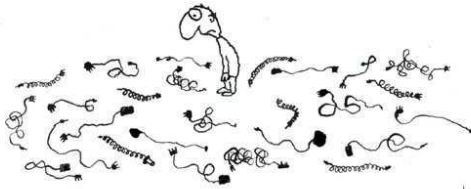


There comes a moment when all the cables, leads, battery chargers and power adaptors we have ever owned, gather together and assemble themselves around us and ask us the terrible question, "WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOUR LIFE?"



Diary 2011

02nd January 2011 – New year, new diary. A little difficult to let go of the old but time to shed I think as it can become a little constricting sub-consciously? Back in Melbourne, new house, new stage of life, lots of challenges ahead, important that I free myself up largely (not totally), from the last 8 years. Free myself up so as to be able to set new directions, accomplish new things not just extend the old.

Has been a full on Christmas and New Year. Leaving and arriving, the new house, a weekend down at Venus Bay with the family for Dad's 70th birthday, a week after that camping at the prom, and the unpacking and setting up of the house. And of course Christmas and the presents and visiting – all this has been a bit if a tangled patchwork thread that has run through the constant of kids lives, us as the people nudging them this way and that, onto the next bit and the next so on through the whole thing... all good.

The move back is still I am convinced the right thing to be doing. Looking back, Singapore still feels surreal – what a great thing to have done, I could never have imagined when we set off that it could have ended up like it did. Work I could have only ever dreamed of, and feel a lot more connected and informed about the rest of the world now. Asia anyway – and enough difference of cultures that have some perspective on life and how it varies in any case...

Picked up the 'seasons of a mans life book' (given to me by Peter Bowtell some time ago. A few recent realisations... My body is starting to go downhill – knees are not good, they click when I walk uphill and feel like they want to snag within the joint. The doctor I saw in Singapore was a little matter of fact about it – get a scope done, they will scrape off a few imperfections whilst they are in there... hmmm... doesn't feel right to be playing around like that – machine intuition tells me that once you start, it is a slow downhill slope, things get looser and more precariously held together and you end up in there all the time putting things back together to keep yourself going.

...the kids are everywhere all the time! There are a lot of things I/Ange would like to be doing for ourselves, exploring developing, looking – everything needs to be done with kids, there is not extended me time to be looking at this stuff – maybe we need a date 'day' once a month to do this – lean on the parents...?

...just about everything else. Country, culture, career, family relationships, house is all changing. Strangely not as big a impact as you might think. I am still here and have a pretty good level of confidence at the moment so feel ok in dealing with things – I am bigger than the changes going on around me if I can say that without being to egotistical although that's what it is!

One thing would like to do is to maintain contact in a few relationships. More because I have got so much out of them that I want to give back and recognise it in some way. Russell, Grace, Hwei Nu, Lin Ming, Wah Kam, Wijaya, Mak, Jason (quite a few from Singapore understandably). Others from Aust I would

like to put time into are Peter, Frank, David Singleton, the family, Mick especially.

5th January 2011 – Good couple of days down at Shoreham where Simon and Margo part share a caravan.

Australian bush, dirt roads and caravan park toilets, hot sun cool water and cool sand in the shade, a moving balance between sun wind and sand – the beach. Jess and Stella loving the water and waves, more dad more, hot afternoon chips warming cold bodies in the back of the car.

Late night toilet runs and the milky way against eucalyptus trees, a bright bright star low in the sky (East?), 4:30 in the morning. Ewan asleep with Ange and I in the yellow tent, girls with Meeg in the caravan annex. Surf life savers and little nippers, the Australian summer rolling on around us.

Strawberry picking on the way home and stories on the couch (Green Eggs and Ham and the Diggingest Dog – plus one made up between us), a phone call to Rhiannon, and early to bed.

More work around the house planned tomorrow. Some big furniture buys ahead and cupboards for Freya, the study still needed. Starting to feel in now.

Struck me today that happiness is in movement. Not possessions, or perhaps change but in doing things. In achieving and moving forward, doing things you can be proud of at the end of your time.

...and how much of it is in the recording of these things I wonder. The purist in me says nothing, the person here now says something, I just don't know what. Is it in the legacy you leave your kids? Is it in legacy's like Heide created for future generations? – visited on Sunday – not always a big fan of the art but the whole facility is fantastic. Gardens, fields, old houses, new galleries etc – hard not to fall in love with at some level or another...

Struck me also when reading an article about "Eat, Pray, Love." A recent movie, that we (I in any case and I think Ange also), really did find ourselves during that year away. It was the most deeply spiritual thing (personally), ever. I really feel like we touched perhaps not nirvana but we were there in the same place things like that go on.

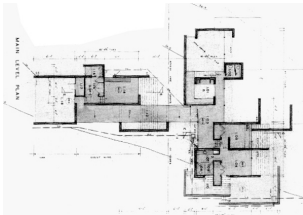
I feel like it was all there in the aspects we were about at the time – which was the core who are we's. Perhaps no answer to be written but the knowledge that the concept is there and an at peace with that whole thing type feeling. The ultimate I am ok with everything feeling that was and is and can never be recinded... I still get comfort that we saw that and that it is still out there to be drawn upon.

Just to have one piece of the jigsaw you know is in the right place is a great place to be – gives you confidence there are places for all the other pieces (kids, and the other life/death things around you), even if you don't have the answers.

I feel like I need to explore a lot of that further. Do a bit more on the wtf are we here. What are the reasons and what should I be doing about them. And perhaps it is just in the exploring of them. That was certainly partly true of our trip. Seeing the world first hand was a big part of it. Observing and relating... seeing.

Something that sticks in my mind from Heide is the fantastic ways the building provides framed views – one window in particular with a view to part of a tree trunk close up. A little like Nick and Sasha Burns place in Singapore actually. Fantastic typical section of a tree trunk in the window, up close and detailed, and living and fantastic right there cut away for your viewing pleasure. Stunning and engagingly beautiful.

I cannot believe no one has taken a photo of it – I will have to the next time we go down if I am allowed...



Something like the composite above – will have to take the real thing to compare - :)...

Architect was David McGlashan – one of the most influential buildings in Australian architecture in the past fifty years apparently. Designed as a house – good job!



Thought I would put in the above pic also – brave room use, beautiful

8th January 2011 – Ewan when he is at his best is a beautiful kid – interested in gardens and life and questions, intelligent and articulate and imaginative. With that goes all the incredibly frustrating not listening and oblivion to the mess around, on, in him! Maybe that says more about me than anything else?

Trying to find my pace at the moment. A bit up and down I must admit while we try to get some order in the house. Furniture is the big thing that is proving difficult to get together. Difficult to know where to look and difficult to find a feel that we like. Somewhere industrial, somewhere sixties, somewhere modern.

Will take a while I think...

Back into reading 'The Inheritance of loss'. Very detailed and crafted as a book. I like it but not an easy going light flow – more like wading through fields of intense flowers of every type imaginable.

She gives a beautiful description of Gyan's house at one stage that took me back to the rice terraced hills around the back of McLeod Ganj. Even going so far as to describe boiled egg light at one stage.

Nice to soak in and enjoy, and to be fair less intense somehow – perhaps because of the punctuation than long classical portraits you find in English lit.

Tasks for the day are Ikea shelves (assembly), and more furniture hunting...

9th January 2011 – “This was how history moved, the slow build, the quick burn, and in an incoherence, leaping both backward and forward, swallowing young into old hate. The space between life and death, in the end, too small to

measure". Kiran Desai on the Gorkha uprisings in 'the Inheritance of loss'. Very good, makes me want to write like this, create something beautiful and enduring...

pm – Mum just called and gave Ange a bit of a hard time over a text sent (from Shannon's phone), last night after a few drinks. I thought it would be funny as she is always relating examples of funny sms's sent to her from Cam.

Seems growing old you do get grumpy and flighty of mood – she is always at pains to be so easy going on the surface... A bit of a realisation to me that you are not full of natural wisdom as you grow older by default. All of the things I wish I could do better now in reaction to situations etc, I will be thinking the same thing when I am older – there is no holy grail of dignified retirement, not higher level attainment.

The bonds of being human are with us always from the start right to the end. Makes it even more important to create things along the way, things outside of yourself that have some element of perfection about them as your own will always be flawed from some angle.

ppm – Ended up smacking ewan twice tonight (two smacks – but big ones). Over not listening and him hitting Freya in her private parts immediately after having just been forced to apologise for hitting her earlier.

I am sure Freya was not faultless and we spoke with both Freya and stella about looking after Ewan and loving your brothers and sisters etc but feel really disappointed in myself. Have managed to do the right thing for so long – it is a physical thing, the rising of anger and temper and unable to constrain – letting a flashpoint overtake my thoughts and actions.

Need to keep reminding myself whenever it reduces to violence – smacking, that it is never the right solution. Mind you I am not sure the mental games and guilt plays are much better in terms of effects on the kids?

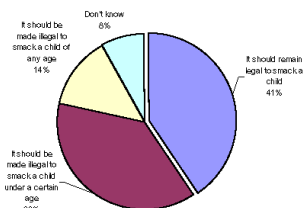
Do other people do this or is it just us who lose control from time to time? I cant believe it is just us – we both tried to remember our childhoods but could not clearly. Ange recalls her mum hitting them with a ruler, and I remember dad smacking us but in a much more controlled manner – warning and explanation and all of that – one the one instance i clearly recall in any case... (when I convinced them it was Beck – she got a smack and I couldn't resist telling them of my trickery!).

Might be like most other things in life – things are usually worse than you believe people ever let on – and it amazes me that people don't let on – but they don't... I think... from the bits and pieces I know of and pick up, both between the lines and in odd instances where I get to know the facts.

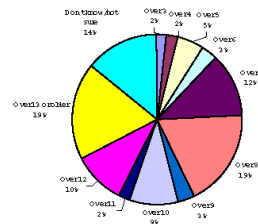
...Just did a bit of surfing on smacking and feel a little better – Ange and I are particularly hard on ourselves – everyone is only human after all and to lose it

from time to time is human. We are doing a lot more right than we are wrong I am pretty sure.

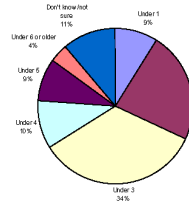
From a web site on the Scottish laws regarding smacking of children.



Age above which it should be illegal to smack:



Age below which it should be illegal to smack:



Something not quite consistent between these last two. One consistent thing is the huge difference of opinion. Reading between the lines – putting a few

more voices in the smacking camp to allow for the non-PC concerns I reckon it is likely a 40/40/20 split between yes/no/don't know...

16th January 2011 – Ewan learned to ride on two wheels on Friday afternoon. An experience that showed me sides of him I have never really seen before.

He wanted to ride his scooter (on a walk we were all going on), and I persuaded him to ride his bike so we could practice and try without the training wheels the day after – like Jacob Bernie and Harry. Only he wanted them called stabilisers, not training wheels (something he picked off of TV – Pepper Pig I think). He was obviously wanting to grow up and get away from being the kid who couldn't – the baby of the group with training wheels – although “some people call them stabilisers don't they dad” in an effort to make them as acceptable as possible.

Immediately he was insistent that we try now. We did the loop down to the Koonung Creek bike path and back. The whole way he did trying two wheels.

I would stabilise him send him off shouting to pedal pedal pedal, and off he would go wildly turning this way and that. The first leg of the park connector he just consistently veered left and ended up in the grass. By the second and third he was getting it.

Constantly falling off – mostly grass luckily but getting back up again and again to try. More persistent than Stella if I remember. He even skinned his knee at one stage with blood showing and just got back up and kept going. Little 'die hard' :).

The way back up was tougher going as mostly up hill and on the return leg he was at the stage of starting on his own. I was under strict rules no to help – which was difficult as it was slow going! Stella and Freya disappeared into the distance losing patience.

Both I and the bike copped quite a bit of abuse! We were stupid, I was too far away or too close and stabilising him. We both got punched and kicked from time to time, but he kept on going. The initial successes on the way down had given him the belief he could do it.

A big factor was to get home and tell mum that he could now ride without training wheels.

Eventually we got back and he was as proud as can be – calling Ange out to show her. He was quite concerned he might forget how to ride overnight during his sleep. After querying me telling him telling him that you never forget how to ride He cautiously accepted the argument that you don't forget how to walk when you learn that.

The next morning he was out in the driveway better than ever doing little circles and riding.

Fantastic stuff – grit and determination and pushing on through. Really allayed a lot of fears I think I had in the corner of my mind. Showed and bit of competition and determination to do something. Things he will need growing up through life.



Go little Ewie go...! Actually I think this is the start of dropping the 'little'. Go Ewan go!

Been watching Doc Marting, a TV series Jill gave us to watch. Good – the main character is a little off for me somehow, not quite consistent enough for the story lines – difficult balance between gruffness and insensitivity and romance...

Anyway it is shot in Port Isaac, Cornwall and keeps reminding me of an image from my dreams during the accident. A small English seaside village built around a cove with a cobbled street curving from right to left as it descends to the just out of view of the harbour and fishing boats at the bottom.

I reread my diaries from around then – and I had thought it might have been Whitby in Norfolk which is very similar and it could have been.



A composite of the above if you can picture it.

Always intense reading back over that period, and the accident. A good place all of that, a life experience and journey to rival our India trip etc...

I feel I place more significance on the dreams than I should. I am still convinced that during the coma I was totally off line – deep dark beautiful quiet of non being – deep dreamless sleep.

It was during the waking that the dreams came on. Wild fantastic dreams. I have to say however that many of them were garbled versions of what may have been on television at the time – mixed with my imagination, which lessens the purity of them somehow.

Still good to have – memories of an amazing place and time that is a big part of me.

pm – re-reading my diaries from before and after the accident has set me thinking a bit. I used to be quite a feeling type person. Swimming in the world around me taking it in, observing and contemplating and being somehow a part of the ether.

This setting up the house is a pretty materialistic selfish and indulgent thing. Must say I am enjoying but it is not real, it is the surrounds of life, not life itself.

Ange said she wanted to go a bit eclectic in terms of the furniture for the back balcony and she is dead right. Informal and see what comes our way. We need to keep that part of us rather than getting trapped in the fitting stuff out new the whole time – especially that area which is for relaxation and not much else...

Spoke to Steven Enticott the other day who was saying we were doing really well financially comparatively which is really nice to know. When I mentioned I was thinking of aid work and reduced salary etc, he talked me away from it, the forties being a period in your life (season) where you earn money and put it away – for kids education and supporting start ups in life etc...

He is right but I want to explore. At least lay foundations if not more. Really must try to be me whoever that is. It is one of the reasons I don't want to read books telling me where everyone else and therefore like I, am.

Self fulfilling prophecy all of that and a bit like skipping to the end page in the book. I want to see where me takes me. Want to see where me is and what me thinks – not that that is so straightforward either as decorating the back balcony shows!

Still feel I am capable of that sort of feeling – that living. Harder with kids who don't have quite the time for it but still possible. Looking at the stereo we have – old amp and cd player – two new big speakers all about simplicity and

natural sound – not the many speakered sub woofer home theatre systems that seem to be everywhere...

And one of my corners of joy is the old doorbell. Removed the previous radio controlled cheap door bell to reinstate the old 60's doorbell. Beautiful old solenoid doorbell, just above the door and loud and simple and beautiful. Nothing worse than pressing on a piece of Japanese rap to struggle to hear if the thing has even gone off somewhere in the deep recesses of the house beyond.

When you press a doorbell button, a door bell should go off!

Just had a rumble like rolling onslaught of thunder or a huge sliding galvanised tin door go through the house from one side to another. Possums I think on the roof – see their droppings on the front balcony in the morning.

Ewan mentioned them this afternoon having picked up somehow that they are round a bouts. Wanted to go spotting with the torches etc. Runs deep at times that boy.

And Freya continues to be the personification of joy and beauty. Lovely relationship with her at the moment – Dad is in favour and gets called on to do all sorts of things :)... Thing of beauty a little soul like Freya.

Stella was the same, and Ewan in his own way although different somehow as a boy. Still recall his little persona around the Costa Rhu pool loving it all. All grins and business – with Eva the maid we had at the time.

Family seems to be going quite well at the moment. We are all finding our places and our pace. Generally winning.

Was very lucky the other day when persistent rain showed just how bad the rumpus room and garage can be in terms of rising damp and moisture. The guy turned up to lay our floor and basically went on his way. Have since spent a bit of time and will spend a bit of money getting it all waterproofed.

Without that rain would have been lucky to have lasted 12 months! Larger forces at work again... things just falling our way – in a groove and aligned with things somehow.

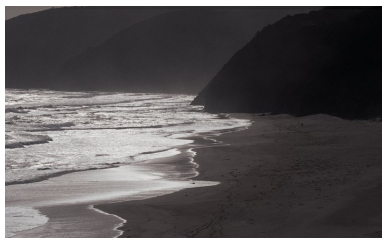


"Cant keep my eyes from the circling skies,
Tongue Tied and twisted, an earth bound misfit, ...I"

by the way which ones Pink...

17th January 2011 – Up late last night looking at photos etc – glass of scotch etc. Nice. Nicolas Burns put me onto a surf photographer, Jon Frank, amazing images and brilliant descriptions of himself on his bios lol.

Really feeling the environment



Johanna – Earl Court



Seal Rocks (cropped) – Jon frank

24th January 2010 – Down at Lochsport (the purple house), with the rest of the McNivens. A few last days away before back to start work – where did 6½

weeks go? Seems like the longest time going in to it, all of the stuff you are going to do – including getting back your sanity and ironing out all of the wrinkles around your life.

And then suddenly there is one week left... and life is still wrinkly :).

Hard to complain sitting here though. Early morning with everyone else still asleep, on a balcony overlooking the inland waterways – the place is absolutely beautiful. Almost cliché in appearance it is so nice.

Tea Tree, gently lapping waves, green and red channel markers out in the water a little distance off, blue light at the end of the pier (the marina just around the corner). Big cast iron cauldron that must have been made from an old boiler end or something and various rustic shelters and benches built here and there. Dogs are out exploring the place, experiencing life without fences and the city.

If we were ever to splurge on a holiday home, something like this would be pretty good.

‘The seasons of a Mans Life’ was saying that by the time you get past 40 your powers of abstract thinking start to decline – along with most other things. I had never really thought about abstract thinking being a skill.

One of my joys in life is introspective thinking – just being places observing and thinking. Not so much thinking perhaps but sensing. It is when I feel closest to life and is why I like travel. Different places and different lives, feeling what is out there, this life force and collective psyche of people and place and time.

There is something out there and in places (and times) like this where the mind can wander a little it is particularly strong – or easily felt maybe. The distraction of kids does not help with these things...

We still have quite a ways to get settled into Millicent Ave. To find some pace and who exactly we are now we are here in Melbourne. Trips like this and places like this will hopefully be a part of it – get a little collection of holiday places to go to and spend some time out with the environment.

Find how to interact with others which is always hard. I would like to get better at entertaining and cooking – interacting.

Then again I would like to do a lot of things – at the last moment I packed three sci-fi books to take away thinking I might revisit a bit of my youth.

Meditation and living in the moment is another thing I would like to get into. Difficult when work is around, although life is work – strategising, preparing for the future, constantly maintaining life and things around you...

Life it seems is so pliable – it is a strange mix of reality and your perceptions and feelings. As long as you can recognise reality and keep it within arms grasp, then manipulating the feelings side of things, indulging in feelings of

this and that layered over the top is not a bad thing, in fact it can sweeten and enrich the whole thing, sugar in a coffee. Bare reality with nothing else can be a pretty plain and ordinary place.

pm – Wind this morning, a trip out to the sutf side of Lochsport to see if fishing was on – which it was not, and reading papers and a big breakfast for everyone in the house as rain started to come in. Stella, Jacob and Harry out braving the wind on the boogie boards, ewie playing in the shallows getting his pants sandy and wet unconcerned and amusing himself in his usual Ewie way.

Ange doing an Ed and reading the papers and her books, and Freya watching TV downstairs – me talking a bit with Mick and Cam and reading Skylark and Foundation.

I love the way the weather moves across a place like Lochsport. It is what it is and no more no less, beautiful in every condition because of it. We the inconstants get to be in protected by the house – see and feel it all as observing tourists pondering and being for a bit away, off line from day to day life.

Enjoyed the science fiction. Set me wondering what the future will be like – amazing to me what a loose grip I have on that – was very easy back twenty years previous reading Asimov etc where everything was laid out before you. What is science fiction f today written around I wonder – might have to take a look in a bookstore or two to find out.

I imagine the defining things for the future will revolve around things other than technology. It will be making sense of the supernatural, the things we don't understand at the moment and barely I think even recognise the potential for.

A big movement toward ecology in the age in which we live in, moves towards psychiatry and the unknowns of the brain and the physical environments around us perhaps.

My favourite Sci-Fi short story is still the one of the development of man and super computers to the point where they housed themselves in hyperspace. Merging with one another, slowly absorbing human consciousness into other realms for convenience and who knows what – Nirvana for all perhaps? Until after many more eons, time goes by and the physical universe as we know it degrades, expanding, dying, reaching a point asymptoping towards a point of maximum entropy, this being or presence or whatever, blinks and decides now knowing all the answers that the process should start again – 'lrt their be light' it thinks to itself..

Actually I cant help but feel, thinking about it that it must be more of a circular process all over the place, beginnings and endings all around in space and time. Whirlpools of conscious time and universes billowing in and about each other of we inhabit a small dot.

I instinctively want our existence here to be a part of it. For there to be a meaning to it somehow. Nothing would be more expected from us though than this which makes me doubt it.

There is not a lot that is extraordinary about life on earth apart from the fact that 1) it is there, and probably 2) that it is conscious. And from all appearances we seem to be the lucky conscious ones that are most advanced.

Individual life is popping and disappearing all over the place in really insignificant ways. Real consciousness is still momentary and fleeting – there is very little species memory, little building on past experience and history other than on the technological front, and even that is limited by our behaviour as essential primal human beings, being driven by urges within us we struggle to understand.

We are pretty much individual organisms that try to get ahead, to a point where we are comfortable in life and can relax to some degree, stop worrying and fighting to be ahead in that race.

To look at those that don't die in the process you see people with money, people with family, and people with spiritual beliefs and faith and mostly in a combination of degrees.

What are conceivable ways forward. Ant colony multiple or group consciousnesses perhaps? Or extension pre and post life to gain some continuity. The limits physically of the human body and brain at birth seem to provide a large stumbling block in that direction. In fact the joy of childhood and starting from nothing anew seems almost to be a sacrosanct right that should not be played with – again coming from personal and so incredibly biased instincts...

And the other way just seems so tiring and to be so much effort – actually only as I sit here – that will of course change.

Maybe the future is people growing as we grow now, experiencing as we experience now and bonding to the earth and physical life, to one day graduate and become a part of a larger undying consciousness to which more people are added as time goes on.

Bodies die and are discarded, the sould and life force goes on in other forms.in other places. I don't think that is happening now – it is all too organic,, all has a bit of a drak ages feel about it. If it was that way I would think we would have some inking? Perhaps we do – the spiritual stuff?

No the picture of reality here is too complete – there is no conspiracy covering up greater things just yet – not to say that the ultimate consciousness doesn't exist, just that it does not have much of an active hand in the here and now, the before beyond.

Maybe it happens naturally and the way forward is for the two to join, relate in some form or manner.

I like that a bit better somehow. A life equation that is beyond just here – not organised or developed at the moment but heading that way sometime in the future.

Biased instincts talking again?

The get born, live and die (without any other meaning than that which we invent for ourselves) scenario is still the most likely I must admit. Which makes the enjoy it along the way even more important – and there is a whole other scientific field – how to enjoy. A science of relativities for sure I think – having travelled a bit and seen peoples lives in different places.

All of which does not take me very far into what the conceivable future looks like here. Same same but different – life with a lean, a flavour of the millennia but essentially the same - science spiritualism, ecology... Contained to a country, contained to a planet, contained to a galaxy etc... But essentially the same life of get ahead – the star wars scenario is pretty attractive just at the moment.

Just a little bit boring in realisation – surely there can be more than that, somehow the huge technological advances need to somehow drag along the human ones, the supernatural, the force and knowledge of it and how it affects our development?

Something to keep thinking about. More and more however it looks like my search should be along the lines of what makes people happy – given the goal posts of life and death either side.

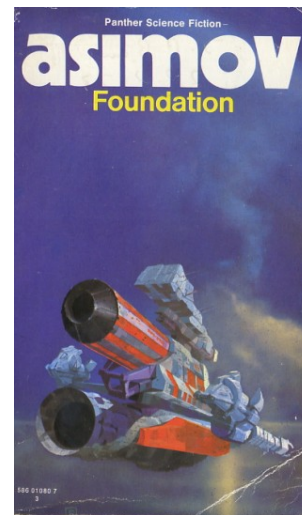
...and that is to do with relativity and action s within the timeframe open to us. Satisfaction and karma and realisation, consciousness etc of the whole thing.

...and that must start with different people and their drivers. How does a person like Peter Purcell who seems to revel in the battle , in causing pain and heartache to others exist, or more why do they exist. Is it in their bringing up, has something happened in their childhood to make them like that or are they fundamentally that way.

Maybe I should do a proper psychology course, study Freud and the others and learn a little.

27th January 2011 – Ange mentioned she is worried about the kids and school tonight just before going to bed. Way to get me thinking Ange :), thanks. I worry too. I worry about Ewan's attitudes and seeming hyperactiveness, his ability to relate and to deal with things... I worry about their empathy for others and their feelings. I worry about their academic abilities etc.

I can see so many strengths in them and so many weaknesses, especially when they are compared with other kids who all seem so well adjusted and coping with reading spelling etc.



I find it hard to remember where I was at at the same age. I don't seem to remember getting homework until year 7 or 8, these guys are right into it now...

Can only do our best I guess, this year might be hard with the readjustment and settling into Melbourne and the different school, progress and all of that. I must spend more time with them, in particular Ewan, build self confidence.

It is difficult when I am struggling also – anxious about starting work again, about fitting in and being able to justify myself. Will take a bit of understanding I think from those around me I think?

It is a constant struggle, a constant trying to keep things balanced and progressing and right and in order... and time keeps marching on leaving you behind when you make mistakes, or get your priorities wrong, dealing with the wrong things, or in the wrong way.

Try to be more relaxed around the kids

More supportive

More interactive

More intimate.

Try to be a better dad, try to look after yourself too – got to get that pace right – early nights and better sleep would be a good start me thinkst (it is 23:58... still cant sleep).

I visited the Alfred hospital today. Something I have been wanting to do for a while, I have been back since the accident but it will always be a very special place.

Must admit I built it up a little, wanting to savour and get the most out of the experience. Drove up Punt Road, like Ange used to do – looked for a car park, imagined the EH and her and Stella and the many times day and night she had to do the same.

Past the gardens I was wheeled out into once I started to recover. Explored area under the emergency ICU helipad, looked around the old buildings that I could see from my window in the ward – I was convinced I was in Adelaide because of the old cream brick buildings and iron staircases – convinced the extendable lights of the old Adelaide cricket oval were just out of sight somewhere...

I went into the ICU reception and waiting area which has changed a lot – Arup were involved in the refurbishment. Looked around the walls and tributes to donors and sidled up to the door that leads to the unit and the beds. Memories of white and clean and beds and machines, and beeps and nurses going about there business, of televisions and of life in that place, encapsulated in another world of struggling, of getting better, of people in and out, of troubled medical cases in different beds.

The receptionist came out to ask if she could help and I started asking after the nurses, Janice Mulligan, Lisa, Theo – they have all moved on. Janice to Swan Hill or something similar, Theo to be a paramedic and I am not sure on Lisa... She asked me what I had, and my thoughts went to my throat and the trachy, and I mumbled ARDS.

It was all a bit much at that. Bottom lip quivering and unable to hold back the tears. Flow of emotion into me, swimming in it, made my way out to try and compose myself with a couple of people offering help, telling me it will be ok.

Funny really – similar surge of emotion as to when I went in to have my shoulder ball expanded. Hurt, but it was the overwhelming emotion of being there, around all of that again.

I recall the lifts and the gurneys in and out down to x-ray. I remember the ambulance arrival area, and the waiting at different times when I was delived back for a check from Bethesda.

Difficult to explain when you can understand yourself. So much intensity and good, bad, strong vivid experiences nearing life and death there. Like revisiting the womb or something like that...

