and changing a few things in the report. My fault – no time! – but really quite unhappy about the final submission that went in... Frustrating and annoying.

Continuing with Krishnamurti but he is annoying me also. Heads off on these diatribes about feelings etc trying to apply and dissect with logic things like love.

Not that I am saying there is nothing to be gained by doing this just that I really think it is so complicated and subtle and subjective to the point where it means something different to everyone. Just because Santa doesn't exist, it doesn't make him any less real as a concept of a feeling to a kid who believes in him with all their heart – a bit the same with love, and in fact most things in this highly virtual life of perceptions and reality in a big blur.

The best description he had was when he set out to try to describe this "flame" called love. That's it, a flame – something with a life of its own that springs up unexpected and self sustaining, with an element of non-control about it. It could grow, die, ravage, warm... A flame of emotion: appreciation, respect, adoration, jealousy, lust, understanding, and whatever else goes in there, a different mix for everyone.

24th February 2010 – Again the night anxiety and worrying – 5 hours sleep the last three nights I reckon – and then the light of day, a breath of the problem at hand and small steps and at least can start on it – and a breath of anger and inclination to be selfish making it all ok...

4th March 2010 – More horrific stories in the papers, a young kid hit by a 4WD after fleeing a bully who was shouting "I am going to kill you". The bullying had been going on for a while, had been reported and nothing done about it.

One of the murderers of James Bulger also broke conditions of parole apparently and was taken back into custody – that case was about two ten year olds leading away a two year old and torturing/killing him.

I have a pit of sickness in my stomach when I read of these things but cannot not read them. I have to know, know of the dangers... and it fills me with fear for what could happen to our kids. I am obsessing a little I know. How far am I over reacting, how unhealthy is I am not sure. I don't think too much, it

affects me from time to time, adds to general anxiety, not comfortable, but it does make me aware and it does make me think about these things which can't be bad.

6th March 2010 – Lost patience with Krishnamurti – too much harping on about the same thing. Perception of images and the space between ourselves and the images and this conflict that exists (I am not sure where from or why), between us and the space and time between the images etc.

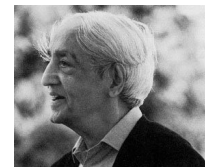
I sort of know what he means - bring everything together by reducing the space and image perception of objects and things, become the tree when you are painting it etc. Just that it goes on and on it seems.

There are a few nice little concepts as he has a real ability to think differently.

"The observer... is made up of memories, experiences, accidents, influences, traditions and infinite varieties of suffering, all of which are the past. So the observer is both the past and the present, and tomorrow is waiting and that is also a part of him.

He is half alive and half dead, and with his death and his life he is looking...always translating the new in terms of the old and therefore... in everlasting conflict."

Krishnamurti
"Freedom from the Known"



The way around this is to become the objects you are observing. It sounds too intense to me, too much to bite off – fusing with everything around you at the same time, almost an impossible task. It also seems a little instructive and diluting – intrusive to the world around and diluting to your own being.

I can't believe there is not another way of becoming at peace. Something that maintains some sort of gap, but that bridges that gap with increased

communication. Increased understanding and acceptance. Live let live and understand type thing.

Seems I buggered my knee at Freya's morning tea (for her third birthday), last weekend. Now clicks a bit and feels a little uncomfortable when I walk on it for a bit. Did it when sliding down the grass embankment on the cardboard mats. Went over a depression and had to abort – could quite run out of it and ended up tumbling taking all the hits (sole of foot, knee, hip and shoulder!) in the tumble with Freysie tucked into my arms.

Strange as knee didn't even feel sore afterwards – seems to be a bit of a mis-alignment thing, must have knocked sideways? Anyway, will give it a bit of time to heal and see how it goes – some tiger balm and massage to get the blood flowing and doing its job – hopefully will be ok...



Back listening to Room with a View while Ange goes out to pick up Stella from a party. Music to take you to another place, another frame of mind, like a pause or go slow that opens up time to a porous thing you move through and experience rather than the deadness of television that takes you though unseeing at its own pace.

Nice. A little indulgent in that it makes me feel I am more – makes me feel like I am in a movie, living like real people, movie worthy people anyway, or olden days real people who listened to real entertainment?

All very F. Scott Fitzgerald and Great Gatsby like...



7th March 2010 –

“Those who think a great deal are very materialistic as thought is matter.”

Krishnamurti
“Freedom from the Known”

Especially so in diaries like this where thoughts get recorded. Thought is also vain in this case, wants to live on beyond the moment. There are some good observations on thought and how it behaves, what it can and cant do...

Persevering a little more with him but I can feel the art of war waiting...

8th March 2010 – Need sleep, relaxation and time to myself.

9th March 2010 – There are times I just cannot face email – face doing work. Usually right after lunch (yesterday and today for example!). Fly off tonight for a regional forum in Sydney – some time to myself for a few days at least – looking forward to sleeping if I can manage...

pm – in flight – one of my favourite places. Time standing still, the sameness of everything interrupted for a short while, a chance for my mind to wander a little...

Been persevering and Krishnamurti is redeeming himself somewhat. Talks about stillness of the mind and meditation which are striking a chord. A little similar to the philosophical society before I left Melbourne. Not imagining you are in a beautiful glade of a favourite place, but just being and observing without attachment. Observe and let pass...

A few extracts:

“In the life we generally lead there is very little solitude. Even when we are alone our lives are crowded by so many influences, so much knowledge, so many memories of so many experiences, so much anxiety, misery and conflict that our minds become duller and duller, more and more insensitive, functioning in a monotonous routine. Are we ever alone? Or are we carrying with us all the burdens of yesterday?....”

“To have inward solitude is very important because it implies freedom to be, to go, to function, to fly.”

“...how can a mind which is so endlessly active in its self interest be quiet? One can discipline it, control it, shape it, but such torture does not make the mind quiet, it merely makes it dull.”

” Meditation is to be aware of every thought and of every feeling, never to say it is right or wrong but just to watch it and move with it. “

Krishnamurti
“Freedom from the Known”

Just when you think things are getting a bit normal, you are tired, a little wore for wear from a gin & tonic or two and having tried to sleep in your clothes... you notice out the window that the sun is coming up. – low level orange on the

wingtips, empty steely cold blues and browns of the sky beautiful... and then you notice on the travel screen on the wall that we are flying over the great dividing range.

...and a bit of the novel returns – for the moment anyways...as soon we will be landing.

11th March 2010 – Sydney – Australian Region buildings Forum – good day – quite tired. Lots of conversation around returning to Melbourne – all a bit worrying but confident it will work itself out one way or another.

Learned today that Bob Tomilson had passed away. Bob was a Canadian MEP engineer back in Melbourne under Jeff Robinson – his name came up talking about a ski trip he was on. Very nice guy but very Christian and a bit painful to be around in that naïve goody two shoes wholesome Canadian pancake and apple pie way... if you know what mean.

Apparently his daughter committed suicide and he died not long after from cancer. Shit, what a horrible thing. Did I know that? I have a feeling I knew he passed away but don't think I knew about his daughter. I remember he had a photo of her somewhere, or maybe she came into work – tall long straight hair – again just a little too wholesome – her fathers daughter...

He was really proud of her, had a lot of his life in her – as you do as a parent. I hate that he had to go through all of that – I wish I could have been there to somehow soften the blow – given him some support.

God save me from ever having to go through that – I really don't think I would be strong enough...

12th March 2010 –

“The profoundest truth of war is that the issue of battle is usually decided in the minds of the opposing commanders, not in the bodies of their men”

Sun tzu, “The Art of War”

Started on the Art of War and promises to be good. The translation was by Lionel Gilles who sounds like a bit of a legend himself. “A sinologist of the old school”. Its translation came from some of the texts from Dun Huang which is kind of nice, a bit of linkage back to my trip around the Taklimakan.

Another translation was a poem he came across, relating the story of the sack of Chang'an in 881 by the brigand Huang Chao.:

“Every home now runs with bubbling fountains of blood.
Every place rings with a victims shrieks-
Shrieks that cause the very earth to quake.

Our western neighbour had a daughter- verily, a fair maiden!
Sidelong glances flashed from her large limpid eyes,
And when her toilet was done, she reflected the spring in her mirror,
Young in years, she knew naught of the world outside of her door.
A ruffian comes leaping up the steps of her abode;
Pulling her robe from one bare shoulder, he attempts
To do her violence,
But though dragged by her clothes, she refuses to pass out of the
vermillion portal,
And thus with rouge and fragment anguents she meets er death under the
knife.

Wei Zhuang (c.836-c.910)
Tang Dynasty poet.

Seems a repeating story – the sack of Naning etc... what an amazing place this world. What unfathomable depth of life and pain (and joy) there is out there woven through the ages, vivid beauty and horror all around. I remember writing once “please let me be not so trivial in my life”.

I need to reconsider that from time to time...

13th March 2010 – At Taekwondo again with Stella – watched her for a bit through the thin slot of clear glass they have to allow parents to peep. She is doing really well.

Lots of thoughts about Arup and returning to Melbourne this morning. I really don't like the open forums of the forums we have – I feel very self conscious and have a lot of trouble contributing. I like to think that when I have something to say it is worthwhile saying – it is mostly I believe but I am just not that opinionated! I am more from the cest' la vie school. Go with the flow – cultivate right thought and right action will follow. Try to drive things too much and the process will become forced. Forced things are never great, they are rarely beautiful. That is because the process is an inherent part of the end form.

I find old wind up watches beautiful because of their clockwork, the jewels, the fact they need attention, winding and cleaning, because of their heritage, they enabled us to navigate the world, they are the product of thought and engineering beyond compare through the ages, second hand ones have direct history also – joy and sadness, they have seen things... To be able to see all of that within an object, what a beautiful thing...

... I would like to experiment with physical things, two identical objects, one having been through marked history, one not and see what people pick up in comparison. It is perhaps the reason people like slightly aged relics – age and

embodied experience is only one facet – I have no doubt that physical beauty has a higher weighting – but it is all in there.

People are similar although on a scale of complexity and depth so massive and... and distorted, and veiled as to be almost out of reach. People watching is a fantastic pastime, observing, exploring, pondering all of these things. Picking out the similarities, the social stereotypes, looking at the ripples of event of people lives and the way they manifest themselves...

So where to?

As I get older, I will gravitate more and more to real things, to things of enduring value. I will acquire things like this and produce things like this likely (I hope)..

And this is one of the aspects of the answer. – a jigsaw puzzle piece. How to get to that place? We all collect jigsaw puzzle pieces but lose them forget them, have them over ridden.

How do you get to the answers. It is a far too complex thing to put together and understand, of that I am sure – It will have something to do with finding a way to live that is in harmony with as many of them as possible.

14th March 2010 – aam – Still waking up at 4:30 in the morning worried about Southbeach! It is that getting judged by peers thing. Deep down I must believe there are problems also – I have resolved to do some checking of Garry's resource plan to give myself a better picture – good or bad...



Waking up at 4 am is not a good thing – things are not in alignment...

Spent some time on the streetscape for Abbotsford Street last night. The house is big – and has a fair impact I have to say! However all new development



(and the area is under regeneration so there will be a lot over time), is going to be of a similar ilk – increasing density with time. Also ignores all of the trees etc which will have a huge impact.

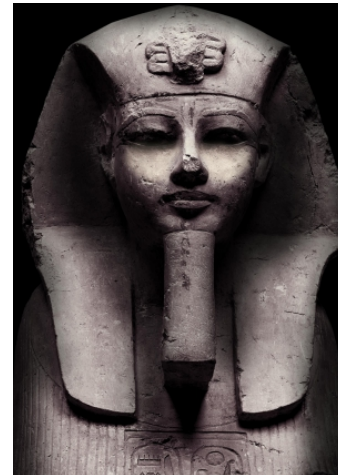
The biggest worry is how it will relate to the heritage house next door. Imported from some exotic place (Glasgow or somewhere), hundred years ago – or something?!! It is set right back on the block. Advantage is the huge tree that sits in front of it obscuring / softening everything.

pm – lazy day listening to kids play and fight... Don't have the energy to be playing with them on their terms!

We did go the National Museum to have a look at the Egypt exhibition – quite a few statues and artefacts and sarcophagus' but have to say expected a bit more... I did learn a bit about mummification however.

Wasn't as I had always assumed – that they were hoping to be brought back to life at some stage in the future, but rather based around a complex view on life. Body, soul and another spirit not tied to the body (Ka and Ba?).

Mummification was all about giving the soul a body to use in the next life, preserving the spiritual parts of the being.





<http://www.philae.nu/akhnet>

The concept of the **Ka** and the **Ba** is an ancient one which is not so easy to understand for our western minds. The ancient Egyptians regarded the human being as made up of five different elements; the **Ba**, the **Ka**, the **Akh**, the **Name** and the **Shadow**.

The **Ka**: Originally the word **Ka** meant 'bull', but soon its meaning became to be intellectual and spiritual power. It is almost impossible to translate the concept into our words, but try to think of it as the 'creative power in any being, whether human or divine'. The word 'sustenance' has also been used as description. It is not quite to be equaled to our concept of the 'soul'.

It was thought that the creator god Khnum created a person's **Ka** when he created the person on his [potter's wheel](#). The **Ka** then followed the person like a shadow or a double all through life, but when the person died, the **Ka** returned to its heavenly abode. It was also dependent on food offerings, either real ones or carved as depictions on tomb walls. Unlike the **Ba**, the **Ka** was not thought to eat these offerings, but to assimilate their energy in the same way that the cult statues of the gods 'assimilated' the energy from the offerings set before them.

The **Ba**: has sometimes been equalized with our concept of the soul, (the definition of which also varies according to whom you may ask) but there are several differences. The **Ba** refers to all those non-physical qualities that make up the personality of a human. But it also has to do with power - and gods as well as humans can have a **Ba**.

An important function of the **Ba** was to make it possible for the deceased to leave his tomb and rejoin his **Ka**. As the physical body could no longer do this, the **Ba**, transformed into a bird with a human head, which could fly between the tomb and the underworld. It was also believed that the **Ba** could take on any form it chose, and that it had to reunite with the deceased every night in order for the deceased person to live forever and become an **Akh**; an ancestor.

So the **Ba** was very much attached to the physical body, contrary to the concept of the soul or the spirit. It was even thought that the **Ba** had physical needs, like food and water.

Akh: This was the form in which the blessed dead lived on in the hereafter. It was also the result of the union between the **Ba** and the **Ka**. An **Akh** was believed to live on unharmed for eternity, they were sometimes referred to as 'The Shining Ones'.

Name: The **Name** (*ren*) was a very important part of an individual. It was regarded as a living part of the individual and it was believed that the name or the word was the perfect expression of the person or thing in question. A newborn child had to get a name immediately or it would not come properly into existence.

To get a good understanding of the importance of a **Name**, one can think of the [Memphite Theology](#) where it is expressed that the creator god Ptah created the world by uttering all the names for everything. It was thought that 'whosoever's name is uttered, then he lives', which make us remember that to give offerings and utter a deceased loved one's name meant that the

person lived on among 'The Shining Ones'. And the only person who could destroy demonic powers was he who knew their names. When travelling through the Underworld, the dangers that were encountered, were repelled with: 'I know you and I know your names'.

Shadow: Finally, the **Shadow** (*shwt*) was also believed to be a living, essential part of the individual. Now, we must realize that in a country such as Egypt, **shadow** can be a blessing and protection from the burning rays of the sun. It was also seen as an entity with power, and which could move at great speed.

Just as the **Shadow** can protect, it needs to be protected, in likewise manner. Here's the ancient Egyptian duality can be seen, which means that everything exists also in its complementary form. Nothing existed isolated, only for itself. The function was always intertwined with their universe, with Nefer and with Man.

Quite impressive if not a little overworked?

"Do you know what my favourite thing in the whole world is?
I'll tell you.

Each week millions and millions of upper middle class Americans put on expensive dress clothes, and load themselves into SUV's, and drive past homeless shelters, orphanages, prisons, missions and half way houses, on their way to a very expensive and nice church, where somebody tells them how to be more like Jesus.

That is fucking awesome let me tell you"

From a random Stumbleupon page...

This sort of thing is the reason Christianity never carried much weight with me growing up. These days I think things are a little more complicated. All that means is that I am more ready to forgive people and their self delusional visions of grandeur, but the base reasoning is still there.



14th March 2010 – Feeling very flat today – in fact that feeling has been there the whole weekend, just waiting to come through. I have been looking the other way for some reason...

17th March 2010 – Spent most of last night awake worried about the size of the loan we will need to take out if we go ahead with Abbotsford Street. Could be as much as 800-850k – over four times my salary.

Mitigating factors – In our budget we should be able to afford the repayments although only just – Also if I use medium prices for construction (A\$3,290), instead of the A\$3500 I have assumed things get better. We will have to adopt a build the basic framework approach with minimal fittings and finishes in other areas me thinkst.

I am fine with this as long as we can get the basic for a reasonable price. Will keep going along this line with the aim of finding out where we are once we get a quote or two. Worst case scenario is we blow 40-50k on the design and need to pull out. It will have been an experience anyway and we will at least have tried.

It is likely I think that we will go forward even if it means a stretch to the limit. Money gets cheaper and there will always be the option to pull out and retreat into the suburbs!

I keep running into the girl who is the rep for the new photocopier company we are swapping over to. I think a month or two back I had one of those small talk conversations with her in a lift mistaking her for someone who worked at Arup (big enough now that I cant recognise everyone!). In my defence she gave me one of those acknowledging glances people who work at the same company give each other when in a lift!

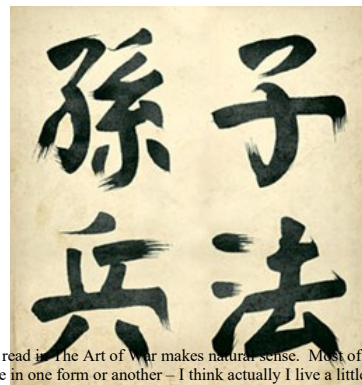
Anyway whenever I see her now I get this full on attentive look with wide open eyes sort of like she is waiting for something amazing to happen. Hate to say it but it is very nice – that sort of unknown but want to get to know you type thing with futures full of possibilities opening up around you – like being young again and the excitement of a new relationship. All the more exciting as there is an air of adoration (imagined or otherwise), about it – an enthusiastic puppy dog type thing.

Probably made welcome by the contrast with the stress I am feeling at the moment. Not enough work – not many opportunities...? I feel removed from the focus of what should be happening due to the day to day issues of project work and running the group. Agh..... hmmm....

21st March 2010 – Stayed up late last night doing work – clearing email – got through a whole week in fact (Ange was out with Byron, an old school friend who was dropping through. It is a struggle getting started on work (so many other things I would rather be doing), but once started, easy to get on with.

I had an incredibly vivid dream this morning (after getting up to get the kids set with breakfast and a movie). Work dream around the arrival of Phil Dilley. Innocent enough but some vivid points of detail and I wonder why. Michael McGowan in vivid Yellow pajamas with small pink animals or something on them – sick but in good spirits as always. Moving a polished timber roster so tha Phil could speak – circular in shape and by surprise we found it fitted exactly into a recess in the wall at the back of the room. Two small boys (Phillips children), who had peeling skin and scabs on their faces. And Roshi shouting about the place trying to get things organised.

Lots more but as I write I realise how boring this is. The interest was in how vivid things were and the fact that I remembered a lot of it. The fact that it was something else – other than real time consciousness. Like looking over a fence seeing stuff and wondering what else is hidden in there.



Everything I read in The Art of War makes natural sense. Most of it feels like second nature in one form or another – I think actually I live a little like this although on a whole more subtle level.

One thing that did strike me however – and strike may be the wrong word to use, it was more of a strange dawning or realisation was the short passage on how a general should treat ones troops.

First with humility and then with an iron fist or something of that ilk. If you punish without having first established respect and trust, you risk underlying resentment and anger, lack of loyalty. If you never punish you risk having no control or commitment.

If you at first establish trust and respect and then rule with an iron fist you get loyalty and respect. People know where you stand, and where they stand.

They feel a part of something larger, more noble than the individual can ever be. A part of something larger than they in which they can believe.

Very simple, I think I just needed to hear it said out loud to me. Perhaps I have never been in a strong enough position or confident enough to feel in control of delivering that vision. I do know.

Currently I do have a degree of fear, but unfortunately it comes through mood swings and not always being as understanding as I should with individuals. Hwei Nu told me in her appraisal that people call to see "what the weather is like" before coming to see me.

A little respect but not of the pureness it needs to be. The punishment should be for those who step out of line and do some wrong...

I might see if I can find a short version and buy a couple to give to a few select people.