The hyperbaric chambers near the helipad, the drugs and dreams and daily tribulations – visitors, trying to write and communicate. The paranoia and episodes of this and that. Reality and non-realities intermingling and swirling around. A place where anything could and did happen, awash without control trying to stay afloat throughout it all.

I really look up to the nurses and medical assistants – the loose fitting dark blue hospital outfits with name badges on lanyards, ordinary people in their dealing with the patients lapsing in and out of normality. Simple tasks but you are so reliant on them. They are points of fixity and strength, of solidity and kindness to hang onto and rely upon.

Similar the nurses. You are totally in their hands. They are masters of that place, the people to whom you place yourself and rely upon again. They are all there with you, your family and visitors as well, all around you with the doctors etc in an unbelievable spinning.

And yet the thread of the journey is yours. You travel and lean and get pulled through somehow.



I did a couple of things I had really been wanting to do. Ange was with me last time and time was limited I recall so didn't get a chance. One was to sit down in that downstairs cafe and have a big lunch of whatever I wanted – I remember being terribly jealous of everyone disappearing downstairs for a bite to eat in the cafe, me left there sucking in droplets from the trachy tube!

And the other was to down a large iced coffee Big M! Again I vividly remember the strong smell of a trainee doctors Big M as he went around with the rounds looking at the different patients. Not a great thing to parade in from of someone unable to drink water let alone a sweetened flavoured carton of milk!

Also visited Bethesda, which is no longer there, but went back to Elim across the road. I had forgotten about a lot of that – the old Victorian building, the exercise equipment in the central double height space, the stairs and colonnades. The pool – which is a lot smaller than I remember it being – square and not rectangular.

I went through the new rehab wards, but they didn't seem the same. Saw a few people with the external steel ros they use for growing bones and things back again.

I would love to be able to revisit that time, to see what it was like.

Few photos from the days away prior to Australia Day (Lochsport with Beck and Mick, Cam and Heather, and Mum and Dad). What a great time.

Big house right on the water, kids with cousins to play with and the beach etc.



29th January 2011 – Last weekend before starting work again, I am officially starting to establish life and routine again and feels good to get started in some ways.

Signing up for the weekend papers...



"The car in which you travel seems to leave the ground and hurl itself forward like a projectile ricocheting along the ground."

"As for the driver, the muscles of his body and neck become rigid in resisting the pressure of the air; his gaze is steadfastly fixed about 200 yards ahead; his senses are on the alert."

Camille Jenatzy,
Belgian car enthusiast.

From an article in The Age. Camille Jenatzy was the first person to break the 100km/hr speed record at a time when physiologists had no idea about the effect of so great a speed on the human body.

He died in a shooting accident supposedly however the shooter was the husband of Jenatzy's mistress. The cars fielded by Jenatzy and his rival pressed the limits of late-19th-century technology. Both attempted to cut drag with aerodynamic bodywork that appeared inspired by the day's airships.

Fantastic. Mistresses, hunting deaths, world speed barriers and cool industrial design. Inspires me to be living life to the fullest with a bit of flair and fun along the way.

30th January 2011 – Tub and Julie and Stew over last night for a barbeque. Kids ran wild around the house having a good, loud time. I don't really enjoy entertaining, always feel a bit judged, never totally relaxed... Still haven't mastered being me I guess.

Maybe that is where the judging comes in. You can only ever feel totally relaxed with people of your ilk and so the social interaction is a constant exploration of people to see if they are like you and can be related to?

Then again not – the other thing I am is over-analytical. We all are in fact, listening to Ange she was going through a lot of the same thought processes.

"You're like a barbarian. And in case you think you're a big rebel, you are completely ordinary. There is nothing more typical, more predictable, more common and low, than an American teenager who won't try things. You're boring, Lulu - boring" (to Louisa)

From Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother by Amy Chua.

I like the above. I didn't realise how difficult parenting would be. How to manage to be the type of parent I would like to be... I want to engender a strong sense of fun, reward and accomplishment.

That seems to come awry when dealing with kids with their own personalities and agendas and work ethics etc! I am hoping it will come right in the long run. Am doing what I am capable of and improving I think with practice.

ppm – I read some old diaries, 1986, today. My God! I was a totally different person. Painful to read – naïve, full of crap about romance and embarrassing analogies in the worst poetry I have ever had to read.

Makes learn think what the hell I am like now. Probably equally as bad, immature and oblivious to just how bad I am!? Some of it is down to the times – 24 years ago everyone was different.

I can't escape the fact I was 19 years old though – people do amazing things at 19 – I was a straight laced boring predictable dork. I am the extension of that now come to think of it! Although I have travelled a lot, I have done a lot with work and have had to get through some pretty rough shit – and then there is the accident!

All learning, all things that hopefully give me some dimension and perspective. Some of it was boredom and writing for the sake of writing which is what a lot of this is also. There is a comfort to be had in numbly typing away thoughts and observations.

Gives you a feeling of something happening, a vague sense of creation, a little bit better than veg-ing in front of the television. Does make me realise though I need to be more serious in my life, more worthwhile.

Tomorrow is the first day back at work and there will be a lot of catching up with old contacts over the next few weeks. Imagine there will be lots to learn and reflect upon through all of that. Where people have gone, what they have done with themselves, who they have become.

...and where do I sit in it all?

5th January 2011 – First week of work over – think I had one billable hour! I could perhaps invent one more if I tried really hard by charging back to Sg.

But I don't want to write about that. I want to write about feelings I am having. One of the great things about being back in Melbourne is the weekend

Age – takes five minutes of paper separation just sorting out all of the different mags etc to read through, not that I read them all...

But getting exposed to so much material and so much just on life. Property stuff, news all of that but I love the life mags – the Good Weekend and all of that.

Just read an article on people who suffered in the GFC to change things around by doing other things. None of these things brought them money but all brought them huge satisfaction in their lives.

- The head of commodities for MacQuarie in Korea who now works for animal shelters saving abandoned pets
- Head of a communications company who now owns ice cream vending carts, spends time with his daughter and does pro-bono work with ex servicemen
- A CEO headhunter who went into counselling, now back 4 days as a head hunter remaining two in counselling, again mainly pro-bono
- Google advertising account manager who ran 52 marathons in 52 weeks to travel the world and found a following on facebook and other places to gain a bit of notoriety and a lot of friends etc joining him

Fantastic.

I can feel this slow mist coming in and around me, full of expectation or something I can quite put my finger on it.

One of the reinvents, the CEO head hunter was from Vietnam and talked about survivor guilt. I feel like I have a bit of that also. I have never really suffered – I have always been incredibly lucky in all that I have done – despite myself a lot of the time!

There is a feeling around all of that. I look at others who struggle and get through and do well and bring up kids and do all of that and here I am making it seem a meal of it a lot of the time.

Things that could take me to other places:

1. Buy a block of land and build a holiday house. Rather than the worry of life becoming alternative maintenance on the holiday house and the city house, the holiday becomes building the house – which I actually enjoy. The more second hand the more beach shackish, the better.
2. Start studying psychology – it has always interested me and fits in with life exploration – why are we here and what are the bigger facets to the picture.
3. Start on the aid work – building a school or something with the aid of corporate donations in developing countries. Womens education – involved with womens foundations perhaps (I was really impressed

with the RRR show I listened to about this. Feed funds into the women in a community and 80% of the funds get reinvested into the community whereas if you give it to the men the figure reduces to 30%. Who knows where the hell those figures come from but they feel right.

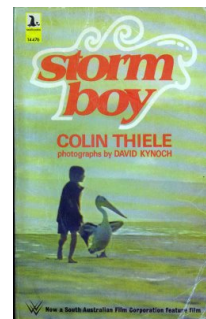
4. ...

I reckon I should try and get this list up to ten things – and then what? Choose one? Difficult.

Maybe it is time to break out of my engineering ways and not be so sensible. As the benefit is in the doing, not in the end point, what does it matter if they become partly finished projects along the way?...

Hmmmm ;), I like having thing like this to ponder, feels right this sort of direction. I know this is supposed to be the gathering stage but time is not endless.

Should talk with Peter Bowtell and Ken Stickland about it perhaps...



6th January 2011 – Sunday and another sleep in and more weekend papers - actually just the one from yesterday I didn't read, and lo and behold another article I want to record a bit of.

Yes, based on two sample points my life is becoming weekend magazines and articles about life and feelings and living... There is a lot more of that in Australia than Singapore and I am filling a craving just at the moment arising

from the lack of exposure over the past eight years and the circling mists of mid life crisis thought.

If this is what mid-life crisis is about it is actually a lot of fun. Crisis is definitely the wrong word. Maybe the crisis comes a bit later when you realise what you've done and exactly how much in debt it has put you!

Anyway, reading about a guy who has spent a lot of time studying longevity – blue zones (geographical areas where people live longer), and all of that. A few of his lessons (which all ring true):

- It is not about a lot of exercise. People who live longer do their own yard work, use manual tools etc. Walking is apparently the only thing that has been proven to stop cognitive decline.
- Financial security is more important than income – spend your money on financial security.
- Long term actions rather than short term - super foods etc wont help unless it is for the long term which it never is. Caloric restriction helps. The down side is you burn less brightly! I think all of this is not being a glutton – eat simply and not to excess – something I could learn from, at least I am not in love with food which is a good start.
- Unhappiness or grumpiness takes around eight years off of your life.

Drink more, work less, was the authors take away.

Slow down a bit get a pace to life, live, enjoy, don't be excessive – there is a definite feels right about what you eat and drink – do it and no more. Look after security.

Been doing some more thinking about a block of land. Want somewhere that you can interact with the outside. Preferably nature and the sea but bush and fauna/flora as well. Take heed of the comments on financial security above Brendon!

7th January 2011 – aam – I am actually shit scared about what is going to happen with work. Here I am big house, three kids at school, Ange studying, loans to service, lots of things going on all costing money, and struggling at work.

A week in I know but it is not going to be easy to get things to work. I need to be able to sell commercial or something on the large side to get things going. I need to figure out what it is I am selling first off!

Another 3:30 in the morning session, up by myself unable to still my mind, thoughts lined with mild panic... not very nice to be going through. God help me I hope everything is going to be ok.

12th February 2011 – Just started reading Lee Kuan Yews memoirs and are enjoying having the background of Singapore to make it all a bit more relevant.

I wasn't expecting to enjoy it I must admit so a nice surprise. The papers at the time of separation mentioned:

“In each individual's heart is his own prayer”

And (from the Nanyang Siang Pau)

“The heart knows it without having to announce it”

This strikes a chord. All of us have deep feelings of what we want within us that aren't spoken, or even revealed in consciousness to ourselves sometimes. I can feel them there and try unsuccessfully at times to try and put words around them.

I wonder if they are general feelings of wanting to accomplish or create, or more distinct goals that are too close to our souls to reveal, too precious to admit even to ourselves lest we have to face them. In cases they may even be too scary to admit to, too opposed to cultural norms or the manner a person has a chosen to live their life by...

I need to be careful reading autobiographies – I all too easily identify with the people and their lives and adopt their goals as my own. It is like stopping your own life for a few weeks and living theirs. Not all bad, but dangerously distracting if there is too much of it...

More and more, some further study is appealing to me. I am thinking astronomy, or psychology. I still don't particularly want to do business. Whilst it is interesting I think I don't like the way it is taught. It is like running with a pack of sheep who all think they are wolves – and maybe they are? But it just seems to be missing the point of life a bit.

There must be more than learning to win at business games. And winning at business games is I suspect a lot about doing things differently. An MBA it seems is about who can run the same race as everyone else that little bit faster.

18th February 2011 – Longer week at work this week. Got out a submission on Tonsley Park which involved quite a bit of work at night. Feeling a bit better? Maybe? Something is slipping in around me, I am not entirely sure what but I can feel it approaching.

22nd February 2011 – Bed at 9pm last night – tired and kids up late (good story time on Freya's bottom bunk mind you). Stella slept in our bed (Ange in Freya's. She is still scared after that witches movie she watched – think it was sometime on the weekend but really seems to have affected her.

I hope it is the movie – will have to quiz Ange a bit more on when it happened and ask her some of the details...

23rd February 2011 – Second day of the beyond zero workshop at work today (Beyond Zero accidents – well being etc at work). Has been very good. Love a bit of introspection...

A few take aways:

Clare Graves spiral of human development. A philosophy where society builds upon knowledge or states (meme's – levels of thinking). First Level:

- Cave Dwellers
- Animistic
- Egocentric
- Authoritarian
- Archivist
- Communitarian

Second Tier memes involve people who can see the whole of the first tier:

- Holistic
- Integrative.

I can see this on a large scale – and also as they pointed out an individual scale. I like things that help us understand our motivations etc.

Issue with dealing between memes is that everyone in a meme thinks they have the whole thing figured out.

“Stuff I know, that I don't do”

On too much teaching – in the context of
we know what we need we just need to remind
ourselves how...

When JFK proclaimed in 1963 that America would send a man to the moon and return him safely within the decade, they had no idea how to do it. There were resignations from NASA apparently and scientists rejected him on three broad principles. One was the rocket technology (navigation, stability etc. I imagine), another was the metallurgical knowledge - to be able to cope with the re-entry, and the last was fuel technologies...

He responded by setting up the 'office of can't be dones'. Anything that proved too hard was given to these guys who hit it with all their might to overcome it.

On comfort zones, you start with a full open circle as a child – the space in which you operate. Over time your experiences result in different parts of the circle being shaded. Rejection here, pain there, you learn to limit your sphere of operation to protect yourself – establish and keep yourself within a comfort zone.

Making ground on anything involves not doing things the way you have always done them (to change things by definition I guess). So that it follows you need to be operating outside of your comfort zone – and have faith in yourself that the results will come through...

That last one is also about involvement – put yourself out there with the faith that it will be the right thing to do.

The other one is being known by three things. Your reputation, your stereotypes, and your core values. The first two arise from the past and you have little control over them. The last your values are your chance to change how you are perceived.

What - How – Why. All things should come from the why. You sell hte concept like Apple, and you convince people, get them on board – they rarely buy the why, the don't buy the how or what.

Lead with your values...

All this being personal, introspection, looking after people, communicating and sharing, leading with values.. I can relate to that...

27th February 2011 – ad a voice coaching session today. A girl, Emily, from the Beyond Zero training that I did last week, who looks like she knows a thing or two.

One of the exercises we did was to read the poem by John Marsden, A prayer for the twenty-first century.

May the road be free for the journey
May it lead where it promised it would
May the stars that gave ancient bearing
Be seen, still be understood.

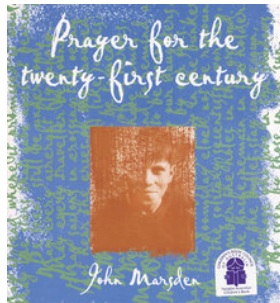
May every aircraft fly safely,
May every traveller be found,
May sailors in crossing the ocean
Not hear the cries of the drowned.

May gardens be wild, like jungles,
May nature never be tamed,
May dangers create of us heroes,
May fears always have names.

May the mountains stand to remind us
Of what it means to be young,
May we be outlived by our daughters
May we be outlived by our sons.

May the bombs rust away in the bunkers,
And the doomsday clock not be rewound,
May the solitary scientists working,
Remember the holes in the ground.

May the knife remain in the holder,
May the bullet stay in the gun,
May those who live in the shadows
Be seen by those in the sun.



...'May those who live in the shadows be seen by those in the sun.' Struck a chord. Appeals to my fears of being left alone, of rejection and of not being able to fend for ones self.

I need to get that tattooed somewhere to remind me of it everyday – something to live your life by. I am not there yet apart from in very small localised ways. One day I hope to make it – personal things to get over first. Look after family etc... I want it though.

Went to a very good talk tonight about 'Room to Read'. Basically answered a lot of the questions I had on building schools etc in developing countries. It is huge – as I suspected it might be – knew that it should. These guys open a new library once every 6 hours or something like that. Fantastic.

Started by John Wood – an ex Microsoft BD exec who got inspired when shown a school by one of the local headmasters in Nepal. 'Perhaps when you come back you could bring some books' were his parting words.

Think I would really like to get involved – they seem to be doing everything right. I particularly like his description of land rovers for NGOs – not only do they cost 75k which is 300 children through school for a year, but they are also like chips. Once you have one, you need another and another... :).

Will read more but would like to get involved – I would like to align it with corporate spending on team building events, and corporate responsibility. What better way for high powered execs to get skills about working together, relate to people, and feel good about themselves and their company. And what

better way for a company to demonstrate it cares and is doing something about improving the world.

- Branded schools?
- Visits by staff members to school openings
- sponsorship of teachers
- annual trips to donate books
- multi day treks to open peoples minds, carrying books as donations
- Team building

Negatives might be concerns on safety, concerns about being distracting from core business (in ways that a weekend camp would not be). Concerns on length of time out...

01 March 2011 – Things heating up at work – now officially too much to do! Most concerning of all is some cracking in the hub of the Flyer. Minor but will require repair which will be expensive and controversial given the relationship between MHI and SFPL.

Went to bed early (8:45), last night – Stella in our bed still scared of the 'Witches' thoughts from the movie she should not have been watching – Ewan awake with his light on across the corridor. I got up about 12:45 and did some paperwork – back to bed about 2:00 freezing and didn't thaw out for a few hours of disturbed dozing.

Another typical night in the McNiven household – could be better orchestrated cant help but feel – poor Ange just wants some normal sleep – all these abnormal sleepers around her...

2 March 2011 –

Waves

The sea presented a superb spectacle. With your eye at water level you suffer a good deal of inconvenience, but the viewpoint is much finer than from the lofty bridge of a steamship. In the trough of the waves you are dominated by a colourless sea entirely overspread by a sort of white powder which is driven by the wind across the heaving surface. From the crests you see an ocean of foam; from time to time the top of a huge wave topples over and bursts into an unforgettable cloud of spray, shot pink in the early light. Facing the wind it is difficult to open your eyes.

Still more striking are the extraordinary patches of indescribable green, 'electric green' as I always call it, which appears on the slopes of the larger waves, those which break or at least try to break before they are decapitated by the fury of the wind. This is an 'effect' which marine painters find almost impossible to reproduce, as it is essentially luminous, not that there are many who have really seen it. Sea water, permeated as it is with active phosphorescent organic life, from which its colour is derived (for sea water is coloured, as you may see by pouring some into a big wine glass), glows through and through with an inward light. On the flanks of the wave oily tracts gleam lividly, mixed with patches of whipped foam.

Marin-Maric:Wind Aloft, Wind Alow.

Really like that passage – I like the description of the subtle raw beauties of the ocean, I like the fact that it is in the early morning light, from the decks of a steam ship through heavy seas. It is the scene around the passage as much as anything else, but the core beauty is of that ocean water and the light.

Reminds me of the few vividly memorable experiences I have had , on Nathans yacht through a Singapore Sumatra squall the sea surface transformed to an oil painting, all the rough edges of the waves rounded off by the heavy rain and wind, out with Fred on wings on the way up to Phuket, heavy winds and seas – throwing my guts out in-between hauling in the main sail, wild rough beautiful in the immediate, and a closed local little world somehow, and also out with the kids exploring the caves through the limestone islands rising from the seas around Krabi. Deep beautiful green light you pick up at depth in a dark cave when the light comes through the sea from the other side indicating the passage connect through (gorgeous, warm and deep, slightly menacing but lovely to experience).

4 March 2011 -

Desolation

Mark where the pressing wind shoots javelin-like
Its skeleton shadow on the broad-back'd wave:
Here is a fitting spot to dig Love's grave;
Here where the ponderous breakers plunge and strike,
And dart their hissing tongues high up the sand:
In hearing of the ocean, and in sight
Of those ribb'd wind streaks running into white...

George Meredith: Modern Love

Here is a fitting spot to dig Loves grave. This really struck me – one of those rare things that surprises you, that weren't expecting. 'Desolation' – burying your hopes and dreams in the back of a wind swept wave borne of some horrible tempest, what a sad and beautiful thought.

Peter Davidson (ex LAB architects of Federation Square renown) came into the office today. He has had a stroke (as Pippa had told me). He had made his way to the office just to visit someone.- Peter Bowtell, Pippa, and Andrew Maher who used to work for him.

Struck a chord – he is still in rehab – St Vincents. I was going to look him up in any case and so went out to say hello. I am not sure if he remembered me – I worked a little on Fed Sq, with Chris bell the light sculpture artist.

He didn't relate to me so much but I could see the whole rehab thing. I ended up dropping into to where he was staying (Bolte Wing), to have a chat on the way home – but was told he was on a weekend visit home.

I think I will drop in next week to say hello. I remember being in that situation – wanting someone to talk to – maybe. It is not a great place rehab. I

think I mentioned I visited Bethesda but it had been torn down and spread out into other wards.

Maybe St V's is somewhere I could visit and talk to people, maybe do some good? Not sure what I am doing by going there but feel it is something I want to try in any case...

7th March 2011 – Got a little angry again last night – no real damage but reminds me it is still there – must sign up for a management course – put it in the diary to arrange now!

Sunday papers this morning and the magazines :). This weeks pearl is an article by Sarah Wilson on authors and self binding – the habit of people to set others to control them. You can buy software call freedom which blocks your internet access for eight hours, or Anti social which blocks facebook etc for similar periods of time!

Victor Hugo used to write in the nude (pajamas I am thinking might be more accurate), as he ordered his butler to hide his clothes so he could not go out, thereby being forced to write...

Te immediate thought is to give turning into a morning person a try. It is by far the most beautiful and pure part of the day. Cold, pristine, lovely, mind is clear and there are few distractions – notably crap television which seems to chew up nighttimes (vaguely enjoyable as it might be).

What if I were to get up at five am every morning – one and a half hours to do something – go for a walk or do some paperwork, reading or writing. The only issue will be the waking of others...

I should set myself a goal to try these extreme things (not drinking is another), every now and then – to break the boredom/routine if nothing else, and perhaps find some nuggets of worthwhile to keep on in the process.

7th March 2011 – First day of dropping kids off at before schools care – Ange's first day at uni :). I like being involved – helps when they look forward to it – a bit of play time and hot chocolate/vegemite toast – fantastic...

Couple of little things caught my eye walking to work this morning, a red feather on grey concrete littered with twigs, and a gumnut flower? I like a world with scale, lots of places/levels to be in.



8th March 2011 – Attended a talk at Engineers Australia tonight. Pretty lightweight – good to be happening however... I don't know why I have such a fear of public speaking...? Maybe it is because I like being within myself – even when I am out there. I feel so removed from society sometimes – in a good way mostly.

9th March 2011 – am – Enjoying getting involved in work at the moment. Interesting things on wheels, introducing myself etc, few tenders here and there.

Can't help but feel not everything is as it should be however. I don't want to be working – I want to be exploring the world and observing and writing and drinking it all in. But to what end I am not sure – probably my own laziness and self interest?

I know that this (slight?), misalignment is not a good thing, but I need to be here for family reasons – which are another priority. I am not capable or out there enough to take the big risks to get everything aligned. There are too many things at stake – Stella, Ewan, Freya mostly... I would be happy if I knew that what I am doing is the right thing for them – but on that I am taking the conservative well trodden path as well.

Maybe once they have a more stable grounding we can branch out a bit – do the sailing for 3 months, or travelling the third world... I don't know? Keep going best you can Brendon...

10th March 2011 –

Ocean's Nursling

Underneath Days azure eyes
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves,
Lo! Te sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
Ande before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome, and spire
Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire tinted skies.

P.B.Shelley

Lines written amongst the Euganean Hills



Venice Painting 009
Venice Painting, 100%
Hand-painted on Canvas
by Outstanding Artists,
Museum Quality and
Affordable Price. The
above price is 20X24Inch
size. Other...

Definitely one of the nicest cities I (we) have been to. You do get that feeling the city is being cradled by the sea, gently lapping up around and in cases of high tides through the canals and squares.

It has a bit of a childlike quality to it. A maze of buildings and passages, and waterways through which to immerse yourself, and explore. Not to mention the amazing history. Italy in the 1800s must have been incredible – to an observer...

Lots of birds about this morning. Overcast with very light drizzle. Any lighter and it would not have been raining at all, felt like you were walking through the droplets rather than have them come down on you.

Saw another butcher bird which was nice (nice to confirm what I saw the other day).

pm – Didn't get time to mention the other day an article on the front page of the Age about a man pleading insanity for throwing his four year old daughter from the West Gate Bridge.

He had been on the phone to his wife with whom he was in a custody battle. He told her she was never going to see her kids again. Pulled over (he was driving home from the West coast to take the kids to their first day at school), and got his little girl out of the car and, just threw her over the edge.

She was fished out of the river later with heavy injuries. They tried to resuscitate her for 50 minutes but failed. His six year old son who was in the back seat told him 'Dad, you need to go back for Darcey – she cant swim'...

He apparently drove straight to a courthouse and broke down freezing, non responsive to his sons (6 +2)...

I was physically sick for hours, felt like going home. That poor girl. And her brother now having to live with that for the rest of his life.

Again – why, how. So much pain and tragedy, destruction, I can't imagine. Destruction horrific, and wreckage of lives and human beings scattered, and ongoing.



r.i.p Darcey

11th March 2011 – Seems a verse a day connects somehow. I can relate to the cold and picture this guy. I wonder what his woollen jumper is like, and his life. I wonder what he feels when he goes home at night, what he eats and how it must be a fluid part of his life around him. Hard earned food is the best of all...

The Aldeburgh Oyster-Dredger

Nor angler we on our wide stream descry,
But one poor dredger where his oysters lie;
He, cold and wet, and driving with the tide,
Beats his weak arms against his tarry side,
Then drains the remnant of diluted gin
To aid the warmth that languishes within;
Renewing oft his poor attempts to beat
His tingling fingers into gathering heat.

George Crabbe
The Borough

pm – Disappointed in myself this afternoon. I mentioned to Rick at Alfasi something I shouldn't have about where they sat on SSH national stadium roof. Serious error of judgement and very silly.

I let them know that they were low but that others who were not outsourcing the work were also low so it did not look good. Hopefully not that much they can do with but should never have done it. I guess I am feeling at sea a little and wanted to be valued. Live and learn – need to settle down and get my head level again...

15th March 2011 – Moomba yesterday with the kids (Ange was at uni), great afternoon. Morning up early dropping Ange off, food shopping, putting up the second clothes line, and lunch. Really productive good day...

Moomba was brilliant – fantastic rides, less of the crappy games that you lose a lot of money on trying to win a soft toy. Water skiing (jumps), skateboard park, and met ticket inspectors handing out swap cards of Australian fauna, and even old pennies!

I probably shouldn't be but am always surprised when I see proper generosity.

20th March 2011 – aam - House warming for Al & Heathers tonight, beautiful place – victorian, old chandeliers cleaned up etc. Has come up really well. A bit like their place in Shanghai, very well furnished out – lots of stuff in all the right places – feels a lot like the homes you see on the movies.

I wonder if everyone's homes are like that – I guess ours will be as well with time. It is nice now, just needs filling out with some of stuff that is us. Difficult with us being so busy.

I look around at everyone, and everybody seems of this course. Drinking and appreciating wines, and fine foods, raving about prosciutto or things like that... and cooking things like that. It is great but I just can't get into it that much. My memory is good for things I like and am interested in, I just cannot keep that sort of thing in my head.

I really enjoy it as a transitory experience, made all the better as it is a novelty and not there all the time. A contrast to normal things and life... There are just so many things that are far more real, important.

There was a Leunig cartoon today about life being a tightrope walk across a room with no floor. You inevitably fall off and through one way or another arrive in the outdoors, at what is really important. Can't help but agree that there is something out there that holds the secret – is the secret?

What do all these people think. Do they all think this is the thing to do, do they enjoy it? If they don't, why don't they say something?

I really enjoyed last night (and a night a little while ago), lying down on the rug listening to the second Romeo & Juliet soundtrack album. Beautiful. Made all the more beautiful as the sounds, all of the mid tones were all there in the speakers and old stereo system – resonating with reality and a time scale I have lived through.

Need some more of that – get some things I really like, simple things and get them around me, incorporate them into my life.

Arup are asking me to be office leader at the moment in Melbourne. There are alarm bells ringing – not my natural skill set and I would like to relax for a bit – take a break.

There are all these other things pulling however. I feel a named role would put a bit of the paranoia around the edges at rest. Being against my natural skill set would probably be a good thing for my development. Some of it I would do quite well I think in that I would hopefully bring a bit of a personal feel to it. Other bits I would struggle on – need a lot of energy which I don't always have.

Having said that I think I am quite good at a lot of it – compared to others. ...and I was really happy and encouraged that they thought so as well. I also feel a little obligated – they haven't got many choices (I wasn't the first), but I am a grade 9 and should be putting in.

Will speak to a few people and we will see.

Watching 'Lost in translation' with a bit of a scotch late at night – kids on sleep over, day of renovations in the rumpus room ahead - :). Love the feel of the film – Great parting scene, what a difference a smile makes



Quiet house, Surfing the net, scotch in hand, rage on the tele – liking it.

Above image from Mark Gray – Mt Buffalo (bit saturated in terms of colour – had to b&w so it would not annoy me!, but like the composition – an anonymous hill feeling to it...). I must do some photo printing – canvas and stretch them, should not let Ange dissuade me – doesn't need to be forever after all.

24th March 2011 – Just bought a book (Moby Dick), from Hill of Content bookshop in Bourke Street (Borders has closed). Forgotten what a bookshop can be like – fantastic. Some really good books in there, people who know about them etc etc.

Might even go down there on a rainy day and read it is so comfortable.

Came across the following artwork on one of their winter catalogues – love this also – the sketching of the tubes in particular – earthy maybe, probably not but something human in them in terms of the way they are related to you...

25th March 2011 – Stella went to see Mary Poppins last night. Mum took her and Jacob as a Christmas present. Fantastic – they were all beaming when I picked them up talking about the show and the whole experience – Billionaires must go there I am told.

Thought she would be slow out of bed this morning and she was but just a little – probably no worse than other days – me on the other hand – not as young as I have been apparently and bit sleepy...:).

26th March 2011 – Frank was over today helping with some reno's – doing the self levelling grout for the rumpus room. Frank is great, really lucky to have him around. Always positive, always down to earth.

He mentioned on Friday that he had put me down as a mentor in his appraisal - ! Will be good to spend some time with him but feel a bit strange – I feel a bit of a fake compared to people like him. Then again it is about a lot of things – I understand enough, and I hope I understand enough of the people side to get things happening which is after all a lot of it.



We should be doing far more high end architecture at work. We shouldn't for a moment give up on the rail and other stuff (good work), but the end goal should always be the architecture. It is a higher form of art after all, something to take us further, to inspire and reflect on us, to interact and to be more than everyday...

28th March 2011 – Doctors on Saturday morning to talk about the results of the x-rays and ultrasound I had done on my knees. All fine, all completely normal, all meniscus and soft layers of a normal thickness, all tendons and gooby bits looking like they should where they should. All bones smooth and no scaling or lumps that need shaving off.

Hmmm... doesn't explain the clicking internally – mind you that was back in Sg prior to me starting to wear inner soles to stop my foot from rolling. Perhaps it was starting to go and I caught it early?

Will start some slow short jogs and try to strengthen and work back into training. I am putting on a little weight in the wrong places. Aim is to get exercising again, eat more and have it translate to muscle in good places – and hopefully some weight in my face – too thin for my liking – a sign of a warrior.

Finished the underlay on the floor last night in the rumpus room. Likely will cost even more than a laminate or pre-prepared floating timber floor but at the end of the day we will have Tassie oak boards similar to the rest of the house. Floating and insulated from the slab (feels warmer already with just the underlay down).

And I am enjoying it – did some angle grinding – always scares the crap out of me – and sawing off of the bottom of the door jambs with a vibrating saw – brilliant little tool. Ummed and Aghed about buying power tools instead of an old hacksaw and stiff wood saw – lucky I did as they had all been cast into the concrete and it would have been a bugger to get out!

Next weekend is putting the timber down. Whole system relies on the boards being glued together – they say it works and in theory should be fine but as it is not the norm (normally the thin ones click together), you never know. Must stick a couple together tonight just to test the system!

Might sound a bit trite getting excited about small renos like this but am enjoying it. Bit by bit, house will become ours and the way we want it. Next cabs off the rank are the back yard and external window painting etc.

30 March 2011 – Dodgeball tonight as a part of Ovathon – bit like the Arup Olympics... Always thought it was a made up game for the movie – apparently it is real, and people even used to play it in school!

We saw an old lady and her husband by the side of the road next to Southern Cross station on the way home. She was obviously in distress and not able to get up.

Gave her a hand to her feet by which time the taxi that had initially pulled over for them took off – not very nice! They had been on a full days bus/train trip to Melbourne for the flower show from Adelaide.

When I get old, I must make an effort to keep moving – she was just dead weight trying to get her to her feet. Not in good shape. Apparently the train had arrived at a different platform to last year and she couldn't walk the distance required to get a taxi.

A bit grim – seems funny to use that word in relation to an old lady, but that was it – grim. I would have been scared and embarrassed...

Thinking more about an additional room and extended deck out the back. That cost reasonable, think it is the type of thing I could do myself?

- Excavation (5k),
- Re-route drainage (2.5k),
- Concrete slab(10k)
- Stud framing (10k)
- Brick walls (5k)
- Bit of steel perhaps (5k)
- Concrete slab or timber deck (20k) (talk to Mozz)

- Balustrade (2.5k)
- Windows and doors (20k) – all glass
- Plasterboard and timber flooring (10k) (floating depending on how the rumpus room turns out!
- Electrical (10k)
- Toilet (10k)

If we did it ourselves don't think it would cost more than 100k? If we got a builder it would be more like 200-300k.

31st March 2011 – Nice little smile from Ewie saying good bye this morning. I get the feeling there is more connecting there now – mainly through the mornings at drop off before school I have been spending with him – need to do the same with Stella...

5th April 2011 – Did I mention I am going to embark upon a year of extremes? The year of living dangerously... :)

Each month I will change one aspect of lifestyle and do my utmost to keep to it. Hopefully I will get to see the changes and pick up on bits, perhaps retain some of them to change the way I am for the better? (or not).

If nothing else it will keep me amused for a bit. – Refer to my to do list for details...

Kids are beautiful and seem to be getting on well at the moment – with us, each other, and life in general.

They are all sleeping in the same bunk bed currently. Started out with Stella wanting to sleep in Freyas room after being scared by a movie (Witches – Ronald Dahl!). They became inseparable, and Ewan joined them on the bottom bunk one night as he began to feel a bit left out.

Really like that this has happened. It will I hope create a bit of bonding between them all – three little snoring musketeers out to make their way in the world.

7th April 2011 – aam -

“...for it was not unlike the custom of his own race who, after, embalming a dead warrior, stretched him out in a canoe, and so left him to be floated away to the starry archipelagos; for not only do they believe that the stars are isles, but that far beyond all visible horizons, their own mild, uncontented seas interflow with the blue heavens, and so form the white breakers of the milky way.”

Herman Melville, Moby Dick.

Meditation not so easy. I keep drifting off to sleep. One small thing I have found is that it is nice to meditate on being in the moment. This is helped by slowly moving my head and feeling the muscles move, the slight stiffness etc that brings you to recognise the here and now. The other thing to do is to sit outside for a small while to feel the cold of the air, or to see the stars.

Maybe that is it – just being here for the present for a little bit...

13th April 2011 – Both Ange and I working hard at the moment. Worries on the wheel – could be that we can't make what is up there work because of the locked in stresses induced when they were putting the spokes together after arrival at site (having been taken apart for transport).

Bit concerning. Ange has assignments due in prior to Easter. Going away camping – not sure going to be relaxing given won't be warm, no confirmed camp spots etc.. Will take an extra day off beforehand to take all the stress out of it and give us some time to relax.

School holidays and kids are being juggled between grandparents – actually quite good as they do sleep overs which gives us some time off – amazing how smoothly things run when you are kid free...

Haven't managed meditation the last couple of nights due to the weekend away and just having been so busy... Must get back on the horse and discipline myself to do it.

pm – Gave my talk at futurenet – over a hundred people turned up which was good – not a great performance I fear! Could not master the microphone – guy came up to me later to tell me I had not put it directly in front of my mouth and not under. He didn't say it was a disaster but wasn't as good for people at the back as it was at the front.

I chastise myself constantly after these sessions! It is painful and I don't like it! What to do – I must keep on and hopefully get better. At least I have half decent stuff to talk about – and that probably carries through a lot of it.

Brendon, Brendon, Brendon....



14 April 2011 –

Spring or summer are the time: the sea will then not wreck ships or drown men – unless the earth shaking Poseidon has a grudge against them, or Zeus the king of Heaven doesn't like their looks. They after all, have the last word. At any rate, that is the season for kindly winds and calm seas; without anxiety then you can trust your vessel to the breezes, get her afloat and load her up. But mind you come home again at the first possible moment; don't wait for the new wine and the autumn rains, the bad weather which is sure to come – with southerly gales, constant companions to the of the autumn rain, making the sea an unwholesome place to be in.

But to sail in spring and summer is another matter. When on the tips of the branches the new leaves have grown to the length of a crow's footprint, then the sea is fit to sail on. Then you'll have a summer passage – not that I recommend it myself; for I do not care for such things. Even then you may hardly escape disaster. Ah well! Men do these things, poor fools! For money is life to miserable mortals. Yet it is a dreadful fate to drown.

However, if sail you must, take my advice: never trust all you possess on board of a ship. Leave the greater part at home, and freight your vessels with the lesser part only. For I say again that it is a terrible thing to perish at sea.

Hsioid : Works and Days



I like a few things about this – particularly the crows claws and autumn rains... and some times it just nice to be writing in the diary for some reason.

pm -

"...In response to the challenge men discovered within themselves resources they not suspected, and never before had used. This, of course, was a common discovery of war..."

"...and one realised that in the huge overcrowded areas of our civilisation there is, for lack of opportunity, an extravagant waste of native ability."

Eric Linklater, The art of adventure

And maybe it is just the frame of mind that makes these passages connect somehow, and want to be written down?

Night out tonight at a Doxa scholarship programme – where Arup sponsor underprivileged kids with the ability to well academically but not necessarily the money.

A good thing. Charity working at all levels I guess in society and the world. Not quite the starving or third world but worthy nonetheless.

15th April 2011 – Kids back this morning – bit of squabbling – Ange had a tough time with them all ratty and complaining and fighting last night apparently. Gave them all a hug telling them how much I had missed them all and seemed well received :). Did miss them as well – must remember to make the most of these times, they will be grown and gone all too quick I fear – and not without a lot of trial and hardship along the way either.

I really hope we can hang onto the relationships etc. See it go wrong so often...

18 April 2011 – ppm – Back in Singapore. Interview with Alfasi on Sports Hub on Wednesday. They are up against it in terms of winning but hard to say no – million plus fee, they have asked us to bid on Southbeach also and run a risky game of inside information if don't play with a straight bat.

Other reasons to be here as well – cracking in the Flyer hub, touch base with people on other work – sus out how stressed the SSH guys are etc...

Feels a bit strange being back – should not have stayed around the office, sick of this place – has given me all it is likely to – especially at night where not much around apart from bars etc.

Mara Hotel, room 1313 – auspicious. Seems so, got a bit of going with the flow going on with things not turning out quite as expected...

19th April 2011 – back sitting at blue cafe (now red with Walls ice cream advertising – and green walls... I can't quite recall if the building used to be blue also – I am sure it was?

The old blokes with grey beards have been replaced with the burkha clad daughters. I thought the old guy at the urn was still the same but couldn't seem to get my chia order and ended up with a passable ginger tea – but not quite the substance...

Think might be the closing of blue cafe days for various reasons.

Area around Arab street seems a bit seedier than before and at the same time not. More tourists, more massage places. Meant to sketch the scene from the hotel room window this morning but didn't have the paper... Maybe that should be an extreme month – a sketch a day – in the same book to see how things change.

20th April 2010 – Interview seemed to go well today. Alfasi happy, and I actually think they would do a good job if successful. Also think they are up against it with Yongnam in the frame...

Had a good night out with Rick and Brett last night. Tapas dinner at a Spanish place in Duxton Hill Road – quite hip, and then a few beers at JJ's to see the band play again – hadn't changed one iota – must do it every night, and they were great, the lead guitar player is awesome – just quietly stands there and rips out these fantastic session to drunk guys and Singapore party girls... largely unappreciated.

21st April 2011 – Love flying. Closed my eyes and just absorbed the feelings of accelerations on take off last night. On one of the double deck A380s – giant form and mass powering up into the sky. You can feel the initial thrust forward and then acceleration for a bit whilst picking up speed. /All of the bumps etc come slightly dampened through the undercarriage etc into the cabin. Not strong energetic enough to be called a shaking, but a purposeful, 'means business' type of bumping.

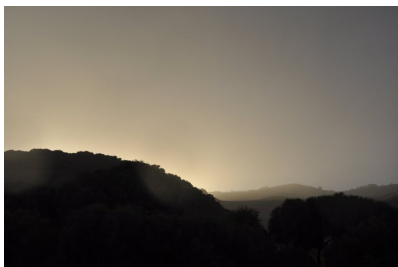
As you take off, you realise there is no clear definition of the bumping stopping or abating, instead it continues. It is as if the massive wing spans are forcing the air to do its bidding in an unnatural way, an unnatural state of physics, introduced to the world by powered flight and these huge machines.

24th April 2011 –

Two households both alike in dignity
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean,
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes,
A pair of star-crossed lovers take their life,
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Doth with their death bury their parents' strife:
The fearful passage of their death marked love,
And the continuance of their parents' rage,
Which but their children's end not could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage.



Johanna – dunes behind Johanna beach, surf crashing, tents, combi's wicked camping, atmosphere, rain on, and off, twilights of pasture hills, great southern trail?, Aires crossing, imaginary campsites, muddy tracks and bogged, three J's Cindy and Fiona, 4WDs and winches, Cape Otway lighthouse, Moonlight anchors an adventure, tired small legs, wild coast line, shipwrecks long ago. Easter baskets and Easter bunnies, property for sale unaffordable. Port Campbell f&c's, beach lookouts before bed, and stars, and cool, and long nights. Long drives, and feeling our way, of feeling alright about things... We tents, sanding and second floor coat, packing up and playing, television (Thomas), Easter visitors at Basil's. Concerns over work threaded through, of not caring enough to panic perhaps, but to worry?



Afternoon rain squalls Johanna

25th April 2011 – Morning in the house, smell of the painted floors in the rumpus room downstairs, autumn cool mist outside, yellow leaves on trees. Quiet – very Christchurch/Bath for me, bit of Ballarat for Ange. ...all permeating the soul, thoughts, demeanour. A bit of time travel, nice feeling... unrushed.

pm – Took the Winx club to the movies (Hop), this morning and shopping this afternoon. Freya fell going up some white marble stairs and chipped her front tooth, displacing one back (or bringing one forward Ange thinks?), in the process. Poor little thing, I hope it will be ok – milk teeth so hopefully no lasting damage. Might have to ask a person or two re effects on the way her future teeth may grow.

Bought Stella a bike for her birthday – 18 speed, 60 cm, which is close to if not full size. She was fairly quiet and non-committal during the process of looking at different bikes – as only Stella can be, very down to business and no unnecessary wasted emotions or over thinking of anything!. As soon as we

bought it however I could tell she was over the moon. Reminded me of my first bike – the big blue ten speed racer Malvern Star – sat in the back room at Appletree drive and just looked at it for quite a while. Similarly, Stella just wanted to sit and be with it. Lovely to be a part of – really enjoyed it.

The others have been pretty good as well. Ewan got a new helmet after Ange backed over his old one in the car! Let me talk him into the better one than the original he chose – could tell he was cutting me some slack – not sure if it was giving in, taking the easy road, or seeing the sense...? Perhaps I should have let him take the cheaper one but wanted something that would fit and not keep falling off!

Listening and thought processes going on in any case. Freya was all up for a toy but we ran out of time – ended up going in to Toys'r'us as it was closing, and picking up the display model – a little funny actually and lucky it all worked out – might not have been too popular! Alpine Huffy, 24 inch girls mountain bike – pretty chuffed myself I must admit – nice bike \$150 down from \$200 as a display model but good nick...



Love the bean...

Few things going on at work at the moment. Office Leader stuff happening. SSOW (Southern Star Observation Wheel), and trying to get buildings happening again in a buildings sense (we do good transport work, stations etc), but should really be in the building game me thinkst.

The wheel in particular is prickly – Alfasi have not delivered as well as they should have. We are in the difficult position of having to justify out of tolerance construction, and locked in construction forces etc. If we don't and are bloody minded about things, the project spirals into the toilet, law suits will abound and we will likely not be immune.

All bearable at the moment as we are managing to convince ourselves things are ok, heaven help us the day we cannot...

Few interesting characters thrown in there for good luck. Graeme Manie the hard nosed arse kicking representative hired by SHM to protect their interests, Cliff Slogget, the Robert Bird Group independent checker – smart guy and doing his best to do the right thing but obviously out there and nervous – needing some hand holding and convincing. Phil, Cliff young offside – another kiwi and very good – feeling his way also, and Dai, our man – Japanese and very good shouldering a huge load (and has for quite some time). Hmm... and where do I sit in it all/

Don't like all the politics and contractual/legal stuff which reminds me that I must get our contract signed! Graeme Manie in particular is a bit random – reminds me a lot of Peter Purcell.



"Dear friends, both known and unknown to me, fellow Russians, and people of all countries and continents, in a few minutes a mighty spaceship will carry me into the far-away expanses of space. What can I say to you in these last minutes before the start? At this instant, the whole of my life seems to be condensed into one wonderful moment. Everything I have experienced and done till now has been in preparation for this moment. You must realize that it is hard to express my feeling now that the test for which we have been training long and passionately is at hand. I don't have to tell you what I felt when it was suggested that I should make this flight, the first in history. Was it joy? No, it was something more than that. Pride? No, it was not just pride. I felt great happiness. To be the first to enter the cosmos, to engage single handed in an unprecedented duel with nature - could anyone dream of anything greater than that? But immediately after that I thought of the tremendous responsibility I bore: to be the first to do what generations of people had dreamed of; to be the first to pave the way into space for mankind. This responsibility is not toward one person, not toward a few dozen, not toward a group. It is a responsibility toward all mankind - toward its present and its future. Am I happy as I set off on this space flight? Of course I'm happy. After all, in all times and epochs the greatest happiness for man has been to take part in new discoveries. It is a

matter of minutes now before the start. I say to you, 'Until we meet again,' dear friends, just as people say to each other when setting out on a long journey. I would like very much to embrace you all, people known and unknown to me, close friends and strangers alike. See you soon!"
(Yuri Gagarin)

Russian Stamp 1961
From Joseph Morris' flickr stream (and I've had dreams like that).

I must admit a large part of what I like about this image is the detail, the grain of the paper and the ink stain of the postmark. Larger than reality detail through the scanning. Not that I don't like the image etc. Interesting and tactile in a history sort of way...

26th April 2011 – One of the 360 degree feedback questions in the Mt Eliza leadership course was something along the lines of 'what is the most likely reason Brendon would run off the rails. Thought it a little strange I must admit, and a little sad – a bit to how must Brendon be a good boy type thing, how must he conform into what the world expects of him.

Brendon is most likely to run off the rails through sheer boredom, through not really caring as much as he should, through deciding there is more to life... Through wanting more love and romance and mystery in his life.

What as silly question really, and just the wrong side of the line in terms of demeaning.

27th April 2011 –

"...year after year. Would he die before his dream came true, or before he knew that the dreaming was the better part of it?"

Arthur Ransome: Racundra's First Cruise
(from a tale about coming across an old man restoring a large boat – on a desolate portion of coast somewhere.

Lost it a bit last night with the amount of mess in the house – toys in every room as far as the eye could see.

Ewan came up to me this morning and unsolicited asked for a kiss of the cheek. Feeling much more of a connection with him these days – really nice.

28th April 2011 – Early (9:00pm), to bed these days – and late to rise – body must be making up for some lost ground over Easter – or maybe just taking a few concessions as it feels like it?

Still trying to do the meditation. It has transformed slightly however. Started as quiet nothingness. Difficult to do and can't say I really felt like I got a lot from it. Then went to a bit of Tai Chi, and now at a place where I just try to be in the absolute present for a period of time.

Find I can do this with slow movements (stretching neck muscles etc), and observations of the space around me.

Can't say I get more out of it (I do get relaxation which is what I get with full meditation), but it is easier to do, and hence gets done – something I can bring into my normal life as well.

Really enjoying 'The Book of the Sea'. Read a bit about Gilliat and the octopus from Victor Hugos Travellers of the sea this morning – fantastic. Small bits of life at sea as well.

I recollect his (Captain Sir Lewis Tobias Jones), running foul of me on only one occasion; and no doubt I deserved it. It was a bitterly cold day and (as is the custom when a ship is under canvas) the wretched midddy of the watch had to walk the lee side of the deck. Unfortunately the main topsail was set, the most draughty sail in the world sending all its winds bang down your neck from one end of the quarter-deck to the other. I felt perished from cold, and in moment of inadvertence put my poor little fingers into my pocket to keep them warm. Now, the weather side is the sheltered side (It sounds illogical, but so it is), and no doubt Captain Jones did not realise my benumbed state, he being on the more sheltered side of the deck. Seeing my hands in my pockets on the sacred precincts of Her Majesties quarter-deck was beyond what he could bear. He called me up, therefore, and said, in a rather stentorian voice, 'Pray, sir, who allowed you to keep your hands in your pockets on the quarter-deck? Go down immediately to the tailor on the half-deck (a worthy who was always seen squatting with his mate at the after end of the main deck, sewing clothes) and tell him from me to sew your pockets up instantly; and report to me, sir, when he has done so.' I fled, feeling disgraced, and knowing that the only chance of retrieving my character was to urge the tailor to 'bear a hand' as the sooner I appeared on deck sewn up the better. It was but the work of an instant. The tailor twigged the situation, dropped his all his work and sewed me up in no time. When I reached the deck, trembling almost, with my report ready, the stentorian voice had disappeared, and I was accosted in the most fatherly manner. 'Now my boy, this is a lesson to you. Do not do it again. Go below to the tailor, and tell him to unsew your pockets'

Rear Admiral V.A.Montague: A midddy's Recollections

...and even smaller moments...

'...an occasional light musketry of canvas as the swells launch her.

Reef-points
Clark Russell: A marriage at sea

Peter Bowtell amazes me with his capacity for work – he is a driven! I can also work at times but I know I could not muster that depth right now. Will I in a few years time when the kids are grown up?

In some respects I hope not - I want other things from life as well. In some respects yes, would be good to be that good if I had the capacity for it. Lets hope there is something there to drive me... aid work perhaps?

30 April 2011 – Stella's tenth birthday. Don't grow up Stella! – it is all going too quickly...

Another thing I learned out of the meditation was that doing small slow rituals also helps. Neatly folding a pair of jeans at the end of a day and putting away. Confucian even? Slow deliberate simple movements around order and ritual – helps calm and relax and bring thoughts into the now.

Early to bed tonight – 4:30 starts this month...

2nd May 2011 – Article Tony Schwartz and Catherine McCarthy on personal effectiveness – good timing I think but can relate to this – a lot of what the year of living dangerously is about. These are the summary points;

PHYSICAL ENERGY

Enhance your sleep by setting an earlier bedtime and reducing alcohol use.

Reduce stress by engaging in cardiovascular activity at least three times a week and strength training at least once.

Eat small meals and light snacks every three hours.

Learn to notice signs of imminent energy flagging, including restlessness, yawning, hunger, and difficulty concentrating. •

Take brief but regular breaks, away from your desk, at 90- to 120-minute intervals throughout the day.

EMOTIONAL ENERGY

Defuse negative emotions—irritability, impatience, anxiety, insecurity—through deep abdominal breathing. •

Fuel positive emotions in yourself and others by regularly expressing appreciation to others in detailed, specific terms through notes, e-mails, calls, or conversations. •

Look at upsetting situations through new lenses. Adopt a "reverse lens" to ask, "What would the other person in this conflict say, and how might he be right?" Use a "long lens" to ask, "How will I likely view this situation in six months?" Employ a "wide lens" to ask, "How can I grow and learn from this situation?"

MENTAL ENERGY

Reduce interruptions by performing high-concentration tasks away from phones and e-mail. •

Respond to voice mails and e-mails at designated times during the day.

Every night, identify the most important challenge for the next day. Then make it your first priority when you arrive at work in the morning.

SPIRITUAL ENERGY

Identify your "sweet spot" activities—those that give you feelings of effectiveness, effortless absorption, and fulfillment. Find ways to do more of these. One executive who hated doing sales reports delegated them to someone who loved that activity.

Allocate time and energy to what you consider most important. For example, spend the last 20 minutes of your evening commute relaxing, so you can connect with your family once you're home.

Live your core values. For instance, if consideration is important to you but you're perpetually late for meetings, practice intentionally showing up five minutes early for meetings.

3rd May 2011 – Had some energetic dreams last night. The first was a drowning dream. I was out surfing, I think – the board was there I think but not very memorable. The waves were large and I kept ducking under to avoid the break.

I would listen to the crash overhead and then make my way to the surface for air and to take stock of the next one. I had a couple of very large ones come across and somehow I knew not to go up lest I get caught in the dumping of the crest.

I was under so long I had to sneak a short drawn breath from the corner of my mouth – which seemed to come ok albeit I was underwater. I briefly considered this fact and put it down without too much lingering thought, perhaps due the high bubble and oxygen content in the seawater around me.

I was very conscious at the end of it of the clear, bright ever so slightly greeny blue water and bubbles (minimal dirty sea foam), around me and the fact that I had to close my eyes putting me in pitch blackness amongst it all. That was a disenfranchising feeling – clearly delineating me from the natural way and beauty even, of everything around me. I was a foreign object to this world – not quite an intruder but at its whim.

The other was experiences in Singapore, in a strange life over there somehow subsequent to this life now. I had a small apartment and ended up having a girl with brown skin over for the night – someone I knew but only on a casual basis. After a session of cuddling (or something, I can't quite remember), I was covered in this white grainy scale. I tried to scrape it off of me being embarrassed about what she would have thought, feeling unclean and it having come from poor hygiene habits. Going to the second shower I realised with some relief that the white scale was everywhere – something to do with the water as it was all over the shower screens etc.

From there I ended up at the entrance to a large theme park (vague memories of some super ride to get to the start even – a little like the mighty beanz game Stella just got for her birthday).

There was a lot of aggression in getting in for some reason. I was off organising food or something for the kids and only just caught the train in.

...some break here and then being around racing car drivers and talking about cars and racing. Picked up on the name J. Reynolds and a story about him riding a motor bike and narrowly missing getting his head taken off by a poorly placed sign or bit of infrastructure by the side of the road.

Then flicked to seeing a replay of the incident on television – it was from an old race – he made a manoeuvre to overtake a pack, not one would let him back in and he was forced to ride extremely close to the barriers – 3m high in this case. A small recess in the barriers came up and he had to duck, narrowly avoiding an protruding obstacle.

Focus then shifted back to the other side of the track where a car had obviously hit a barrier end on and had been split in two. It was still however powering along one third/two thirds on each side of the fence – with much screaming of metal on metal and metal on pavement, sparks the whole lot...

I was then incredibly shocked as with a sense of outrage I saw other unthinking race cars power through the poor split vehicle (and the guy in it presumably), smashing them on the way through in an aggressive to win.

Switch suddenly – same race track etc, but to a large bus that had been racing and had come a cropper somehow, and firemen running in to douse the place with white foam. I watched incredulous because of the drama of the situation as the firemen methodically covered every surface with thick white foam.

I was conscious of the fact nothing was on fire, and recall thinking that it was a shame to be wasting foam and destroying property but it had to be done given it could have broken out any second.

Quite energetic violent dreams.

My subconscious is obviously working to sort things out in there, shifting things around and re-adjusting, tweaking norms and refining the way things are. I kind of think it is a good thing – dealing with things, working it through, I just hope for the better.

7th May 2011 – Nice morning thing happen with Ewie yesterday. He had forgotten his small bag to go on excursion with. Explained to him at before school care that he would just have to take along his big bag (after searching high and low for a make shift alternative) – funny how these things turn up in makeshift ways if you take a look around immediate environs.

So left him to it and then started feeling a little bad for him. Passed home, dropped in and managed to dig up the little bag he was after, rode back up to the school and gave it to him to much joy. 'Look my Dad has come back with the bag'.