Fantastic day today – around the house enjoying the cool weather in the morning, Wave House at Sentosa in the afternoon – Stella and Ewan both had an hour and really enjoyed themselves. I couldn't quite believe Ewan who isn't so keen usually on those things – lots of water and a small crowd and a bit of speed.

The guy overseeing the wave got on with him, and he had an absolute ball, laughing and grinning ear to ear, comfortable as. Wiped out once or twice – not so keen on that – but still jumped straight back up, smile on his face to get back in line.

25th March 2010 – aam - Early morning wakenings thinking (worrying), about work again... This time some detailing to one of the main port cochrer entry trusses by Reve – well by the contractor, but looked after by Reve.

These guys don't have a good sense of safe construction – too much reliance on site welding and lack of redundancy. They could all do with a course in lego construction or furniture making to get a good understanding of stiffness and robust construction.

Scares me a lot but need to work through – generally there but just not good practice! Will thicken up a plate or two when I get in in the morning.



26th March 2010 – aam – here we are again...

Worried/concerned about handing over projects and who to:

MBB – Jason should be ok

MBB – SLM will be ok

Southbeach – Garry – Soh – more likely RNC?

F2a – Losing Juan to SSH which is a disaster

F4 – still to find someone to run

Pavilion – RNC but should be finished

MBSIR – should be finished

So really F2a – the project from hell – started by HCL and Khoo Teng Chong – basically fucked up from start to finish! Juan and I have made a lot better but god knows what little surprises await!

Seems when saving into the new version of word (2007), the file size dramatically reduces. Looking on the web it is due to compression which is a good thing – I am a little concerned I might be losing picture quality – as I didn't think you could compress jpgs, they are already as small as they go?

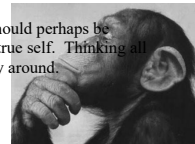
Perhaps it is all the text? Will have to trust in Microsoft – kept the original file anyway so look in there for images up to today's date...

pm – Reading "The Power of Now" by Eckhardt Tolle – I know embarrassingly self help cheap spiritualism title – and the book is turning out to be a bit that way as well. Was a Christmas present – not that I am complaining mind you – I liked getting it and am enjoying reading it although with a bit of scepticism.

Anyway, all of what he says I agree with and it is quite basic (and the same as what a lot of others say), but it is good to be reminded of it again.

He talks about being addicted to thinking. This is how our egos survive. They project themselves forward into the future and work out ways they can be fed. Basically they are our image of ourselves. They start being formed early on and they are what we do and the station we have been born into, and more importantly they are what we think. I think therefore I am becomes I am because I think, and in fact my thoughts are what I am.

He also talks about thinking filling up all the space we should perhaps be living in. Creativity happens in the base self – the quiet true self. Thinking all the time is a reason we are not creative, not the other way around.



ppm – I have got to stop reading these child abuse stories on the news – I can't look away – feel I have to know in that not knowing is even worse. Tonight was a small three year old in Southern England left with a young couple by the mother:



"There was a baby lying on the bed naked with scratches on his face, and his eyes were like foaming. It was a pretty traumatic sight to see," Adrian Mitchel said.

I stuck my fingers in his mouth and pulled his tongue out and rubbed his back until air came out. He burped and I waited for the ambulance to come."

When doctors saw the extent of Ryan's injuries, they knew they were not caused by a simple fall and they contacted police. Ryan died in the hospital of cardiac arrest a few days later, on Christmas Eve.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard how the couple humiliated and degraded the child.

He was made to lick spilled soup from the floor and shouted at so loudly that he wet himself.

Police believe a friction burn to his nose was caused by his face being rubbed into his own urine on the carpet.



There can be no evil in a three year old – Gods speed little one I hope you move onto bigger and better things, or some good comes from your death. I feel sick and emotionally scubbed when I read things like this. Rubbing his face in urine on the carpet – they must have been on a terrible drug trip or something I hope – the thought that this would be a concious act is too much to bear. None of which helps the terrified little three year old...

Leaves me with a wht the hell do I do feeling – go and look at our kids and love them even more. Light some incense, give him a few thoughts and try to calm down and go to other places mentally.

28th March 2010 – Did some more numbers on returning to Australia. Can't afford to keep Park Street. Best option is to return to Abbotsford Street, rebuild and sell Park St. A\$1.1M to rebuild. End up saving A\$10k in cash a year, and 30k increased net worth (profit based).

Downside is it assumes the kids go to public schooling. Am hoping with time we will be more comfortable and be able to save more – potentially opening up the private school option if needed.

The other alternative plan would be to sell Abbotsford in the future and move out to the suburbs – use the extra cash to fund schooling.

Think this is the way to go – aim for what we want and take it from there...

31 March 2010 – aam – Doing it tough at the moment – overwhelmed by workload and the seriousness of some of the issues. Made some progress on the MICE trusses yesterday. MBS's fault that one.

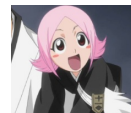
Still working through the canopy truss connections. They could only install the thinner plates but te welding looked good at least. Left it with Reve to put in additional stiffeners to get the connection to work.

Pissed that we are here in the first place. Think I need to do some numbers myself on exactly where we ended up. One option is to spread the load to the top connections of the trusses with some packing plates. Will take a look at this tomorrow.

...desperately clinging onto sanity.



And this was the other image when searching under the above that seemed to strike a chord...



Ange is going into hospital to get her gall bladder out tomorrow. Always a hint of uneasiness surrounding hospitals and general anaesthetics etc, but must admit I am looking forward to the mental break from work – if I get it (will have to try and stay in touch with email at least).

Jessica Watson is still going strong – a bit of that solitude and constancy would go down quite nicely just now. Different time, different place in my life...

2 April 2010 – Ange has had her gall bladder operation and all went well. Always a few nerves and uneasiness around anything like that so it is nice to have her back albeit very sore.

Kids have been good. Freya was a bit upset last night – bad dreams and sat up with me for a bit watching TV just to clear her mind. Ewan has been lovely –

making Ange pictures and bringing her vegetables which are good for you – to help her tummy get better.

Hard work looking after the three of them – constant occupation. Mind is off work which is good (mostly), but it is far from still. More like static turned up to full volume.

3rd April 2010 – Easter Sunday. Carrot with a pink bow and an orange cup of water was left out for the Easter Bunny. Ange made some Easter baskets and the magical rabbit filled them with eggs.



He took bites from the carrot, drank the water and left bits of rabbit hay about the place. Ewan was first up and incredibly excited. The rest of the morning was all about finding different evidence the Easter bunny had been.

Bits of white and brown and one red hair, hand prints in the paintings drying on the balcony, the odd footprint here and there. Apparently the Easter bunny had also been watching the “Snowman” on TV - the first one to pop up when you accidentally hit play... Little bean lying on the couch head against the arm rest soaking it up.

5th April 2010 – To sell Park Street early next year and capitalise on all of the growth, or to wait for another year? To do some light renovation before we sell or to just do the garden and patch up a crack or two. Nice problems to be thinking about – we have been very lucky with the houses...

pm – Just finished rev 1 of the sun shading diagrams for 38 Abbotsford Street. Quite chuffed I was able to do on sketch up relatively easily. I hope they are ok! Work as ever is heating up with pressure points on MBS, F2A, Southbeach, Create, MBB, and soon F4!

I can't seem to make ground on these things. Programs not under our control push out prolonging agony and costing us money. We (I) seem to have the longest list of watch projects in the region!

Perhaps I should have a chat with Peter Bailey, or Bowtell. Peter Bowtell as first port of call. MBS seems to be the critical thing taking all the priority time at the moment.

A large, stylized black Greek letter pi symbol (π) is centered on the page. The symbol is rendered in a bold, serif font, with the top bar being thick and the vertical stems having a slight curve at the bottom.

Agghhhg – it does get to be too much at times.. and email means you need to do it with one hand behind your back.

“Lots of things in life don't die but instead evolve or get reinvented.”

Lisa Shusterman
Author & blogger

Seems to be life a lot of the time – and many people and their failures, secrets... dreams and hopes I guess as well.

10th April 2010 – Tough three day week! Sorting out minutae construction issues on MBSIR – down on site soaked in sweat sketching on the spot etc... Mtgs on payment F2a – Tham from JTC is not so much playing games but struggling to keep in touch (as I am), and distorting memories to his own justification. I think they got the message that the issue is not going to go away.

All in all an improvement but still in heavy swirling seas with a lot that could potentially go wrong. Preview visit for the whole office tonight to Marina Bay Bridges (families included), which I am really looking forward to. In the middle of the Flyer and the IR 9and immediately above DTL!

Concern on the approvals for MBS and need to ride this a bit now.

pm – Spent a lot of today on the phone sorting out an approvals blockage to get them pouring on the tunnel for Morth Crystal Pavilion. Learnt on the way through that the submissions seem to be in hand – a good thing. We will see what Monday brings I guess.

Tonight was the preview for the bridge (double helix). Seemed to go well although it is lively as a bridge! More than I had expected even with one or two people walking around it. Not in a concerning way however which I guess is what matters? LTA did some people tests yesterday and so I guess we will see what comes out of that...

Stuart & Michelle (& Xian and Tao), are in town and came out for the bridge preview. Was good to see them. Ange reacts badly to those sort of situations. I negative relation to things she doesn't understand or cant relate to I guess. I don't subscribe to Stuarts endless and often Teflon covering optimism but it has its place and the opposite isn't much better! Live and let be, and just get by without judging I would say.



The bridge does look good however – slick stainless steel. The kids all had a good time albeit with a few tears back at home when tired and grumpy and needed a bath. Stella had a few moments but seemed to recover when she realised how much fun it was heely-ing down the slope in amongst the crowd. In her element – when she is queen riding above (on in this case gliding amongst), the common people (of course of which I am citizen number one!

11th April 2010 – Still concerned about this truss connection (Atrium South Canopy). I don't like being in control of these things. Have confidence in the truss connection now after the past couple of weeks but the strengthening of the spigot was all done without me. If I did see it I wasn't aware of the importance of the connection – There is redundancy in there I am sure but it is of different stiffnesses so I am not sure it helps too much.

Obsessing but there you go – it is me on the line at the end of the day. Must do some more calcs when I get in on Monday to hopefully give me some peace of mind.

Bearing in mind, the strengthening detail was designed by the contractor, checked by us, and checked by TYLin. Would hope that it was ok.

12th April 2010 – Eckhart Tolle talks a lot about 'now'. Over and over repeatedly actually! Couldn't agree more with him. Consequences of the now however live in the future so there must always be some tenuous connection – hopefully a strong one or we would all live by the moment without them (consequences that is).

I also wonder where all the other realms live. Sub-conscious, dreams, hopes, all the connections between people etc that I suspect we don't understand or are quite willing to admit exist at the moment.

Maybe they, potentially like God could be, are a bit of a virtual concept that will quickly evaporate when it comes down to it?

13th April 2010 – 9:20pm Burger King, Novena Square after an ACES mtg – quite sad on many accounts! Where are all these people from? I feel like a bit of flotsam or jetsam washed up here on the sand, suddenly dry and half out of my natural habitat – blinking a little vaguely aware that it is through my own doing but wondering how it got to this...

17th April 2010 – MBS are finishing all the structural odds and ends this weekend – will take them through to Sunday. Monday 7:30 am Wah Kam signs forms C2 C3 (provided they have finished), 9:00 Ong see Ho from BCA arrives on site with TOP and issues provided he is satisfied with level of work completed (their main thing seems to be the finishing of the cladding to the belly of the skypark! – perhaps as they think this will make building look more complete rather than the stated fear of panels falling to below?).

It is an incredible crescendo of nerves and tenseness. This time (and the few weeks after), would seem to be the natural time for things to go wrong – coinciding with maximum to lose, and the maximum public exposure/attention...

25th April 2010 – Carl Jung apparently tells in one of his books of a conversation with an American Indian chief whose perception it was that most white people have tense faces, staring eyes, and a cruel demeanour: "They are always seeking something. What are they seeking? The whites always want something. They are always uneasy and restless. We don't know what they want. We think they are mad."

27th April 2010 – **aam** – Things are too complicated at the moment. My mind is fatigued and I am tired, I need to calm things down. Need to spend some time working through issues on jobs at work and not take on any more... For my own sanity.

29th April 2010 – **aam** – Up worrying about moving back to Melbourne which is a nice change! Seems it is not going to be so easy to get the kids into the schools we want to get them into.

Will have to sit down with Ange and plan the best way forward. We don't want them going to a school where they are going to be a minority. Sounds bad but we want them to have what we had growing up – that is the reason we are moving back to Australia.

Will have to go through the schools, get info on how good or bad they are and all of that. If we can convince ourselves the local schools are ok, then great, if not, we might need to bin the Abbotsford Street plans and buy somewhere closer to better schools.

Kew, Hawthorn... hmmm... Richmond West is one of our closest schools and that apparently has a very good name so we could push for that – not sure what secondary school options that leaves open.

Spent some time going through it this weekend...

On the other hand, Krabi was great. Although not as restful for the soul as I would have liked it to be. Totally shut down from work but still tiring. And back at work now and into the stress of everyday commitments (over commitments).



Tub is a good guy, and enjoyed being around him and Julie and the kids. Spent a lot of time in the pool – kids were in there probably six hours in the day! Highlight for me as always is the proximity to the beach and beautiful scenery – breakfast lunch and dinner by the sand and sea and limestone cliffs.

30th April 2010 – aam – up in the middle of the night again – Beans B'Day in the morning which brings a smile to my face... She is really good just at the moment, all the kids are actually, enjoying themselves and doing well.

Up thinking about the whole house situation again. 800k block of land in Abbotsford Street +1.2M house construction = 2M house. That's affordable but no room for private schools etc.

Thinking we would be better buying somewhere. Came across a couple of houses – One in Elwood, one in Clifton Hill which looked livable quoted around 1.25-1.5M – so even if went for 1.7M, it would leave us some elbow room for school fees etc if we had to go private.



More discussions with Ange tomorrow – trips to Melbourne to look at houses?
Wouldn't be our dream home but would be a good home and financially make more sense...

Of the two the Clifton hill one probably makes more sense – reasonably close to the city – close to Eastern freeway which is gateway to our parents places and further afield – mind you, beach access in Elwood would be nice!

Maybe it is a case of living in Abbotsford Street and looking for a house to buy for the first year...

am – Am feeling in the light of day that the thinking last night might be right. Priority #1 kids education, #2 where we live, #3 cash in hand and room to manoeuvre.

Will have to redo all the numbers again. Will see a financial adviser as well. It would be good to buy somewhere for 1.5M and still be able to hang onto Abbotsford Street or Park Street.

More time on the computer doing numbers and looking for houses...

pm – A days thinking and some quick numbers lead me to the following:

Option 1 – sell Park St build for 1.2M (effectively 2.0M including prop value) on Abbotsford. Save 15k per year – unlikely will be able to send kids private, banking on getting into Kew which is a lottery – unlikely even I would say...

Option 2 – spend 1.5M on new house elsewhere (hopefully good school zone), and keep Abbotsford. Near enough break even, means that either kids go to good local school or we sell Abbotsford, or second mortgage it to fund private schools...

Option 3 – Spend 1.2M on house, keep Abbotsford Street and loan extra to fund kids schooling...

Difference between 2 & 3 is the type and location of house we can afford. Either would be ok but if we want closer to city and closer to public transport for me to city 2 is more likely – Kew type of scenario. If happy to drive to work, lack of PT for kids later on, then 3 is the answer – Balwyn scenario.

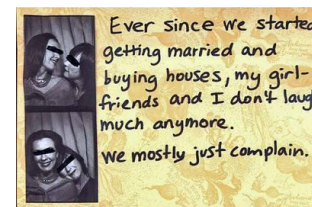
Must admit, like to be a little close to city at least. Any way the nice thing about options 2 & 3 is that they involve keeping Abbotsford – negative gearing advantages and kids could use if went to uni, or we could build and retire there.

Tempting to rush in now but probably better to spend time thinking through. See how finances turn out, look for a good house with time on our side. Do some looking now and see what comes up.

Will talk to a few others as a bit of a sanity check also...



My head, my head, my head. Going around in my head.



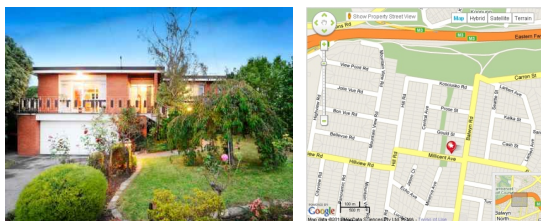
...and others also apparently.

3rd May 2010 – aam – More figures and more thinking. Option 3 it seems is option 2! Spend 1.3M max (90k buying costs). This is about what it would cost us to buy a house that Ange found in Balwyn North.

19 Millicent Avenue. We like it because it is near a small park connector to Koonung Park, it is in Balwyn High School zone – good school apparently... and it is a 6os place I think and we both think could be updated with not too serious renovations (render external brick walls, new colours, paint inside – floorboards etc perhaps).

Up for auction on the 22nd May. Had a look around at all the houses that have gone up in North Balwyn and not so many with all of those things going for them. Sounds like it could be a good thing – advertised at 0.95-1.05M –

Would hope that it wouldn't go for more than 1.2M but might have to be prepared to spend 1.25-1.3M. Will get mum & dad and perhaps Cam to go around and take a look. Thinking it will be likely that I will fly back and make a bid. Will decide on the upper limit once I have seen it.



Feels right though. Sacrifice the flash new house for something near good schools, still near parks, and something we can work on to slowly renovate and improve the value of. A nearby fully renovated similar place went for 1.5M although right opposite the park...

Must admit there is a small kernel of though in me that thinks perhaps I will never be comfortable unless I have something not quite there to work on. Heaven help me I should get the dream house we have always wanted. In this case I don't think so however.

As well as the normal things going wrong that keeping Abbotsford could help cure (me not getting the salary I thought I would, or Ange not getting a job, medical things or needing private schools after all), there is the sail around the world dream that could come back... with a quite smile.

I should write more about Krabi and Thailand at some stage. Fantastic. Went to town on the curries, Tom Yams, but more soupy curries this time around, can't say I did the green thing which is one of my norms, but coconut milk curries, smooth and silky and warming to the soul. Intense sweating with hoards of kids on banana milk shakes all round!

Was a bit more of an eye opener to some of the different cultures this time. Seems in the past going to Thailand we have only ever come across the Buddhist Thais – incredibly nice people, bowing and hands together, warmth and inner beauty all over.

The Sand & Sea resort (and the one next door), has been taken over by muslim Thais. No alcohol and a downgrade in the standard of food and service. I would stop short of saying not nice people but no where near as friendly as the Buddhists elsewhere on the island.

As well as the Buddhist Thais there are also the Burmese Thais who are also different according to Tub and Julie in similar ways.

Where have all the other things gone that were in my memory, that I thought I must write that down? Into my collective consciousness (collective as in the collection of fragmentary consciousness that seem to come and go in my life!), I hope, to make me who I am, to come out indirectly at later times or to just sit there to inform my view on the world.

5th May 2010 – Really fitful sleeps the last few nights. Last night was fitful (with an hour or two email slotted in there), but at least woke up feeling I had had some deep sleep somewhere along the line.

Been continuing to think re Millicent. We are doing what we probably shouldn't – get too involved and as a result attached to the place before auction. Trouble is you need to get involved to make sure it is the right decision.

Plan would be to be between 1.3-1.35 as an upper limit, and do renovation prior to moving in whilst it is free. Strip wall paper. Move couple of walls internally (wall b/w dining and living, wall to Freya's bedroom, and possibly remove some of the remaining wall by kitchen and around staircase), then paint walls (white or variation of), and finally put in floorboards and render outside brickwork. Will also need some furniture. Coffee table \$700, Bed for Freya \$600, Two kids rugs and rug for dining/lounge \$4000, kitchen table/chairs \$2000, outdoor table/chairs \$3000 – say total \$12,000!

- Strip walls	\$ 2,000
- Remove walls	\$ 10,000
- Paint walls	\$ 1,000
- Floorboards	\$20,000
- Render	\$10,000
- bits and pieces	\$ 2,000
- Furniture	<u>\$12,000</u>
Total	\$57,000

Hmmm – added up pretty quickly – probably allow 60k but would make a huge difference to the house.

6th May 2010 – Couple of really nice surprises the last few days. Getting in the car last night to find Deep purple playing. Not a great recording but fantastic music (and different, Lady Gaga and Madonna'd out just now). Walking to the train this morning at sunrise (7:00am) for an early morning talk on property and finding myself surrounded by soaring billowing pink and yellow and orange cumulus clouds. Stumbling out of Raffles place MRT a little lost and disorientated under UOB2 to be greeted with the supreme calm of the river water at the widening around Boat Quay (in front of which I am now typing this).