He gave me a little hug on the leg on the way out of the classroom. Very nice.

Stella seems to be having a lot of trouble at school – none of the other girls will let her play in the games etc they have. I think because she has been on about Singapore etc. She also says because they say her hair is so messy.

Really feeling for her on the outer a bit. Will have to make an effort to keep her hair more managed, Had a few words with her about being nice to the

other kids etc, and it hopefully turning around in time. Not easy being the new kid.

And on my front, work is getting a little out of hand – not as bad as things sometimes got in Singapore, but felt more manageable there as I knew the depth and people expected it a bit more – still not sure about here.

The architectural work hasn't taken off as quickly as I had hoped and the Office Leader stuffs is now going to slow things down even more. Will be better once I get a good PA on board I am hoping. Lian is great but stretched.

Bit of politics around also. Peter Bowtell was very keen for me to take the ex Cox receptionist/Executive assistant to the ¾ directors. Not up to the job technically with IT, bit up and down and would be too much like working with my mother.

Andrew Wisdom is trying to set up a scenario where I take Cara, the Planning BA/PA to him. She seems ok but a not quite as sharp as I need, and relies a lot on defined briefs etc which I am not good at...

Just need to hold my ground unfortunately and work through the consequences.

8th May 2011 – [Giant Beetroot](#)



The beet is the most intense of vegetables. The radish, admittedly, is more feverish, but the fire of the radish is a cold fire, the fire of discontent not of passion. Tomatoes are lusty enough, yet there runs through tomatoes an undercurrent of frivolity. Beets are deadly serious.

Slavic peoples get their physical characteristics from potatoes, their smoldering inquietude from radishes, their seriousness from beets.

The beet is the melancholy vegetable, the one most willing to suffer. You can't squeeze blood out of a turnip...

The beet is the murderer returned to the scene of the crime. The beet is what happens when the cherry finishes with the carrot. The beet is the ancient ancestor of the autumn moon, bearded, buried, all but fossilized; the dark green sails of the grounded moon-boat stitched with veins of primordial plasma; the kite string that once connected the moon to the Earth now a muddy whisker drilling desperately for rubies.

The beet was Rasputin's favorite vegetable. You could see it in his eyes.

- Tom Robbins, *Jitterbug Perfume* (possibly his best work)

Martincourt, France
1917
from [drakegoodman's flickr stream](#)

Fantastic...

Just watched *Romeo & Juliet* (Baz Luhrman). Brilliant also – really enjoyed watching again (over a scotch or two... or three). I don't generally get into Shakespeare or poetry, needs the music I think. Makes me want to get a fluorescent tube blue Christian cross for a wall somewhere in the house.

Love the intensity of feeling through it all. It is not religious but the whole Jesus statue thing, the Italian love of the Virgin Mary and all of the cherub angels etc, it's full on visual and feeling. Somehow thrusting its chest out in the face of religion just by being modern and hip and out there.

"I was so pleased to be informed of this I ran twenty red lights in his honour; thank you Jesus, thank you Lord."

The Girl with Faraway Eyes
The Rolling Stones

I can relate even if I find it hard to express.

14th May 2011 – Just finished an Arup Regional Forum. About the ecological age strategy – all good however always come away from those things feeling less than comfortable – A little empty and even though this was one of the better ones – felt like I was involved a bit and valued a bit as Melbourne office leader - I somehow feel more empty than ever...?

Something to do with the way everyone relates, lots of unnatural dealings and depth searching. Lots of uncomfortableness.

On a brighter note, stayed in the city – down at the /Hilton South Wharf which was really nice – the city is a great place – lots of culture and people about. Had dinner at the Chapter house just behind St Pauls which was very nice and had Tim Jervois talk about the polar exploration he had done – Fantastic talk

and really inspiring – like it a lot although don't feel the need to go quite that far.

On the way back this afternoon I dropped into the Seafarers mission house down at the bottom of Flinders Street. What a great place. Charitable Mission set up and run by the Anglican Church. They pick up the sailors and give them a place to stay, internet and a few things – pool room etc.

It is an old grey rendered building. A small chapel at one end, sprawling 2-3 storey pitched roof - ye olde inn (c1910-40?), type architecture down to a rendered concrete dome at the other end (which incidentally used to house a boxing ring according to the Chaplain type man who had a few brief words with me when I put my head in for a look.

Could be straight out of Moby Dick – an older whaling Inn in Nantucket somewhere, harpoons and cold grey skies, chilling drizzle and suggestions of woollen beanie sea hands making their way around the now relocated docks, heads down shuffling against the cold and wet. In reality this place has stood immovable (I remember it clearly from when we used to live here), whilst the city has slowly encroached around it compromising its purity and threatening its modus operandi.

This is the dirty functional end of the city sprawl. The grimy blackened steel railway structures and cracked concrete and bitumen paths winding their way through the unplanned mess of development, obviously done to no particular plan other than the ad hoc as she goes type thinking (which must have a place somewhere).



717 Flinders Street
Mission to Seafarers Melbourne



The above is from the ANL Docklands art exhibition – no artist given. This is what I imagine might embody the feeling of life at sea for merchant sailors, what might be in their aura when sitting with a warm hot chocolate in front of the internet having just cleaned up after having docked and been delivered to the Mission.

Good day with the kids today – went up Eureka Skytower which was great did 'The Edge' – a little glazed steel box with active opaque glass. You stand in this thing as it bumpily extends out over the edge of the building, a few sound effects etc and the glass goes clear to reveal the 285m drop below you. Kids all liked it, bit of an adventure and a bit of fun.

Dinner at Ikea, another favourite, and home to storks and bed. They love a story before bed and get a little upset when they don't get one – can be either too late or they have been misbehaving etc...

Few strained pains round my chest this afternoon. Must be feeling the stress in my sub conscious a little. Must do some strength exercise – some pudhups or a run perhaps.

16th May 2011 – Stella is accelerating into the teens. Heard her telling Ewan what sex was yesterday ('when you put your rude bits into each other and jiggle them around'). She also asked if she could buy a bracelet with spikes on it and refuses to let us help her anymore in doing her hair – can see a black stage coming... At the same time she loves her bedtime stories and playing with the other two, will be a few growing pains between everyone.

Feeling a bit down on work – face huge challenges with workload and type of work and being able to operate in this market (architectural buildings). Not sure if I am up to it? Feeling very Singaporean and superficial and not feeling much love from the people I meet so far...

17th May 2011 –

“...truly to enjoy bodily warmth, some small part of you must be cold for there is no quality in this world that is not what it is merely by contrast. Nothing exists in itself”

“and yet he seemed entirely at his ease: preserving the utmost serenity; content with his own companionship,; always equal to himself. Surely this was a touch of fine philosophy:... perhaps to be true philosophers we mortals should not be conscious of so living or striving”

Herman Melville
Moby Dick

Really enjoying Moby Dick.

18th May 2011 – Feels good when you do something well technically. Just pushed back on some stuff Arup research and development had been saying was a problem, and they agreed in the end it would be ok!

Enjoying work at the moment, just a bit of a stretch in terms of time.

Cold morning this morning with low level mist around the place. In patches, was ok around our place and then quite thick just across the freeway reserves etc. Blue sky above that and beautiful when the sun was coming up causing light to play around all the different landscapy bits.

Lorikeets out and busily chirping rapid fire in the trees – must get some flowering gums as well to bring a few into our backyard.

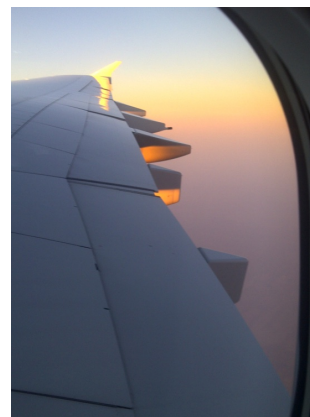
19th May 2011 – Kids are still finding it tough at school. Ewan has been teased about having nits. At first I thought it was just kids in his class – the teacher made a few of them write notes of apology. Stella now tells me it is the whole school – because he quite often scratches his head.

I asked him if he had friends (he had been telling me he had three or four), and he replied ‘yes but I’m losing them’. Broke my heart. Not sure what to do – will speak with Ange tonight – I have the day off tomorrow so thought I might drop by the school and speak to the headmaster just to make sure he knows what is going on and ask advice.

Must get Stella to support him a bit. Perhaps organise a birthday party for him and the kids in his class to help him get accepted?

24th May 2011 – Got to love flying. Other worldly physically and psychologically. Just left of right of centre. The rate of time changes, the focus of where you spend it warps also. You are in a conduit between two pictures, two life scenes made all the more potent through the joining somehow.

Flying Qantas who always, rightly so, make a thing of flying over Ayers rock banking right for the view of Uluru before left for the view of the Olgas. It is



hard not to meld into the desert below. You know the heat and the quiet you can only get with a large expanse of horizon. I can see in my head the street in Alice Springs, people in shorts going about their Sat morning shopping, the hotel and water holes of the West McDonnell ranges, quiet, slow, Britz campers on dry river bed camp grounds.

Can recall pizza and shirts wrapped over the head to keep the flies away while waiting for the tow truck to pick up the struggling commodore. Sunset in the cab and the simple boy playing pool at the petrol station on the turn off from the main road. The breakaways, Coober Peedy, Breakfast at the swish hotel in Glenelg on the way up. Fantastic.

How do you work when all of that is reaching up through the dust and the orange in the sky to cling to you on the way past. How do you prioritise email when life is rolling beneath you, and around you,

I Hope I Never

Everybody’s talking at me (Midnight Cowboy)

Cause I’ve seen Blue Skies through the tears; I’m going home...

I see love and beauty all around... and I believe in breathing just for today; I just want know; that your okay...

Good last couple of hours on the flight flicking through mp3 music, tajken here and there with the mood, nice.

25th May 2011 - Watching the news without sound (listening to Breathe in now repeating on the phone).

Lots of people running in small circles, ...in large circles, bumping into each other, bleating, blaring, doing things, being this, being that, influencing, affecting, being better than the all the other people in their circles... Pretty sure I have had these thoughts/impressions before.

Life should be simpler than all of the static that let's face it, fades and dies with each generation. Life should be about enjoying the now on the human scale immediately around us. If it takes you far and wide so be it, and if not, so be not...

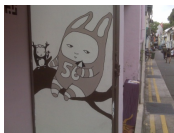
I will be happy if the world and the people I come across in it are slightly better off for me having been there at the end of it all. I say this not as I have lived by but something I am deducing and aspire to...

26th May 2011 –

"Let me make a clean breast of it here, and frankly admit that I kept but sorry guard. With the problem of the universe revolving in me, how could I – being left completely to myself at such a thought-engendering altitude, - how could I but lightly hold my obligations to observe all whale ships' standing orders, 'Keep your weather eye open and sing out every time'?"

Herman Melville
Moby Dick

Something in there that rings true in me mostly. How can you keep such an unrelenting monotonous grinding deplorable guard on life as seems would be expected of you with so much going on around you. The problem of the universe revolving within me...



This little man has become somewhat of a companion. Travels with me on my phone and regards the world from my pocket, or at times my briefcase or bedside when I remember to place him facing upwards.

I took him from a shop house column in Haji lane around Arab Street in Singapore. His original is still there watching Singapore pass his little place and this particular image is like a spawned Photostat, given legs to wander and expand, explore.



This is another random image taken from my hard drive, that has something to do with my core being, somewhere back there, somewhere in time and place but infused into me somehow. Highway 964...

Flight back home. QF10 overnight and working tomorrow so paid A\$80extra for an exit seat with leg room so hopefully get a little sleep at least. Started to watch Black Swan with Natalie Portman, but wasn't in the mood... ended up watching Midnight cowboy again. Fantastic film, really well put together - of its age but hasn't really dated somehow. Done with a type of ageless subtlety.

Quite sad and a bit of a tragic comment on the world. Not sure if it was the best thing to do! – left me with a lot of tired feelings about life and people and an introspective 'so what about things'.

30th May 2011 – Another misty morning – chill and a slight moisture in the air – it condenses slightly with the cold on your cheeks, makes your nose run ever so slightly (or not in my case...). Hustle and bustle through all of this dropping the kids off, the walk over the top of the oval embankment looking out to Balwyn's hills, eucalypts and parakeets overhead, to all the Balwynite homes aspecting this way and that. Down past the shops with the cafe setting up and the Balwyn Rd. bus usually making its way past. Millicent Avenue and the park connector, more parakeets, to Kosiosko and Koonung Creek reserve. Walk on the far side to feel some earth beneath my feet and perhaps (if not too wet or grassy), across the field to the bike path. A long green paddock extending beyond paddock boundaries to something else I am not sure what, but with an identity its own. Black bitumen and white lines, the odd bike, head down, making its way and the noise of the freeway traffic – strangely out of place in the mist, car fumes spewing poisoness into the serenity and mind space it represents for all of us. Intertwined city and life and industry and

beauty, growing through each other in a not as nice as it should be sinewy continuum.



1st June 2011 – Not all going well at home at the moment – Kids are struggling with school – Ange is under pressure at uni and is short with everyone, doing what she does which is to take it all on herself – not communicating or working out, just getting through, or not as the case may be. I think it is either laziness or just a natural disposition to not want to deal with other people that makes her do this? – don't like it although before I am too quick to judge I can see bits of that behaviour in me also../

Red and yellow trees and successive ridge lines with valleys of mist to varying degrees this morning on the way to work – beautiful – chilly. Cant help but think as beautiful as it is (very English or even Darjeeling for some reason?), as beautiful as it is I cant help but feel it would be just as if not more beautiful in local trees, eucalypts etc.

2nd June 2011 –

“...yet for all these accumulated associations, with whatever is sweet, and honourable, and sublime, there yet lurks an elusive something in the innermost idea of this hue, which strikes more of panic to the souls than the redness which affrights in blood.

This elusive quality it is, which causes the thought of whiteness, when divorced from more kindly associations, and coupled with any object terrible in itself, to heighten that terror to the furthest bounds.”

Herman Melville,
Moby Dick, c. The Whiteness of the Whale

Herman Melville was a whaler and a few other things. He escaped ships to live with natives in the South Pacific, and jails after being imprisoned for mutiny over wages. He became an alcoholic later in life, suffered from

depression through which his wife stuck by him and helped him. Eventually he died without fame or recognition for his works, writing for the pleasure of it.

Bit of a star in my book – a life well lived...

4th June 2011 – **aam** – Back to the middle of the night awakenings it would seem – concerned about work. Mainly fees. Have taken on a large job designing the connections for the National Stadium in Sports Hub.

Peter MacDonald and others are being a bit selective in their memories. At the end of the day it was down to me to make a call on the fees etc. Mike King and he put a fee together in the first instance that was around S\$750k. I changed that to S\$1.0M when we put in the fee for Alfasi. I have since brought it back to S\$850 as the fatigue stuff became a bit more straightforward.

All of a sudden everyone is telling me how tight the fee is etc. If I was kind I would say they are all being conservative at the start of the job to make sure we make money. My feeling is however they are all stepping away to leave it all with me – not that nice.

I will try to get a profit sharing agreement working to get them to buy into it at least... and stand strong. We will see.

Came across a couple of images of my ‘leviathan’s of the night from last years diaries (Searching for ‘The Whiteness of the Whale’ picture – really enjoying Moby Dick, and that chapter in particular). Am feeling a little more like the painting on the left than the images on the right. Something a bit more menacing and grotesque, silent, still about it somehow. Perhaps because it is happening over here – in my true backyard on home ground. It was equally probably more scary in Singapore but everything there was a little removed - able to be disassociated with me in the ultimate state.



5th June 2011 – **aam** – First of my meals last night for the month. Romanian Stew – basically a vege stew. Basic but really nice – veges all coojked to

perfection and nice enough taste. Heated bread rolls also – was very nice. Ange was really appreciative which was nice.

Big meal (serves 4 do will likely eat Mon or Tues night as well. Through the swimming, the doing the gutters on Abbotsford Street, running around buying various stuff and food shopping, taking the time to cook the meal etc yesterday felt really good.

6th June 2011 – aam – Seems early morning wake ups at the moment – worrying about work and kids and life in general.



The general feel has changed back to the above – sharper and more fierce.

- Losing money over SSH connections
- Not being able to make building engineering fees work full stop (what else do I know, could I do, that would keep us alive?)
- Ewies development with sport and socially, and with writing and academically.
- Stellas development academically, and with friends etc...
- Shares and Abbots ford street – Loans to service and potential crashes in the stock market and property market.
- My temper and effect it might be having on the kids (hard not to get angry with them over misbehaviour etc.) – got to keep making sure they know I love them and minimise mixed messages on the getting angry bit...

Not good all of the worrying – generally better by daylight but not helping. Battery low which I will take as a sign I should be trying to go back to bed having downloaded onto paper, and get some sleep.

I have trouble keeping my mind across the myriad of things I need to keep it across... which is another source of anxiety and concern!

7th June 2011 – am – Off early to Sydney this morning to set up the - connection design for SSH – still worried about fee etc.

Skipping through my diary I realise a lot of my thoughts are around how to deal with the kids – got to keep reminding myself constantly – what is that about? It should be a natural thing should it not?

Right now I am in the mood to be with the kids – spend some time in their presence. Stella seems to be doing ok, few wobbles around education – she is covering old ground (endangered animals!), and is not happy about it. Still issues around friends and settling in...

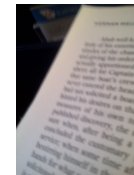
Ewan is wobbling along in his own inimitable way. Ange has some concerns around maths and numbers – must spend some time with him on these... He has quite an interest in science and animals etc – discussion last night just prior to going to sleep was all around why sharks need to keep moving. Understanding the subtlety of not moving and not breathing and dieing as opposed to us who can stop for a while.

Freya is just Freya. She seems to be hot and cold on me. Mum is the definite favourite and when I do something to get in way of that – even if it is something nice that endears me to her, she is not happy about it – big Freya frowns my way – don't look at me dad!

.....

Can't say it enough, I love flying. What unadmired views, it is incredible to me; the clouds, the sunrises and sunsets, the world at its most beautiful. That humans should get to see these things from such a vantage point in the first place defies common nature... but then to ignore and not take them in, what are people like, I can understand.

We just descended from flying above a rippled virtual ocean bottom of cloud tinged pink on the one side of the plane, and white with warm yellows and golds (with the slightest hint of underlying dark grey cooith underneath) on the other. Down through a bit of turbulence and the disappearing into the depth of the clouds for a bit - greyness whipping past the windows; and then out, emerging underneath to morning views of the land. Ridgelines and valleys



filled with low lying cloud banks of its own. I have been in those places on the ground and know their beauty, the cool quiet of their mornings and expectations of the day. Hundreds of kilometres of it, what is everyone (including me), doing up here, away from all of that reality?

Sydney is a beautiful city. Took the train in to engage a little bit more. Strikes me a bit of a toy town – the type of thing you would put together as a model maker. Trains winding their way through rocks and tunnels, across Harbour Bridges and adjacent to parks and Opera Houses etc... Old tiled underground stations looked after through the years, unusual double decker carriages just to be unusual and a bit different. Hotels and serviced apartments squeezed in here and there, not a spare metre left to spare, like a giant crossword overjammed with words of all description, twisting and turning and layering themselves around each other.

9th June 2011 -

"But not only is the sea such a foe to man who is alien to it, but it is also a fiend to its own offspring: worse than the Persian host who murdered his own guests; sparing not the creatures which itself have spawned. Like a savage tigress that tossing in the jungle overlays her own cubs, so the sea dashes even the mightiest whales against the rocks, and leaves them there side by side with the split wrecks of ships. No mercy, no power but its own controls it. Panting and snorting like a mad battle steed that has lost its rider, the master-less ocean overruns the globe.

Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure. Consider also the devilish brilliance and beauty of many of its most remorseless tribes, as the dainty embellished shape of many species of sharks. Consider once more, the universal cannibalism of the sea; all whose creatures prey upon each other, carrying on eternal war since the world began.

Consider all this; and then turn to this green, gentle, and most docile eart; consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half-known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thoust can never return!"

Herman Melville,
Moby Dick, c. Brit



10th June 2011 -

"Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience."

"I want to die peacefully in my sleep, like my grandfather.. Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car."

A couple of random one liners from 'Stumble Upon'.

I bought my shoes in on Wednesday morning after having been to Sydney and not being able to get the whole walking shoes – work shoes logistics happening.

Extracting myself from Moby Dick I fall off the bus into the cold grey basalt like atmosphere of Lonsdale St. After about a second and a half I realise my shoes (in an Arup bag), are still on the bus – F&\$k!

I turn around to see the back of the bus receding in size down the bus lane – my mind is dealing with a few tracks of thought at the same time. Should I run for the bus, what will the bus driver do, Oh no I am going to have to deal with the maze of metlink lost property, what are they worth, how much is it worth to me to go through all of that. And all while I was memorising the advertising sign thinking I will have to recognise and describe to someone in the system – it only occurred to me later that describing the advert on the back of the bus might be less useful than the number plate!

Then I notice a red light at Exhibition St – Off I run – dodging people on their way to work, cafe tables, lampposts etc to finally have the light turn green and my goal take off when I was within 10m... Having paused watching again the receding back of the bus, I notice the next bus stop half a block on. Off again (Lonsdale is a slight downhill in this area so was making good speed when I did take off). Again, within 10m and the bus takes off again.

Again I pause watching the back of the bus slowly recede. Surreptitiously another bus pulls up next to me. Fantastic – one or two people get off the back exit, I knock on the front – for some reason the driver is in tune with me and picks up that we need to chased that bus to retrieve the bag in a record few number of seconds (he has probably been watching all the carrying on for the last block and a half?).

So off we go hurtling down the bus lane me riding shot gun next to him and we manage joy of joys to catch him at the next lights half a block on. Off I get, run down to ,y bus, knock on the window and the driver opens the door handing me the bag - just about to call it in he grins.

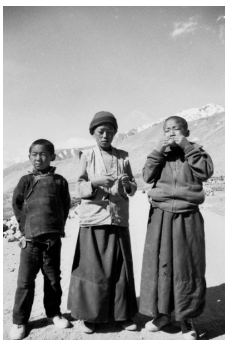
Wild thanks you's and the light turns green and he is gone – a thumbs up and thanks to the bus driver who took me there as he took off and there I was two blocks on, out of breath and blood coursing through my veins but with my shoes ☺. Quite a sense of accomplishment.

Meant I was five minutes late for a phone interview with someone from the States. I apologised for being late but didn't bother going into the whys and wherefores...

11th June 2011 – Put together the monks picture last night – very unscientific stretching of the canvas over a cheap art frame – looks good and happy with how turned out. Excerpt from diary at the time of the photo:

4th May 1996 – Tingri (4342m)

Tibet proper, stark barren landscape, brown and yellow and ochre hills, shale slopes and blue blue skies, snowy peaks behind, dry cold dusty, visit to Milarepa's cave, child monks – money – pens – no! Dutch ladies giving balloons, temples, thankas and the Dalai Lama, oil lamps and the cave, light through a bright window with flapping veil, photos of Patagonia on the road (no money!), flow the river, dry villages up the hills, patches of pointy snow, more dry yellows with traversed roads, and the blue! Lalung pass (5200m or 5050m?) lots of prayer flags, lots of colours, dry colours in the wind, lots of small stone piles, lots of snowy mountains in a long thin vista, definitely the most spectacular scenery yet, maybe...



This was the second day into the friendship Highway. We hired a four wheel drive with a couple of fellow backpackers (Skadi and Jeff?), and two older Dutch ladies (Ali and ali – slightly different intonations). This was one of the first stops after the climb up to the Tibetan plateau. A small monastery 'Milarepa's Cave' after Milarepa who I seem to recall the whole valley was

named after. The road was on the top edge of the valley a vast grey valley cut by the river at the bottom with groves of trees (aspens I think), and bits of sparse farmland, farmed by the families living there and their yaks.

I like this photo as all of the subjects are their own people, doing their own thing and not really bothering about us too much. We called the boy on the right Patagonia as he was wearing a Patagonia branded polar fleece top.

15th June 2011 -

"Nor is it the end. Desecrated as the body is, a vengeful ghost survives and hovers over it to scare. Espied by some timid man-of-war or blundering discovery vessel from afar, when the distance obscuring the swarming fowls nevertheless still shows the white mass floating in the sun, and the white spray heaving high against it; straightaway the whales unharmed corpse, with trembling fingers is set down in the log – *shoals, rocks, and breakers hereabouts: beware!* And for years after wards, perhaps ships shun the place; leaping over it as silly sheep leap over a vacuum, because their leader originally leaped when a stick was held..."

Thus while in life the great whale's body may have been a real terror to his foes, in his death his ghost becomes a powerless panic to the world."

Herman Melville,
Moby Dick, c. The Funeral

Babysat the kids last night (Ange out with uni friends). Stella stayed up to 8:30 or 9:00 by which time she was tired and wanted to go to bed. Other kids not that well, Ewan had stopped vomiting but Freya had one (last as it turned out) in a bucket in her bed before going to sleep.

Tried to convince Stella to sleep in her own bed but could tell she was feeling a bit lonely and needed some company – Let her stay up to watch 'The story of science' – cutting up of brains and commentary around who we are as humans – she really enjoyed, getting tight into the fact that they said the had insight in the questions of who we were and why we were here. Was cold and she ended up creeping up to lie on me to watch and get warm and ask any questions. Really nice.

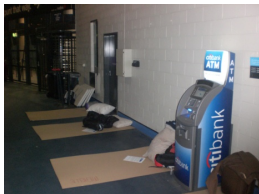
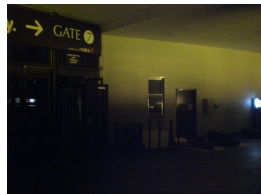
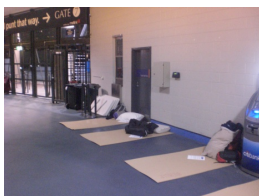
Acquiesced and moved a mattress to the bottom of our bed. Could tell she really appreciated it and even got a good morning from her this morning. Ewan was asking this morning why we all slept in the same room in Singapore (remembering our last 6 weeks camping out).

Kids are feeling a little insecure at the moment obviously. Happy to give them a bit this young I think. You should protected and comforted by family – sets a good base for the future relationship I hope.

19th June 2011 – Did the CEO sleepout on Thursday night. Recall seeing this before leaving for Singapore and thinking it would be a great experience if I ever got the chance.

Lian and Cara at work put me forward for it, and I went along with it. Felt a little bit of cheat as Office Leader and not exactly CEO but close enough and good cause. Ended up with lots of one man businesses there – wide mix of people.

Funny looking at everyone and the personalities. I was the one starting up conversations mostly – shy CEO's!



Often see homeless people around Melbourne CBD. People wheeling trolleys or carrying bags of bags, talking or mumbling to themselves, walking crowded sidewalks with no recognition – active ignoring from the people around them – must be surreal and scary and desperate.

There were talks on the night from people in the business (St Vinnies), and people who have been through the whole homeless thing themselves. It can be a fine line. Most people are only a gambling or drug addiction, or nasty break up or domestic violence case away from having to face it.

The most tragic are the mothers with children forced to leave the house, even worse when there is the threat of violence around it. Mothers dragging their kids to centrelink offices each day trying to find a place for them to sleep.

Packing up and moving each day, and when after 6-12 months of trying and finally getting into a place of relative comfort or permanency, being forced back out again as the violent husband finds them having tracked them down.

How do kids survive all of that – what does it do to people...?

Raised almost \$1,900 -was quite inspiring just in itself – seeing people give – comes from the least expected places. Couple of people gave \$200+.

- Mrs Jill Edwards donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Sunday 19th of June 2011 04:03:21 PM
- Mr Stuart Clarke donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Friday 17th of June 2011 02:49:05 PM

it's the CEO bit that is most amusing! Well done Bren, quiet night without the kids?
S

- Mr Kenneth Bowtell donated AUD\$ 100.00 on Thursday 16th of June 2011 10:20:39 PM

It is worth the \$100

- Allan and Minerisa McCabe donated AUD\$ 200.00 on Thursday 16th of June 2011 07:41:44 PM
- Mr Christopher Hube donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Thursday 16th of June 2011 05:35:31 PM

Enjoy the sleep over!

- Andrea & James Cranstoun & Hine donated AUD\$ 250.00 on Thursday 16th of June 2011 02:13:39 PM

Good on you! Keep warm.

- **Mr Alex Chen** donated AUD\$ 20.00 on Thursday 16th of June 2011 12:26:53 PM

Inspirational stuff Brendan. Showing true Arup spirit and leadership. Hope that you will brave the cold and make it through the night. Take care!
- **Mr Ken Stickland** donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Thursday 16th of June 2011 12:02:29 PM

Leading by example and demonstrating to all of us the need for our greater support to community as individuals and corporates. Thanks, Ken S.
- **Mr Luke Treadwell** donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Thursday 16th of June 2011 11:09:36 AM

*Good luck Brendan - you've got our full support!
Looking forward to hearing the stories.
Luke Treadwell*
- **Mr Peter Adcock** donated AUD\$ 100.00 on Thursday 16th of June 2011 11:06:58 AM

Well done - real leadership
- **Ms Madeleine Tillig** donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Thursday 16th of June 2011 11:46:09 AM

Goodluck! Hope you get some sleep.
- **Marzena Rolka** donated AUD\$ 20.00 on Wednesday 15th of June 2011 04:23:09 PM

Well done for taking part in this Brendon - I hope at least the skies keep clear for you on Thursday.
- **Mr David Young** donated AUD\$ 25.00 on Wednesday 15th of June 2011 04:22:47 PM

Well done Brendon. Unfortunately you're likely to cop the predicted forecast COLDEST NIGHT over the next week. We'll be looking for photographic evidence too!
- **Mr Jonathan Kinghorn** donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Wednesday 15th of June 2011 11:52:07 AM

Good luck Brendon
- **Mr Paul Stanley** donated AUD\$ 30.00 on Wednesday 15th of June 2011 09:00:18 AM

Good Luck! And well done, Paul
- **Ms Pippa Connolly** donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Wednesday 15th of June 2011 08:49:22 AM

*Brendon, well done on taking the initiative. Might be a good day to be visiting the Cairns office as I think sleeping out there would be a little warmer. hope you don't get frostbite in those toes that are bound to stick out of your cardboard box.
Pippa*
- **Mrs Meg Marshall** donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Wednesday 15th of June 2011 08:39:25 AM

Well done Brendan - this is a great cause and an inspiring act!
- **Ms Christie Monte** donated AUD\$ 20.00 on Wednesday 15th of June 2011 08:27:04 AM

Rug Up!!!!!!!!!!!!
- **Mrs BOB & CAROLYN MCNIVEN** donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Tuesday 14th of June 2011 06:46:19 PM

WISH WE COULD BE WITH YOU!!
- **Ms Rachael Austin** donated AUD\$ 25.00 on Tuesday 14th of June 2011 11:07:47 AM

The countdown has begun!!!
- **Ms Lian Heather** donated AUD\$ 50.00 on Friday 10th of June 2011 12:21:37 PM

Good on you Brendon. I look forward to hearing about the experience.
- **Anonymous** donated AUD\$ 20.00 on Friday 10th of June 2011 09:28:58 AM

Good on you Brendon! Keep up the good work. Takes a man of steel to be out in the cold for a night like that! I'm sure this will be a life-changing experience for you. Please do find some time to share your experiences with office when the opportunity arrives, even if it is a short talk during one
- **Miss Megan Edwards** donated AUD\$ 10.00 on Thursday 9th of June 2011 05:23:12 PM

Goodluck Bren!!!
- **Mr Jonathon Parker** donated AUD\$ 40.00 on Thursday 9th of June 2011 04:46:44 PM

Good luck! It reminds me of the days of waiting for concert tickets!

- **Mr Brendon McNiven** donated **AUD\$ 100.00** on **Thursday 9th of June 2011 09:01:55 AM**
...and in kind for the baby sitting!
- **Mrs Angela McNiven** donated **AUD\$ 100.00** on **Thursday 9th of June 2011 08:55:11 AM**
Good luck Brendon, hope it's not one of those chilly Melbourne nights!
- **Dr David Young** donated **AUD\$ 20.00** on **Thursday 9th of June 2011 08:54:32 AM**
Good luck Brendon, hope it's not one of those chilly Melbourne nights!
- **Miss Rachel Ngu** donated **AUD\$ 50.00** on **Thursday 9th of June 2011 08:34:06 AM**
Good on you Brendon!
- **Mr John Legge-Wilkinson** donated **AUD\$ 200.00** on **Thursday 9th of June 2011 08:22:48 AM**
Rug up close and tight.

Must admit, I feel a little bit bad as it wasn't the most uncomfortable experience ever – far from it in fact.

At work during the day I couldn't wait to get away and get some rest and respite to myself! I rugged up with thermals – 5 layers on top, and 3 on my legs – one of our old Nepal sleeping bags, had a mars bar and muesli bar on the way down, a cup of chunky nice vege soup, a couple of rolls, listened to some really good talks and chatted with a few people all pretty casual to turn in around 11:00pm.

Slept pretty well through to about 4:30 at which time I got up to go to the toilet – pretty usual stuff! Had a bit of a look around and then back to doze in the warmth of the sleeping bag until 5:30 and breakfast – thick sugary porridge :)

Little bit cold at times, was raining in the morning and icy breezes but rugged up wasn't too much of an issue. I must admit was tired by the time got home, and had a relatively early night but all up pretty sedate as far as hardship goes.

Mind you this was one night – give me a few nights or a week like that and it would be hard – big mental thing as well – a lot (too much) time for your brain to be dwelling on where you are at... That would be the worst of it all – how to maintain self worth and confidence, belief in yourself – I find it hard enough now let alone when the world around you appears to be at your throat, with lots of danger and not much support.

I felt obliged to talk it down a little to people and emphasise the cold of the breeze and the turning to keep the hips and shoulders warm – there was a bit of this but wasn't nearly as bad as I had thought it might be.



Worthwhile doing – hope to do next year with a few more bells and whistles – send out to friendly clients etc.

Might also look into doing a volunteers day as a family some time – would be good for the kids to have that in their lives I reckon.

20th June 2011 – aam – Life a bit mixed at the moment. I am not really coping with work – should be doing a lot more, the balance between office leader and buildings is proving difficult.

I still wake up with worries over the Flyer and other things on the boil at the moment.

Kids are great even with the issues around how they are doing. Love them to bits and feeling like we are at a good place relationship wise.

Feeling a bit locked down in terms of life here however. Property clearance rates have slumped and hence prices a little as well. We wouldn't get what we paid for the house now.

I am still disappointed by the amount of freeway noise – especially as I paid a bit of attention to it when buying! Must have been a good weekend in terms of wind direction – I remember I was more worried about the pool filter next door that was running all morning.

Where is my adventure and my life goals etc... Studying philosophy or sailing the pacific? Too many things to do with the kids and work etc...?

Just have to take it bit by bit. Watched the social network Saturday night – young guys with good ideas and stacks of money, partying and having a great time. Looks like fun... not feeling much of that just now...

28th June 2011 – aam – Stella went along to a bball training session last night. Trying to get her into a team with her friend Anastasia from school – hoping will be ok. Pat, Anastasia's father told me they struggle for numbers however there were nine of them there last night including Stell! We shall see but really happy she is taking it up – much better sport than netball. More flowing and action, better for the body I think.

Ange tried to get her in on netball but difficult mid-season. Basketball might prove to be the same but hoping not – all down to the mothers!

Really worried about work at the moment. Stretching myself and financially things are not looking so great on the work we are picking up. SSH National stadium connections will be a balance between losing money and getting things done in time...! Not a nice place to be.

Bidding for a job at Latrobe which will lose money if we get it. I feel we must do it to find where we sit on fees and the market place with respect to architectural buildings.

At the moment we are not really there and need to be I think to have a profile in the industry – track record. The alternative is to really withdraw all together and reduce down in size pretty dramatically. Issue will be being forced to do that if we cannot make things work which might be the case...

Losing a bit of sleep over it and will have to have that discussion with Joe/Frank.

29th June 2011 – Someone dropped a Salvation Army book on homelessness on my desk this morning (must have been thinking after the sleep out). Really powerful stories from people in it. Tragic in a lot of cases – usually around the successes they have had in getting people back on track or in contact with their families etc.

People really are saving lives out there. I would like to do it also I think, partly through this hopelessness being one of my biggest fears below it all –for me, and now for the kids! Partly I must admit there also is the feeling of strength through helping, the feeling of philanthropy and doing good, and a tiny bit of morbid fascination... coming from needing in some way to see how bad things are out there.

I suspect I wouldn't be prepared or enjoy dealing with the anger and hostility and non-logic of a lot of it. /It is not always the underprivileged kid or single mother...

I came home from school today
No-ones here,
No-one to greet me home
I wanted to show you my picture
Mum I'm only six

I came home from B-Ball practice today
No-ones here
No-one to greet me home
I needed help, I sprained my ankle
Mum I'm only eleven

I came home from High School today
No-ones here
No-one to greet me home
I needed help with my exam
Mum I'm only fourteen

I came home from drug dealing today
No-ones here
No-one to greet me home
I know I'm doing wrong
But no-ones there to stop me
I need to eat, look after the house
And pay your bills
Mum I'm only seventeen

I came home today
No-ones home, no-one to greet me
I'm going crazy, I'm out of here
See you at the cross roads
All I wanted was a mum and dad
And a home
But as I see that will never be

Kristal

"In Kings Cross there is a place called 'the wall' where young men, often caught up in drug abuse, desperately needing money, sell themselves. Its one of the places the Oasis streetnet mobile technology van visits. For a number of weeks a young man would come on board at this stop. He was 17. He would spend half an hour on the computers and have a cup of coffee, before disappearing into the night.

One night as he got up to leave the van, he called a worker over to the computer he was using. Saying there's a problem here, he jumped out of the van and disappeared into the night. The worker checked the computer, there was no problem but written across the screen the young man had typed these words, 'Please help me. I'm scared to talk to anyone. I feel I'm trapped in this life and I don't know how to get out. Please help me' and below was his email address.

We were able to use this address to make contact with the this desperate young man. Over a number of nights we were able to reassure him that change was possible, that heroin addiction could be overcome, and that we could keep him safe from the pimp that was controlling his life. Eventually we were able to meet him in a safe place.

We were able to get him away from the man who kept him imprisoned with drugs and fear. Today he is in the Salvation Army rehabilitation centre in another state, rebuilding his life."

Slavation Army Oasis.

Reading this I remember a story I read in primary school as a kid. A lot of instances in primary school had lasting effects on me I think. I often remember moments in school around things that burned themselves into my memory. The book on drug abuse and looking with a degree of horror and fear on the depicted deteriorating face of a woman addicted to drugs, wondering if it was real unable to take my eyes off it was a big one.

Anyway, this other story was of a man in London who used to go out each night and collect the kids without homes and bring them back to a place with a bed for a nights sleep. On a few consecutive nights a boy with red hair, smaller than the rest, kept pleading with him to take him but he was always just after the places had run out.

One night on going back the man found the little boy he called carrot top or something like that, dead. After that point he no longer left anyone who actively asked for his help.

01st July 2011 -

"-and now that all his successive meetings with various ships contrastingly concurred to show the demoniac indifference with which the white whale tore his hunters, whether sinning or sinned against; now it was that there lurked a something in the old man's eyes, which it was hardly sufferable for feeble souls to see. As the unsettling polar star, which through the live long, arctic, six months' night sustains its piercing, steady gaze; so Ahab's purpose now fixedly gleamed down upon the constant midnight of the gloomy crew. It domineered above them so, that all their bodings, doubts, misgivings, fears, were fain to hide beneath their souls, and not sprout forth a single spear or leaf.

In this foreshadowing interval too, all humour, forced or natural, vanished. Stubb no longer strove to raise a smile; Starbuck no more strove to check one. Alike, joy and sorrow, hope and fear, seemed ground to the finest dust, and powdered, for the time, in the clamped mortar of Ahab's iron soul. Like machines they dumbly moved about the deck, ever conscious that the old man's despot eye was on them."

Herman Melville
Moby Dick, c The Hat..

2nd July 2011 –

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush.
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there. I did not die.

Mary Frye
c 1932

From a stumble upon web site. Mary Frye, was apparently living in Baltimore at the time and had never written any poetry. The plight of a young German Jewish woman, Margaret Schwarzkopf, who was staying with her and her husband, inspired the poem. She wrote it down on a brown paper shopping bag.

Nice – urban myth, perhaps a bit of that in there but does it really matter. If it wasn't written by a novice on the back of a brown paper bag, the poem is strong enough to reach back from the time it was written to re-write history and its demand its own version of its conception. Beautiful.

4th July 2011 – starts again. Office leader, work, pushing being pushed. All takes a lot of sustained energy. Watched some videos of Mum & Dads India trip last night. Luxury house boats on Dal lake – give me ten days there to relax and be with myself... and even then it would be ten days I would regret through not having accomplished other stuff I want to do! I am not sure about life and how to pitch still, within me or without. There are some misalignments, some not real time going on somehow and I don't feel absolutely connected with things. Like I am in rapids swallowing the odd mouthful of water trying to take in the rapidly passing panorama around me.

Mum asked if I could give her something on Buddhism to read last night, she wants to explore it a bit. Maybe that is one of these bigger picture signs, I need to remind myself of simple living again? I will try to have a read also.

Relatively good weekend. Finished fixing the door at Abbotsford Street, visited a nursery to get ideas on local flora for the garden, and also visited the rescue to look at dogs – might take a while for the right dog to find us. A little torn between small or big and exactly what it will mean being tied down?

Did some searching about families taking a year off to travel. Must admit, feel there is a lot to be gained through staying here for a while. Bedding down in a city like Melbourne enjoying things and giving the kids some stability. We have had all of that time in Asia – more into to doing a big trip each year or something along those lines...

I just looked at the clock and it is 2:30 in the morning. I had gotten up thinking it was 6:45 and time to go to work! Ange had been awake and mentioned she thought it was close to seven also. I know it was just that bit of suggestion leading me to look at my watch incorrectly but it does feel like someone just gave me an extra four or five hours :). Thank you whoever that was. Something I needed just at that moment. Right – off to look at books in the shelves for mum.

6th July 2011 – aam – 1:30am this time – equally non cogniscant of time, could have been 6:00am. Better early – place to myself, feeling of a bit of space around me time wise.

Salary review yesterday. Went from A\$210k to A\$262.5k as a total package which is significant – recognition of the office leader role which is nice – cantg

see it lasting forever but hopefully for a bit – there will be some tough times coming up and hoping I can make it through it. Expect to be in a position where have to run some loss making projects! Take it days at a time and work through.

Feel a bit strange about it all. Definitely feel if this is what I am being paid now, I was underpaid in Singapore. Cannot let myself get back into that space. Things are what they are and must just keep going forward. Business can't really accept much more in any case.

Few other funny things going on also – KPB, FXG, JCC – all a bit precious in one way shape or form, all with their own pressures I guess. I need to put a bit of time into those relationships I think, offer some stability – do some lunches with them to reinforce the friendships and relationships.

Forty four years old now, retiring at fifty five? Changing to do something else without the same income? Arup seems to be changing a lot also – I can see Infrastructure and consulting dominating more and diluting the buildings stuff. Not so enamoured with all of that. Maybe retirement will be a move to my own small company – or someone else's – more likely a Brendon orientated life change I think...?

Walking between the offices yesterday and it was blowy, and cold, and there were a few drops of rain about the place, just enough to be hitting your cheek from time to time. Beautiful I must say. Chilled trees without foliage, gray city buildings, sprinkling of people on about on their business, school holidays so the odd young kid rugged up to the hilt all attention focused on them from the parents. Was really nice and I had a strong feeling of Melbourne and of place.

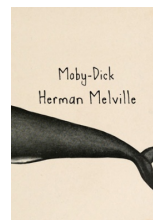
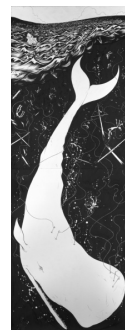
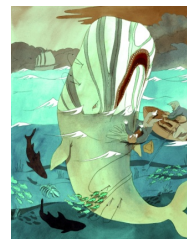
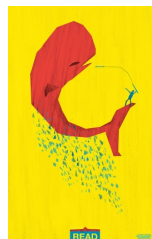
Feeling of place is a good summary. I am worrying about the feeling of people around the circles around the place a little, I guess.

Ever noticed how time frames vary from person to person, both in actual reality and perceptions. Peter Bowtell is moving at a million miles an hour at the moment – I get dragged into his pace and don't always think things through enough – feel a little at sea and paranoid.

It is a challenge finding your own pace and sticking with it.

am – Finished Moby Dick. Big finish – fanfares and trumpets and full on but all in the right ways. Not out of control, a sustained release of energy not taking away from the rest of the book at all.

Warm finishing a book feeling and more :).



Lots of cool art around Moby Dick. The best of which is the art deco type print stuff, and the worst of which is the film based American crap..

7th July 2011 – am – Up again at 1:30! This time ate a little much last night and woke up needing the toilet and a drink. Thoughts about work – mainly office leader stuff kept me up – and the want to sit by myself for a bit and write in my diary – Think I will keep a record of my midnight wakes and general sleeping hours for a bit just to see where I am...



From the Tallyhassell guy (I've had dreams like that). Like the whole social thing – must organise some card nights or similar with a few senior leaders around structures... engender a bit of comradeship?

am – Karma Yoga preaches disinterested action (and non-attachment to non action). Not for one's own benefit but for the action itself. As every action will have a consequence, it is implicitly hoped that the ultimate end will be for the good of mankind.

Can't help but think that whilst this is nice (and I actually agree with the benefits of doing action in the right way), that it is likely flawed. Whilst you cannot argue that human kind does eventually benefit – look around and we have come forward, cant help but feel it should be more guided than this.

...and then thinking again, if everyone was to try to pull in the same positive direction, you would remove all conflict etc and the world would suffer, it would lose all of the progression through being pushed and its edginess and likely end up stagnating, withering and limp.

So maybe the answer lies in performing karma, performing it honestly and in the right way – in line with your own personal Tao. I am not sure this is not what the Bhagavadgita teaches in any case – read on Brendon.



McNiven Family
joint effort :)

11th July 2011 – Started reading an old 'old' book on 'The Buddha'. Felt the need somehow after mum asking me for something to read on it – Found it has provided a bit of kick back a little to the days of exploration when I was younger (that in itself feels strange – I always think of myself as young).

Speaking about his quest, Siddhattha describes such things as noble or ignoble. If a man only values and chooses and tries to possess things that must sooner or later change and die, he will make himself unhappy. The noble quest is the quest of wisdom and goodness of a holy life – that alone brings one happiness.

All good. The questions in my mind are where this sits in relation to life, especially with children, but also with advancement of knowledge and science and psychology, the human race as a whole etc. I am a science fictionist from way back it would seem.

There must be a higher cause I feel which doesn't need to be at odds with this, but it must mean that enlightenment is only the first step. This must be done or worked into life...

13th July 2100 – Not well at the moment – managed to get through a cold recently – some Codral and those things become back seat. This is something more gastric that has been going around the office. Had similar things before however with more nausea.

This is still bad enough however that it seems to accentuate the blocked up head, and something strange in my brain – not a headache but a stuffy feeling of despondency. I really struggle to keep going, my usual half cared attitude at times overwhelms me to be care non one side but just not be bothered about doing anything about it on the other.

Strange dichotomy within myself, little like I am watching myself wreck in slow motion, some third party force of inaction swamping through me like a heavy mist.

Really looking forward to this snow weekend – main thing is to try and stay healthy for that – lots of water perhaps to wash it through the system? Stay away from high sugar foods which seems to feed it...

14th July 2011 –

A Waste

The worlds tallest building
Is now in Dubai.
So high it almost reaches the sky.
And for it there is no need
Most things to do with it are all greed.
It may, in some way, to a few
(whose minds are askew)
Be like a part of the body of a man.
But avoid this attitude, if we can.
Those involved could have been bold instead
And helped the poor, sick and old.

Owen sells The Big Issue in Melbourne

20th July 2011 – Couple of Shakespeare retweets from Brave New World:

“The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us”

King Lear

“Whether is nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, orto take arms against a sea of troubles and and by opposing end them”

Shakespeare – surely?

And an original:

“Civilisation has absolutely no need of nobility or heroism. These things are the symptoms of political inefficiency”

Aldous Huxley (through the world controller Mustapha Mond, Brave New World.

Ange blew up at the kids this morning. Wasn't happy as she smoothes over the cracks rather than fix the base problems in my mind. I got angry and went to turn the television off as consequences for not being able to get on – it was only on on the condition that they behaved and got ready.

She then blew up at me. I am worried – Mums words all those years ago in Singapore about her not coping I hate to say are feeling true. It upsets me and then I get emotional and have trouble controlling myself also. It is like an expending of anger at her redirected to the situation and the kids – not good.

I know it sits with me and I cant blame her for it - and I have been better of late. It is still a struggle however and not good – the kids need more love from her not just the negativity and hard tones the whole time.

24th July 2011 – My fishpond book on Buddhism arrived last week (An Introduction to Buddhism – Teaching History and Practices – Peter Harvey). The text booky version (ordered a couple as always difficult to know what they will turn out like – there is another lighter version arriving which will hopefully be good for mum).

Really good book – it is the no nonsense comprehensive text book. I have read quite a bit of random ‘The Buddha’ type stuff that has always been a little opinionated I feel, this seems to tie things together, make sense in the bigger picture and is dare I say definitive.

Some of the really interesting things to come from it are the larger history things. Buddhism started around 500 BC, and according to Peter Harvey predates Hinduism – must admit I thought it was the other way around...

In any case what he describes makes sense and has a ring of research and truth about it. Hinduism came from Brahmanism which entered North West India from Eastern Turkey, Southern Russia and Northern Iran in 1,500BC. It was bought in by Aryans and stepped in to replace the then declining Indus Valley Civilisation – a city based culture that had existed in Pakistan since 2,500 BC.

The religion of the Aryans was based on the Veda (recall bits of this from the philosophical society). These were oral teachings and later literature called the Brahmanas and Upanishads. The worshipped thirty three Gods which fits in well with the Hindu cast od thousands! The priests were placed at the head of four social classes which were essentially the caste sytem.

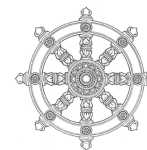
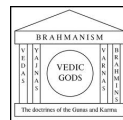
The Brahmanas (priest class), the Warriors (Ksatriyas), the Cattle rearers (Vaisyas), and finally the servants (Sudras). The Sudras later ended up with thousands of sub classes – presumably including the untouchables etc.

The transition from Brahmanism to Hinduism occurred around 200BC.

Buddhism on the other hand came from the Samanas. The Samanas were wandering philosophers. A wide amount of community debate was occurring between the Brahmins and the Samanas. The Samanas rejected Vedic tradition and wandered without family or ties in order to think and investigate the higher meanings of life.

One of the other Samanas groups was the Jains, who teach that everything in this world (including stones etc), has life principle (force?), or ‘Jiva’.

Around all of this was the concept of rebirth and karma that had existed it sounds like for a long time prior. Buddhism did not uncritically take the concepts of karma from other religions however took it from proof provided through meditation. Hmmmm.

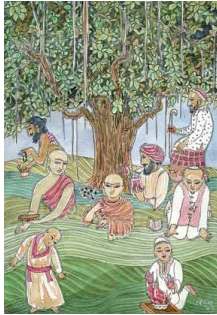


In any case I can well imagine the scene and /Brahmanism, the Samanas, etc, and religions like Hinduism and Buddhism naturally developing. Has all the same feel in terms of what I sense our psyche looks for and needs at the base level, as that of Christianity and Islam. And the same feels in terms of development within society to meet the needs of governance etc.

Buddhism does feel at the moment to be the nicest, most elegant (in terms of truth and practical application to us in the world), of them all...

The other nice thing to see is the common thread of some larger life force similar to Taoism (which personally I like even better than Buddhism as it provides a framework to live in rather than getting into to too much personal stuff – Personal stuff must be different for each individual.

Atma for the Brahmas, Jiva for the Jains, The Way for the Daoists...



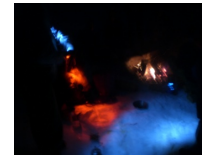
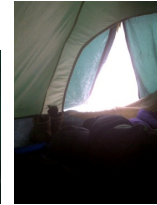
The banyan tree symbolizes the breadth of spirituality, shading all who gather near. Here members of several faiths assemble: a Hindu with a water pot, a Buddhist with a begging bowl, a Jain, a turbaned Sikh, a Muslim cleric, a Christian, a Jew and a Taoist priest in robes.

25th July 2011 – Weekend skiing last weekend at Mt Stirling. Was great even though the upper trails were closed (sunny the day or two prior and lots of ice/fallen and falling trees. Arborists with chainsaws up and down the mountain all day trying to clear stuff.

Camped at Kings saddle – shelter with firewood great but might have been nicer at Razorback hut where there was full enclosure and couches believe it or not – lack of firewood however which would have made it hard!

Probably the best parts of the weekend I hate to say were the early morning drive up in incredible mists etc through the Yarra valley, and the drive home warming up afterwards...

Not quite the skiing was good fun as were the people – open invitation not too many accepted but people who do accept those sorts of things are generally pretty good people.



Good weekend with the kids just gone – Ange was studying so spent a lot of time with them all – swimming, chocolateria Bulleen Rd shops after, walk to the pond, State of Design, experiments with electricity (batteries and globes and motors etc...), dude time with National Velvet (admittedly with mixed buy in!)... Tiring but good – hope that sort of thing stays with them – always peppered with having to growl at them for this or that on the way through unfortunately – good outweighs the bad? All a part of the same continuum – need to learn to behave as well as have a good time.

Enjoyed National Velvet – fantastic characters and lessons in life – Mr and Mrs Brown have a great relationship. Some nice little life lessons in there also in letting them take the money from Mrs Browns Channel swim to enter the Grand National.

Comments on the boy – can't quite recall the quote but something along the lines of need a little bad to appreciate the good to come...

Also watched Black Swan – very good, but not exactly an enjoyable movie to watch – was questioning my own sanity at the end of the movie!

26th July 2011 – Not a great day at work yesterday – found out we lost Latrobe University with Lyons (who told us we were as good as Bonnacci technically – offended, but more expensive), SSH connections seemed to get worse (didn't actually just the news breaking!), realising I should have picked up fact Rachel sent out some Beyond Zero stuff in overly flowery envelopes – not upset so much with that more that I should have picked up and made the call when I saw it – seems to be thousands of little things like that. Bit down on getting things to happen – lots of blurred pictures and slow progress...



28th July 2011 – Rereading The Jungle Book. Really good – I have a feeling I have read it before but it has passed from my mind – there is a slight imprint

there that feels familiar, Rikki Tikki the mongoose and Toomai of the elephants – I don't think I ever read the whole thing however – not much memory of Mowgli and Shere Kahn – the feeling of the detail at least...

I hope these things that fade from the mind stay with me somehow – form the base of who I am. I feel they should and do, and I like them so much it would be a great shame to think they just dried up and evaporated.

What little Toomai liked was to scramble up bridle paths that only an elephant could take; dip into the valley below; the glimpses of wild elephants browsing miles away; the rush of the frightened pig and peacock under Kala Nags feet; the blinding warm rains, when all the hills and valleys smoked; the beautiful misty mornings where nobody knew here they would camp that night....

Rudyard Kipling
Toomai of the Elephants

Feeling the call I must admit. Switching between the warmth and adventure of India, and looking out the window of the bus to cool grey streets and the approaching buildings of the city in which I will be bound for the day.

Too early to retire? When I retire it is going to be to do something interesting – and maybe reduce cost of living, or earn some income, or maybe none of the above?

01 August 2011 – This month is a poem a day month...

The best surprises come least expected and small,

Work contrasted with a fairy tale Arthur to younger days revisited,

Cabin stars overhead, an emirate airline by necessity,

As a way fell into, all seeming right with the world through forces larger than oneself, larger than traditional mundane choices...

Emirates to Singapore

02 August 2011 –

Enough living in the present to negate any need to trawl that of the past.

Something yet asks for respect; from within, from without?

Of more matter than what was; that which may not have been.

The greater tragedy of almost not happening, humbly pointing to that which is still to come.

'Thank you' the reply...

A decade ago today.

It was a decade ago today that I had my accident. I feel like I should be feeling something, or rather society has given me expectations of myself in this circumstance. In actual fact, there is only now. All the rest are overlays constructed by me, founded in clouds and ready to be blown to the four winds at the merest breath.