Struggling a bit with a threatening cold but all these things help in the mental battle :).

9th May 2010 – I realise how much I am giving up work wise by returning to Australia. Went to a badminton tournament yesterday with some of the big players – AECOM, DPA, etc. and I got to present some of the trophies, saw Teh Hee Siang – head guy from TYLin across the room with BBChan from BCA, both nice people and people I get along with in the industry. I appeared on the MBS ‘Build it Bigger’ documentary last week and was interviewed again for an article on the Flyer in discovery channel Magazine.

There would be more to come with Sports Hub and a lot of further work to do to keep the group busy and winning the good work. People see me as the leader in Singapore and I am more and more comfortable with this (relaxed with this).

It is probably not a bad thing on the other hand that I am returning at a high point. A nice sort of contained achievement – although I do worry a little about the mess a lot of the contracts are in. Not mess – situation normal for Singapore I believe but would be nice if Southbeach, F2 and F4 got sorted. Should be able to make good in roads into that happening – we will see....

Back reading ‘The Kontiki Expedition’ – needed a real book. There are only so many ways you can say ‘now’ is important and Eckard does it endlessly – feels like you are trapped in a recurring blurry dream of not quite reality.

Have been letting the thoughts of the house and work get to me of late – partially as I enjoy thinking about them, but it is hard to pull back and clear once started. The last couple of nights I have made a concerted effort to clear my mind and think to black which has seemed to work – along with a couple of panadol cold and flu tabs to help clear my head... :).

Sitting at Palawan Beach watching the kids; well with Ange who is watching the kids – after a nice Mothers Day morning – Ewan gave her a voucher for a nice shiny clean floor – half an hour later Stella and Ewan were doing snow angels on a wet kitchen floor with Freya distributing water via mop and bucket, very funny I am sure.

It is really nice down here – beach and fountain and kaya toast and coffee from the foodcourt. Will miss things like this in Melbourne.

Am looking forward to the change however, feeling age a little with conversations on others retirements and how old we will be when the kids graduate and are at university (we will be old for grandparents). So feel like a life change and challenge is due – although am pretty sure it will be hard and I may regret it in times to come.

So far in life however, so good.

11th May 2010 – Haircut today – looking very grey! Must say I don’t mind it... feeling like I should be showing some age, young at heart perhaps I hope.

13th May 2010 – aam – Woke from a bad dream this morning. Started out by being on some trip, I can’t place exactly what it was although I recall it was organised through a guy acting as a third Party. It may have even been our accountant Stephen.

We had just returned and were sorting through the details of payment which seemed steep. When he asked me to pay for his rickshaw ride home (to the Mountain view pub carpark from just up near Wesley HS, a trip he was doing anyway he wanted AS\$22.

Thought this was a bit rich and complained leading to a falling out.

Anyway the terror part was finding myself on a chairlift going home. I realised that it was going way fast. I turned around to make sense of the swing bar arrangement that keeps you in to find I couldn’t, or didn’t have time to in any case.

The speed increased with some significant G-forces and I started to think his is a part of the ride. It then accelerated big time. A rush of speed and wind and the whirring sound of cable running through guides etc. I started to realise that it wasn’t the ride and something was going terribly wrong.

In the end I was a fraction out of body observing, waiting for the crash, having time to think at least I won’t know what hit me when it comes – that terrible expectation of a violent end. And that was when I woke from sleep...

...going on to think about other things – the less immediate worries but still worries, the night concerns which are always much worse than the daylight reality.

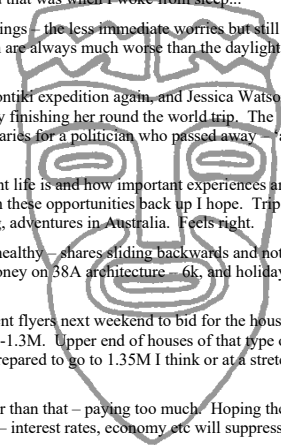
15th May 2010 – Enjoying the Kontiki expedition again, and Jessica Watson is sailing into Sydney Harbour today finishing her round the world trip. The Singapore papers are full of obituaries for a politician who passed away – ‘a doer’, ‘a menacing foe’...

All seems to point to how transient life is and how important experiences are. Doing the Balwyn thing will open these opportunities back up I hope. Trips back to Nepal or long haul sailing, adventures in Australia. Feels right.

Finances are looking a little less healthy – shares sliding backwards and not saving heaps for some reason (money on 38A architecture – 6k, and holidays to Krabi probably!).

Am booked to go down on frequent flyers next weekend to bid for the house. Think it will probably go for 1.25-1.3M. Upper end of houses of that type over the last few weeks. We will be prepared to go to 1.35M I think or at a stretch 1.4.

Don’t want to go too much further than that – paying too much. Hoping the current uncertainty in the market – interest rates, economy etc will suppress



things a little. We will see I guess (trying not to let the suspense get to me – mixed success!).

Looking through the school ratings, Balwyn is definitely one of the good schools on a par with all the private schools. One post pointed out that if you put the premium for private school fees into the bank and looked at cumulative interest then you could probably buy a house with it in ten years or so. Bit optimistic but if the premium was 20k x 6 years it would be a decent start :).

ppm – Wah Kam sms'd tonight to inform of a fatality on site. A Chinese National slipped and fell on the Theatre package, just as they were all quietening down to finish apparently.

Somewhere a family is grieving... not nice.

Now I am up and cannot keep my mind from Millicent Ave. We gave our mobile numbers to the agent in case of an offer before auction. Another house (2 Kosciusko) sold before auction today.

A couple of houses went below what they were asking for but they were large awkward houses for one reason or another. The market is a bit topsy turvy at the moment spooked by higher interest rates and economic uncertainty over Europe.

Difficult to know if it was the vendor getting spooked and accepting an offer, or the other way around on Kosciusko). I hope Millicent goes to auction – feel a lot better about paying market price.

Occurred to me that there would be nothing stopping the agent from falsely declaring there was a bid, and forcing us to show our hand. In that case we should be putting our best foot forward I guess but it would definitely irk me.

If that did happen, I guess, we would ask them if the owners intend to accept the offer. If the answer is yes then we put in a real bid, and either buy the house or it goes to the other person. If it is not a real bid and they don't accept our offer, and go to auction, then hopefully we would have grounds to complain on ethics.

In terms of this scenario, I would want to put in 1.25M as fair – a safe price in the hand should be worth less than the possible auction upside. Danger is someone out there like us wanting to make sure they got it. Might consider 1.3M but would probably not go the full 1.35... I hope the right things happen and it goes to auction.

It is clear we are emotionally attached which is not a good thing!

19th May 2010 – Had my appraisal with Peter Bailey recently. Clear this is a bit of a highpoint in my career. Amazing really (the work and the experience in Singapore), given I really didn't go out there actively looking for it. Don't get me wrong – worked bloody hard for it – but that was it, wanted to do a good job first and foremost and do the right thing by people around me.

Really happy and pleased within myself over what I have been a part of. Lots of really positive feedback on staff loyalty and treatment/development of those around me also which is also really pleasing inside.

Sitting on a plane right now on the way back for Millicent (in the hope of being successful at auction – good chance I think). Indulging a little in music and contemplation and just being.

'Don't you remember you told me you loved me baby; said you'd be coming back this way again baby...'

'I'm driving in my car, every light I see is a star... that makes me feel so happy, what's wrong?... all the buildings sway in time and the streetlamps calling my name and the gold fish keep on saying... King Kong, Oh crazy you – where's the life we once knew?'

Have to love the whole music industry. Really is art – getting inside of you and lifting you up, dropping you down carrying you away with feeling and inspiration or whatever.

Same with theatre – after all these years I still get the dry dusty smell of the lights come back to me when I see theatre or hear music around some of the musicals we did when we were at high school. Magical time

21st May 2010 – Running around looking at houses and speaking with agents and accountants and solicitors (well one each only but feels like a lot in a short time frame!). Enjoying being back and seeing M&D, all of that.

Millicent looks good – not too near freeway for noise, close to park connector. Not the brilliant deciduous reds of autumn in other more pricey areas of Balwyn but still ok.

22nd May 2010 – Pre auction day nerves turning things over and over. Was a little silly yesterday. Got into talking strategy with Chris O'Shaughnessy and let slip our limits – when will you ever learn Brendon, too trusting and naive.

He called a couple of tie with advice last night after he spoke with people he knew on what the likely price might be. His original advice of go in strong at 1.25M changed to hang back and watch as the market is a little jittery.

We will see tomorrow. Ange is very keen and wants to go to 1.43M. I was a little less keen and wanted to stop a little earlier. Will have another look tomorrow to see what I think about the place.

Would I be happy if we got the place for 1.4M – probably although it would mean we will be limited in what we can do for a little bit!

Why so fucking stupid Brendon with Chris – naturally nervous I guess. Not much you can do other than to see how things go and hope that he doesn't play any underhanded games himself...

I don't think this will happen, I just want it to be over.

22nd May 2010 – Spoke with Ange last night (Ewan got his leg tangled in the side of his beds railing during the call – lots of screaming and panicking – ‘Ewan how do you get yourself into these situations!’ – had to laugh), anyway Ange is keen to go the distance on Millicent.

Think she is right – family home, close but not too close to parks along freeway etc. Good bones and we can make it our own in time – memories with kids, will be a family home. If we end up going to 1.43 (ignoring any silly things I might have done with Chris – rely on karma in that respect – good things happening to good people fingers crossed), we would still be happy although will have paid 150-200k too much!

So – we will see...

pm – A\$1,315,000

26th May 2010 – Ewan's birthday this morning. Electronic hamster and playmobile fairy figures and unicorns etc.... The playmobile stuff was greeted with disappointment as he had chosen something else in the shop – Ange chose something different as she thought it would be better (from another shop).

Ten minutes later they were all playing with it happy as can be – he has some \$\$\$ from Nanny & Poppy -will be interested to see if he wants the original choice – kind of hoping it is a bit more boy orientated but doubt so, and not really an issue either. Just don't want him having trouble fitting in at school etc.

So feeling very middle of the road with the house. We expected it to go just under 1.3M, we got it for just over 1.3M. Happy to pay a small premium as it is a family home will be with us for a while we hope! Maybe 50k premium?

Would have been great to get for less, would have been disappointing to get for more, but we were prepared to go much higher so pretty middle of the road.

Happy with the house – location, layout, construction, only challenge will be the back yard and making it usable – bit of a slope at the moment and narrow where it recesses back into the rear terrace. Thoughts for down the track.

Work is hard. Really need a good break and will take the opportunity on the return to Melbourne. A month or so off to work on the house and to clear my mind...

30th May 2010 – Watching House tonight and someone being put under an induced coma. Brought back the whole hospital thing. In particular the clean dry heat of the outback hospital I dreamed I was in at one stage. Someone with snakeskin cowboy boots – the expansive blues of the sky and reds of the scrub/desert out beyond the immediate of the carparks – black asphalt kerbing and odd yukka type planting etc. Visions of an airport type atmosphere with planes there somewhere – white tails against the whole scene?

In many ways I want to be back there. It was such an intense place. It was a place of struggle and of help and assistance and getting better. Of participating rather than leading, Of being taken places. ...and of rest and recuperation.

Spent most of this weekend sleeping. Thursday night (long weekend), was from 8:00 to 8:00 with only an hour of work in-between. Rest of the weekend has been lethargic in-between bursts of energy to get the kids out and doing things. Naps here and there.

Millicent was obviously taxing in terms of mental energy and worry is that it will likely continue in the run up to get home. Lots of things to organise, and a new life to look forward to and come to grips with.

Just want to get home now to tell you the truth. Trapped seeing out the roll through of work on the books etc – not enjoyable but has to be done. Need to take a closer look at who takes over what when I go... for tomorrow or next week at least.

31st May 2010 – Hate work, hate being here... Hardly slept last night – dreams of concern and worry of project finances here, and not getting a good price for Park Street etc. (packet of chips I had just prior to bed won't have helped either!).

Night time it seems other influences rule my subconscious. Monsters from the depths come up to the surface and break water, I catch sight of their large horny scaled backs (a glimmer here and there in the moonlight), they briefly arch and dive staying shallow however in their movements. At times there can be many, almost a writhing mass creating its own chopped up surface of bodies and water, almost only in that it is not real. With signs of light and dawn I turn around to look at them, and they are no longer there...



Result tired and shitty... could do with taking a day off to get my mind straight but that just causes more problems... work keeps flowing in.

1st June 2010 – aam – Stella is going through a bit of a creative burst at the moment, amongst other things she is putting together a book of dragons, having taken cue from the movie. Drawing each dragon and its features. No. Of legs and wings, heads, special powers etc. Really is fantastic.

Her piano playing seems to have broken out to a new level also and she practices now because she wants to practice.

Ewan is also undergoing a bit of a phase change. He is getting more mature (ever so slightly), but more is taking on challenges and doing things – swimming in particular, interacting with other kids, asking questions, answering back...

Frey continues as ever to push forward, her speech is not getting any better with sound formation not really happening but her vocabulary seems to be taking off – she now comes out with sentences and multi syllable words.



Fusionopolis 2A

Fusionopolis 4

MBSIR MICE strengthening

MBB ii

3rd June 2010 – aam – Thins continue to go badly at work. Am yet to work through in detail but financial position of a lot of our jobs looks poor. Conservative assessments on where things are but still not good. I am going to have to start interviews jo by job I think to assess exactly where we are!

6th June 2010 – Heavy rain this morning – beautiful in the flat, water pouring off of the eaves all around, the comforting soft sound of heavy rain through the trees. Walking out in the mornings, the beauty of the green here continually strikes me. It really is heavy lush tropical jungle greenery in and about every dimension you can feel around you. It was so humid the other night driving to squash that i could not stop the outside of the windows from fogging over – need the windscreen wipers on just to see where we were going...

The image below is about as similar as I could find for the jungle about Singapore in corners of the city like here. It actually comes from a Costa Rica web site.



Good day with the kids today – Wiggles this morning (live at Indoor Stadium), swim this afternoon.

Ewie is a clever thinking little boy. He was asking me where the seeds come from for plants that birds carry around to make other plants. ‘From other trees and plants Ewan’. ‘Yes but where did the first seed come from... did god put it there? I think God put it there...’. ‘Some people think God put it there – other people think it just came to be through collections of dust or through little funguses...’

Later on he had a little flower and was looking for the female parts of the flower. ‘I think that’s them there Dad – you can feel them, is that them...? I think they are too small to feel...’. Hmm.. bit lost on that one, they must be off on a plant module at school and dads education isn’t quite up to it!

He has blossomed in confidence with swimming as well after some lessons at school. Ange took some photos and he had a smile plastered on his face the whole time.

Stella was asking about smoking and drugs and how long I spent in hospital etc. And Freya is just loving everything about life at the moment. She finds joy in everything no matter small or everyday. Lovely to have around.

Reading a small book about the Microsoft made famous puzzle interview techniques at the moment. Book is not that great but is opening up lots of little things to think about. The whole innovation in business – business that lives by innovation dies by innovation etc.

Find that whole company life cycle, health, get ahead fall behind thing quite interesting. Not so much in the purist business sense but actually the opposite – how that relates to reality.

Saw that Apple recently overtook Microsoft in terms of largest gross income – on the back of the Ipod, Iphone, Ipad etc... How fantastic is that. Apple who have been on the back foot for decades pushing better solutions with nicer industrial design and interfaces, but always losing on the \$\$ front, finally starting to get an upper hand through a gentle sway in the consumer IT terrain.

Soon after this will be cloud computing – or even now I guess – remote programs on servers tat just get accessed rather than the traditional download to your own PC/laptop (I think)...

It is one of the reasons I love to see Russell (the oil millionaire), from Survivor lose. Fantastic strategiser and manipulator but totally ignores the human side of the game – bad karma and can never see it – amazing really given he isobviously an intelligent guy...?

Being in Arup is a little like that. Seems to defy gravity and work on the basis of god will and honesty?

One of these days I might write some bordering on holier than though book that tries to make sense of the whole thing. That tries to put another nail in the coffin of the super competitive Microsoft business model ethos. Lets face it people worldwide hate them for it.

I would like to say it is (was always ever going to be), only a matter of time, but I wouldn't be so smug. The problem with 'goodoe always wins' theories that they don't.

Still there is another argument that if you play by what you think is the right way to play, you can never lose. Be you downtrodden, bankrupt, or in a pool of your own blood in a gutter somewhere, to have played with integrity is to have succeeded.

Think you need a fair bit of religious like justification for something like that perhaps. ...and very easy to say when things are all going swimmingly thank you very much.

1. Rules of the game
2. Value system by which you play
3. Reward system by which you perceive success
4. Natural Justice that comes about over time

Maybe something in there. The fall down is our need for recognition. We are so much a part of what we perceive other people to perceive us to be. Difficult to see that core trait of human nature changing anytime soon.

Will have to watch the Dalai Lama and see where he goes, see where the plight of Tibetan Buddhism ends up. Or is the low flame of my recognition and thousands / hundreds of thousands around the world like me enough proof. That will be difficult to extinguish and perhaps will prevail if not through high ground, because that knowledge and recognition of what is right by others is enough in itself?

I still like to believe the good guys always win in the end.

8th June 2010 – aam – Am abandoning the Microsoft inspired book on puzzle interviews. I need some solid points in my life right now and that book is an ethereal skit floating out there, created to fill the void of someone's quiet times, perhaps just even pockets.

Back to Wilson of the Antarctic.

What is my reality at the moment? Work is hard – we are short of it and have had to take some tough jobs on. The people I have around me doing them are not quite up to it. Haven't got that little something that gives me confidence they will be able to make them work...

Hence stress and concern on my part. I must say in fairness to those around me that I am not sure I have the little something that is needed either.

What do but to push on with things...



9th June 2010 – aam - Took a little time out after lunch yesterday. Went down to my favourite cafe in Arab street (Blue cafe), and read a bit of Wilson, watched a few people, and had a cup of tea.

Should have been more therapeutic than it was but still not bad. Trying to flatten out a bumps in my mind that are causing distraction, trying to calm a few waters? It seems never ending at times, people wanting time from me at work – not a bad thing I know but I am tired, and need a break, need a change.

11th June 2010 – Just been to see Scott Douglas, a financial planner. They are very good, I have always been very cynical, or perhaps suspicious would be a better description. Both times i have been to see him now I have walked away with a different financial direction as to what I thought might have been the better way forward previously.

These guys pay for themselves in terms of the interest costs etc they save etc.

One decision I do want to think about more though is making contributions to super. Contributions to super are tax deductible so we could be paying 15% tax instead of 29% tax on our net incomes in Australia while we are non-resident.

The downside is that it is then locked away until we are retirement age – 60, I think. Say $5k \times (29 - 15\%) = \700 saving and earn super interest $5k \times (100 - 15\%) \times 7\% = \300 /year. However we could put off of our non tax deductible debt – $5k \times (100 - 29\%) \times 7\% = \250 per year. I.e. Compare $+700 + 300/\text{yr} < 250/\text{yr}$.

Probably a good thing to do – I don't particularly like having money locked up in super but given where the market is the returns will hopefully be ok and also it forces us to save as well.

How long is that – less than 20 years – not so far!!

Need to consider other income/loss I guess – tax rate while we are over here will always be 29% as long as there is an income to deduct from – Ange will now have 38A which means she will be making a loss – 3months $\times ((15k \times 3/12) - (420 \times 7\%)) = 3,600$. Ange's income is only going to be around 2.3k in any case.

All small stuff but every bit helps.

The bigger stuff revolved around when we should be transferring and refinancing 38A.

- Better to increase value of home to max deductible debt.
- Will also increase value base off of which future capital gains tax is calculated in the future.
- Better to transfer when Ange's tax rate is low as it will be her incurring capital gain

2009-2010 – low increase in value – small income from trust transfer – tax rate 29% - low income from Bren to set off against.

2010-2011 prior to leaving – medium increase in value – tax rate 29% - pro-rata half tax free threshold – medium income from Bren to set off against

2010-2011 when back – higher increase in value – lowest tax rate as not working and have losses to offset from 38A – medium income from Bren to set off against

2011-2012 max increase in value – tax rate 30% approx as working – max income from Bren to set off against

Thinking more about it the losses on 38A will offset any small capital gain in any case no matter when we transfer – except that valued low currently so perhaps not. Probably makes sense to transfer when back in January.

Definitely not worth doing prior to end of this financial year. Will find some time to do some numbers I think...

13th June 2010 – There was someone (some people), partying on in the fire next door to our place last night. Couldn't sleep with the noise and so got up. Poured a decent scotch with the intent of doing a bit of serious introspection and reflection however got distracted and spent the better part of a couple of hours on I-am-bored.com – disappointing really...).

Went for a run for the first time in a while this morning which was good – not far off what I normally do which just goes to show it has been a while since I have done anything to really affect my actual fitness! Really need a proper extended programme – diet all of that etc – not likely to happen. No time and haven't got the resolve currently.

Ange has been pissing me off a bit lately. Don't feel any love anymore despite trying. She has always held out this thing of separate beds (as a joke), which I find pretty horrible. If it comes to that then it degenerates full scale, I would be wanting to see other people – I need some love and contact in my life.

I love Ange which just makes the whole thing that much worse...

Enjoying Wilson at the moment :

“Every bit of truth that comes into a mans heart burns in him and forces it way out, either in his actions or in his words. Truth is like a lighted lamp in that it cannot be hidden away in the darkness because it carries its own light.”

Edward Wilson (of the Antarctic)

Reading about his life and the love of nature he had, and of his observations etc inspires me. Makes me want to live a worthwhile life, doing real worthwhile things rather than just working to pay bills and get by.

I think we have had quite a good start and are only now getting to the point where we have some elbow room to move – perhaps a little later on once finances are better and the kids a bit older – could be a sailing trip (they have just rescued Abby – the 16 year old attempting to circumnavigate the globe after her yacht was demisted – good on her for trying and persevering – in the face of criticism – not so good on hr for focusing so much on writing a book and not paying for the rescue!), could just be travel or a bit of missionary type charity work...

Could just be study of astronomy, or psychology – which must be the two great frontiers for personal benefit and to learn more about life and why and where to from here?

Or it might just be getting into closer contact with Australia and the bush – explore a bit of Banjo Patterson and the past...

Whatever it is I would like it to be real and meaningful – creative, productive in something to stay within the annals of literature of life.

“Vera... Vera..., what has become of you? Does anybody else in here fell the way I do...”

Pink Floyd

Not sure why but that phrase comes back to me from time to time. I like the searching I think – the sense of being lost of looking for someone, something that might be out there, something that was in the past, but is no more, looking for some thing to lean on, cling to, be comforted by.

14th June 2010 – The kids are good. They are both the source of endless frustration and the tonic to the frustrations. Yesterday was a series of naughty corners and then three heads on my shoulder reading bedtime stories that night. They genuinely enjoy life – with or without us (don't know why that seems surprising but it is to me a little... might be because we think we organise all of these things to be doing when they will just make their own fun no matter where there are).



15th June 2010 – aam



A FIVE-year-old boy has called 911 in the US, saying his "mommy and daddy were dead". Police in southern California are investigating the deaths as an apparent murder-suicide, KALA-TV in Los Angeles reported.

Officers found a man and woman, whose identities have not been released, shot dead inside their home Anaheim, Orange County .

The boy also told police on the phone that his younger three-year-old brother was missing.

Police eventually found the younger child hiding in the house, afraid of the noises he heard.

And I worry about things in my life, and get upset at the kids from time to time...

am – Hard not to dwell on things like the above. First reaction is to want that this sort of thing should never happen. That no three year old should ever have to go through that, or suffer the longer term damage that will come from it – foster homes, no parents, mental issues – you hope that there are loving extended family about...

And then you draw back a little and realise there will never be anything you can do to stop this. There is always an end of society, or perhaps more accurately a slice of society where this sort of thing will happen.

And because of us? Because we are here growing up as we have grown up privileged with not having to deal with the desperate side of life. Growing up with opportunities and all of the rest of it.

So where does this take you? It takes you not away from looking after your kids but it does slant the way you bring them up and how much you might contribute to charity. It might take us (me), further in later life. Travel and a little more sacrifice.

Reminds me I wanted to look up a western charity that helps kids – must look into Smith Family, or Salvation army...

pm – Been thinking about Millicent and how to make the back area – the rear terrace by the kitchen work with the garden. I can see it at the moment. One of the reasons we bought Millicent was that we thought it had good bones and we could do a lot with it but this bit really escapes me – frustrating.

Wants:

- Open living space and kitchen that engage with each other and with a exterior deck – mostly under cover but with a small area direct to sun peraps.
- Tree canopy view with privacy from the neighbours
- Engagement with the back yard
- Perhaps a fireplace or external heat source?

Challenges:

- Proximity to the sleeping areas if we extend too far out the back
- Change in level from kitchen/living to back yard
- Position of laundry in amongst it all
- Narrowness of space from kitchen terrace out
- Height of rear deck and proximity to neighbours place

Cant help thinking an access deck around from kitchen terrace and back around rear of ours and Stella bedroom would be a good idea. Perhaps bifold doors for full extent from dining to terrace to make one big space?

Guess the main thing is to have some spaces in the house we can really enjoy being in. Key will be main living room and tis engaged outdoor area if we can make it work.

Must stop thinking about it – it is the type of thing that will be much easier to solve once we are living in it, knowing the views and the sensitivities of neighbours, etc. Once we do the floorboards etc it will be a liveable place for a bit in any case from which to learn and feel...

What set it all off was coming across 15 Goodwood (earlier in diary – Feb). That place seems to work well although I have a feeling it was a lot more bitsy in real life. The thing it had going for it though was a long outdoor deck that connected the living dining areas and the master bedroom and provided engagement with the trees outside. Looked like a nice place to live – the whole family centered around one area.

Downsides were the lack of a good garage, lack of connections to transport – parks was probably ok in surrey park but imagine wouldn't be used as much as Koonung which has the opportunity for really long walks and rides if need be.

What am I looking for. I am looking for bits of Appletree – bits of house I can retire in?!? Bits of house we can entertain in.



More I think about it the more I think extend the rear deck just a little bit so we can sit up there in some sun wit people if we want.

One quick option – the access through to the bedrooms doesn't really work – have to go through the galley kitchen which creates a bottleneck.

Having tried a few other options, this might be the lesser of a number of evils. Important when you walk in that you don't see the open workings of the kitchen I think.

Moving the kitchen wholesale to the left (west) mixes up back of house with living too much.

Maybe you are just either in the living or sleeping areas and don't go

in-between to frequently all the time – in some ways it actually attenuates the separation perhaps?

Perhaps instead of the deck the whole way around which might be too much connectivity – and also infringe on privacy, maybe the main bedroom just has floor to ceiling windows that would give that connection to the outdoors?

The other thing to think about is the rumpus room – extend and provide connection to a sunken timber sleeper area outside – along with Ange's sewing room... Think this could work with the timber deck over as long as it was done properly with good spanning structure rather than timber stumps and bearers every 1.5m.

16th June 2010 – Another night spent thinking instead of relaxing! Feeling better about the house though – I think the layout is looking ok and I can see the spaces being the nice indoor outdoor spaces we are after.

Extend Rumpus room below and have a small sunken timber sleeper area under the timber deck above?

17th June 2010 – Still thinking – latest ideas based on keeping kitchen above area where pipes don't clash with rumpus room – steal back a bit of the terrace but rationalises space a lot better I reckon....

18th June 2010 – Agreed a fee with Dragages on Sports Hub today. Should be a lot happier than I am!

Celebrated with Andre by having Thai for lunch and didn't agree with me – hard days wok, few beers and collapsed in bed when got home. I am still doing it a lot harder than I should be. I need to learn to pull back and relax.

Issues on F2a, Southbeach, F4 – not of my doing but responsible nevertheless. Building unit reviews next week and the pressure is getting acute, again issues overlapping at once to make life very difficult.

Peter Hale from cox was buried today I found out from Peter Bowtell. He was a nice guy – a little gruff but down to earth and reasonable to deal with – Singapore Expo extensions, and Marina Bay Bridges.

Peter didn't know much other than he went to sleep one night and didn't wake up. Didn't strike me as a particularly healthy guy but he was only 47 years old! R.I.P. Peter, and take it a bit easier Brendon.



Fairly full on diarrhoea just confirmed my suspicions about lunch...!

The other emotional stress today come from the world vision child posters in the toilets around PAN – poverty action network – or something like that day. Relating stories of child prostitution in Cambodia and Thailand.

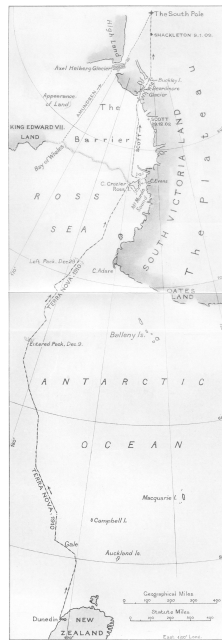
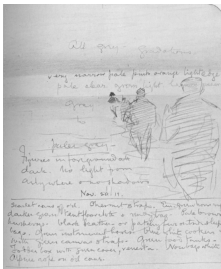
One in particular a young girl duped into prostitution – 11 years old – kept in slavery basically, given drugs and told they came from her wages, “the men like girls, and I am the youngest” is just ringing in my head. Beatings and descriptions of an unbearable existence...

I hop one day i will get to do something meaningful in this respect. That would be a happy replacement dream for a oat trip around the world.

Hard not to form the argument that all of us – anyone in the fabric of society, is partially responsible for this. We all buy cheaply made goods, we all benefit from disparities in economics, is it all wrapped up in the same – these things are the root of unhappiness – it spreads like a cancer – society in these areas becomes a twisted bitter struggling place that then leads to stories like this...

20th June 2010 – Was looking for “The last of the dogs” – one of Wilsons images referred to a bit in the book but not included. Came across a zipped file of an e-book of the whole of “The Worst Journey on Earth”.

Produced under ‘Project Gutenberg’. I probably wont read it not having an ipad or kindle but thought it fantastic that someone has done this. Fills me with hope for the human race somehow...



What an amazing adventure – and times. Very kindred spirit to being published this way :).

21 June 2010 - And managed to find “The last of the dogs”. Two tracks out, one track back.



Spent the whole of the weekend pretty much sick – trying to rest and sleep – in a bad edgy mood the whole time which wasn't great for Ange or the kids (or for me). Poor Ewan as the loudest and most annoying – never listens – cops the worst of it. I need to be nicer to him.

They are all beautiful and I love them so much, it is nice a real tangible thing.

Looking at “The last of the dogs” the sketch itself is not that harrowing or emotional, it is more the title I think...

24th June 2010 – Announced change in leadership at work today – Wah Kam to take over from me. Quite excited about the change – something new and all of that. Mostly fatigued I must admit and am looking forward to the break.

Seem to take the slack the whole time with the result I am way overstretched and have to do a lot more with less time – decision making becomes more difficult, strategies harder to think through clearly.

Trying to negotiate Jakarta master planning with Kevin at Aedas at the moment and have Arup NY with a client relationship making things more complex. They are rightly trying to squeeze every once out but are in danger of falling fowl of Kevin and losing altogether.

I can see the negotiating and fact we have a strong position it is just Kevin does not work that way. They are critical of me for not fighting this end. They don't realise the only advantage we have is at their end with the Karuna

(client) knowledge and friendship – but Karuna is not the only guy in the company (CCM).

Anyway a bit sick of these things. A bit the same with the leadership positions. I must admit that others seem to be able to see these things clearer than I can – I think in retrospect that Wah Kam is better than Lin Ming.

Although at the bottom of my heart – it doesn't really fucking matter – pros and cons on both sides. Must not fall into the trap of losing self confidence in these matters. Just can't take the 'don't think it really matters anyway' line publically.

Russell is better at playing that game, although has issues of his own – micro manages and unable to pull people together – apart from his facades team...

Who cares, go with flow and enjoy the work...?

26th June 2010 – Russell posted that he had been promoted on facebook this morning. Just a little bit funny. Hadn't really seen it that way, I have always thought we were all in that position anyway.

What was also a little strange was that it conjured up feelings of loss. Not 'what am I doing throwing all this away' feelings but baser than that. Thoughts of pay rises to Russell, and of me being at the mercy of people like Chris Graham (not a believer or fan of mine), on my return to Melbourne.

Pressures on finances and stepping out of the onwads ever upwards mentality. Am I crazy? I really feel it is not a bad thing to be doing – casting off an old skin and changing into something new. New and different challenges and opportunities – opportunities to be more than just work...

...it is a life thing after all is it not? It may be hard it may not be successful, but it will be different. One life and one chance to be living it and getting the most out of it. Staying in Singapore to cruise into that horrible place of senior stiff's rolling around the industry rubbing shoulders with each other in a sort of haze does not hold much attraction.

I can feel the cold air and wetness of the wild, sunsets and mist in the morning around natural places calling – a long way from Singapore.

What is out there – seas crashing around rocks and ruin perhaps, other hazy industry places possibly also, family anyway which will always be good. Yes I think it is the right decision even if it means struggling.

Even if it means suppressing the fear that comes with walking away from the safe road of medium people hoarding and doing well and living comfortably.

There must be people out there who are worse off than we. Who struggle with similar issues – Scott Douglas from IPAC is one – faced with going home also and unable to form a picture around it – I am lucky I have Arup there to do the right thing by me.

Although without them there would be any number of consultancies who would take me on one would hope.

So what are some of the possibilities – Brendon the writer or the poet. Brendon the physcologist? Brendon the naturalist will never, be but out in nature enjoying it will hopefully be a thread.

Lets leave behind the Russell's and the Andre's for a while in any case and see where things may take me (us)...



"I'd like to repeat my advice I gave you before, in that I think you really should make a radical change in your lifestyle and begin to boldly do things which you may previously never have thought of doing or been too hesitant to attempt. So many people live within unhappy circumstances and yet will not take the initiative to change their situation because they are conditioned to a life of security, conformity, and conservatism, all of which may appear to give peace of mind, but in reality nothing is more demanding to the adventurous spirit within a man than a secure future. The very basic core of a man's living spirit is his passion for adventure. The joy of life comes from our encounters with new experiences and hence there is no greater joy than to have an endlessly changing horizon, for each day to have a new and different sun."

Chris McCandless.

27th June 2010 – Needing to support a family, looking after kids educations etc complicates this somewhat. The stakes are also higher in that the decisions affect others also not just myself.

Tend to err on the conservative side in these things because of that – way conservative in fact! Part of it is taking a position where the kids are closer to

the social norm. Right or wrong at least they are not disadvantaged behind others.

And there you have probably quite a sad little fact of human nature and development. A mix of conservatism and competitiveness conspiring to dampen the human spirit and progress.

I really want to break out a little later in the kids developments – do trips to Nepal or India or something that gives them more of a perspective on life. Needs to be when they are old enough to appreciate it, and make some sense of it – be able to analyse it in any case.

Needs to be when I (we) are old enough to be able to afford it – the time and the money.

It is early Sunday morning and we just had one of those beautiful tropical downpours. Sitting out on the balcony watching it stream off of the roof, wet the tree canopy through, feel a little breeze carried spray in the air. Reminds me of camping when younger.

I would like Stella Ewan and Freya growing up not afraid of the rain or of getting wet from time to time. At least not to have the preconceptions of it all.

Surfing and spent a bit of time looking through Banksy – a London street artist – really liked his stuff. I want to be an artist.



29th June 2010 – aam - hmmm..... what are you doing up at this hour?

30th June 2010 – Having an electronic diary gives me an opportunity to type for a few minutes for a break at work whilst still looking busy at my computer... Last day as official BU Leader – should be having a celebration or something perhaps – quietly on the inside. Temptation to head off to spend some time to myself for the afternoon.

Work to do and end sum gain will be better spent here – must stay firm with myself – good things come of good actions and all of that.

Always enjoy a good random image search to provide a little window of interest into the big wide world out there – this one from an ancient manuscript – from Bodleian Library... Days of illustration (Ewan quite often asks who illustrated a particular book :)), ‘The name of the Rose’ etc, brilliant stuff –



real history and time – middle and dark ages, human course of development, things you almost feel you can touch, things with a reality that is fuller and more meaningful than the scarcity, the fleetingness of the current.

1st July 2010 – Officially no longer business unit leader. I am bored with work – the concept of work actually! I want to just drift for a while, enjoy time, enjoy the kids, observe and contemplate (but not too deeply). Be a leaf on the surface of a nice slowly drifting creek for a little while...

Sounds like retirement – that’s got to be the next medium long term goal. Twenty odd years until Freya finishes university. 10 years of kids in primary school – Abbotsford street being paid off and hopefully accumulating value (expect some hard times on property in next 5 years but should even out in longer term), finally to be sold to pay off Millicent.

In ten years time I will be 53, in twenty years time I will be 63 – all assuming I get that far.

So the next ten years working hard, the ten after that looking to see if I can transition to part time and do some aid work or something that would pay a few living costs +, allowing me (us) to do a few really useful things...

Need to mull that over a bit – is there a reason we would wait that long to get into it. Depends a lot on finances and how heavy a burden paying off Abbotsford Street is!

A lonely golden
leaf falling gently
to the river below,

drifting slowly
down river toward
places unknown,

has served its
purpose in this
old world

James Foull
20/09/2008

3rd July 2010 – John Murray (author of the book on Wilson), refers to the maxim “human activity mainly consists of moving matter from place to place”.

There is a lot of truth in this it struck me. Something worth considering in life, how to move forward rather than simply moving, organising, side to side shuffling of things, repeating what has happened before.

And in there somewhere is human life. All those jobs out there maintaining the way we live, garbage men, engineers, salesmen. A small percentage only considering the questions of life and moving us forward in real ways.

And yet that is what life is about – I love the kids and being there for them, helping them grow and develop, not moving the human race forward perhaps but consisting of real enjoyment and satisfaction. And is that the end to which all of the distracting means should be heading.

I think so actually. Watched a short video on the Great Ocean Walk last night. The walk starts in Apollo Bay a small town on the coast that must have a population of a few tens of thousands of people – or more. Spectacular living in the coast etc but outside of the mainstream... and yet so much better in terms of quality of life in so many ways – and behind.

“...what was chiefly extraordinary about our childhoods was simply that we were children then, and aren't anymore. Life wasn't better. We were. The sun shone hotter, the snow fell thicker, and the sea was more salty back in '63, '73, or even '93, because to a child all the world – not just the plasma – is in HD. It is age that leaches away life's resolution and sends our sense perceptions all pixelated. Like a set of flimsy 3D glasses, a child's-eye view is built for obsolescence.”

Susan Maushart
From an article in 'The Weekend Australian Magazine.

Ange's parents and Meeg & Jessie, are visiting at the moment – brought over the Australian magazines from the weekend papers – just crap all over the rubbish available in Singapore. Indicative of life and contemplation and thought – civilisation – a bit far perhaps but am looking forward to getting back to things like that.

4th July 2010 – Every 15 minutes in Australia, someone attempts suicide, and every 4 hours someone succeeds... (35,000 attempts per year, 2,000 successful).

How many minutes, hours, days, weeks of pain and suffering go on, unheard. Was unable to sleep last night (concerned sillily about leaving the kids with someone else overnight next Saturday night when we stay at MBS!), anyway, noticed how slowly time moves when you are trapped in a thought pattern like that.

Night on the laptop on bed with Ange on the desktop playing you tube music as she surfs – Angus and Julia Stone, David Bowie (There's a star man waiting in the sky...). Very nice. Forever Young :).

5th July 2010 – Got into work this morning to that deflating feeling of doing it all over again. Over it I must say – do you really want to live forever? Time to get a grip and concentrate on the steps one at a time, trust that that will get me there.

I think much of it might be the excitement of the bigger picture – selling Park Street and the impending return to Millicent.

7th July 2010 – Chest pain from a few frustrating things at work – mainly too much, and not going right when I don't do...

8th July 2010 – Motivation issues continue. Spend all my day clearing email without getting into any proper work.

9th July 2010 - What do you do when the world is so large, when there is stuff out there that will make your stomach turn, when there is a lot of it and it is an integral part of society that you can never hope to change.

Do you jump in anyway and have some small but positive effect? Do you withdraw back to your own life and try to make sense of it first? Do you navigate as best you can having a small but positive effect on your general interface with the world outside of your immediate?

Very traumatic when you start to cross boundaries and care for things outside of your narrow station in life.

I'm beginning to think that there is something to Hinduism, when it teaches that there is inherit merit in fulfilling your station in life no matter what it is. It is a bit of a mental safeguard that enables you to get by. Unfortunately the flip side to that argument is one of denial that these things are happening, which of course does little for those trapped and subjected to the wrong end of it.

... you know reading a bit more on the web, through deep and meaningful, pained diatribes and introspective reflections you realise we need more wtf type approaches to life...