I am incredibly grateful for these past ten years. Can you imagine the tragedy of them not having been. Ewan, Freya, Singapore...

Almost heightens the fear around things not going well now. Now that the stakes are known.

Have copied the email transcripts etc into the end of this file. Just as this is the only diary place they appear.

3rd August 2011 –

Airports are not real...

They have funny piano musik and fake flowing fountains,

Shopping duty free .wall murals of mountains.

Travellers excited, and people all important,

But they are taking from reality, their world, merely dormant.

Time in Changi.

Did I mention I passed out on the flight on the way up? Combination of little sleep the days before, Dry July broken by a few drinks – a mix of drinks thinking the kids would appreciate the different little bottles! Being on a plane – happens all the time no need to be embarrassed as I kept getting told, and getting up after sitting for a while.

I tried to get into a toilet – feeling a bit woozy, and the first one was locked. When I went around the rear kitchen to the next I could feel things slipping away from me. A nice tingly gradual loss of being in that place, a slide gently downwards to lots of Emirate beige hosts and hostesses all waking me back up.

Lots of smiling and concerned faces, drinks of water, untying of shoes, a blanket and place to rest my head. Didn't fight it, sat up after a bit and gradually felt better and made my way back to my seat.

It was nice that feeling on the floor however – took me some way back to hospital, people caring, a muddy half there consciousness – tingling around the brain and senses. The tiniest bit trippy and nice and;... like being not all quite there. Like the early onset of happy gas.

5th August 2011 –

Poetry and prose, and things refined
Struggle it seems, for place and time.

Amongst market failures, and famine, and debt,
squawk boxes, tabloids... internet.

Nice Things.

6th August 2011 –

Moods swings and feelings show themselves in us, weaving
within something else,

Something without a name, ...not soul, ...not life. Movement,
direction, scale...

What natural state removed from this I wonder?

People within.

Feeling the world around me is a bit of an uncontrollable force at the moment. A raging torrid river chaotic and turbid but channelled through a tight canyon.

We are all being swept away with it, tangled with money and ego and commitments and responsibilities unable to make much progression in any direction one way or the other.

Glimpses of others in their own plights, struggling with their own tangles, smiling through them, grimaced grins with honest trapped souls below them...

7th August 2011 –

Little boys brains need time in the morning,
Time to start to begin to think,
That's what I'm told (with an unseen wink).

Ewan

10th August 2011 –

Sleep comes on stealthily, menacing like a hospital drug...

It comes gradually, seeping, like a silently enveloping thick mist, having crept up unannounced in times relaxed...

It comes rushing in impact as a wearied welcome relief, a temporary escape from consciousness once given permission at the end of a long day...

It comes intermingled with imagined attention, unawares, cloaked by warmth or starved of oxygen to become often permanent...

Or not at all, no matter we might ask, kept at bay by things
unspecific, thoughts, feelings, vibrations...

When it finally does come it is the finest silk, unfeeling to the
touch and under and around us unknowingly, suspending all
nature...

Sleep

Had a really nice morning with the kids this morning at before school care.
Throwing the tennis ball across a carpet to see how many times we could catch
without dropping, and a quick game of snakes and ladders before I went.

Ewan sidled up next to me on the way out, with a bit of a smile obviously
enjoying himself and feeling pretty at one and happy.

Wind and rain and trees,
Enclosing, enveloping, adverse...'
Seeming to fit; like an old coat,
Caressing from inside out...

Walking home.

11th August 2011 –

Born to wealth, study and poverty a natural call,
Non-attachment to worldly things.
Right action, right thoughts. Idols not.

...enlightenment.

Followed, and praised, and forgotten,
All at the same time

Overcomplex

14th August 2011 – Good days cooking yesterday – Moroccan carrot soup and
baked vegetables, really nice – rewarding when something turns out well like
that. Last weekends lentils were just a bit dry and bland unfortunately – ok but
not great.

Watching all the older people in the change rooms yesterday at swimming (the
pool is full of young families, middle to older male lappers, and older people
doing saunas and spas etc I presume – never seem to see them actually in the
pool?), anyway... seeing some of these old guys, overweight and stiff as
getting changed made me think of Greece – specifically an old guy with a big
belly sitting in speedo's on a breakwater I took a photo of.

He might have been old but he could move, had a bit of that jolly have lived
father figure about him. You could see the warmth and texture in him rather
than the bland hospital suite feeling of the old people yesterday.

Made me think of the attractions of the environment. Warmth and sea and
wine and cheese – fantastic. We really liked Greece, and particularly the
islands.

Would love to take a year off some time to d=go and live there. Hire out a
house by a harbour on one of the lesser known islands; again I have a photo in
mind, a late dinner by all of the fishing boats etc, earthy and local and non
intimidating – welcoming, not sure, but would love to experience that a for as
while.

Ange's comment was that there are many things like that she would like to
do... Will keep in mind – not realistically until the kids are older – but when
does it happen. When Freya is 20, I will be 60!

Hmmm, needs some thought.

Struggling with the time/energy to get a poem a day done – missed the last
two...

Memories become stills,
Under which life is lived.
Drawings of time gone,
Distract from the now.

Distractions

Dreams of terrible monsters pull young ones into their parents
beds. ...and the light chases them away.

Terrible Monsters

Bird sounds call to wake,
Breakfast waiting unannounced,
Another Sunday.

Sunday Morning

15th August 2011 –

facebook "The Dalai Lama, when asked what
surprised him most about humanity
answered, "Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to
make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his
health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does
not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in
the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die,
and then dies having never really lived." Compliments Sheela...

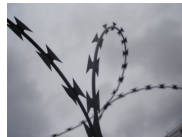


From Stumbleupon (facebook link). I like this but I think I like it more for the handwriting, and the fact that it is a written note. Suggestive of a story – a note hidden somewhere, a book, a library in a leafy university in the States perhaps. All very Life according to Garp...

Anger comes as dark crows overheated, breathing heavily through their nostrils perched uncomfortably on the edges of metalware bowls, talons scratching moving to and fro with half flaps of their wings to keep balance, darting skirting, never quite focusing, revolving minds small and preoccupied with little capacity for anything but the overflowing anger within.

Menacing, full of direction without purpose and craving to take flight. Sensing tethers, imaginary and real tying their ankles, and endangerment, uncertainty, their minds confined to the immediacy of the small world existing in a drawn out flash point around them. Cognisant somehow, at some level, just out of line of sight that that only time will come to cure.

Within.



Grrrrr.



16th August 2011 – This morning (the morning after), had a beachside feel to it. Eyes not so sleepy or strained, I could almost hear the gentle sound of the break somewhere not far off, waves reaching up to shore, seagull cries and ruffled feathers against the stay bits of wind.

Ange ended up sleeping in another bed, Ewan can in shocked and breathing heavily around about one o'clock having what must have been a bad dream although he was a bit delirious or still half asleep and difficult to communicate with. He spent the rest of the night in with me waking me continuously with his snuffling and moving about the place.

Woke at ten to seven to a text from Peter Bowtell for a quick call re a few things on his mind about work overnight. Late start for Ange so slow wake up and into work.

Listened to some music on the phone and had flashbacks to similar walks to work in Singapore. The music divorcing me somehow from the immediate physical connection to make me an interested observer. Strange contrasts between the music and the world around the walk. Felt like the real connection was to the walk and it was the environment that had somehow been changed, slid in and out of a Perspex holder around me, or a dial turned one click to the right to swap from the exotic feel of Singapore with warm weather, carparks and hawker centres to the park connector down to Koonung reserve.

Feeling a bit peaceful, or sleepy now, not sure which... Sleepy I think.

17th August 2011 – Up late last night figuring out the connections of the sub-woofer which seemed to have disappeared from the stereo sound! Think it was the auto setup that I did – turned it right down! Ended up turning back up and put on plus which boosts it – and back to working.

I am enjoying it I must say – music sounds fantastic although I have noticed different music sounds different at different times – which would seem to suggest that mood etc has a big impact! Nice to listen to good music – last night was Romeo & Juliet II, Wedding Cake Island, and the Doors. Doors was particularly nice with the bass – “slowly languidly” – flowing like thick syrup around the room...

Got to bed past eleven, a slave to the systems I have built around me obviously, but enjoyable. So much for non-attachment – a bit of indulgence and superficial love of a material thing... don't judge me.

17th August 2011-

All the food scraps on the plates that get put into the dishwasher? Things go in but ultimately don't come out.

Where does all that shit go?

With all of the other seemingly rational stuff in life around us that disappears without reason without science?

Honest pay for honest work,

With quiet, and with time,

Good governance,

Homemade simple things that work,

Relationships and love,

With childhood and dreams and things that were going to be (at one stage or another).

I think they get mashed up out of sight, or blown into corners unseen (maybe to be later cleaned?). I only know they disappear and we are left with what is.

At least my dishes are generally clean, for the most part.

residue

I think the above probably reflects my state of mind at the moment. A bit out there, wobbly and running quickly, a million miles an hour for the most part. Steamrolling thoughts that perhaps should not be.

19th August 2011 -

‘That being, this comes to be; from the arising of that, this arises; that being absent, this is not; from the cessation of that, this ceases’

Conditioned Arising
Buddhist doctrine

Conditioned arising is a Buddhist doctrine on the form of life. It is an argument against a specific permanent independent self. Instead life is series of linkages that arise from certain conditions, and disappear once the conditions disappear.

The general format is along the lines of the following:

- 1) Spiritual ignorance
- 2) Constructing activities
- 3) (discriminative) consciousness
- 4) Mind and body
- 5) The six sense bases (sixth being mind)
- 6) Sensory stimulation
- 7) Feeling
- 8) Craving
- 9) Grasping
- 10) Existence
- 11) Birth
- 12) Ageing, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, despair

The argument is therefore made to remove spiritual ignorance, remove the original condition and the rest (cessation of Dharma), follows.

21st August 2011 -

Baby birds out of their nests, awkward, bemused, befuddled,
Baby humans out as well, less bemused than domineering, but
awkward all the same.

Early Spring

Background surf noise, constant.
Little voices full of here and there,
Surfers black, seals, beyond the break, Container Ship turning...
Slowly to Port Phillip, Fishermen casting waiting watching, Young
eyes old eyes, squinting to the sea, Monday miles away looming
unheard, Waiting at the dinner table at home perhaps...

Afternoon at the beach.

22nd August 2011 – Great day with the Winx club yesterday. Morning party – Jarod’s second, the to Gunnamatta for the afternoon. Plan was to meet up with Frank, called him once there to find he was sick in bed.

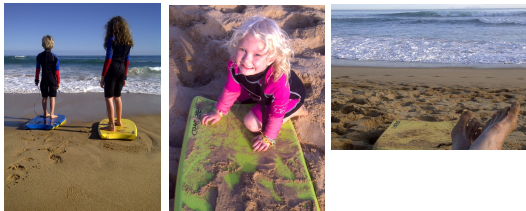
Had a great day though – Stella and Ewan both played around the wash of the waves – never more than 4 inches deep, letting their boards float while they tried to stand.

Waves were pretty full on – lots of surfers out there. Amazing weather still as you can imagine, sunny, not too hot or cold – perfect. Did some burying of winx in sand and then some sliding down the sand on the boogie boards (towed behind dad).

Perhaps the nicest bit of the day was the walk back over the dunes, gingerly treading on the car park asphalt and stones to the car and to the outdoor showers to wash off the sand – getting changed shivering and cold, into warm clothes to the drive home. Iridescent orange sun sinking into the horizon – lots of low light and music, relaxed tired.

Then watching the finale of the Block to fish and chips and finally winx falling asleep on Mum and Dad. All except Stella who was obviously tired but still wanting a final story to fall asleep to...

Pretty Nice.



24th August 2011 – Finding it hard to keep up with poetry – hard to make time and hard to find inspiration in what must be quite an un-poetic life!. This is one thing that it has taught me, I need to find enjoyment and beauty in my life as well as hard work. A lot of my quiet time is reflection and very introspective...

Reading 'Mawson' a book about replicating the Antarctic journey Mawson took where he survived two comrades. By Tim Jarvis, who actually works with Arup now. Was talking to him at a recent event and have asked if there is any possibility of me joining or contributing in a real way to any of the trips he has planned.

Made me think of the worthwhile things I have done in life (as opposed to the background noise of general living – which might have an overall meaningfulness but one that is harder to recognise or grip onto – particularly when half way through?)

- All of primary school, secondary school and University.
- Parachuting
- Basketball
- 3 month trip up East Coast Australia after University
- Trip to Hawaii for Aloha bowl and a week of exploring myself.
- Photography and the course (at Monash uni?)
- Philosophical society and interest in philosophy & religion.
- Year off to travel India, Nepal, Tibet, China, Russia and Europe.
- Two years living in London (and 3-4 months in HK prior to that)
- My accident
- Hiking in Victoria, Wilsons Prom, Mt Stirling and the high country.
- Sailing trip from Singapore to Phuket (Wings)
- North West China Trip (Silk Road and Taklamakan)
- 8 years in Singapore including all the side trips, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia etc.

All of these things and all of the people and friendships along the way have ended up defining or changing me in ways. What is doing that now – my year of living dangerously I guess... I need something else – there are things in the air I can feel, like an approaching change in the weather, just what they are exactly I am a little unsure...

25th August 2011 –

Pale white eucalypt limbs, grey blue gum leaves, and dirt and rocks and white sand of a worn track - making its way up a bushland gully.

A little bit of Australiana and youth, and times more relaxed, arriving through a bus window, draping past out just beyond the wake of the trip into work.

Observed but not so much regretted... times and places for all things. A day will come when the time is right.

There will come a day

26th August 2011 – aam -

I see only beauty within,
Sparkling eyes and cheeky grin,
A mind and nature that likes to think,
Intelligence that's quick to link.
They say there might be something wrong,
...motor skills that take too long?
It scares me that they might be right,
It keeps me waking through the night.

People will be what people will be,
And you are lovely, and loved by me...

Beautiful Boy

Funny – my poetry it seems is taking a very definitive Dr Suess rhyming style!

Ewan did some tests at school recently where he qualified for special help as disabled. Really worried for him. He is a beautiful boy, just incredibly messy and uncoordinated. I can see the intelligence within him, and so can others – his teacher has said as much, it is difficult as it is overshadowed by the simple things of not knowing left from right or organising himself.

We see him getting out of control at home. Fighting back, being selfish and over reacting. How much of this stuff is because he is a little boy? I like to think it will all just come right with time and age and maturity. I worry however, and feel at sea not knowing.

I might look for some help – talk to Peters wife Anne about it – maybe get a second opinion.

We have organised a party on Saturday for him – to help him extend his friends at school.

I worry that he is how he is through something we have done. I have yelled at him too much or something like that. He can be incredibly frustrating and uncooperative making it hard to keep your temper. I feel like I have let him down in some way. At the end of the day I am only doing what I can do. I love him to bits and try. Perhaps he is inheriting these things though weaknesses in myself. Got to try to be a more loving consistent Dad Brendon.

Got to do a lot of things at the moment. Finding it hard work.



27th August 2011 -

Backyard birds call in the day,
Time to wake, get up and play,
Shed the thoughts from the week,
Forget that things are sometimes bleak.
Saturday Morning

28th August 2011 –

Ambling weekends, around things drifting our way,
Will young memories be made of these?
Weekends

Ewan's party went very well yesterday. Lots of junk food and yelling 7 year old boys. Couple of fathers helped out scoring, and we remembered the tea and coffee etc – all good.

Dinner last night – roast Moroccan vege's with couscous. Gabby, Ange's friend from university stayed over for dinner which was nice. The older I get the more I enjoy having people around – a little also I think as living in the burbs you see less of people in the immediate around you?

Food a success – must invite Andy and Mozz over for dinner one night soon – owe them and like Andy – would like to re-establish closer contact – do some meaningful stuff perhaps. Tried to catch up with Tim Jarvis unsuccessfully last week – I might be a bit lightweight for him!?

pm – Just been watching a show on Hollywood and all the great directors / producers etc. Feeling a bit bland! Want to rush out and make movies in the sixties, be a part of the scene etc...!

Need something in my life. Writing poetry every (nearly every), day has made me realise my life is not that poetic, or inspired... Maybe I need to start taking cocaine, have an affair, or do some wild travel and searching of the soul?

Makes me a little sad I cant write or play the music I love to listen to. Write the books I like to read. I have always had a bit of misplaced confidence in myself that makes me think I am capable of anything – when in fact I am not. Maybe with a bit of alcohol I can be? A bit of mood and place.

29th August 2011 – Mental Health day off today – annual leave mind you... Fantastic- got up early with the family, dropped the kids off at before school care, trammed it into Richmond and am going to wander a bit, indulging, enjoying, observing, doing what drifts my way. Plans for a bit of reading, furniture shops, book shops, an Ikea run, an actual run – or more likely ride, and got to get back by 3 for Ewies Occ therapy? I think, appointment.

Seeing Ewie with his friends on Saturday at the party was great. He doesn't seem that behind at all, cant help but think the teachers are making mountains out of molehills when it comes to this testing they have done. I really think he will come right, it is just about maturity and what he cares for, then recognising and connecting. I think actually that he will be quite vain boy – likes fashion and notices etc, it is just connecting that with his personal self!

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, or the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change."

Charles Darwin
as quoted through Brian's (McNiven) book

Slightly dodgy – I don't trust Brian to alter slightly to his own ends – not a lot of respect for thoughts and philosophy other than his own I suspect. I like this

however, and begrudgingly accept that there are a few points in his book so far that I like and agree with.

Sitting in a nice little cafe in Richmond, not far from corner of Bridge and Church. Tweek cafe – bit retro and cool as you must oblige and be in Richmond I guess. From the clock marked Wodonga on the wall, I am guessing they are from up that way.

The cafe is nice but what makes it is the procession of people, trendy and not, young and not that make their way through the doors. Makes me think people are all sorts, made up of what they achieve (have achieved), their possessions etc and their immediate life, and then they are what they make of life day to day minute to minute, their reasoning ability and their interaction ability.

I have been way too material most of my life, it is now that I am coming to have what I need and not really want that I feel I am growing in other directions. True a lot of the conversation is still with myself, but I am interacting moiré, becoming more like my mother and welcoming people into my life with who to interact with.

I still get more enjoyment out of watching others I must admit. ...and if I am honest with myself, it might be partly because it allows me to contrast them with myself and observe and be happy with who I am and where I am also.



Inverted image (of intersection and The Vine Hotel, from a piece of art on Bridge Rd – an pin hole camera that produces images drawing an analogy to the growing population and life in the world. Like it just because of the moving coloured image – great and don't get to see that often – should set something up at home for the kids – would be good for Ange's teaching as well.

Little units walking, talking drinking coffee and living in their little unique worlds.

Little challenges, little goals and little dreams, growing expanding in mind spaces not so little to the little brains they are within.

Lots of little's, bumping meshing merging lapping over each others boundaries.

Lots of little energies buzzing, humming, inverting, producing.

Lots of little's joining, creating becoming, ceasing, making, being together, relating.

Myriads of little's in little cities, little islands on a little world.

How little is little, and is together, together?

All little journeymen, journeying, living,

And dying, and yet not...

Journeymen

30th August 2011 – Fantastic day off just not enough of it as usual – didn't get to do my ride or run, council approvals for backyard etc...

A beer with breakfast,

Coffee and toast,

A bell on the door people in, and out,

Shaded sun through the window to the street,

No tweeking required.

Richmond Breakfast
(Tweek cafe)

pm -

Thoughts and feeling, and mojo too,

Run through lyrics to inspire anew,

To take me away to another place,

Overlay reality with a sense of grace.

Music

Watching the world around me, the machinations of people, the decisions and the logic. I cant help but feel the randomness. Paths and strategies taken on the basis of little or inaccurate information, poorly executed and flying in the face of incredible complexity around them.

How can these ever hope to come right? And the reality is that they rarely do. Things change, and luck falls this way and that and people succeed and fail on the basis of little reason, or even intent.

I really think that as long as the reasons are good, and the action honest and true to them then more often than not the right outcomes end up bearing out.

Right action – right outcome. Karma perhaps but a little less than that...

02nd September 2011 -

All faith is false, all Faith is true:

Truth is the shattered mirror strewn in myriad bits; while each believes his little bit the whole to own.

A couplet from the Kasidah of Haji Abdu El-Yezdi. Translated by the 19th century explorer and linguist Sir Richard Burton from Sanskrit.

9th September 2011 – Originally had transcribed a short summary of Brian (McNiven)'s in here on the four noble truths of Buddhism – which I ended up losing during windows 7 installation. Probably a higher reason behind that – would like to do my own summary in any case, and that is probably it...

As previously there is something in me that thinks whilst Buddhism is great it has slightly missed the point somewhere, inking toward withdrawal from the energy of life rather than getting involved it – the elimination of desire...

Can't help but think life and the way we should live it should have a lot more around balance. The world is not all suffering, it is a balance, there are closed systems and action and reactions, and a life philosophy should revolve around learning to deal with these, the fact that you cannot look at only one side.



I know Taoism has a lot of that in it – it also has a lot more I can really relate to and even feel at times in the world around me – the way... However is offers little guidance on the partaking of life. The winning and losing and experiencing.

Time to start a new splinter religion/philosophy Brendon :) ?

11th September 2011 – Have told the kids we are going prospecting for gold this morning – bit of excitement all round!

12th September 2011 – Sovereign Hill was fantastic – kids had a great day. Highlights were panning for gold – got a few scraps to bring home, the boiled lollies and Freya getting tired, kicking up a fuss and telling a small crowd of people that she was not going to come over (from an area she was not supposed to be in), if the man was going to say something boring...

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap,
but by the seeds you plant."

Robert Louis Stevenson

14th September 2011 – On one of my favourite pastimes, Flying :). Time to myself, suspended animation, a ticket of the world for a parcel of time – this one quite a good one – business class to L.A. and San Francisco to be involved in a review of a wheel in Las Vegas. I can almost feel Salman Rushdie sitting a few seats up by the window, accompanied by some pointy eared half fictional character in a green jumpsuit inspired by the circus (Salaman perhaps?) – what you are experiencing sir is the disconcerting feeling of experiencing the present for a short while.

Lots of heavy moral decisions to be made around this trip. Ange thinks I am a sad case for all this by the way... get over it and consume you stupid man or thoughts to that effect I imagine.

Should I go, or should I not? – they want me, are willing to pay, there us a chance I could contribute and be of benefit (and a chance not!), I have contributed in the past – and I really want to go – A:Go!

Should I fly economy or business (knowing they have already approved business)? – Carbon footprint, deep seated belief it is waste of money taken up by the weak and inconsequential, the not real in our midst. Will need to work – long legs not good in economy. – A: apply for premium economy, waitlisted and then be secretly happy when it doesn't come through and I get to fly business.

Should I watch TV? – It's the year of living dangerously and this month is no TV month (going quite well except when I discover myself tuning into the kids TV shows at breakfast time!). Will force me to think, work, read. The whole purpose of living dangerously is to push myself and see what the changes bring on (pathetic really – not like I am uprooting and living in a hermits cave on a mountainside for a year or two). Unsure of my resolve when boarding the plane – is a movie really TV – suspect not... But after a few hours of flight trying it I am pleasantly surprised by the feeling of being free from it – free to just be me and nothing else. Liberated, feeling new age, feeling honest and exploratory – feeling like I will still be open to it as it has only been a few hours after all... actually, am confident it would be good and I will do it. – A: Give it a go.

pm – Not sleeping...

Bit disappointed in this introduction to Buddhism – what looked like a detailed text book is detailed but not that good I feel at picking up the general tenets and giving them form, it is all detail...

He transcribes a carving of Gotama's son being presented to him in which the Buddha is just a throne with footprints. He talks about the Buddha being

'perhaps' too pure to have been depicted in reality and the custom of representing him by symbols etc.

I am sure I have read in more than one place, and more importantly it makes total sense in terms of the overall philosophy, of Buddha strongly being against any form of idolisation. Life and life philosophy should sit within the person, not without in the form of a God or idol.

It was only when forced to compete with other religions etc that the Buddha image began to come into being. Doesn't fill me with confidence.

I might start up a little table on what a good religion or life philosophy might look like (Refer table at end...)

Flying business class is a bit of an experience. Makes me realise how random life can be. I was half expecting people here to be a cut above or something like that, after all they (or someone), is paying a lot of money for them to be here – on what is after all not much more than a single day or part of a day of their lives.

But people are generally the same as you would expect anywhere, fair shares o over weights, socially dysfunctionals (that would be me) etc etc.



Felt like I needed to browse a few images, no internet so browsed the hard drive and came up with this. Am coasting now, rhyme and reason may well have abandoned this place?

Back to try to sleep...

pm II – San Francisco and America. Got into San Francisco around lunch after delayed connections etc. It is a place of cars ...and loud people (which is strange as it is also the home of a lot of quiet people – I am pretty sure).

Not quite as bad as I remember (Florida? – not sure), but pretty full on. Five lane each way freeways, median strips to concrete footpaths to eroding bitumen struggling to hold back weeds on the side of the road.

I wouldn't say I am disappointed in SF – cities are what they are and SF is just SF. Quite a big peninsula (49 square miles according to my taxi driver, just realised that might be where the 49'ers comes from!) – Big CBD but a little anonymous, hard to stand back and see, busy streets, tram cars, electric buses, and lots of waterfront by which stage the CBD has dwindled down to 3-5 storey apartment blocks, inner city suburbs by the water.

16th September 2011 - There is Chinatown, little Italy and loads of convenience type stores “Liquor...Cigarettes...Produce”. Quite a few finger docks around reminding me of old plans of New York.

America is definitely a service society – cheerful clear ‘can I help you right there sir’ type of stuff. Everything seems always switched on. This is my job and I am going to do it the best I can. Cheerful at least, maybe belying mixed feelings and suppressed contradictions in psyche at worst.

I don't mind it, it is just a little tiring at times and a little exclusive of being able to chill and be quiet, be a comfortable second every now and then. It also gives the impression of all of these service people everywhere. No more than Aus obviously just more in your face. – I spent a lot of time thinking what these people must be like when they go home at night.

Took the bus from my hotel – fantastic old building called the Palace. No. 30 winding and weaving down to the water. Quintessential American bus drivers, the first was an old Chinese guy, the second a black American, both getting to see the good bad and ugly of the city pass through their doors – caretakers of a slice of transient space collecting, discarding, mixing.

The Chinese guy must have missed a lady at a stop who managed to catch up with the bus at the next. ‘I was there’, ‘I didn't see you’, ‘I was there’, ‘I didn't see you’, ‘well I was there...’. Neither really having the energy to fight, ...or apologise.

Lots of homeless people. Long beards, bags and backpacks, trolleys. An old guy eating sloppy peanut butter straight from the tub sitting opposite me... stinky.

Black American women waiting for the bus with me – ‘I'm from New York, New York is my town’. Stained conversation, not been here long but living here, guess I'll stay with friends tonight. I did ask her about who her friends were...

Seems a place where a lot of people end up. Tall black transvestite shaking a McDonalds cup with a few coins by the underground station entrance, ‘help, I haven't been here long, I'm new, appreciate a little help, hungry’... Presume there is a large contingent who do the East coast to West road trip, end up here somehow to ideas and get faced with the reality of a city like any other, just as uncaring, or unable to care despite the history of hippies and flowers in the hair. I wonder, I can't imagine it was ever very different, not in the city in any case.

Lots of old age pensioners on the buses as well. Gingerly making their way up and down bus steps. Patient bus drivers, wanting to care, being there but not much more, this is just the way things are... what are you going to do in a situation like that except not be bad; and that is probably enough.

Made my way down to a lit up area by the water to a vege restaurant called Greens. Bay area – a lit up field with softball going on, basketball two on two and a bit of tennis. Odd supermarket open, and gas stations with one or two people randomly around on the streets. Glimpse of city life after work – very American, liked it.

Was hoping to sit with a lit up view of the Golden Gate. Greens was a cool little place – hip and dark and you needed to know it was there – vaguely see the outline of the bridge through lights on the cable drape, but vague at best...

Rather than sit with my food by myself amongst all those hip city couples, decided to make my way back into town and look for some American burger joint or cafe with a little more life. Got back to a bit of life in the streets but nothing open... City dwellers at night, young and the homeless it seems. Ended up at the only MacDonalds I had seen on the trip (or saw for that matter).