12th July 2009 – Saturday night at MBS – swimming in the Skypark – managed to get the whole family and in-laws up there – absolutely fantastic. Felt like we were a million miles away- came back refreshed having slept and been treated like a grown up for a whole 24 hours :).

Really is a great experience and will be recommending to people although not that exclusive – seemed like a lot of locals had the same idea and were up there with their family – more reminiscent of Jurong public swimming pool than an exclusive resort.

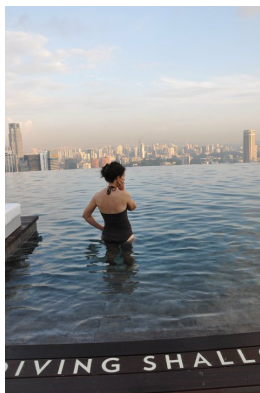
Felt together and in control – a feeling that seems rare these days. I must try and get it back. I see photos of myself or see reflections in a mirror and I am a

tall thin gaunt looking thing. Dark rings under the eyes, not a natural smile in a together happy look but something strained, disjointed and out of place. I think back to when one of Rosetta's friends saw me in London after we had been on the road for four or five weeks trekking etc. She could not believe I was the same person all but saying I used to be this washed out pathetic pale thing and was now the opposite – strong, energetic and attractive.

Need to be doing more of that in Australia – long weekends away walking and out in nature. Maybe I should be doing more of that full stop – change my career... bit hard midstream like this but somewhere down the line there may be hope – work it into aid or charity work.

Actually ease off on the work a little is a big part of it. My email traffic has reduced slightly recently and yet I feel guilty when I am not going at it full on!

Was great having Meeg & Jess and Ange's Parents here also – although Ange does tend to denigrate to her parents level – all the things she gets upset with in her parents, I can see in her!



...pondering Skypark

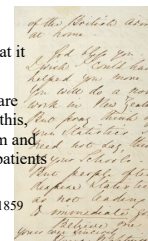
14th July 2010 – Back tired again after losing sleep over salaries that weren't done quite right, and outstanding contracts – F4, Southbeach and F2a. Hmm... must stop obsessing – a good portion of it is me wanting to be in it – turning things over in my mind, thinking about things – why I wonder, perhaps

to be conscious. I am trying to sleep when I should be up and doing something productive?

“the first requirement of a hospital should be that it does the sick no harm”

“Little as we know about the way in which we are affected by form, colour, by light, we do know this, that they have a physical effect. Variety of form and brilliancy of colour in the objects presented to patients is the actual means of recovery”

Florence Nightingale c1859



Makes me want to get in and design a green hospital. Full of light and windows and trees able to be moderated like a intravenous drip to the betterment of those inside recovering.

16th July 2010 –

“I believe that the trade of critic, in literature, music, and the drama, is the most degraded of all trades, and that it has no real value. However, let it go. It is the will of God that we must have critics, and missionaries, and Congressmen, and humorists, and we must bear the burden.”

Mark Twain

18th July 2010 – aam - On a plane again – London for AGAM – Brendon time, sleeping, movies, diary. Time away from everything else more to the point.

Said goodbye to Ange and the kids again like it could be the last. Dont think that will ever go away – wonder if it was the accident or if it would have been like that anyway.

Definitely feeling older these days – the odd small pain around the chest – on and off with stress, getting more and more out of shape – like to think it is a time thing but not so sure – I should get into a regular swim! Left knee quite sore at the moment – again not sure why – combination of the Freyas 3rd bday grass slope accident and squash – yes funny?

Think I need to bite the bullet and give up on squash – do some weights and swimming instead. Build a bit of tone and work on aerobic fitness – much better for me and walking which is what I want out of life longer term.

Looking forward to seeing Justin & Rosetta – Rosetta tells me they are getting a divorce – will be a little interesting... Justin and issues with alcohol again by the sounds of it.

Somewhat a case of a lifestyle they love – or live anyway clashing with middle age. Maybe not clashing but morphing as all our lives are I guess.

am – Tube to Earls Court and East Putney, London brown brick and grey skies, patchwork hodge podge community gardens, arched bamboo diy plastic sheet glass houses etc, small leaf straggly plants after the lushness of Singapore.

Upper Richmond road, cafes and chippies (closed), and real estate agents, and Tileman house looking a bit unused. Breakfast at the Wetherspoon (changed name), pub opposite Putney rail station.

Vegetarian option on the traditional English breakfast – beautiful fried food, a short wait ahead for a green no.85 bus (in light rain), and down to Frensham Drive.

Enjoying.

19th July 2010 – quite a strange thing... woke in the middle of the night not able to sleep and decided to have a surf of the tv to come across the following image:



Black and White low light image of someone's head as they are sleeping – real time. Looks like a youngish woman with short blonde hair, one streak across her forehead.

I kept it on for a while and she moved from time to time as you would when you are asleep. For roughly a minute every so often, a television channel propped on – Channel 4 advertising 'The Big Bang Theory', and 'How I Met Your Mother', only to drop out again back to the picture.

The fact that it was a close up head shot seemed to suggest that there was some pan and zoom involved – after about 15 minutes she rolled to one side with her head off screen – facing away obstructed by the doona.

Thinking this is a part of intended programming – you could hear the breathing, and regular programming came on at 6:00am.

The image changed after a while to another woman – similarly asleep – this time with well manicured eyebrows and what looked like some plastic envelope sized packages behind her – with Japanese writing – difficult to tell at the poor resolution.

Feel a bit silly now!

pm – Was thinking these images are to help people sleep. The sound of breathing and a barely changing image of someone sleeping.

Actually just big brother – they use it to fill the night hours! Good one Brendon...

AGAM – full of Arup principals – hard to get away from the strutting thing and politics of people in careers – bit of a schoolyard popularity play – I don't enjoy that sort of thing – probably because I am not a natural when it comes to that sort of interaction. Should be about hard work and doing the right thing?

I am not particularly put out by it – hope I am strong enough to be my own person and I am... just feel a bit like a fish out of water left wondering about the realities of life and work.

...feels like getting caught up for a few moments in an eddy of surface scum and foam in a river. A little harsh probably – there are largely good things going on underneath and I feel pretty inspired and lucky to be a part of a company like Arup.

I wonder however – I get the distinct feeling that we are in our own little world which is very similar to everyone else's own little world in whatever company they are from.

...and now down even to thinking about sustainability etc that way, questioning my part in it and how much I really do care. I care, don't get me wrong, but questioning how much effect I can have other than how I live personally – and getting a bit bored by the whole thing.

Thinking I am starting to lean towards leaving all of that off to one side to take its own course – and it will with or without me. I am more interested just at the minute in society, people and our path in it all. Of art and psychology, and of being more than the political slightly paranoid animals that our base beings are built off of.

Enjoying the intimacy of thought and of feeling in living.

Everyone does that sort of thing at their own level I guess and my level I am guessing is not uncommon in Arup. In fact the extroverts of the world probably feel as intimidated and threatened by me as I do of them.



So there we are... been listening to Blondie with a double shot of scotch taken from dinner – slightly nostalgic and in my comfort zone. Time alone with my thoughts and less than that even, alone with some time to drift and feel the flow and ebb of things around me - much more worthwhile than the drinks and networking downstairs.

Why, how, I don't know, I just know – might be what I need now, or what the world needs, might be more productive, or less productive. Whatever be it, it be more than a room full of others of random corporate direction. It be something.

“Walking in parade, why don't you walk like me?”

Blondie

20th July 2010 - What is to become of you Brendon, to where will you drift in life? Spent some time looking at Sunda – fantastic that touching of the world, of the life within it and the reality present there.

That is something worthwhile. What I have been doing has been good and I wouldn't say not worthwhile, but it is work after all. Even when it is for a great cause, it is work – that by definition is somehow related to the job of surviving, and therefore cannot be a level of higher thought can it?

Thought needs to rise above survival, only then can we take ourselves in other directions and develop.

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26th July 2010 – Perhaps the nicest thing to have happened over the past week is Stella asking me to come in and kiss her good night. How nice is that :).

The second night I had to jump up the side of her bunk to kiss her. The third night it had denigrated to jumping up to kiss Pudding - the soft toy dog - hmmm.

Park street sold on the weekend – for A\$860,000! Fantastic result. Biggin and Scott had been talking things down preparing us for the worst – talk of perhaps needing to declare the house was on the market at 670k if the auction stalled just to get things going again.

We were pretty clear that we wouldn't be putting it on market below what we thought was a reasonable reserve (720k in our minds). We were thinking it was worth at least 750k and were hoping for this!

It was a real rush sitting at the other end of the phone trying to get through to James (the agent), and ending up talking with Mum who had her ear to the crack in the door!

Started at 500 which we thought was very low, slow start according to Meeg, but remember it seemed it quickly went above 720k in our minds – perhaps as we were desperately trying to get a hold of James at that stage!

Then stopped at 782k and James came in side for literally 10 seconds just to confirm it was on the market.

Then kept on going... all the way through to 860k. Still have a smile on my face thinking about it!



The price was brilliant but it is all the other small things that went with it that really gives me satisfaction and enjoyment. We listened to Biggin & Scotts advice and followed it – did the right thing through getting painting done, not

getting too upset at gardening not as we had expected (as this is something people feel they can touch up easily themselves).

We swallowed the pill on the tenants offering them compensation (6k each which is generous- plus two weeks rent plus moving expenses – up to 15k! In the end they had the place absolutely immaculate and well decorated and furnished – down to tea lights in the fireplace.

We allowed a dog – and the kennel in the backyard would have driven home the Park and immediate access benefits. That was a big part too, a large part of the attraction of the house for us was the park and feel a bit vilified that it has attraction for others also.

In all sorts of ways it feels it reinforces a few decisions and approaches – a win for the nice guys almost...

100 Bendigo St just around the corner – nicer but smaller place (renovated Victorian) sold for 749k which was a good price also I think.

We ended up with 500+ hits on the web site (Millicent was 2,200), and Bendigo St about 2/3rds of that. 30% premium to the ESR (Ange has been using the acronym like a property mogul :)! On our tracking of sales nothing went for more than 165 above the upper estimate.

In cool hindsight, it was to be totally unexpected. When I first met Chris (O'Shaughnessy), he told me it would be a 800+ house – I didn't quite believe him and told him that. He insisted it would and was talking about a 600-650 listing range even then. We asked for an incentive commission which they did, and when they gave us the two options, the break even point was around 830k.



So you would have to say in hindsight looking at the financial figures (commission), Biggin & Scott knew pretty much where it should go for. And they were right but given the softening market a lot could go wrong I guess – we were lucky we had strong interest and a result which was indicative of where things were not where they are heading.

Am a little sad to see go – was a great house and location and had some really good times there. Flash cowering under the computer in the living room during thunderstorms, the floor boards, fixing up the back yard, central heating, re-doing the toilet etc! - seems to be all the renovation and hard work memories!

And the view above through the kitchen and out to the back yard – I can feel the dry heat of summer smell just looking at it. The laundry with the oldest water heater ever and the drying rack.

Walking Flash morning and night, trips down to the boat ramp with him and the cafe down near where Victoria Gardens is these days. Constantly fixing the irrigation and flash baths in the driveway!

Tom (and the bricks episode), Danny and the chink chink chink episode of cleaning bricks whilst Ange was pregnant! Janet and Andrew and Lisa. The range Rover – which is still there! – hasn't moved in over 13 years...

All good. All our other places have similar memories as well mind you... before I get too nostalgic.

Hall Street, Hennessy Ave (96-97), Park St (97-02), Costa Rhu (03-06), Woking Rd (07-10) and onto Millicent.

27th July 2010 – A story about a young boy this morning who had been left at home with his older siblings. He went missing and was found dead in a tumble dryer – he had apparently been playing hide and seek.



Gives me a sick feeling. Cant help imagining the poor thing and him trying to get out – hope it was just suffocation and nothing worse. I get so worried about our kids and all of the dangers out there they need to keep clear of.

Got called out of bed this morning very early to help Ewan go to the toilet. He is capable of doing it himself but gets put off by the darkness etc. He asked me for a kiss when I was putting him back into bed – very nice.

Other than that though a lot of angst around as kids slow to get ready, parents tired... hmmm.

Have spent the morning faffing about, reading my diary a bit, and generally doing nothing – more because I cant face work. I need/want some time to myself.

Got a coffee and spent five minutes chatting with Arun (who grew up in India), stirring up all those feelings even more. I want to be out on that going somewhere path in the world at the moment. Feel like I am being dragged and suppressed by heavy blankets of work and other commitments.

Do other people feel like this I wonder? Surely it has to be a part of the human condition – no one can be so machine like that they can just soldier on day after day suppressing the world around them to this extent?

OK – steel my mind away from day dreaming of the outside and concentrate a little on getting some things done!...

28th July 2010 – Felling a bit more together today. It is a case of being tired – we didn't sleep well the night before and were woken early – result a bit of a mess the next morning and couldn't get things together at work either.

Reasonably early to bed last night, slept ok apart from checking a few emails from NY on Jakarta sometime during the middle of the night – but feel far more measured and relaxed, calm and together this morning. Still elastic...

30th July 2010 – Application to work has improved a bit happy to say.

Enjoying the kids at the moment – went home early last night to spend some time with Ewan to kick the soccer ball around a bit. He is struggling with relationships at school at the moment. He is not really interested in sport but all the other boys are - to excess sometimes.

He has a friend – a girl called Lilly and they have been very tight apparently. Any way Lilly is also being befriended by an older girl and Ewan is struggling with where he sits in the whole thing 9ange keeps tabs on this through talking to the teachers etc!).

So some time practicing soccer with Ewan – was a really nice time – not keen at all but ended up doing it. We took frequent breaks to sit on the warm concrete path and look at animal shapes in the clouds in the sky (much nicer than playing soccer dad!).

Will have to do more on the weekend with him. The issue is the girls – Stella tends to take over so will have to make some boy time happen.

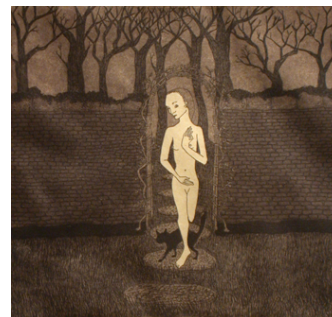
Stella is right into her music at the moment. She got a black Eyed Peas CD from Rhiannon her friend at school – late birthday present. Now gets overplayed in the car! Every morning she is up on you tube looking at old Michael Jackson videos – ‘the first time he did the moonwalk dad!’

I came home the other day to signs all around the house – “The Deep Blue S’s – Concert tonight – in the TV room admission 10c”. Fantastic.

Little Frey is going great guns also – Ange had parent teacher interview and she is really adventurous and capable – good fine motor skills etc. Plays in groups but happy enough to keep herself amused also – seem to remember this was a common trait with Stell and Ewan as well growing up.

“The God of Small things” – Arundhati Roy. Just came across this in recommending a book to a friend at work. What a wonderful title for a book – what a wonderful concept full stop!

References to smallness, to greatness, to the uncontrollable and un-understandable! to the beliefs of millions, to Hinduism and the exoticness of the East, there is something murky and beautiful about the thing that I cant quite put my finger on but I really like it. Maybe it is the lightly random meanderings of the story that seem to untwist the logic of life I know into a swirling river that defies planning etc. Nice because you are looking at it from an ordered place of course, not so nice if you are in it with no means of escape...



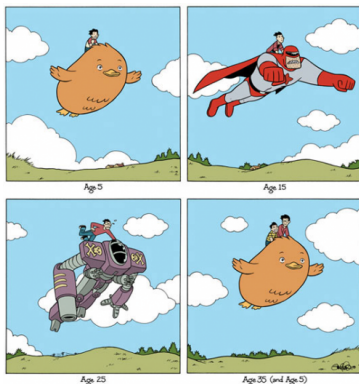
Strange image dug up Google searching – awkward and slightly appropriate somehow?

31st July 2010 – Received a letter from MBS notifying us they are withholding payment on site staff services until such time it can be shown that we were not responsible for significant cost overruns!

Sounded a bit firm like almost – referring to “another cause of significant cost overruns”. Bit menacing and will occupy my thoughts for a bit I dare say – not so worried I must admit – will work through and it will be what it is – we have actually been better than most in terms of site supervision (post chng Leong anyway).

Today was boys day – we went to underwater world on Ewan's request – great – very relaxed easy day. Not quite the boding of others – I don't know – we will see with feelings over the next few days I imagine.

Been doing a bit of sleeping and surfing this afternoon, and came across the following images on a 'found photo' blog called I had dreams like that. Liked this:



And liked the "MacGregor" etched into this photo of a sheep. Also really liked the posted comment



There's something pleasingly solid about this sheep"

01st August 2010 – Woke up last this morning realising that I have become the PM and not design orientated engineer – out of necessity. I must push the

balance back. F4 has worked well but Southbeach has gone that way because there is a lot of money at stake, and we are not being treated well at all.

4th August 2010 – Relatively quiet morning talking about the potentials of the threatening MBS letters, and the Journal article to be produced. Dark clouds around outside over the straits towards Indonesia.

Black grey reflections in the waters, highlights of bright light grey where the clouds are not so dense. Blues and greys and white caps in cool reality on a land scale, viewed from the comfort of our building. Beckoning undertones of adventure, of salt spray and rainwater on the face. It doesn't get much better than that – beautiful.

I am in my early forties and I can sense a turn back towards more of that. A little less self sacrifice and a little more Brendon and nature, and real things in life. I wonder how it will go, how it will end?

Actually refer to the sequence of images on the previous page – apt in a way.

6 August 2010 – On and off constant headaches at the moment. Sore neck muscles from trying to sleep on my front from time to time (over the last 3-6 month), or the gin and tonic which seems more common at night these days, or the change in roles at work (which should be easing tension not raising it?

Makes me wonder about my health and age etc, about my energy levels etc. I can see the well ordered in sync with nature and my body life I should be leading but I just cannot be bothered at the moment – I want a bit of enjoyment and relaxation.

7th August 2010 – You get into situations at work where people give you attention and praise quite often – because of the position you are in, because of the things you do, if they are good, but also if they are not.

To keep you happy, to keep them happy in that they are giving good news not bad, to win favour, so as not to upset... loads of reasons. Sometimes just because people want someone to look up to and believe in worthy or not.

I find it difficult to deal with. I question myself and my confidence. It sets up feelings of not knowing what is real and what is not, and again ensuing internal questioning and paranoia.

People must have to deal with this all the time, or even worse, not have to deal with it I suppose. I feel a bit for Ange sometimes in role of stay at home mum – who tells her what a great job she is doing? I must make more of an effort on that front.

Anyway, I am in a place I am sue where I need some attention and appreciation. When I don't get it I start to get a bit unstable I think. I must admit it is difficult to know. I recall being in hospital after the accident having lost who I was. My sense of life and identity. I remember I cried, just wanting my life back, wanting to be Brendon the engineer with all the things he had

again instead of this injured person unknown and alone and dependent in a bed.

I was surprised at that turn, and I hate to say it but it is much, much worse now. Quite a scary thing actually. You are not the stand alone resilient who the hell cares what others think individual. You are the stereotype identity in your job weak dependent thing still needing your mum and dad to tell you how well you are doing and that it will all be ok.

It is complex and no wonder that people get burned everyday by this life. I am incredibly lucky on that front – smart enough to get by, no major disasters in life I need to live with etc. Things have gone just about as well as they possibly could. Fantastic family and ll the rest of it.

How will you deal with it when it comes Brendon. When things don't go well through your fault or others? When your parents die or...

8th August 2010 – Had my photo on the front page of the Business Times yesterday. An off comment about the Venetians share price may well come back to haunt me! I am sure I prefaced it with don't take from me or something like that but... anyway will see if it is a problem next week. Seems I still have a ways to go to be fully composed and thinking about what I say in pressure situations.

In my defence it was the day after returning from AGAM – tired and wasn't at my best. Too much trying to talk to give them material, not enough talking about the story we really wanted to give them.

It is all a bit embarrassing to tell you the truth. "First he made the flyer fly, then with the skypark he touched the sky". Classic Singaporean writing – just down the leg side of proper English and all very cheesy!

All good I hope – we will see. Neck muscles are really sore – have been for a while now. Got the wind up me a bit last night as we are just now sorting out life insurance, TPD, and critical illness.

I must admit there are thoughts of Eli Stone in my head. I managed to pull through the accident and it really has been a dream over here. I have always had things go my way. Been extremely lucky, divinely lucky in most of life.

Thought it might be time to pay the piper – was put here as a bit of a reward and to accomplish something in Singapore which plus/minus I have. Two beautiful children who would not have otherwise been here. ...but Brendon, your time is up, time to go now that you have had all of this and enjoyed it.