The befitting American experience I was after, and I did enjoy it I must admit... seems to be where all the flotsam and jetsam end up. Boys in hoodies and trainers trying to be the man for their girls in tight jeans, make up and attitudes. People like myself (- I wasn't the only business traveller looking for a late night snack). The tired hardy manager in pink jacket, her personal battlefield night shift after night shift I imagine, keeping things together and under control, the over it Asian help mechanically refilling the water cooler while people wait for a drink.

And the burger tasted pretty much exactly as it does in Aus :)... testament to something, I am not sure what.

Nice tired feeling at the moment – will try and get some sleeping happening over the next 18 or so hours on the way home! Feeling reflective ...and reflecting that everything seems all very been done before. It's been written up somewhere, talked about somewhere, happened before somewhere.

What I need is a journey, an exploration. Maybe inner, personal, something that draws from other bits of the world I am not drawing from at the moment. And I need to create something from it.

Suffered from time today. Ended up having to do half a day to finish the wheel review. Went for a bit of a walk at lunch, people watching and down to the ferry terminal at the end of Market Street hoping to take a ferry under the Bridge.



Ended up misreading the times and wasting \$9 on a ticket I couldn't use! Few little indiscretions like that – more tired than I realised I think... Ended up realising I wasn't going to make it – or even get anywhere near it so bit the bullet and took a taxi from the hotel out to the park with a view of the bridge, couple of photos and onto the airport.

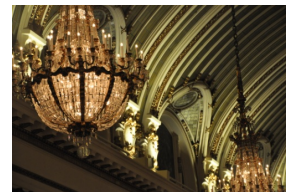
Ended up being a good afternoon – had a good driver who kept me entertained a bit ! :).



And then into the surreal goings on of the American airport system. Buses on the tarmac here and there to boarding gates who knows where. Sitting in small transitory rooms with people milling about in and out, planes pulling up outside, and trying to talk to Peter Bowtell in Bristol – 4:30 am his time and can't sleep!

Funny stream of places – inhabited by these travellers of all types – little personalities and egos bouncing around the ever cheerful service staff like stainless steel balls in a big convoluted pinball machine.

...and why do people rush to get onto a plane – the plane is not going anywhere, you have a reserved seat, you are going to have to be sitting in that seat for the next 14-15 hours, wtf?



The bridge was worth the effort – beautiful piece of construction – elegant, bold, that beyond man feel to it. One of the nicest parts were the large pier buttresses or whatever you call them. Swirling ocean currents around them, emphasising the battle for man to hold his own against the elements in living on this earth, ending up in an easy free flowing truce of mutual respect I think – I like it.

Forgot to mention the night out last night – too much to drink! Cocktail bars and bars – the hotel bar (closing just as we got there was used in madmen apparently – and the night had a bit of that feel about it. 1920's and pre-puberty America (assuming puberty for the States was the 60's – American Graffiti).

18 September 2011 – Had one of those nice nights where you are tired but slightly uncomfortable where you are sleeping. Warm enough and drifted off to sleep for extended periods at a time however waking intermittently to adjust position etc.

End result is you get to experience the sleep in a way, you have that joy of waking up, but still being tired and still able to go back to bed to sleep. Reckon I slept nine hours on and off... :).

Will have to see how I go today – kids slept at Mum & Dad's last night so hopefully will be able to ease into things...

19th September 2011 –

“Progress is not created by contented people”

Frank Tyger

...and I am feeling a little too contented at the moment I think. Strange, it seems as this contentment is all around me – like a thick liquid I struggle to move through, sticking to me everywhere in an inextricable mess.

Early Buddhism (early AD centuries), saw existence (Dhamma), to be the interaction of 72, or 75 depending on who you listen to, different patterned processes. Smaller dhammas within the larger overall Dhamma.

Consciousness consists of a string of Citta's or mind states arising out of the interaction of the smaller dhammas. Bhavanga is a type of citta seen as the resting state of consciousness as exists in a dreamless sleep. Mental functioning (or the 'brightly shining mind'), is seen as constant flicking in and out of Bhavanga to sense objects. Hence not being able to see and hear at the same exact same time but switching to and from in rapid succession, building up a picture of the world like a television or movie.

I like things like this as they relate to what is observed in people, which means it has been put together that way rather than being the product of purely

intellectual thought. Intellectual thought is fine as long as it is calibrated by reality.

Motivation factor for work today after the SF trip : small to none...

20th September 2011 – Bit of fear and needing to perform helping the motivation this morning. Did a couple of silly things through being tired yesterday – take things a bit more slowly and think as I go today...

Rained on the way in. Lovely smells of the eucalypts coming out, place felt I had it to my own to enjoy – beautiful.

pm – Feeling like I only have so many good decisions in a day at the moment. Quite good in the morning, but don't catch me in the afternoon when they are few and far between.

...and the killer is that the bad ones come back to haunt you so you are paying for them for quite some time – putting more pressure on the process (decision making process that is).

23rd September 2011 – Engineering Excellence awards last night. High commendations for AAMI Park and North Melbourne station. Peter Bowtell professional engineer of the year award.

Bit of a travesty on AMMI Park!

Down and tired today.

26th September 2011 – Another beach day at Gunnamatta on Sunday – fantastic. Kids light up and full of energy, up and down the dunes, standing in the shallows of the wave wash pretending to surf, decked out in their wetsuits, lovely to watch and to be a part of.

Visited the Melbourne Recital Hall tonight – took Moshe Safdie out to dinner and a performance after visiting the sound lab in the office. Absolutely fantastic, hearing the theory and then seeing in real life.

Beautiful space, makes me want to be an architect or acoustician! Warm and human and easy to relate to and beautiful sound. The strings were fantastic all round the hall, the voice was a little soft up in the upper circle because of the volume but crystal down in the stalls.



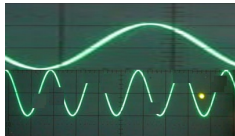
Australian String Quartet playing sunset. Haydn String Quartet op. 76 no.1, Respighi Il tramonto (the sunset), Goljov Two songs for Quartet and voice, and Ravel String Quartet in Fmajor.

At home now listening to my own little recital hall in the Dali speakers – lovely... :).

Feeling like I am relating a bit better to Ange the last few days as well. Read her some poetry from my poetry month of living dangerously last night. She fell asleep to it which was beautiful – watching her so peaceful. Light snoring :), and eternal calmness I haven't noticed in a bit. Lovely hands and fingers draping over her pillow – she really has a calm and together soul that I don't. It is there somewhere... somewhere, I can feel it, it is just I am not sure where.

And in other news, stocks are going into the double dip – crap – down 20k on 80k and likely to go lower eventually even if Greece gets a rescue...! Hang in there and buy low Brendon...

29th September 2011 – Feeling a bit out of phase. Life and things around me moving at a slow pace, large, serious, continuous, and then there's me, quick nimble, a bit random and discontinuous, patchy and not pure. I feel like I am pricking at a huge worm with thick skin trying to get it to move this way or that. Delayed reactions and uncaring in general to the people around it, difficult to keep the motivation up at times...



I am probably the yellow dot, slightly off of my own discontinuous patchy phase as well (let alone in sync and effective in the bigger picture).

Lunch – I get a surprising amount of joy out of seeing a small , what I can only guess at being, turtle ladder in the pond next to our building. The building was designed in the 60's when people had time for design.

The pond opens onto a semi protected ground level green courtyard. The fact that someone jhas given this thought, created a little environment for the turtles, allowing them to get out of the pond and walk around the crass and plants of the court yard is I think fantastic. Warms my heart that people think about these things. A little spot of good karma in the world humbly glowing with passive but positive vibrations.

Turtle Ladder



3rd October 2011 – More bad news in the papers, children, toddlers getting run over and killed by reversing four wheel drives – by family – how horrible, gives me a sick feeling in my stomach I really feel for them and the poor parents, how would you ever forgive yourself, go on with life? I really think it would be more than I can handle.

Other kids being hit by trains after playing on the tracks – a 3 and 4 year old. One seriously injured and the other in an induced coma after having been thrown 15m away!

Had to make Caitlin from office support redundant today – lack of work and demand for BA support – not nice. Will have to terminate a contractors appointment tomorrow – Joanne Dennis, a really nice lady who has just bought a new house – also not very nice - to make room for a permanent staff member whose position has been made redundant elsewhere. The right thing to do but hate it really.

The market is flat, funding for infrastructure is the worst the government has seen it in twenty years they tell us.

Am struggling to do what I need to be doing. Sports Hub connections is a basket case – was much more complicated than first thought and we will end up losing money (a lot of money), by the looks of things.

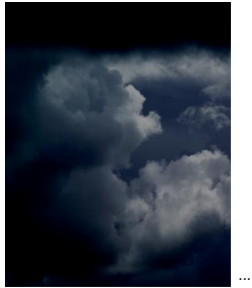
Tried to get out of it by taking on the drafting but Yongnam have now decided that they will try to get out of this by submitting shop drawings – which I am

pretty sure the BCA wont allow them to do. Just have to hang on, play cool and see where it takes us can only do so much.

Just seems to be negative news everywhere I look at the moment. Not enjoyable and struggling to keep positive.

Still waiting on RHH and also Green Chemical Futures.

Must start to get out to other architects and see what else is out there – do this contractors presentation.



Had a fantastic weekend with the kids on the other hand – seems to be going well at the moment except for a few of the cousins ganging up on Ewan which isn't very good – he doesn't seem to pick up on the emotional indicators re when he is pissing people off etc. He is getting better I hope and is an intelligent kid so hopefully all will be ok in time.

Got to keep working with him...

pm – Meeting with Peter Bowtell this morning to catch up – he was very defensive when we talked about my contact with Tim Jarvis and the fact that that would happen.

Has stuck with me and I am not sure why – his angle was too old but maybe he had been talking with him and discouraging it... I feel I need testing, need something to motivate me, feel like I am never closer to myself than when out in nature, or close to death.

How to marry that with kids and a family however...? Choosing to ride a motorbike is a similar thing I guess?

5th October 2011 – Spoke to Tim Jarvis about possible doing something, he is still open and we will give it some thought. No negativity at all, a little strange given Peters comments although may just be that he is not very good at breaking bad news?

Also spoke with Wiz about Christine. Peter had told me she was looking for another job (as informed by Wiz). Wiz didn't mention anything, we spoke a lot about how to deal with Christine – keeping things factual etc.

Perhaps I am just incredibly naive at this – likely. Perhaps Peter is telling me things (he actually mentioned Tim shook his head when Peter mentioned I had been in contact..., to move things his way (in my best interests?)

In any case, no choice but to keep on going assuming/believing the best in people.

At the end it is down to me in any case, not others. I must make these things happen and carry them through on my own beliefs.

Funnily enough after philosophy last night, walking out of the Royal Society building with an extremely clear head, seeing and absorbing and enjoying the city and world around me, the last thing on my mind was to go tramping off into a world of hardship and pain.

I am not in the mood for work and this life. I walked past the traffic crossing at the lights this morning noticing the people behind the wheels of the waiting cars, ready to get going again once the lights turned from red to green. The banality of it all in the bigger picture really struck me... and as usual I didn't know what to do about it.

And looking about work right now it strikes me also – like this is invented to keep us busy, to distract our active minds from other things that could be real?



Deadly Distraction - Blood Dove

6th October 2011 – What are other things I could do instead of this?

- Lecturing at university – would require more work if doing at top end.
- Teaching – secondary school
- Risk engineering with an insurer...

I need a break is what I need... A weeks off to recover and get back in a better place.

9th October 2011 – We heard on Thursday that rather than being straight out awarded Monash Green Chemical Futures, they are going to get us to go through our clarifications again, confirm that we still have the resources available, and finally give us the opportunity to reduce our price (the end completion date has not changed and they have decided to simply skip concept design!).

Depressing! Shows a basic lack of appreciation as to how buildings are (or should be), designed with proper input required at each stage to develop.

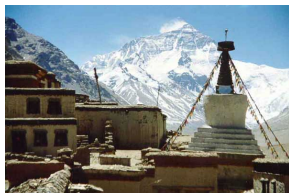
I feel like I cannot win a trick at work at the moment. We will be desperately short of work soon and need some wins.

pm – Reading National Geographic (name still irks me – self-centred Americans!), seeing pics of fantastic mountains in Canada surrounded by ice floes, I realise that the world is an incredible place and the list of things to see will far outweigh me and my time here.

A more global citizen approach is needed – be happy with who you are and what you do. Be honest and follow quality good things to do and enjoy. What does this mean – I don't know, I am less and less interested in joining Tim Jarvis on a trip, and more interested in doing something for myself, something less heroic but more real planted in what this world is.

I will never forget the realisation of getting to Everest base camp on the Chinese side and seeing the incredible culture there, and thinking this is the really amazing part of this place... How can all these people be missing this, how is it took coming here to find out what it is actually like!

... missing the forest for the trees!?



Rongbuk monastery
Largely unappreciated...

10th October 2011 – Full extent of losses on SSH connections became apparent today. Uncomfortable silences... not good.

I think basically we way underestimated the complexity of the connections and what it involved – both us and Arup Singapore however we took on the risk – there is a case for us protecting Arup Sg etc.

Will be an interesting wash up. People making all sorts of arguments – inadequate fee, inadequate project management etc. Hard conversations around profit shares etc – won't be pretty.

Hmmm... not looking forward to it but what to do – not much I can do. Will have to see how it washes out.

11th October 2011 – Ride into work today. Up at 5, off at 5:30, in just after 7:00, shower etc and at an industry breakfast at 8:00 – all good. Feel great – tired (legs anyway), and clean.

Was a bit funny – I was the slowest person I came across other than a woman in a pink top riding sit up and beg style, I could almost hear the relaxed wheels go around music as I passed her (she had passed me not more than 5-10 previously but managed to keep ahead of her – embarrassing really but a good start. I might try to do it once a week and slowly get better. I was on the 20 year old mountain bike in my defence – every one else was on sharp slick little greyhound bikes.

Enjoyed the ride. Along the river for the most part, Dights Falls, Children's farm, smell of hops as rode past the CUB factories, then a slightly more direct route into town from there (used to have to cross at Mac Robertson bridge and do a few river bend loops out near Toorak. Half the ride in darkness, the other half in light. Pretty spent by the time I got up to Spring Street for the last hill up to the office!

Did RRR community radio last night also (The Architects). Was really good experience as well. Sat in the studio with Simon Knott (BKK architects), and Christine? They were very good and talked us through the whole thing. Talked a bit about Arup, Wheels and AAMI park etc. Did it with John Bahoric – he was good – very nervous to begin with but really got into it in the end.

102.7 FM
THREE
TRIPLE
RRR

14th October 2011 – Few wins this week which is fantastic – needed them! Green Chemical Futures looks like it has finally come through. And the client event was a great success by all accounts.

I actually got to interview (prearranged questions), Shannon and had a lot of good feedback on my manner – all a bit strange felt like I was stumbling through a bit although I did manage to adjust and go with the timing etc. – he spent almost ten minutes answering the first of six questions it felt like!

I chatted with him earlier and got some really good vibes from him – seems a pretty down to earth achiever type. Just smart and successful.



Did a Dadi (digital design and innovation), talk yesterday on South American travels and the architecture we noticed along the way. Put the photo below up and it really made me realise what a great thing that was to do. Ange and I have been to some incredible places, how lucky are we...?



And how much would I like to go travelling again, to immerse ourselves in that adventure, those places.

16th October 2011 – Good night last night with Andy and Rosemary (Mozz). They came over for dinner – sausages and veges for the kids and morrocan veges and tuna skewers for us.

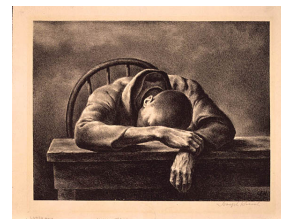
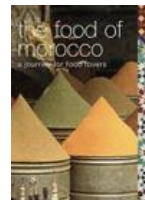
Have to say was a fair bit of cooking and coming together with the Morrocon stuff. Baked (roast?) veges with spices and honey, marinated tuna with spice and lemon sauce, baked bread rolls and couscous to top it off, and it all came together beautifully.

Very happy – cooking is one of those things that has never really been me and always a challenge and source of anxiety. Feel a first successful meal for others is a bit of an accomplishment – scaled one of the foothills to the Himalayas. Onwards and upward to other main course meals now...

Andy had been made redundant from Baulderstone. Sounded very strange, I think he was a victim of political circumstances and end of quarter decisions – particularly after Baulderstones was just purchased by Lend Lease.

He is in pretty good spirits, hasn't any monetary issues and will be fine I am confident after talking to him last night.

18th October 2011 –



Mood I'm in... Silly I have so much to live for, so much to be happy about.

19th October 2011 – First middle of the night wake up for a while. I am worried about work, about structures and MEP, about planning and the rest of the office as well actually.

We learned that we lost Royal Hobart Hospital yesterday. Frank did not mention outright but we did go for a beer after work. We are just not there fee wise. I am worried that we cannot do the work anymore for the fees that are available in the market.

What can we do:

- Keep bidding at what we think we have a fighting chance of doing the work at. Get smaller, more expensive and more boutique.
- Bid lower and potentially go out of business in doing so (Sports Hub connections scenario?).
- Go value driven and quote fees on basis of money saved for contractors.
- ?

And hence my concern.

And where to for me – funny question to be asking as office leader!?

- Continue for as long as can and ride out shitty market. Two to three or more years?
- Change discipline to infrastructure or civil, or blast – retrain?
- Change jobs altogether
 - o Insurance or risk
 - o School teaching
 - o University (difficult with no PhD)
 - o Management consulting
 - o Architecture (go back to study)
 - o Buy a business
 - o Landscape gardening
- Go out on my own or with others in a small start up engineering company
- Join one of the other big engineers (Worley or AECOM etc.)
- Get into the mining sector.
- Go back to Singapore for a period of time. I would really hate to do this. Melbourne is where we should be, where the kids should be. Singapore would be the easy option and a step backwards in a lot of ways. A bit of a sell out in terms of life?

At least we have a nice house, in a good school zone. Another couple of years will see me at 46 years old, maybe school teaching which is what I am probably most interested in could be a bit of a retirement plan. That or buying a business and trying to make a go of it.

Not very rosy options. Stay where I am and earn as much money as I can on the way down trying my hardest to make things work it seems is a bit of a given at the moment.

Maybe I need to branch out on my own and do stuff from a kitchen table – or a firm of 3 or four engineers?

The economy in Australia and the rest of the world isn't looking that great either. What does this mean – poor times ahead, more issues with workload etc.

21st October 2011 -

Heavy head, morning bus,
Dark reflections in laneway puddles,
Transport me to away to provincial cities in China.

Other places

25th October 2011 –

Reasons to resign:

- Loss on SSH connections down to me as PD and person putting in original bid.
- Office Leader role not going well (lack of traction with leadership and office, too much to do within time frame required).
- Not doing enough on buildings front.
- Tired.
- Need life change.

Reasons not to resign:

- Financial – kids and family.
- Regrets on giving up what is a great opportunity.

I am not in a good place at the moment. I feel things are not going well everywhere I turn. Home, work, even on the Brendon front.

I am fatigued – still tired after Singapore I think. I just want a break. I feel hard done by as well for some reason, I am not sure why. I find it difficult to keep motivated and going.

I think the key thing here is not having time to do what I need to do. I need to have a session with Rachael to make me some time in my diary.



The boys on the island vary, of course, in numbers, according as they get killed and so on; and when they seem to be growing up, which is against the rules, Peter thins them out; but at this time there were six of them, counting the twins as two... They are forbidden by Peter to look in the least like him, and they wear the skins of the bears slain by themselves, in which they are so round and furry that when they fall they roll. They have therefore become very sure-footed.

Peter Pan, by JM Barrie

Life needs a bit more Peter Pan and Huckleberry Finn about it from time to time. Everything is all too serious and accountable, and full of pressure.

Just need to do my best and pay less heed to failure...

3rd November 2011 - aam – On a week’s break at the moment. Really enjoying – getting a lot of loose end stuff done. Painting quotes, solar panels, tax returns, electrician stuff, cupboard doors (which continue to be a fucking debacle, and other stuff – time with kids etc...

Up again early in the morning thinking about work however (and I guess to see if I can hear the (now rats we believe), in the roof!

Work is tough at the moment. The office is suffering from lack of work, there have been and will likely continue to be staff reductions to bring numbers in line with workload.

I have quite a bit of actual work to keep me occupied:

- SSOW
- Green Chemical Futures
- Las Vegas Wheel Review
- SSH connections (disaster in itself)

And I am really struggling with what the office leadership role should look like in times like these. What can it look like other than trying to keep people together.

- Monday meetings
- Communications around well being and other things
- Facilitating the winning of work
- Disaster scenario planning

The facilitation of winning work is where I am struggling the most –. I really need the BD people on topic and giving something useful back to the office and its leaders.

Disaster scenario planning is happening group by group as they hit troubled times.

I think it has to centre around the Monday meetings and what we talk about there. Monday back is covered I believe with a few things. Diversity and something else I can't quite recall now. The following Monday however needs some work.

Possible things to talk about:

- Remind people about the business resilience planning? This exists and people should be thinking about it long term (possible secondments etc.)
- Top 10 projects – start to workshop one or two of these projects for people to be involved in formulating strategy etc.
 - Flinders Street Station
 - E-Gate

On the good news front, the possums are not nesting in our roof – they are nesting in the bamboo clump down the side path, and only using our roof for access.

I like possums and having them around the place is a good thing as long as they don't do any damage.

The dark lining to all of that is that the noise from the roof is likely rats! Don't like rats so much, and particularly as they are in the roof. Had Peter the possum man out who recommended either lifting the roof of baiting around the outside.

Not keen to mess around with waterproofing of roof which we would have to do to lift as tied down with gutter guards! Will go for the baiting option. No sign of them tonight – been here for almost two hours. Who knows, they may have gone – not sure what could be up in the roof for them in any case?!

Spending a bit of money at the moment:

- \$ 5k Piano
- \$ 1k switchboard
- \$ 11k Solar electricity
- \$ 10k ??? Painting
- \$ 15k ??? landscaping

- \$0.6k pest control

\$42k! Will have to check out the budget tomorrow... Pretty sure we provided for most of this – less perhaps the solar...

5th November 2011 - A week off and feel better although busy arranging stuff for the house. Toilets replaced, Solar panels organised, Painting quotes – first back at \$22k!, didn't make any headway on the landscaping, piano delivered, pest control baiting organised (\$350). Can't help but feel I should have gotten more done – mind you it was four days really with cup day in there as well.

Highcraft came back for doors only to tell me that they hadn't done the full job last time – useless bastards – been nine months now!

pm – I think I am starting to go through the beginnings of a mid-life crisis. I am realising that the magical experiences are disappearing. Not so much the doing things for the first time, I am doing those things, in ways that part is easier, we can afford them, I have more leeway at work etc.

It is the experiences full of promise and hope, full of the future. I am thinking back to points of connection with people. The girl who shared my thoughts in wanting to see the end of the credits of a film just because it felt like the right thing to do, a sense of completion, respect almost.

Back to the conversation about immunisation with someone studying biology at one of the university parties where we both realised that we were connecting and suddenly drew away a little (but only a little), both of us having been spoken for at the time.

The chance meeting with the New Zealand girls in a pub in Chapel Street, again, connection and walking away... and a similar thing on the train (another kiwi...).

And Carolyn Smith with whom I had a crush on for months even years while going out with Sue. Her mother winking at me to make an approach when Sue and I finally split up, and me not wanting to hurt Sue given Caroline was her best friend at the time.

Ditto Julie. Pretty silly in retrospect.

But all moments where life could have taken a huge turn in different directions. And even those magic days with Ange around Cheltenham, and the years that just kept getting better and better.

I miss those experiences, nothing to lose and everything to live for, a whole future to come.

8th November 2011 – aam – Had a bit of a break down today at work – partially. Coming back after a weeks holiday to further disasters on SSH was just too much for me. Downloaded on Peter which was probably not fair but needed to get it out.

Was seriously questioning myself and what I am doing at work. Discussion was along the lines of something needing to change – with implications of me not being at Arup...

Had a better session with Frank who bolstered my confidence a bit – pointing out that I didn't do anything that anyone else would not have done, and he is right, I have consulted all of the ay through and involved people.

If I have had a failing it is in taking on too much. That seems to be a repeating theme for me – over commitment – coming from wanting to do the right thing, wanting to do as much as I can, wanting to keep people happy all of the time.

The last 24 hours I think I am coming to that realisation – that I am getting pulled in too many directions, trying to do everything and bec all things to all people. The answer comes I think in pulling back a little from that.

I am thinking I will hand in my resignation for Peter to consider in light of Sports Hub – give him the option so as not to be beholden to him. If he takes it up I will look for another position in engineering somewhere else.

At least that way I am not holding anything over anyone, I am here because they want me here. That will free me up to do my best – just do what I can do...

The option of dropping out to do teaching or something is not really an option – dropping out to buy a business perhaps but not right now, not with time pressures.

Then I need to slow down and do what I can do. Take the pressure off of myself, and free myself up to act – (feeling a bit frozen just now). Others go through this – hopefully they will e understanding and if not then let it be that way and I will be at some form of mercy in what they think, assess of me.

And I am not going to cancel the solar panels. I want to do it – start as you mean to go on...!

On brighter matters, there was just a nice electrical storm happen. The weather outside was beautiful –balmy and the air full of the expectancy that comes with summer thunderstorms. I got up on the roof to check out the possum rat situation – definitely rats in the roof.

So we will do something about that only because I cant have them living above us – potential smells, damage, dead in ceiling space type things going on... Part of me feels really bad but there a personal biases and limits and there you go...

Have been ambling around the front rooms with the blinds open and a view to the street. Nice, but what was nice was seeing a little possum making his way along the electrical wires back to our house. They have a nest (a clump of leaves the size of a basketball – sticking together who knows how), in the tree amongst the bamboo by the side of the house.

Unlike the rats, they are native animals living alongside us it feels, not doing any great harm and really nice to have around...



ringtail

8th November 2011 – pm – Another night of philosophy. Have to say that I enjoy it. I have a lot of trouble with the practical side of things however. Putting things into meaningful practice (as the melt down over the last few days has probably demonstrated!).

A few weeks ago we talked about the tyranny of thought and captured attention. The fact that your thoughts can reign tyranny over you. I can sense this – the leviathans of the night for instance. In the extreme it tyranny and sodomisation, I come away drained of energy and well and truly compromised as I did yesterday.

Tonight was about Unity in Diversity. I can relate to this also – the feelings on arriving in mid-levels in HK, feeling that presence of humanity, some larger force or being that has always leaned me towards Taoism.

All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man does not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand within it. Whatever he does to the web he does to himself...All things are connected.

Attributed to Chief Seattle of the Duwamish Tribe

A human being is a part of the whole that we call the universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest... a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. The illusion is a prison for us, restricting us to our personal closeness and affection for only the few people nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living beings and all of nature.

Albert Einstein

9th November 2011 – Wearing my watch ion my right hand today to remind me of philosophy, to pause and to do the exercise. What a difference – just thinking about it all the time and slowing down I

feel better already – given it is a few hours in! Like the concept though – the thing that binds me (time), now prompts e to relax and pause...

Some kind of social justice, affecting the trackers and the coolies and concubines and the mapus and all the other drones of Imperial days, had come to modern China – but had rested only briefly, and a rude and greedy kind of commercial world that had overtaken those brief promises of fairness and equality now seemed to dominate everything. It was no good: the Confucian calm and order that this old man once knew had long since been swept away and the changes were coming faster and faster, so that if to his granddaughter it seemed as though the Chinese world might suddenly spin off its axis and explode in a million pieces, consider how it all must appear to him.

Simon Winchester
(from *The River at the Center of the World*).

12th November 2011 – Sketching not going well, Issues on the wheel at work – getting Large Rim 3 in – 8:30 meetings since Wed trying to resolve and it is not looking good.

13th November 2011 - 12.5 min, First time I have swum 400m continuously! Fairly slow, in the medium lane and in fact a slightly younger woman actually overtook me at one stage! There were people doing walking and running in the slow lane to my defence but does beg a few questions doesn't it. Just took it easy and could have kept on going. Ligament on the outside of my knee is quite sore.