Went to the doctor about my neck at NUH and she was dismissive – you are only 46! (43 actually). Blamed it on looking at computer screens too long etc – just noticed my poor posture then in writing this – so probably right.

There are so many things I want to experience – get back to Australia with M&D, Cam and Beck and all the in laws etc. Go camping and walking and

experience the earth again... Be there for the kids growing up (again touch wood).

I hope I have a few decades left in me...



The whiteness of a whale

Zhao Ruihui & Saoshi Kawada
A project with The Institute of Critical Zoologica

(Cover image) The white whale swimming in the ocean depths off the coast of Newfoundland since 1981

This illustration is an artist's rendering of the white whale in 2008. We haven't observed any sightings of this or other types of a great white in the sea off the coast of Australia, either in publicly available records.

3 Aug 2010 - 22 Aug 2010
11am - 8pm (Tues - Sat)
1pm - 6pm (Sun)
Closed on Monday and Public Holidays
2902 Gallery

2902 Gallery
Old School, 116 Mount Serenis
192-193, Singapore 129402
info@2902gallery.com
+65 6339 8635



Went to 2902 – a gallery at “Old School” in Mt Sophia to see the exhibition – The whiteness of a whale. Really quite good. About the obsession of a Japanese coastal town with whales and the white whale in particular.

Would have loved to buy one of the prints but they were SGD3,300 and more with framing etc. Maybe one day but other priorities.

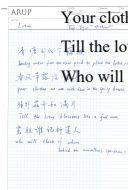
From what I can gather they produced this photo of the white whale – but then someone admitted it had been an effigy the town had placed out in the ocean. Bizarre and nice. A town with the quirkiness and faults of an individual. Slightly crazy and beautiful in only a way that the Japanese could be.

Kids are all sleeping together at the moment. Build a little cubby house out of chairs and sheets next to the bed, and talk to the wee hours of 9-10 pm and then fall asleep. Usually one of them finds it a bit uncomfortable and retreats to their own bed but usually Stella and Freya will end up together.

The underlying tones are I think set by Stell who is a lovely girl at heart – despite the scratching on Ewan’s face etc. There are enough good times for the bonds to be there. Or maybe they are set by Ange (& me?). Any way it is really nice.

10 August 2010 –

Leading water from the clear pond to plant the lotus root,



Your clothes are wet with dew in the spring breeze.

Till the lotus blossoms like a full moon,

Who will think of whom, behind the marvellous spectacle?

Poem by Pang Yiqiao (intern), on leaving Arup.



清水出芙蓉
天然去雕饰

The dappled water
gave birth to
the lotus flower.
Elegance by nature,
its garish beauty
remains unadorned,
independent
of ornament.

Li Bai
The Tang Poem

Received the above card and poetry/sketch from Pang Yiqiao an intern who left last Friday. Really like the poetry – something about Chinese poetry that is far more visual than western poetry – maybe it is an inherent implied mysticism through coming from the East – making everything that little bit exotic...?

I can sense (rather scarily), that art and poetry was greater than life in China back then – when life was precarious and times more turbulent.

11th August 2010 – Not all in sync at the moment - lots of change going on – all in place and going well but the anticipation keeps the mind occupied – thinking and re-thinking. Ange is the same.

ACES last night – don’t know what is in the food but up all night hardly sleeping! Tired today – try to get an early night and some normalness about food etc tonight.

More worries in my thoughts over F2a last night – nightmare legacy left by Ho Chong Leong and Khoo Teng Chong. Fools who did not know what they were doing... I hope Juan and others have got it into a reasonable shape but the structure is definitely nothing to be proud of! I will be happy if it stands up without cracking and movement issues!

13th August 2010 – Friday night, just watched ‘500 Days of Summer’. Really enjoyed it, liked the cinematography, and the writing, liked the music and the casting. There were some extremely cheesy shots in it from time to time and some equally cheesy concepts – the greeting card write for instance – but the rest of the movie was so cool as to almost make these look intentional, just to play with you a bit, send you a bit of a message or something, perhaps to make you pause and double take? Perhaps it was the fact that Ange went out and got the movie without me knowing it. Nice surprise and nice change from a stale bit of recycled television. Its been a while since I sat through the credits to a movie. But I did with this, letting the nice feeling linger on and fade naturally...

16th August 2010 –

“Having children is like being pecked to death by chickens”

From wooden wall plaque
Author unknown.

Ewan particularly trying at the moment – all the more frustrating as love them all so much. Have to learn to let it roll...

22nd August 2010 – aam – Had a good night with Ange and a few beers on Youtube pulling up music videos – like the old days in Park street going through the CD collection.

Music from the 80's got to love some of these guys they were so cool – Cold Chisel, Australian Crawl. I want to be the lead singer of a rock'n'roll band in another life – kiss and TISM, fucking brilliant.

Inspiring, makes me want to live life to the fullest. We are doing that I think...?! Watched 'The Runaways' again tonight with Ange (first tome was on a plane a little while back). Story of Joan Jet – again fantastic! Reminded me a lot of Rosetta.

One moment in the film Cherie Currie says she wants to get back to her family and wants a bit of her life back again. Joan responds with a this is my life. I am Cherie in all of that I must admit. I am not natural enough for this to be my life. My life is the kids and Ange, family and Melbourne, travel and observing, and feeling.

Its been eight great years now, and its time to get back to a bit of normality for a while. – For a while. Even Ange is talking about another move somewhere in ten years or so. Will be a whole different set of constraints then – kids in high school/uni... Hmm wait and see what develops. Got to get through the whole Melbourne repatriation thing first!! – that won't be easy. There will be tears that is for sure...

Google images led me to Ghandi under struggle. I am not quite sure why but I feel his photo here is appropriate. Honest in life with a cause, and the composure to stay true and work through it.

Give me the strength to get to that place.

23rd August 20101 – aam – Just realised today that we will need a building permit for the works to happen at Millicent S\Ave when we are back in September!



Annoyed with myself, I should have known better – undermines my confidence in myself as to the planning side of things etc. Feel like I really need a break to clear my head. Reboot again and be able to start things with a clear head.

This means that all of the works will have to happen while we are away. Means will be difficult to make everything work in time!

Get building permit

Week 1-3 – A) Wall Works

Knock out wall b/w dining/lounge (strip cedar wall to lounge). Strip carpet same time to inspect threshold treatment.

Knock out wall between Freya's room and study/build new stud wall

Plaster lounge wall and patch ceiling

Plaster new stud wall forming rear Freya's shelves

Paint (with rest of painting preferably)

Week 1-3 - B) Stripping/Painting (concurrent)

Strip wall paper.

Paint walls/ceiling off white

Week 4-5 - C) Floorboards -after A&B

Polish floorboards (incl lift carpet and lino in kitchen)

Include quad and rest of carpet lifting/nails (Store Carpet)

Week 6-7 D) time for floors to cure

Notes 1) Stairwell below first floor remains as brick (done later)

2) Doors to Freya's cupboards to come later (Xmas)

Say 2 months required.

Say furniture arrives week December 1st-11th

Need building permit minimum end September latest.

Could be a bit of a nightmare doing it all from here but no choice really! Will have to lean on Dad/Cam if they are up to it...

am – Patches of clarity would best describe what I am going through at the moment – periods of energy and clear thinking but followed by tiredness and depression – quite short – 2-3 hours probably linked to internal energy levels!

Will try and take breaks to prolong or make more sustained. It is not an unusual or unexpected thing after all.

24th August 2010 – Bit of work the past couple of days and turns out we should be able to arrange a building permit for a day or two after we get possession of Millicent. Phew pressure off – well relieved a bit any way.

Feeling a lot better about what has to be done now, and the effectiveness of the trip back in September – worthwhile after all.

26th August 2010 – All happening at work at the moment – don't know which way to turn next for all the issues etc that seem to be surging over each other!



Came across this in a new book release circular – like the image – think the kids would really like it, finding different forms. Hard not appreciate something that has an playful elephant profile woven into it :).

27th August 2010 – SSSS awards last night and Arup received the only three awards granted – Helix bridge, MBS podium roofs, MBS Skypark.

Did a ten minute presentation on the skypark. Had a good presentation and went ok but came across softly apparently – largely because the microphone was too low! Agonise over that stuff – cant seem to get it right. I think I will go back and see if I can do a few lessons on power of voice (as I had intended on doing some time back).

29th August 2010 – All eyes on the house & Melbourne now. Want to be there with it all happening. I hope we fit back in, might be difficult being so used to being away and the interest of other cultures.

Building permit looks like it won't be a problem. Managed to buy a couple of bits of furniture for the house off of the previous owners – kitchen table and work bench in the garage for \$150 – right price, I am glad it wasn't an awkward thing!

Feel like we are holding our breath here a little. Haven't had a holiday in a while which is ok but am getting jaded and tired.

Saw "The Boat that Rocked" last night on DVD. Good movie, a lot of the sixties in there and all of that. One of the lines that stuck with me was one of the DJ's talking about a thought he had and now had to live with.

A few months ago a twinkling of it came into my mind and I should have struck it down, should have excluded it but I didn't. I allowed it to grow and thought about it more and now it is in there, I have to live with it.

The thought was that these are the best days of our lives. It is not going to get better than this.

Made me think of Ange and I. It seems like the times just keep getting better with each new phase of our lives. I cant recall an overall that have not been good, better than the times before.

I am hoping that will continue – the next phase is Melbourne, family home, late primary, secondary school and who knows what else...

...and things continue to fall into place. I see the connections in so many places, all small but there nevertheless. Endless ripples of good karma coming back to help me along the way perhaps – I hope.

Anything founded on the right principles and done in good spirit will come back in one form or another to reward and be good. Even in failure at first glance I believe. It is life and by definition cannot be bad at the end of the day as long as it is real and you have the ability to observe it on the way through, to appreciate it for what it is. In my case perhaps to record it be however banal.

pm -

"Things done for gain are nought

But great things done endure"

Part of epitaph by Shackleton for the lost members of the Ross Sea Party, 1917.
Taken from Swinburne

Worthy of living life by.

3rd September 2010 – Still up and down and difficult to get a pace at work – doing a little too much myself and need to get more help to drive the more process orientated things.

Eight am here in the office getting a cup of tea, the view out to the docks and the straights, across to Indonesia and around the smaller islands off of Sentosa is supremely beautiful.

A mixture of nature, sea, sun, and life of boats making their way out or in, days just starting, everything on a birds eye scale. It draws me to it, I want to be immersed at a detailed level in that picture, in the low yellow sun and to feel the droplets of water on my face sitting in the cockpit of a small yacht.

Brings me back to the trip on Wings to Phuket – fantastic, a continuum of reality, leaving behind the work home out in series of windows in life have to constantly move between in normal life.

6th September 2010 -

Breathe, breathe, breathe... slowly, regularly.

9th September 2010 -

“Anytime you want to find me, I don’t have a telephone...

I’m another world away.”

“Well I don’t mind taking charity, from those that I despise...

Baby I don’t need your love...”

Child chisel (Cheap Wine)

Jimmy Barnes was so cool in this video clip. Confidence of youth and good looks, and a little arrogant – fantastic! I want to be that person... I want to live with that no caring, knowing that you are above it, that things will come to you and if they don’t, who gives a shit.

“What has once been seen cannot be unseen.”

An Ange quote,
from where I do not know...

Very funny...

11th September 2010 – Dinner last night at Soh’s. Really nice night – the structural leaders, all the kids etc. Singapore night out – time on the balcony admiring the view across the city – very relaxed and humble. Coming to think about it this morning I was the only expat – Juan and Garry not invited (I presume).

Daddy and Ewan day today – will head into the URA to look at the models of Singapore... and see where that takes us.

12th September 2010 – Are the problems with my temper getting worse? I get frustrations building up over time it seems. Frustrations with the kids, mess in the house, work, the move back to Australia.

Not even frustrations in cases, just anxieties. Something will happen which will make me lose my temper and I will do something destructive. Usually an over reaction, and I know I am over reacting at the time, but I feel like destroying something and end up continuing.

There are underlying feelings of self hurt. Not really martyrdom, but more self pity and drama, tanking things to their ultimate state – end of the world type stuff.

I have always had these sorts of episodes thinking about it “cutting your nose off to spite your face”. That’s a good sign I guess, if things are getting worse it is down to the situations and not a worsening imbalance or something in my head.

Strange how we live this life in the warped view from our heads. never really seeing what we look like from the outside. It is all what is going on at the moment. Anything that tries to bring in the consciousness external to ourselves is a struggle.

You find yourself responding to the instant almost in auto-pilot without being able to mobilise the real time thinking through of things. I guess this is why they say it is incredibly difficult to change people. You can want to be different and believe in it etc but at the end of the day you are still working with the same base engine – the raw you that works nano-second to nano-second.

The key to stepping outside of that is time - processing time. I must try to master this. Unfortunately pressure makes things worse – you feel pressured to respond in the instant, there is no time other than for the auto processor to reply, lacking the mobilisation of greater thought...

pm – Carried Ewan to bed tonight and he woke up in a daze. He was wanting to communicate and I talked with him for a bit, Dad, dad.. dad, I feel like,... I feel,.. I feel like I want to...”. He could never quite put word to it.

I tried to talk to him about people being mean to him at school etc. Tried to give him comfort that he could always come and see me and I would make everything right no matter what other people said. I couldn’t get much more out of him other than him being quick to agree when I suggested it might be Stella being mean to him.

No surprises there, they have been arguing most of the time – typical brother sister stuff. He idolises stella nd Stella actually likes him, they are just going

through the pains of growing up together at different ages. Not worried about any of that at all.

I really think he is just struggling with coming to grips with all of the external pressures. The friends who like soccer when he doesn't, Stella and her dominance over him – frustrations with not being allowed to do what he wants and learning how to handle those situations. I remember Stella went through some tough times as well but came through and is loving life at the moment.

I really feel for him and want to help him any way I can. Daddy and Ewie day went well the other day – he really liked the models and enjoyed being out with me. When we got home, Ange and Stella went to taekwondo – we watched a movie – Kung Fu Panda with Frey, and he sub-consciously put his head on my shoulder – beautiful.

Will keep watching him and keep the communication lines open...

Watched a few 9/11 videos on YouTube tonight – transfixed by the whole thing – the terror, people jumping from windows, audio transcripts of phone calls from the building prior to it going down. “It’s really hot up here, no one can move we are all trapped – wanting reassurance that people were coming to rescue them.

The looks on the firemen’s faces as the sound of falling bodies hit the podium roof – loud thumping crashes every minute or so. Windows full of people



trying to get air and escape from the heat.

What must have the final few seconds have been like? Something you can't help but go through in your mind – a deafening noise through the steelwork frame of the building – perhaps high pitched screaming roar given the high stress in the steel – high frequency, the sound of the building collapsing, pancaking above or below them. A rush of air through the vertical risers, the floor dropping away to one side (pictures showed the collapsing section tilting on the way down), you wouldn't have time to register what it meant other than falling towards one side of the floor plate with desks and furniture etc etc, finally a half second glimpse of the ceiling coming towards you with likely hopefully instantaneous death after that.

People at home getting snatches of what is happening – partners, wives, fathers killed on a day at work, in a reality turned upside down defying understanding. Almost worst for those left behind with the time to comprehend, dwelling on the horror of the whole thing.

15th September 2010 – At work, heavy rain, thunder and lightning outside – inward feeling of contemplation. Breakfast on the balcony this morning and caught a glint of early morning sun reflection off of the HDB's across the railway, through the trees. Beautiful, took me straight back to travelling and walking – enjoying a moment in the world somewhere, in places of significance...

I want to be back in that place more often. Aim to spend a bit of time walking and camping when we are back in Aus – back to reality.

19th September 2010 – Had a great morning with Ewan and Freya this morning at the Arup family day. Stell was off at Rhiannon's birthday party. Ewan and Frey really got into it – out to see the birds, joining in the competitions, free popcorn, face painting and fairy floss... Ewan brought along 'Orange Sparkles' – the name of his soft toy Ikea rabbit. He was horrified to see a fake rabbit get plucked from the grass in the birds of prey show and Orange Sparkles made a hasty retreat to my bag with a very worried Ewan nervously preferring it if we just left.

Orange Sparkles was then doing some high toss and catch manoeuvres (although catch rarely entered the scene), when he went over the edge of the balcony and into the planted area of the flamingo flock area. A good five or six metres down. Not a good idea to trudging through the heavy plating because of snakes according to 'the man'. Ended up fashioning a fishing line out of string tied to a rock with a stick shaped like a hook taped to that and managed to fish him out of the undergrowth – much to a little boy's relief!

Saturday was good also – soccer which is a bit of a trial – Ewan just does not have the focus – wandering around looking at the grass and whatever else crosses his sideways glances while the other kids all get in and have a go – mostly – a few kids have given it up and maybe that writing is on the wall –

would be good for him to try to carry through a little – I don't think it is damaging him at the moment!?!?

Will all come with time – just needs a bit of maturity and strength. I can see a lot of what I would have been like in him – much rather than the other way around. Just difficult growing up not being sports orientated as I well know.

Ewan will get through, as will Stella and Freya. Stella is going through a bit of a silly phase as she tries to win favour from the other kids at school. She told us proudly that a few of the other kids wanted her in their tents. Still has reading difficulties although not as bad – spelling is a problem we think as she is not good at sounding out and recognising sounds.

Again beautiful girl – lovely personality, not hung up like a lot of other kids – just enough 'dag' in her to be healthy I think.

And eveready Freya just keeps on going – the most well adjusted of us all, although that is probably true of most kids at her age – although I like to think she is better than most.

Settlement on 19 Millicent tomorrow – start of a new phase in our life. Feeling the right time at the moment, I need a change – I also need a break which I will get – the better part of two months over Christmas.

20th September 2010 – Had a rewarding morning with the kids – Ewie had a bit of a melt down and I managed not to lose my temper. Then the Velcro came off of his shoe – managed to sew back on (only need to last three days until we get back to Melbourne according to Ange – and finally managed to get Freya out of her stained t-shirt and into her AB/CD black one!

Small things but all built on relationships with them and interaction – feel quite proud of myself and warm inside knowing Ewans little shoe is out there in the playground happening for him :).

ppm – Why are you so sad Brendon. Is it because you now have so much to lose? Is it because the kids aren't growing up as you imagined them to be? Is it because Ange doesn't seem to relate to you as much to she used to? Is it because things are out of control at work mostly, because you could come unstuck, because you want them to be different? Perhaps it is the lack of time, for you, for thought, for normal things, perhaps the constant pressure on money and the future? Then again maybe the contrast of the perfect lives you see on television with what is before you in your life – the actors with confidence to be other people, to do things magically without effort or mistakes along the way...

Your life is full of worry, you need to relax and let things be. The kids will grow up as they grow up, try to let them, try not to be the element of anger in their lives which can only damage. Work will go well, or not, but you can only do what you can do. It is your best and you can do no more – it is more than most.

You need a holiday and a break, which is coming – and better yet things are ok financially. You can live minimally if you need to – even the kids?

You need to find beauty in your life again. Detangle from these things that have accumulated around you. Simplify back to the family and walking and camping – getting outside and letting the things flow through you as you are one with things.

You need to begin to stop thinking – or thinking in other ways that are less attached perhaps, less worrisome about the future and who you are.

23rd September 2010 – Yet another hour spent trying to connect to public wifi. After another half an hour on the phone I am told it is at their end – try in half an hour... Not winning friends here.

26th September 2010 – Back in Melbourne, setting up for our new life!

Was a little disappointed in the house when we visited yesterday – wind was blowing from the North, although not strongly and the freeway noise was quite bad! Annoying as that was one thing I concentrated on when we bought the place – in fact one thing that turned me away from a few others!

The space just outside the rear deck is a little small as well which is the one thing I remember. Rest of the house is great I must admit in terms of structure – street not as exclusive as could be but that would be about it.

I think a lot of it is just me comparing with what others have! Everyone still seems to have so much! Mum and Dads looks fantastic. Andy and Craig, Peter Bowtell etc, Other people returning from Singapore to Australia!

Again Brendon caught up in what others have rather than what you've got which is a lot – I have been incredibly lucky in this life – We will put effort into the house and take it from there. One of the reasons we liked it was because it was easy to improve upon!

If the freeway noise is too much too often than we can always move...

Main thing really is to be living a real life again – getting out and doing things, camping, things with the kids – other Melbourne stuff, art perhaps, web page, travel, charity work etc etc.

Really nice having Mum and Dad's here to stay at – beautiful house (think that is what I want) – too far from city however – could be on the cards one day if Millicent doesn't work out.

Off to help Ange, whose Facebook account looks like it has been hacked into!

3rd October 2010 – am - Back in good old Singapore. Collingwood won the grand final replay and got most of the work done on the house we wanted to – all is well with the world.

Last few days it was very quiet at the house – no freeway noise – fantastic. Must have been the direction the wind was blowing – from the North. A little bit out of kilter with the level of the problem but it is a huge relief for me. I don't mind if you get the noise on the off day the wind is blowing in the wrong direction but to have had it all of the time would have been soul destroying – no escape when you are outside!

I need some peace and quiet and connection with the environment – on the good days you can hear the birds etc and the place is a nice environ to relax in.

Really happy with the way the rest of the house is going also – spaces look a good size, floorboards all look good and de-grannyfying seems to be working. Will be quite a cool place – nice 60's design and well laid out for functionality.

Looking forward to getting in – only a few months now – will go quickly I hope.

I am leaning more and more towards keeping the original orange brick. I think it is a product of the 60's and gives the house a bit of its look. Paint up all the trimmings and restore it to its original – Ange even found it on a web site giving examples of 60's architecture.

If we render now there is no going back.

Afternoon – back at my favourite Blue cafe – cant even remember the street names it has now been so long since I have been coming here. Corner Bagdad St and Khandihar perhaps? The renovated one leading up to the mosque in any case.

Meant to mention went to the doctors (emergency at NUH hospital), this morning. Ange noticed a lump in my back and thought I had better get it checked out.

Slightly worrying and you start to go through all of the life is short series of thoughts. You realise the longer you live, the more you have to live for and the less you are happy with the fact that at some stage regardless you will be passing away!

In this case just as we are setting up Millicent Avenue and the kids through their schooling years. Getting back to the family and Australia, back to normality.

In some ways it felt almost justified. I was lucky enough to be given a second chance after the accident and this has for the most part been the last eight years here where I like to think I have been useful – the world is a better place for me having been here. In the cosmic view of the world there is some sense to me falling on the 505 side of those who survive ARDS.

The doctors think it is just a lipoma (spelling?), a collection of fats etc in one spot, and not dangerous. Sounds sensible – all these fatty acid foods I have

been enjoying to excess at times I must admit need to have some physical consequences – some manifestation or bubble on the surface.

Nothing in life that is not in the natural way of things exists without some sort of ripple. The ripples are good and bad but they are always there. It is the figuring out of the natural state that is the difficult bit. Recognising which particular preconceptions burned into to you through education and growing up are false, and which are real.

Just helped an old man into a taxi – with his plastic chair and bag of old newspapers...? I like things like that – chances to be involved in life, to do good things, support people and get a bit of good karma going.

My life needs more of that focus 9in mediation of course). Doing some good around the place without getting too missionary about the whole thing. Just grass roots level good.

The street has changed a little bit since I first started coming here. More tourists of course and businesses starting up and closing down, but also more trendy people, dare I say alternative. Brought on by Bali lane and the hip little boutique shops.

People enjoying being young and where it is at, having that confidence that you can only get through having the rest of your life ahead of you, full of promise and good beginnings – wading through the world, all observations and appreciation of the scene (which is good! – it is what I miss about travelling a lot of the time).

I can feel that at times, I can also feel it slipping away... Then there is the stage before that even – the sublime self centeredness of being Ewan and Stella and Freya's age. Positive energy and naivety, all expectations and learning.

Off for a wander around Bali lane and early dinner hopefully at the Golden Mile food court vegetarian stall if I am lucky enough to find them open.

4:00pm - ...or not! Seems I find them closed more than I find them open these days – hopefully it is because they are making moves toward retirement and not because their health is faltering.

Reserve list 1 – salmon set at the Japanese stall just around the corner – also very nice, but not as sound ideologically! And this time a tiger beer also (large despite asking for small).

Bali lane had open street markets going on – very lively – fantastic stuff, all three sizes too small for me – all very hip to do.

Feeling I want to be a bit more physically involved in life at the moment – out there touching feeling and a part of. Perhaps it was this past week with the house – doing physical creative stuff, with real people. Think I might have mentioned that I really enjoyed dealing with the contractors – all nice down to earth people, positive influences on the world.

Four o'clock in the afternoon in the food court is a bit of a different scene. All the mid to late forties plus people – early dinners, a few drinks with a friend, although I get the feeling the friend is the drink and it could be with anyone willing to sit there with them.

Kids and families and younger teens to thirty something's out in the streets wandering around – going to places they have to go to – living lives they have to live.

You can see the toughness of life in the people here – etched into faces and widened mid rifts or rear ends. Into facial ticks or twitches and mannerisms – into looks, not of despair, but of a type of bewilderment – mind in neutral wondering what to do with itself finally having been given a rest – from life I guess from the long march/grudge that has gotten them here.

How lucky am I I guess not to have had that same struggle... How lucky are people from the west for that matter. They struggle in different ways I think – managing to somehow keep control or keep value in the things they are doing. Come to think of it who am I to say that – the struggles will be the same, the values just different.

Kids will grow up and leave and I will likely have that sense of pause about me too. Got to try to maintain something in my life that gets me over that. Got to enjoy things along the way a bit more – be creative on a larger scale and give some meaning to where I end.

After a few gesticulations and translation from a black and pink fifty something on the next table, I just gave my unfinished rice to an guy a table or two away. He had been drinking a Carlsberg and eyeing it for a while – now tucking into it with great energy.

... the drinks man came up head angled looking at my beer, 'ant some ice?', no thanks, and he gave me a comforting tap tap on the shoulder. Nice – Australia is a long way away from here – society works somehow.

A good feeling about the place here, about life somehow – a confidence that it will go on going on and people will get by. I wonder does that exist in other places. I don't think so somehow – in other places there is this cold loneliness tinge to the whole thing that is very unkind, very unforgiving and unsympathetic.

Now, I should do some work – and instead I am going to sleep or lie on the couch eating junk food and watching CSI or something similar!

6th October 2010 – Spoke to Ange this morning. The kids were all enlisted in helping with the house which is fantastic – pulling up staples and ripping down wall paper!

Ange mentioned Ewan had some bad dreams last night. At first he didn't want to tell Ange what it was as it was too scary. He went on to mention monsters in his head.

Ange thinks – and is likely right – that he has an over active imagination and just cannot stop thinking about things – both traits Ange and I have, not good for sleeping well!

He is also very dependant on Ange – doesn't want to leave her side etc. I feel terrible as I am sure some of it comes from me being too hard on him, losing my patience and lashing out, giving him a smack etc. I must mend those bridges and get myself sorted out – not good. I have been a lot better lately but lost it last week when I thrust my bag at him – resulting in tears. Just so frustrating at times and when you are tired and under pressure, difficult to deal with everything in a nice controlled relaxed manner.

I do a lot of great stuff with him too, it is just the consistency. In matters of trust you are judged by your worst performance unfortunately I think...

11th October 2010 – Ange & the kids back Friday night – great weekend – relaxing – Taekwondo grading, British Club for a big swim etc.

All the kids fell sick yesterday. Place was like a bomb had hit it – kids in varying degrees of sickness draped over bits of furniture and beds etc., quite funny. Ewie was the lucky one – seemed only mild and was off to school this morning.

Was great to have them all back – life taking on its colour again.

Ewan is really starting to come into his own – setting up littlest pet shop games and making videos etc. There is still a large frustration element to him – a lot of anger when things don't go his way – you quickly get the angry face and a derisive 'idiot' at the end of the sentence. Tell him not to be so rude and that I am not talking to him again until I get an apology which usually works.

13th October 2010 – In the Silver Kris lounge waiting for a flight to Bangkok – was asked by Holcim (concrete suppliers), to talk to their marketing forum – likely not of much help to them but they have been good to us.

Just saw a guy angry on the phone with I presume his secretary over his frequent flyer number not being linked to his ticket. Walking around with a loud voice frustratingly waving his arms – "I suggest you get angry with these people like I am getting angry with you...how many times...I had people in front of me at customs...etc. etc. etc."

Wow – what a jerk. I am comforted seeing things like that as it is someone clearly and obviously out of control – someone with a total lack of grip on reality and life – not a nice person. I know I am getting some things right when I see behaviour that bad.

Classic – over FF details, it is almost too cliché...

Must say a day in BKK catching up on email etc will be welcome, I am looking forward to it. Don't like being away from Ange and the kids –

particularly when they are all sick like now, but need a little Bren stuff every now and then.

17th October 2020 – Good morning with the kids this morning – giving Ange a break who was at her wits end! Free bird show at the bird bark cafe out front this morning (with the price of coffee and kaya toast!). Kids loved it – three presenters us and the birds!

Science centre which is a bit tired on the inside but Maca's breakfast and lots of play outside in the water – sailing plastic Halloween pumpkins round the place.

Marina Bay to the miser and visitors centre which was closed – bit of a bugger but had a good time anyway.

Ewan is funny (hilarious funny), does some very funny things dancing in front of the camera taking a video etc. Full of talk and touch and questions. Its a pity I can't remember more as there are some beauties! There is the old favourite of "how did the first human et on earth" – quite impressive at his age.

The best of the day however was the "Why don't penguins have kneecaps dad". What logic path brought him to that conclusion I wonder? Because their little legs are too short Ewie...?

Worthwhile turning the sound off on the TV from time to time and surfing the channels. Makes you realise we are all just a seething mass of pink things. Fat short long hair short hair no hair pink things. Some pink things move quickly shaking and jumping, or manouvering and thinking, others slowly and methodically or shyly, some pink things show off, others are liked, or talk a lot about other pink things and the pink thing messes they get themselves in! Pink things of all sorts all over the place all with their own little plight in it, rubbing up and down against, fighting with, arguing with eating with doing all sorts of things with other pink things.

What would an intelligent alien race think if they were to land here – you couldn't help but be slightly amused me thinkst if you took away the immediate understanding. All of the plights and things we do and hold dear... We are like a billion and more little spinning tops, all let off at birth on a random spinning path to do this and do that, bounce off this and that and eventually come to rest in a place they know no where...

19th October 2010 – **aam** – Went for my second appointment last night about the lump in my back – 100% Lipoma according to David Lomanto, Italian doctor practicing at NUH. Nothing is ever 100% me thinkst to myself – small 2-3cm diameter oval, soft, no encapsulating tissue, perhaps in this case it is. Appointment in 6 months just to make sure if I want it – ok perhaps not.

No one knows the whys or wherefores of these things, people can have a whundred small lipomas up there arm, or single big ones in different places...



Each one with their own colourful life in it all – all believing they are all very important and in some way key to everything going on. All quite serious really...?

Seems a little strange? Seems to me something quite normal given the high end crappy lifestyles we live. The body cannot cope with all of the crap. It can clean so much, filter so much, expel and all of the rest of it but it seems perfectly normal given the levels of excess we live to that something like this comes about.

It is almost, I would like to think, like a little pressure valve. A small fatty growth of imperfection arising from the bits of my intake unable to be processed by my body. I won't get it taken out. "It is a minor local anaesthetic operation, you either have a lipoma or a scar... They sometimes pop straight back again in other places (again making sense if it is due to excesses of life)...

Getting older and less perfect – quite a bit less perfect if I take a look around my body! Scars all over the place... Time to start looking after my mental health also – and that of the family.

20th October 2010 – Difficult to look after mental health when there are so many idiots around you. Been having workshops on Southbeach these last few days – staggers me the inefficiency of the process. No one understanding figures, how they are calculated, how to improve them.

It is all so basic but everyone (me included probably) only spending 205 of their time and not understanding. The constant discussion back and forth by the locals without any grand plan or vision on how they are going to get to their goal just kills me.

I need some time off – away from this, away from these people! Looking forward to Melbourne!

pm - Very little work done this afternoon – time looking out the window at the growing density of smoke haze – Indonesian burning off to clear forests again – common this time of year but not every year?

Close shave with a muffin disguised to look normal with sunflower seeds but actually containing Durian! Had to settle for the bland jack fruit alternative...

Been chatting with Hwei Nu at work over instant messaging – will miss the admin team when I leave – I want to look after them and be involved, they work hard and don't always get the recognition they deserve. Can't be easy.

21st October 2010 - Flat tyre this morning and had to take taxis – in the 5mins we were waiting in the car park I managed to end up with Freya's brown pencil placed lovingly in my pocket "so others could not see it", and Ewan's Fairy picture which I was given to hold and forgot about it getting into the taxi!

Ewan asked me how to spell Crystal Fairy this morning and by the time he got back to the computer he could only remember the first few letters so it ended up being called 'Cry'. I remember him complaining about not being able to remember so many letters at the time – poor thing!

22nd October 2010 – smoke haze from Indonesian forest fires (land clearing by farmers), quite bad at the moment. Not every year and varies in extent/thickness. SPI (suspended particle index I think) over 100 which is supposed to be unhealthy!



Also found following pic from international relations website (siaonline). Couldn't see what the reference was too but wow! Check out the guy on the

left with kid on shoulders running. Also a vague shape in the waterfront that looks like an engulfed person. My God!



23rd October 2010 – The guy with the little girl on his shoulders, that is the feeling I get when your love for the kids makes you feel vulnerable. A feeling like you will at some stage be in a panic and up against it trying to protect them, against things out of your control, and unjust and out of their control also...

In Changi airport waiting for a flight home to a conference and tidying up a little on the renovations at Millicent. Glass walls all around and lightning every now and then.

Had a call on Southbeach from the UK earlier on – similar thing, kids all yelling (bath time), and a tropical thunderstorm all around the house – very Singapore.

Headphones on – Midnight Oil, Blur, Blondie, Kill Bill, Red Hot Chili's, etc. Life is much richer listening to music when you are ambling a bit. Helps direct a feeling, or the feeling (verb), of a place, a little of the watching television

with the sound turned off – you pick up a lot of different stuff and it all has a different detached observational spin to it.

25th October 2010 – Dinner tonight ahead of a regional strategy session tomorrow. Not a great dinner unfortunately – should have been, really nice place by the Yarra (Feddish) in Federation Sq.

Not that it is his fault or anything but the whole night was a night of Robert Care type anecdotes and laughter. It is really quite strange – and just a little disturbing – to me anyway.

All of these grown men falling into line and forming a little club or something I know not what? A lot of nerves and pushed conversation. I don't know what I would do in that situation – be myself I guess for a start but needs something to take it away from what it is currently. Perhaps some sort of agenda or game or something. Come to think of it, maybe that's what it is.

Continue to be impressed by Peter Bailey who seems a little ill at ease with it also, but tries to fill the gaps along the way also. He is very balanced guy to borrow Peter Bowtell's words.

Other are generally impressive also just not really my wavelength I think?

Really looking forward to getting back to Melbourne, although I am sure I will tire of things quite quickly. Real food for lunch, Pellegrinis, national parks, family, friends. Roll on Christmas.

14 Park Street settled today – now have approx 1M debt – with 160k shares, 800+k Abbotsford Street – so not too bad. Will go down hill to the tune of 70-100k this year from memory when we move back.

Did some financial planning which shows us comfortably retiring at 60. Think we can do better than this although that assumes minimum spend – there is the yacht to be thinking of etc).

27th October 2010 – On the Glen Waverley line train into work. I used to do this everyday for years. Amazing that there is no real recognition in me, no connection it seems to those times at all.

Probably a good sign, it means I have moved on to better things, or that the memories back then were more about the good things in life than the functional.

Stayed a couple of nights with Mum and Dad which was great – Mums cooking and games of scrabble, a bit cliché but there you go. Very lucky on the family front to have all of that. Never realised it growing up but it is a big stabilising influence. Hope we can be like that for our kids...

Looking forward to getting back, will try to sleep on the plane – demons attacking my sleep at the moment are Southbeach and Steve Burrows. Peter described him as a prize fighter (I think literally actually), only interested in the win, regardless of the issue, right or wrong, collateral damage etc. And he

is – a bit of a prick who operates on putting others down. Need to be considered in my responses. Try not to pick a fight (it will come back on this or somewhere else). And try not to lose too much sleep.

01st November 2010 –

“His face is rough and speaks to long days
unsheltered against the elements.

I see the little boy he might have been,
sleeping with his hands pressed together as in
prayer...”

From 'The Man on the Bench'

My Psyches blog – Austin, not Texas.'

I often think about how people, particularly distinctive or accomplished or mean or imposing people looked when they were young. Pudgy babies and toddlers all growing up into the people they have become.

How does that happen, what goes on along the way, what do their parents think – what do they think for that matter. When do they stop being the little boy or girl, and become the person they are as an adult?

And just as impactful the following as a comment:

I see these people every day and
wonder how they exist.
I see families sleeping in cars and
wonder how they do this.
They have no choice and for that I
am devastated.

[Linda Seccaspina](#)

And me? Things are going as well as I could wish, and I feel the greatest fatigue. The greatest tiredness of it all... And I wonder about this, but not too much as I just can't be bothered at the moment...

2nd November 2010 – Up again in the middle of the night last night. Had a strong sense of wandering mental corridors in my mind – empty grey corridors that used to be full of life and growth, now disused and forming a confusing labyrinth amongst which I wandered wondering where to go.

Not surprising I guess, living (camped out), in the shell of our flat, withdrawing from work day by day, more time to spend thinking but still not time enough to explore unbounded by pressures.

Previously my mind was overrun by work, led in every direction at every minute of the day with small glimpses of sanity trying to fight for their own space. I am now back to a what should be but never can be a comfortable fit – my mind is having to learn how to be active and at peace again. The sanity is there and looking around wondering at the withdrawal that seems to be taking place.

It will grow, but slowly, likely with false starts and blind alleys etc. Like flowers or trees given space where weeds used to dominate. I must not get to scared or flighty on the way through. It should be a constructive thing with a good outcome. Achieving this will depend on me being able to leave behind the false achievements. To live without the superficial praise and sand castles that is work around a career orientated life.

I need to grow worthwhile now. Philosophy and observation of life. Think about the real questions and how to make real accomplishments. Understand and meet life and the human condition at the level it is supposed to met at – not this distraction of work.



Corridors of the mind

'Decayed corridors everywhere, really
feel of mindlessly running in ever
decreasing circles'

North Wales Hospital, Denbigh

By abstract effects, no name given
(Flickr)

8th November 2010 – Unfortunately it is more of the same today. Self pity perhaps – looking inward self indulgently?

Things are going so well on the points that matter at the moment that I begin to feel nervous. Where is the balance, the sense of not all one way. My knee started to hurt yet again, for seeming no reason other than a weekend at home with the kids – long weekend granted but not so hard. I should get my knee checked out... It could be cancer running through the hollows of the bones. It was instigated by the accident, broken femur, titanium rod, loss of sciatic feeling and god knows what else...

What will life be like with a prosthetic leg, or no leg at all – how much leg do you lose before you are just inglamourously given crutches to limp around on for the rest of your life. And health insurance running out rapidly – yes all fits something like this.

Preferable to the plane crash validating the Qantas near misses over the past few days?

Off to the doctors. In a rather pedestrian , but welcome – I guess, welcome and depressing at the same time I got a bit of a common sense spiel on lifetime of basketball, squash and other sports.

Soft bit between bones worn out and, no it doesn't grow itself back again. Can get a something scope done – not as bad as a knee reconstruction, they go in have a look, confirm this is what is happening and then clean, scrape of any imperfections that cause that clicking feeling/ They only get worse as it continues to wear apparently.

So there you have it – old. Thoughts now of not being able to go on ski camp with the kids, of limited walking life. Of saving every step to prolong the use...

Not nice but there... Anti-climatic but there... Damn annoying and bad news and there... And what to think? Do I go on the triathlon I had planned in February? I get a second opinion in Melbourne is what I do.

I do some physio to improve muscle control is what I do. And I buy a knee brace for hard activity to help protect it from slipping out and locking is what I do.

And I carry on making do with my deteriorating physical condition... it what I do. What else?

Remember Bren when you realised what it was to be climbing up onto trams with a healing broken leg and crutches. It was like being like all the other people with walking sticks or limps or disabilities you see doing it everyday. It is like being human and not immune to the ending up living the lives of the population you see around you.

Did you really think you would be immune forever, did you really think that these other people are special cases?

Priding yourself on maintaining a level of naivety, and childhood is all very well, but it doesn't make you untouchable. You too will feel the edges creep in on you, feel dark nights and decay, and ultimately feel death around you with your family passing, and then around you whilst you pass.

Why did death feel so much closer and less scary when you were younger. It must be because it is easy to face something bravely that is so far away. That and you had far less to lose back then.

Every minute of the kids lives you don't get to see is now a black emptiness somewhere about your being. I should be encouraged, feelings like this are not yet earthly serious, I am in fact still exploring them, but it is a sign of things going well – things to lose is a good way to be.

They will become darker perhaps. Or perhaps I will explore more philosophy and religion and maybe they will become more enlightened? I wonder what Frey and Stell and Wean would like them to become? And Ange?

They will become what they become and I will be there as the vehicle for the ride. Lots still to explore, lots of figurative valleys and mountains to explore, to observe, and to contemplate.



La Vision de Fausto
Luis Ricardo Falero
1878t

There was something else I was going to write but I got distracted looking at images – I had forgotten but thought it might have had something to do with dying and coming to grips with your last moments – your death bed.

This took me into a series of websites too horrible for words, torture, cruelty, I don't know what to think other than I am glad I am not a part of it.



The above image seems to comfort me somehow – seems to put a face on death and injustice that seems bearable – not understandable or forgivable or anything else, but maybe bearable. Like there is some testimony involved. Like people did not die for no reason..

10th November 2010 – aam – More horrors in the news – a wife raped and murdered, whilst the husband beaten, and two girls tied to their beds doused in gasoline and burned alive – Connecticut. My God. Three more sticks of incense – some recognition somewhere, what is the logic that makes this remotely understandable. I am not near the place it exists...

I remembered I was going to write about right thoughts, right action, right life type stuff yesterday. Control your thoughts and your day to day to day actions and your life will follow.

I believe in this although I am not sure I believe it should be done. Seems a little premeditated to me. Not daring to let yourself have thoughts lest they take you to certain places that are not socially acceptable etc.

More robust (and better), to explore the thoughts, the dark sides and to conquer them. Prepare yourself for the currents that will take you there in one form and at one time or another, and be prepared. Well adjusted, able to deal with things.

The advantage is you can then take them on your own time. No need to rush, follow what happens and observe, understand. The danger is that you are

corrupted, you lose sight of what is right and normal – yes there must be such a thing as right (and it relates to normal), I believe..

The subtle unseen danger is perhaps not that you are corrupted, but worse than that that you become weak and too easily prone to just going with where things take you if that makes sense. You also need to be able to apply discipline in your life, to choose for reasons other than that of taking the easiest path.

A gentle balance between the abyss and the plains.



When you image search 'The abyss and the plain' you get this little Japanese kimono warrioress pop up – I like that she inhabits that space somehow. Brings just the right degree of absurdity and energy, and moral tone to the argument?

am – late night last night, active mind on work issues (Steve Burrows), moving thoughts, should not have looked at the news perhaps, and a Thai buffet of too many fish patties topped off by a coffee is never going to end well.

Motivation this morning : struggling!

11 November 2010 – Work is falling into disarray around me at the moment. Every job I have seems to be going bad. Kinetic Screen – unworkable, Southbeach, tougher and tougher may have to pull out on financial concerns, Create in a fight with Steve Burrows, F2a still struggling on fees progress.

I feel let down by people around me whom I had hoped would step up more. Garry, Jason, Ada... I have put faith in them and things have not happened...

Going to have to lean on others around me – Lin Ming etc...

I want to get out of this nightmare where everything seems to rely on me. It is killing me.



Despair, panic...

I don't feel as though I am strong enough.

15th November 2010 – Dinner and Dance on the weekend – very good although very Singaporean. Working in here on the Sunday to build up the background on Create against Steve Burrows.

Kids are challenging at the moment. Stell and Ewan fighting the whole time – not nice for anyone. How much of it comes from Ange & I, I wonder? Can only do what you can do. We all get tired and ratty from time to time. The empty house is making things worse as the sound just bounces around the place and there are no soft spots to relax in!

December 10th can't come quick enough I must admit. I am a little paranoid about something happening in this last leg before we depart – car accident, one of the kids disappearing I was thinking last night... Horrible stuff, it is just the concept of so much to lose I guess.

News.com.au is not helping – stories of child murders and disappearances, wrongful convictions... It is difficult to understand how the world can contain so many corners filled with terror and badness. I am too centre of the road I guess.

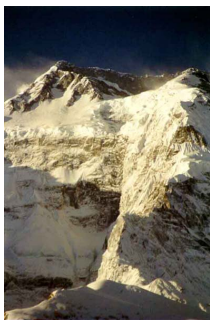
I think similar things looking at Muslim countries that still practice stoning and similar things. Women who are raped, subsequently accused of adultery, buried to their waists and pelted to death with rocks.

The warring and atrocities that go with tribal behaviour you read about in places like Africa are almost forgivable, as they are based in ignorance. Countries in the middle East with access to television and the world at large, education and business however – how does that stuff get allowed to happen.

17th November 2010 – Couldn't find the passage again after reading it, but a section of 'The inheritance of loss' that I am reading at the moment took me right back to the foothills of the Himalayas – to McLeod Ganj. Incredible place.

It was imagery of the clouds moving amongst the buildings. Something like the mist of the clouds intermingled with and brushed up against the clouds in the murals painted on the walls.

And that is how it felt up there. Like images in your mind and books and folklore, alive and moving on a massive scale around you. You wanted it to be romantic and exotic and remote, to be full of magic and feeling... and it was. It was literally like living amongst a living land. Living not perhaps amongst the gods themselves, but in their land, and the land was alive with their magic.

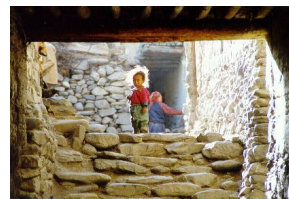


Been doing some more thinking about a scheme where I organise funds from western companies looking to donate to charity. 30-50k for a school somewhere. Designed and built by local labour as that is appropriate and supports the local economy. Branded with the sponsor companies name. A Chorten or something outside marking as their contribution to the valley – the Arup Lodong Primary school for Nepalese or something...

The company can use the images for internal publications, external publications talking about their charity work and their contribution. They get tax breaks, they feel good, their employees feel good. People can visit during construction to be involved. Using their own holidays with a guide provided to show them the rest of the world and facilitate their facilitation of making it a better place.

They could go on to sponsor a teacher each year. Organise team building trips each year where groups of employees trek in to visit the school. Perhaps bringing their kids? Similar to the AISS trips of students Ange went on. Again, lots of feel good factor, additional dimensions to the company and the people working for it.

What did you do this Easter holidays – I went to Nepal to visit the school we built there, to deliver new books, and materials, we trekked in for 2 days and back out and made a difference to the world. Somewhere kids are better off and getting an education which will improve theirs and their societies lot in the world.



18th November 2010 – I must say that all that I do at work now is tinged with this excitement and undercurrent of joy at knowing that I will soon be out of it – in Melbourne in our place setting up for a new stage of life. Life is full of farewells. Took the route of lots of little lunches and dinners etc which is much better – I enjoy one on one formats and don't enjoy large gatherings so in my element. Can't help but grin.

19th November 2010 – Slow descent from activity, involvement, distraction and occupancy of my mind and time by others, into I know not exactly what... Quiet, room for thoughts etc. It is a place I should have been but haven't – the danger is I want to rest there and enjoy myself rather than work there.

20th November 2010 – Took a walk over the railway this afternoon with Ewan and Freya – in search of silly bands to buy. Silly bands are these shaped elastic bands that the kids have gotten into collecting.

Reminded me how different Singapore still is from Australia - I keep forgetting. Fires being lit to burn offerings for ancestors, salted fish (or something, I know not what), sitting in cardboard boxes as a part of the many offerings of the small HDB shop. Grocer cum stationer cum hardware store...

The poles for people to take their birds out to and hoist up for some fresh air and play with other birds – what a horrible life that must be really... The wet markets and food courts. The cheap supermarket (Seng Siong) with its

inadequate ventilation meaning everything is tainted by the fish smell in the corner. Everything a little dodgy and two bit, and the expat family wandering through it all for that matter. Mixing with the locals in underwear shirts. The old guys drinking tiger, or kingfisher, for whatever that other cheap beer is. Passing the time with each other until they pass away!

The MRT, the bringer of all things able to work economically, like the active heart on the bloodstream that generates life its very self at times around it.

Very worried about Southbeach given the goings on over the last few days during workshops. Makes me realise just how much work is left to be done. We have spent approx 25% when we should have only spent 15% if that!

On Monday I must get into it and out it in front of people as to whether we should be pulling out or not.

- Study RIBA scheme stage deliverables to ascertain exactly how much extra work is required to tender
- Print out PFR to study fpc etc.
- Go through Garry's resource plan and spend up till end of scheme
- Review resource plant to make sure enough in there.
- Look at cash flow graph (Garry has one?)
- Look at opportunities to increase income through contractor input etc.
- Summarise timing so far and what has gone wrong including renegotiation points.
- Get independent review from RNC/SLM/CWC/AJL!

22nd November 2010 – things in the wind today I feel somehow. Late into the car due to feeding of cats downstairs and bickering between kids but into the car nevertheless and 8:04 through the ERP, but no traffic to speak of and no ERP?

Realised I had forgotten my wallet, keys and phone, Ange was good enough not to overreact and will drop through later. And a really nice card and Lamy pen as a farewell gift from Mak on my desk. Really touched, nice thing for him to do.

...just found out today is the first day of school holidays which explains the traffic and ERP thing! The rest suddenly doesn't look that impressive without that. :).

Good afternoon yesterday – ran into a few people from weans class at a party (kids party). Nicolas Burns who is an architect and Rupert a photographer. Both really nice people and people I would like to spend time with. Also had dinner at the British club with other friends through Stella who are nice as well (Tony and Natalie).

What a shame just meeting these people now...

25th November 2010 – Farewell from Singapore Leadership group last night. Dinner at an expensive Indian place followed by a few bars and lots of beers! First bar was Bar Nine Tras street – typical Chivas Regal type bar – dark, loud music and swarmed by Filipino girls touching you up when you sit down for a drink.

Never been inside one of those places believe it or not. You then need to keep buying the girls drinks (at \$40 a pop) or something to have them keep hanging around. The couple I spoke to had only been there a month or two, or less... Andre reckons they are slaves to the situation – needing the money to stay...

Second bar was JJ's in Duxton Hill which had the obligatory Filipinos again but more people and more light and a great band. In particular the drummer and the lead guitarist. Lead guitarist was a classic Singaporean – very little emotion or movement but excellent on the guitar. Jimmy Hendrix, Led Zeppelin covers but extended with solos etc – fantastic.

Lead singer was pretty cool also – gold tooth, beanie and an electric violin and flute that he swapped between. Was good to see that sort of thing – relaxed real, people enjoying themselves for the right reasons.

If you are going to achieve excellence in big things,
you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence
is not an exception it is a prevailing attitude.
Colin Powell

The above was taken from a motivational poster on the back of a toilet cubicle door in the NRF (National Research Foundation) offices :).

29th November 2010 – OK – ready to go now. The leaving dinners with the leadership group and 030 seemed to be a strong turn in the tide of feelings and I am actually leaving now.

The dinners continue – last night with Shane and Julia after lunch at Jules cafe. Can feel a belly forming and not real exercise in sight – really should be doing some sit ups at home! The reality is I have very little energy! Seem to spend weeknights going to bed early. Tired is not the word, something more on the side of lethargic...

I think it is the mental anticipation – I am disconnected and going through the motions a lot – a lot of other thoughts around arriving and the change – the break more importantly. Six/seven weeks may not be long enough!

I am feeling it will hit me in a bit of a rush on the last day – seeing things for the last time! Will pretty soon be overtaken by the excitement of the house and unpacking – staying at Mum and Dads for a few days and Venus Bay/the Prom... Cannot wait.

SINGAPORE CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS SERIES

VINCENT LEOW



A Singapore Art Museum publication

The whitens of a whale

Zhao Ruihui & Satoshi Kasataka
A project with The Institute of Critical Zoogeography

(Cover image) The white whale swimming in the ocean depths off the coast of Antarctica, since 1985

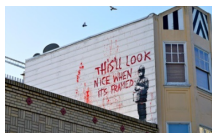
This is thought to be the only existing image of the white whale. In 2009, the Japanese announced that villagers had found an offspring of a grey whale in the sea off the coast of Hokkaido, where it probably still remains today.

3 Aug 2010 - 22 Aug 2010

11am - 8pm (Tue - Sat)
1pm - 6pm (Sun)
Closed on Monday and Public
Holidays
2902 Gallery

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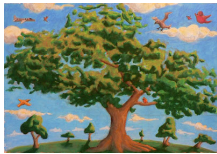




Banksy
London street artist



The Great Wave Off Kanagawa
Katsushika Hokusai



Tree Art



Yue Minjun



Little unsure on this one, however like the SAM connotations it gives having seen it in the flesh there.

Ketna patel



Wood block print by Nguyen Tung Ngoc, local Hanoi artist

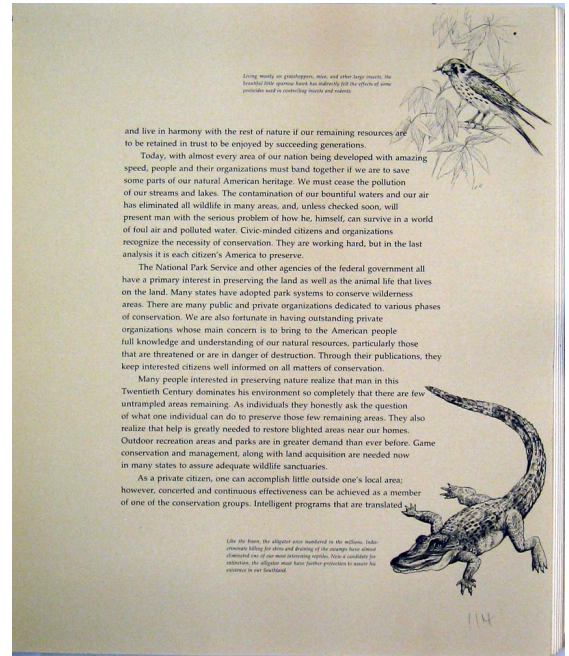


Innocence by Ha Huynh My Oil on canvas 90 x 70 cm



A quick search under Vietnamese art turns up quite a bit. Visited a few small galleries (street shops), and really liked them. Quite a bit happening and very much in flavour with how Hanoi felt – bread, coffee, time to appreciate life for what it is.

The wood block wrestlers here was on a card collection we saw in the tamarin café – one of a series of a whole lot of prints all on different parts of Vietnamese life. Traditional images I think? – liked them for their simplicity and implied age...



Old Antique Historical Victorian Prints Maps and Historic Fine Art - Alligator Sketch C1967 Animal Nature Old Print Fine Art From Life In Ober Ammergau. Its Plants And Flowers. 1910. Sketches By Lucia Lang.

Size 13 X 9.5 Inches (330 X 240) . . Reverse Side Is Blank.

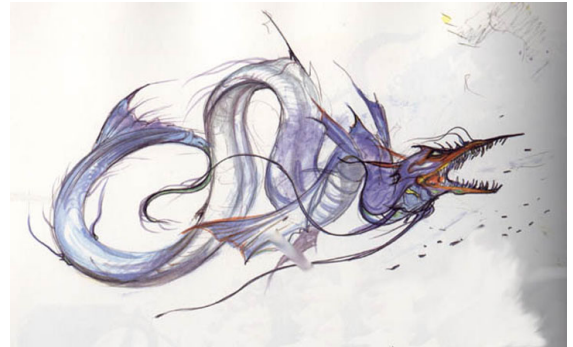


“Leviathan”

Paper Giclee
Edition 50

Signed & Numbered By Marion Peck
Size 14 x 10

Published By Porterhouse Fine Art Editions
SOLD OUT EDITION!



The beast by daylight, tortured
and exposed – but still real?

Leviathans of my nights

To Do

- ~~Look into Deism and Rational Christianity~~
- See film "Emperor and the Assassin" (the story of Chinas first emperor)
- ~~Art from Silk road (refer Lonely Planet Pg779)~~
- Study structure of hive bees
- Mao's Biography
- Sailing – Power Boat course, Skippers license with Andre
- Donate to Western kids charity - Smith family or Salvation Army.
- Take Stella to SCO
- ~~Start kids in karate~~
 - This was a very good thing to do – 3 private lessons in anyway – see how things will transpire from here...!
- Look for examples of families taking a year off to travel
- ~~Study and start Tai Chi~~
- ~~Study source of Taoism (basis of a trip?)~~

– Wudang Mountains near Wuhan. **"Shaolin wushu is the best in the north, while Wudang wushu is the best in the south."**



www.egreenway.com/taichichuan/wudang.htm

- Qingshengshan mountain Sichuan – We actually visited this in our last trip!

- ~~Reading on Freya Stark~~ - Read a bit – serious traveller, on a high but wonder at someone who can put their life so far at risk. What was behind that... I would love to, would have at one stage but not anymore, too much and too many to live for, yes a big part of me has gone, blown from a tree like a falling leaf (Ransetsu). I think I would like to read one of Freya Stark's books rather than her biography. See how she saw the world...
- ~~Read Freya Stark travel book~~ - Southern Gates of Arabia (Travels in the Hadramaut - worthwhile, heavy going but insight into Freya and

her outlook on life. Vey feeling, quite a bit of the romantic about her, and the anthropologist if you know what I mean.

- Read Seven Engineers book
- ~~Spend one on one time with Ewan and sport~~ – Ewan is not really interested in sport and I don't want to push him as it is frustrating for us both and will only put him off things. It will come if he is interested I am sure.
- Netball practice with Stella



• **Running**

Previous 63 runs – if count since Singapore, 2003 – 6 years 5 months – 77 months in total – less than a run a month!

Woking Rd Circuit best 9:03 2 June 2007

Date	Run	First split	Total	Other
2 nd May 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	???	18:33	First in 6 months
13 th Jun 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:15	18:25	Morning – hot humid, took easy as a little tender – felt crap afterwards
19 th July 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:15	18:35	With Stella on her bike.
26 th July 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:01	17:25	Wilton Rd circuit felt hard – generally good no aches/pains aerobic limited
27 th July 2009	Squash			Weight 89.0 kg
2 nd Aug 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:04	17:40	Felt alright – aerobic limited
3 rd Aug 2009	Squash			Weight 90.4 kg
9 th Aug 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:11	18:08	Didn't feel like a run – stomach bug or something and humid.– aerobic limited immediately.
16 th Aug 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:04	17:38	Felt slow to start
23 rd Aug 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:01	17:32	Didn't feel like running – felt like sleeping! Felt bad aerobically
24 th Aug 2009	Squash			Weight 91.3 kg
31 st Aug 2009	Squash			Weight 90.7 kg
8 th Sept 2009	Squash			Weight 90.7 kg

12 th Sep 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:11	18:01	Afternoon, but didn't feel too bad – however end result slow!
21 st Sep 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:11	18:04	Afternoon. Didn't feel too bad but never really in rhythm.
5 th Oct 2009	Squash			Weight 89.7kg
2 nd Nov 2009	Squash			Weight 88.0kg
9 th Nov 2009	Squash			Weight 88.0kg
16 th Nov 2009	Squash			Weight 89.7kg
23 th Nov 2009	Squash			Weight 88.9kg
28 th Nov 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	9:37	17:11	Morning – felt good, managed to get a rhythm going. – Was sore a day or two afterwards!
30 th Nov 2009	Squash			Weight 89.2kg
01 st Dec 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:41	19:21	Evening after work and dinner. Muscles felt tired – didn't push it but slower than expected.
03 rd Dec 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:23	18:21	Evening after work, light snack, felt like I hit a rhythm in bits but slower than expected.
05 th Dec 2009	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	11:01	19:33	After long afternoon taking Ewan & Freya shopping. Didn't feel like it – strength limited.
11 th Jan 2010	Woking Rd Circuit only	10:43	-	4:30am! – to prepare for Mt KK
14/15 th Jan 2010	Mt Kinabalu climb	12 hours total		With a cold – didn't make the top but pushed to limit.
17 th Jan 2010	Woking Rd Circuit only	???	-	Afternoon run to work out muscles after Kinabalu!

8 th Feb 2010	Squash			Weight 90.0kg – almost threw up! – heart didn't feel strongest afterwards – no tremors or real pain just slight discomfort.
22 nd Mar 2010	Squash			Weight 90.0kg
12 th Apr 2010	Squash			Weight 91.2 kg
10 th May 2010	Squash			Weight 91.0 kg
31 st May 2010	Squash			Weight 91.2 kg
13 th June 2010	Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close	10:20	18:49	First time for a while – left knee did a lot of clicking at different stages. Not sore later on which was good...
14 th June 2010	Squash			Weight 90.7 kg
4 th July 2010	Squash			Weight 91.2 kg
26 th July 2010	Weights & 10 laps			Weight 94.9kg (w shoes)

Woking Rd Circuit + Wilton Close – approx 3.8km