Thought it might have even been worse than that as I first noticed her when I stopped at the end of the pool, saw her there and she told me she just wanted to get the float behind me. I assumed it was one of those little flotation things you put between your legs or a kick board or something – Ange tells me it is the broken water behind where you swim!

So when I took off thinking I was blocking the access to the side of the pool behind me, it wasn't in fact that at all, and she subsequently took off passing me like I was standing still!

A little embarrassing but slow passage of rites, am becoming a slow part of the swimming fraternity!?



16th November 2011 – 8:30 meetings progressing on the wheel. Tempers running high... On the tram on the way back to the office yesterday there was a butterfly trapped inside the tram, fluttering against the glass trying to get out.

Was able to catch him in a small cage formed from my fingers, take him over to the other side and let him out of the doors that were open, above the stream of people who were making their way in.

Fluttered up into the air above the city streets and traffic etc leaving us all to go on our way. Nice little interlude in the morning. The feel of his wings fluttering against my fingers as I carried him across, and the slight surrealness of the situation leaning over people boarding to let him go – all very nice.

18th November 2011 – Day off today while the solar panels got put on. Paid a premium for Origin energy, but they did a really good job – very happy.

Used the day to get a few other things done to – landscape quotations, more painting quotations, Edward the electrician fixed the circuit at the back of the house, and finally started again on the basketball backboard (from scratch).

Pretty busy day all up I must admit.

Work is fucking tough at the moment – issues on Sports Hub Connections, the Wheel in Melbourne – trying to finish off the wheel in Las Vegas (review), and then balancing office leader role with it all and business development in their also!

Must just knuckle down and try to get through it on the lead up to Christmas...

21st November 2011 – Arup Christmas party on the weekend – Regent Theatre – Fairy tale evening – fantastic! Lots of people dressed up with some huge efforts on costumes! Ange and I went as King and Queen of hearts, not too out there but enough to be properly dressed up.

Ange had a great time and got out dancing on the floor – at one stage jumped into the a circle of 25 people to do the robot – hilarious! I enjoyed but not as much as most as I had to do speeches, prize giving/judging etc which creates a bit of stress I must admit – even though they seemed to go reasonably well.

Splurged and stayed at the Windsor hotel in town. Beautiful old building, tall ceilings and the rest of it. Very posh although like all old buildings creaking uneven timber floors, and older facilities – very nice however.

Highlights were staying up to watch James Stewart in an old movie – which I am sure I have seen bits of before – the one where he is visited by his guardian Angel at the time he is considering committing suicide. His angel shows him what the world would have been like without him, a much worse place, the local town banker having taken things over for the worse.

Ends with his angel getting his wings for his efforts – with the famous every time a bell rings an Angel gets his wings... Ange was snoring next to me for most of it :)...

Then there was breakfast – fantastic dining room on Spring Street. Good breakfast and service etc, quiet, no time pressures, no kids, beautiful morning after a very wet day the day before. Pretty much constant wedding sessions on Parliament house, not only in the morning but the even night before in the rain also now I come to think of it.



Hotel Windsor

Went for a walk around some of Melbourne's lanes afterwards (Flinders Lane and Little Collins). Very nice.

And of course the time after that, visiting Bunnings and looking at tiles etc for the rear balcony. Meeg was looking after the kids and took them all to science works to give us another couple of hours – fantastic.

Few jobs around the house and feeling nicely tired and satisfied – slept through last night and woke at just before six this morning. Ange was woken three times by the kids unfortunately, her last day of teaching rounds today (Five weeks of a quite different teacher, a little difficult but she has learned a lot), so she is still feeling ok with things also.

27 November 2011 – Good weekend with the kids – got the basketball backboard and ring up and played a bit with Stella – will better when we get some paving in place! Managed some sketching, built a gingerbread house which was a lot of fun, lots of wide little eyes and all getting into it :).

Had drinks with Peter Bowtell tonight – sms'd to see if he was free if we dropped over to see Ann re Ewan. They were having Frank and John Legge over for dinner so we crashed early just for a drink...

Think I might have overstepped the line with Peter a few weeks ago when I came close to breaking down in front of him. I feel bad but also feel like I don't have a choice. This is a painful growing time for me, going through Sportshub – as well as all of the family pressures. It gets to me, I go up and down, feel depressed and despondent from time to time...

Ange mentioned I shouldn't wear my heart on my sleeve so much and she is probably right but that is just who I am. Ange is good on advice like that... And it must be plain for her to be mentioning it to me.

I am through the worst of it I think. Sports Hub, perceived pressure from Joe, and work in a wider sense, issues with Ewan's development – and the other kids for that matter, Ange studying etc, all gets a bit much at times :(- losing the free spirit I want to be. The traveller in me/us, what has happened – kids and life and work has happened?

Got to slow it all down a bit Brendon, not feel so rushed and pressured by situations.

Struck me today that I am a linear thinker where Ange is a parallel thinker. She hears the first few bars of a song, the first few notes even and can jump straight to the name of the song. I on the other hand hear the notes, know the song but have to let the whole thing play out in sequence...

Similar in maths – I am comfortable with long logical progressions, procedures where Ange is far more jumping from bit to bit.

29th November 2011 – En-route to Singapore. Seem to have steadied myself after my mini-breakdown the other week in front of Peter. Time to get back into things and get some runs on the board.

Window seat the whole way with a couple of free seats next to me - one of the advantages of being tall – SIA helps as well, they are so much more friendlier than Qantas I hate to say.

Brahmins (Priest class) – teaching, studying sacrificing for himself, sacrificing for others, making gifts and receiving them. Quite often difficult to make a living out of.

Kshatriyas (Soldier class) – duly protect this whole world

Vaisyas (farmer class) – employing himself in agriculture and rearing cattle. Essentially to get married, to look after cattle and to get rich. Let him exert himself to his utmost in order to increase his property in a righteous manner, and let him zealously give food to all the created beings.

Sudras (servant class) – the three other orders are daily supported by the householder with gifts of sacred knowledge and food, therefore the order of the householder is the most excellent order (Doubtful I think!). One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Sudra, to serve meekly even these (other) three castes.

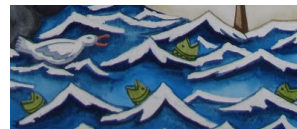
It is better to discharge one's own appointed duty incompletely than to perform completely that of another. For he who lives according to the law of another caste is instantly excluded from his own.

Laws of Manu (Manusmriti)

.... More doubtful propaganda?

02nd December 2011 – Singapore, lots of strong impressions around corners and in places and situations, pulling my being this way and that. Wandering through this series of life experiences, a little hollow and cut up by wakes of having been here before.

Nothing so serious or real that it is grabbing me and holding me down, just a waist deep pool of impermanent stuff to wade through.



7th December 2011 – **aam** – Both SSH and SSOW are intense at the moment! Struggling to keep up but am producing stuff and inching forward I believe!

Discussion with Joe today on role in buildings. He would like to see more of me (as would I). Will have to try and minimise office leader role. Peter Bowtell made it much larger than intended by Chris – not a bad thing but more than I can do.

I am going to back off a little and fall in line with what Chris believes the job should be trying to put more time into Buildings – something I should be doing for the sake of the group – for the sake of me? – I am not sure, maybe better going the corporate route as Andre has done...?

Got feel and flow of Tao telling me (having to read very light runes I must admit), to keep OL role but lean a bit more to buildings. Have to get more support in projects in the future...!

Enjoying a few passages in 'The Republic' at the moment.

Thrasymachus : *"Political Power is merely the exploitation of one class by another... Ordinary morality is simply the behaviour imposed by exploiter on the exploited, and is thus someone else's interest... the pursuit of self-interest,*

in its narrowest and most obvious form, is both natural and right, and the course which pays the individual best."

I don't agree with the last part being a socialist at heart but the first two statements ring true.

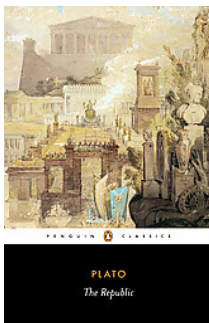
Plato goes onto refute the first part saying that government has its own standard of achievement and it is not merely a matter of profit making or exploitation – which I agree with also. As a pure concept however to be at the core of human and government psyche, driving primeval behaviour aspects if you like, the exploitation theory is nice. As with all things at the core, they are mediated and transformed by niceties and morals on the way out to application – one hopes – and as in all practical situations what one hopes is never always the case.

8th December 2011 – On the subject of Thrasymachus' belief that the unjust do better in life than the just Socrates argues that just people like skilled craftsmen don't argue amongst each other, the unjust however argue against everyone.

He draws the parallel between just and the wise and good, and makes an argument that they therefore have knowledge and effectiveness to live a good life.

Some truth perhaps in that but just as much I reckon in the karma of being good. People like good people, can relate to them, and can also recognise them. Perhaps not at first but a true nature will always come out in time.

At the moment finding the republic quite a narrow and tenuous justification of the laws of goodness – which I am certain work on far more complex planes than the simple arguments set down in the Republic.



10th December 2011 – Kneec quite sore to walk on after a swim yesterday – BRW triathlon not looking good. Went and saw a proper sports doctor on Thursday. Very good – went straight to the problem – my hamstring muscle is rubbing on outside of the bone structure of my knee – not a happy camper in his words.

Inflamed and possibly degenerating. Certainly feels that way. Had an MRI that night – notable for the Amy Winehouse music and the fact that I fell asleep on the MRI table! Seeing him (Paul Blackman), again on Monday.

Continuing to enjoy Plato, slow going as it may be!...

"Thrasymachus had claimed that injustice is a source of strength. On the contrary, says Socrates, it is a source of disunity and therefore of weakness. There must be cooperation amongst thieves if they are to achieve any common action."

"The common Greek word for happiness (eudaimon), has overtones rather different from those of the English word. It implies less an immediate state of mind or feeling (I feel happy today), than a more permanent condition of life or disposition of character, something between prosperity and integration of personality, though of course feeling is involved too."

I can relate to this actually – the skittish momentary feelings of happiness or not, are just that very transitory. Life should be lived mostly for the longer term disposition.

And the following from Glaucon which most closely aligns with my views I must admit (apart from the opening – a good thing to inflict wrong or injury).

"What they say is that it is according to nature a good thing to inflict wrong or injury, and a bad thing to suffer it, but the disadvantages of suffering it exceed the advantages of inflicting it; after a taste of both, therefore, men decide that because they can't evade the one, and achieve the other, it will pay to make a compact with each other by which they forgo both. They accordingly proceed to make laws and mutual agreements, and what the law lays down they call lawful and right. This is the origin of justice."

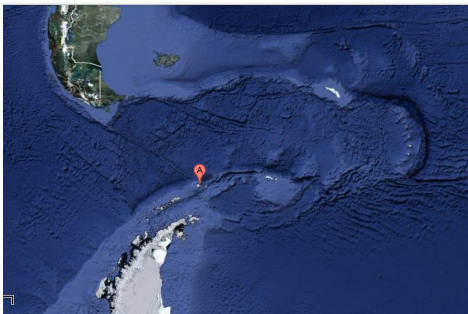
12th December 2011 – Good night at the Monash hotel catching up with Gridiron people, marred only by me making a huge fopar getting Karen Salmon mixed up thinking she was Joe Schiavio's brother – fucking idiot Brendon!

Feels like Christmas now – long lead in time now we are back in Melbourne. Singapore Christmas' were good but much shorter and sharper somehow – used to go over same sort of length of anticipation but not as many functions etc on the way up to it.

14th December 2011 – Tim Jarvis actually got back to me And with something that could be great! Had almost written off as not likely in the least, just goes to show how you sometimes need to have faith that exploring ideas and tie ups etc will sometimes bear fruit even though it may not be apparent at first.

He came up with the idea of getting the Pelican, a tall ship to act as support for his Shkelton adventure. It can carry 25 paying passengers who would get to track the whole thing and see some incredible scenery, and hit all of the Shkelton hotspots etc. South Gerogia, Elephant Island etc – absolutely incredible if it were to come off – crossing all my fingers – has the advantage of not needing long hardship walks ect where knees could be a problem...

Looking up elephant Island (marked below), I was amazed to see the great swath of crust that has been scoured through (looks like it in any case), between South America and the Antartic Peninsula. What is going on here I wonder? It must be something, the way both the bottom tip of South America and The peninsula have been dragged Eastward, a rim of disturbed crust creating a line of islands, and then an arc of islands to the extreme West where the apparent residue has been collected.



And a map of Antarctica – what an incredible place – just the sheer size and remoteness and extremity of the place. Whole continent of detail there covered in ice.



18 December 2011 – Up and down a bit at the moment (not unusual!). End of year, work is hard still, few high profile events around the office (6 month update, the Oves, Staff party... all of which went pretty well by the way).

A few other things to be dealing with as well. Spending a lot of money just now still trying to get to a happy medium with where we should be – a family home etc... Ange still studying hard, Christmas coming up, seeing people about my knee.

My knee seems to be heavier than it should be. The end of a feeling of being physically invincible, not that I ever was. Just that I have always believed it at the bottom of my heart – and probably still do. I remember after the accident, one of the big things was thinking I might not be able to squat again – that the travel through India and other out there places might be over.

Do I really think that might still be on the agenda. I don't think so, but having the possibility for it to be is nice. Same as sailing around the world – the possibility of that happening is still there big time.

Think I am going through mid-life transition – which reading Peter Bowtell's book, *The seasons of a Mans Life*, is mostly crisis. I have an uncomfortable feeling about the book. Feel it is making everything a bit too predetermined, why should we all conform to these time frames and resolve this and that and look for these milestones?

Just by reading it and placing any credibility in it does it become self fulfilling? What is life if not unpredictable, and who am I if not my own person, trying as I am from me, not others. This is also one of the reasons I am a little uncomfortable with a coach. I want it in many respects to be me, not a helped me...

And where is the sex in all of this!?)... Still a large part of my thought processes, of most healthy males I would imagine – pretty base and pretty simplistic, and pretty simply driving/frustrating. Not a great state of affairs this moralistic society standing marrying with all of the power and urges and wants on that front. No wonder there are so many fucked in the head people out there, and so much fucked in the headness type things going on.

Ego is not a dirty word came on yesterday. Just as long as it is all nice?

The four polarities I am supposed to be dealing with at the moment are resolution of who I am:

- Young/Old
- Destruction/Creation
- Masculine/Feminine
- Attachment/Separateness

Why these and no more. Are we ruining the Christmas surprise by thinking about these? Worse yet are we conforming and becoming less as men, as beings?

And what of the women. Ange seems her steady self. Taking it all on, patiently waiting and suffering through my random ravings and precious emotional episodes...



Ange's birthday today. She studied most of the day and I took the kids into the city. Parked at work and took the tram to see the aquarium, and Polly Woodside. Hot chocolates at work – bit of a thing, and back home.

Had a great time – especially the Polly Woodside which was really interactive and educational for the kids. They learned a lot about the old boats – watched a bit of

Hornblower after dinner just to cement a bit and keep the interest going.



19th December 2011 –

*"And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow,
Stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so?
It came without ribbons.
It came without tags.
It came without packages, boxes or bags.
And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore.
Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before.
What if Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store.
What if Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more."*

Dr Suess.

A quote from Christine at work...

20th December 2011 – Concerned about Stella and her development. I am beginning to think that this year has been a waste for her. She did not react well to the new school and I suspect has rebelled a bit.

Her teacher was not very strong (she – the teacher- is being transferred to the library next year – not a great accolade I imagine?). Rarely did we get homework come home. A year wasted perhaps?

Will have to knuckle down with her next year. Put aside half an hour or an hour at night for home work. Hopefully a bit of sustained effort on this front

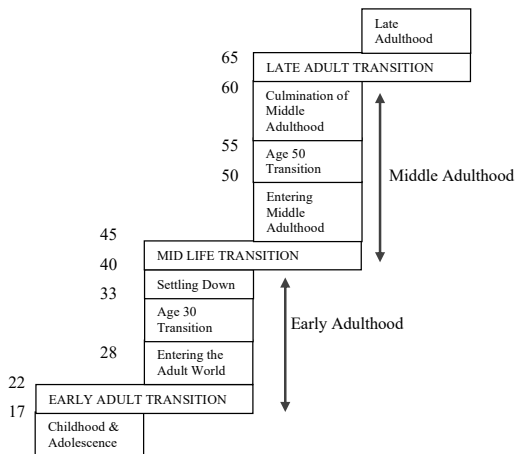
will make a difference and give her some skills to take forward, to do well with and to get some confidence from and onto which build.

Our relationship is quite good I think so hopefully it will be enough to let us do this without her rebelling against us!

The reading on Seasons of a Mans life continues. Am getting a bit more of a picture now – couldn't seem to get into it earlier on. I am still not 100% sure what to make of it in terms of application. I think I need a year or two of stabilising growth around me.

Get Ange through her studies and the kids through primary school. Finances will have stabilised a bit by then, or at least be more clear in terms of where they are heading.

The time for change I think will be when the kids are older – once they no longer need the stable influence for school.



'The Seasons of a Mans Life', Daniel J Levinson. Possibly one of the scariest books I have ever read. All very defined as you can see...

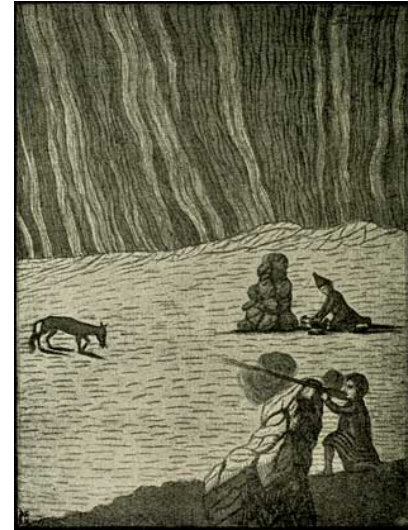
22 December 2011 – aam – Still have trouble dealing with Ewie – he is so stubborn – both Ang and I are stressed and it easily blows up into fights where it shouldn't.

*I must learn to break properly between activities – clear my mind and start afresh on new things.
Meditation and pausing, a new day for each change of state...*

Very difficult – work tends to taint everything, like a caustic liquid leaking and seeping contaminating and eroding the rest of my life. How to do this in practice – mental discipline?



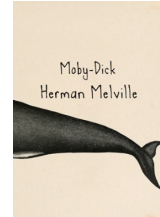
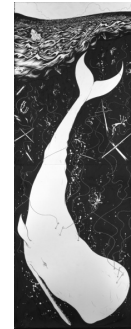
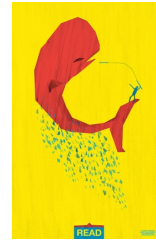
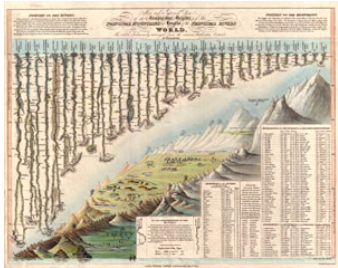
Cool photos of London /Bridge during construction. I love the cantilever as they reproduced pretty much the same thing in imagery for the Sherlock Holmes movie (2009) – great as someone has obviously done some serious research.
I also love the little steam (I presume), crane. Brings me right back to childhood books on construction.



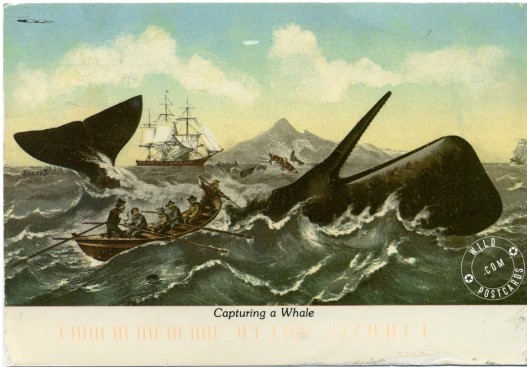
Lapps hunting by the Aurora Borealis
from "Under the Rays of the Aurora
Borealis" 1882-1883 Bomholt,
International Polar Research
Expedition

I find photos like this much more interesting than the actual photo with all the colours... but needing both.





Lots of cool art around Moby Dick. The best of which is the art deco type print stuff, and the worst of which is the film based American crap...



Compliments wild postcards.com



This was from the Tallyhassle guy (I've had dreams like that).
It is the MIR space station with the caption 'When you live in space this is what your house looks like'



Russian Stamp 1961
From Joseph Morris' flickr stream (and I've had dreams like that).

Refer 25th April for more info on this – text from Yuri Gagarin.



...dig if you will a picture.



Johanna – Earl Court



Seal Rocks (cropped) – Jon frank



Creepy Russian Dolls (can't recall where I found this now – on the net somewhere...)



Southern Star Observation Wheel
(cropped), Marco Luccio

Birds from around Koonung Creek...

1) Tawny Frogmouth Owl (18.02.11). Coming home from work just after dusk. The first swooped not more than 2-3m from my head on the edge of the reserve, the other was perched on one of the houses on the way back through the park connector. Silent, not concerned about me at all, swivelling their heads approx 90 degrees every ten seconds or so...



2) Rainbow Lorikeets (18.02.11), about 7:30am on the way to work in one of the park connector gum trees. After following a strange bat like screeching sound I spotted a couple of these hanging sideways on a branch looking at each other in conversation. Pretty certain they were lorikeets and not Rosellas – smaller than Rosellas and less yellows, more greens...



3) Marsh Ducks (as Ewie called them) – actually **Dusky Moorhens**. Around 11:30 at the pond in Koonung Creek reserve. One pond for dogs, the other fenced off and reeded up for ducks. Tried catching their attention (out in the middle away from the paths/bridges, with some bread but no luck. Lots of tiny fish got a bit of a feeding instead... One (presume male) was black with a red beak (white highlights), the partner more normal brown/grey/white...



4) **Magpies** – lots of these guys about the place. Today - 20.02.22 - on a late afternoon walk through the neighbourhood to get some fish and chips, a couple swooped down in a low trajectory up a street we were walking along. Big bodied birds it always strikes me. Very well fed perhaps.



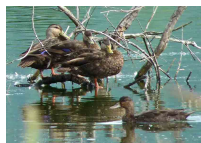
Noticed a group of three a couple of time this afternoon (23.2.11), a mother teaching a couple of chicks how to get worms etc – rearing season.

5) The **Pigeons** have been with us since we arrived. Calmly sitting on the back fence an blended integral part of the backyard scenery. This is the closest I could find – will have top pay more attention next time. Thought they had a few speckles about their neck, and also a small tuft of crest...

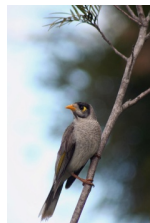


Photo needs updating – they were more grey on grey than this (perhaps doves?)

6) Traditional common ducks. 21.02.11 - Brown black, white, grey, a couple of ducks swimming around in their morning wake up foraging in the pond just behind the Bulleen Rd/Eastern Freeway bus stop. **Wood Ducks** I think.



7) 20.02.11 – outside of the reading corner window clinging onto the stems of some large red flowers (gladioli?), next door. Beaking around the flower for I know no what – have never seen them acting like that before... **Noisy Mynas** – They were also flying up and down the skirts of the park connector on the way to work the next morning. Probably the populous bird here – along with the Lorikeets.



I first saw them when I didn't know the difference between noisy and common Mynas. Having seen common Mynas around now he may well have been one of them.

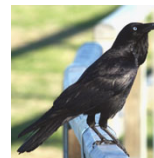
8) White pigeons (or **Doves**?) - 21.02.11 – a pair of these pecking through the grass close to a tee of the golf course just by the freeway off ramp at Bulleen Road (on the way home around 7:00pm).



9) Not certain what these are called – we used to call them Willy Wagtails, but I have heard them referred to as magpies as well (they are a lot smaller than the Aussie bush variety that I refer to as magpies). Again by the off ramp above traffic on the lights (seems to be a bird spotting mecca!) – 21.02.11 - 7:00pm (**Magpie Larks** apparently – birdsaustralia.com.au)



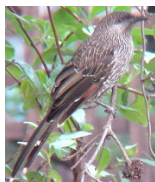
10) On the free way ramps again – 22.2.11 – on the way to work around 7:30. Black common crow quite majestic flying up onto the top of one of the lights distinctively above all the other birds (Mynas etc), with a definite air of owning the place. Unperturbed and unhurried, a position of importance/respect in the scheme of birds. (**Australian Raven** according to the web :) .



11) **Crested Pigeons** – on the way home from work, waddling along the nature strips, eyeing me trying to decide whether to flee or stay...



12) This was either a 'little' or 'red' wattlebird – 27.02.11 around 4 in the afternoon on a wet summers day, sitting on the hills hoist in the back yard. I think more likely a red as it was quite large – slightly larger than the common Mynas. Seem to remember more of these around when we were here eight years back. Nice to find out they are honey eaters.



Saw him again tonight after getting home from work – no red around the face but yellowish bits to the tips of his tail feathers – **Little Wattlebird** I am pretty sure.

13) Swooping down in the freeway median reserve on the way home tonight (27.02.11), was a beautiful sulphur crested cockatoo. Common as muck unfortunately but like the lorikeets, incredibly beautiful. Used to see gangs of these around the place – nearer to rivers in Richmond and glen Waverley. Hopefully more to come :)...



14) Saw four slimmer looking black birds this morning (6.3.11, around 11:30), on a walk with the kids. High up in the tree tops, white feathers in their tails – not sure what they were – quite elegant and fluid. Couldnt find an image but closer to a Currawong than the ravens etc... **White Winged Chough** is closest I could find although supposedly all black with white patches on wings – I recall the odd white feather in the tail and wings.



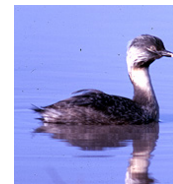
Saw again on the weekend (26.06.11), eating presumably soft rotting wood from top of the truncated tree out the front of the house.

15) Also on the walk this morning, lots of swallows flying low over the grass

(cut last week). Lovely birds. Always reminds me of Greece and our holiday around Paleokastarista (or something of that ilk!). **Welcome Swallows** I think they are, blacky blues.



16) Koonung Creek watching the ducks this morning there was a little one I hadn't seen before. Thought it might have been a baby duckling until it started to dive. Beautiful little thing up and down quite regularly... **Hoary Headed Grebe** I think it is, although more browns/light browns in colour than blacks, greys and whites. Was small so perhaps a fledgling?



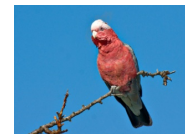
17) 08.03.2011 Saw a grey bodied black headed bird with touches of white on a telegraph wire, on the walk to the bus this morning. Similar size to a Mynah but with a bigger beak. Pretty certain it was a **Butcher Bird** – mainly from the shape and proportions of the beak. Seen quite a few since.



18) **Common Mynah**. I first thought I saw these guys sucking nectar or something out of gladioli in the neighbours garden outside of the reading corner window. Saw a whole tribe of them this morning however perched all over a big tree in the back yard of the house just on the other side of the park connector to us (15 Millicent?)

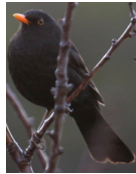


19) 5.6.2011 - **Pink & Grey Galah**. Three of these guys arrived in the back yard this morning to break open the seed pods from the Liquid Ambers in the back yard. Like Galahs – friendly happy birds. Ewie came to have a look from our bedroom window where we could just see the one. Ange and Stella were outside where you could see all three. Nice.



20) 26.6.2011 – Common Blackbird.

Poking around the front garden in the leaf litter etc from memory – seem to recall these birds from growing up as quite common – almost so common they avoid being noticed, or registered anyway...



21) 20.8.11 – Masked Lapwing. Sitting in the front room yesterday morning, a silhouette of large wing span dropped into view (from the roof above), and elegantly swooped down to the nature strip to start browsing and pecking in the grass. A masked Lapwing – beautiful bird partly due to its size and grace – would have been 35-40 cm tall?



22) 13.9.11 – White Faced Heron. This guy was in Koonung Creek reserve down foraging around some boggy mud before a dog came in to chase away. Beautiful because of his size and the grace that comes with it. I have seen them in a group before on the other side of the freeway driving past in a car, this is the first one I have seen this side. Quite difficult to identify – Ibis, Egret, Heron... In the end went for White faced Heron as was only colour match.



If this wasn't the one saw a couple of weeks ago, I came across one today, startled him foraging in the grass off to the side of the bike track as I road past (24th Sept).

23) 14.10.2011 Cormorant. I am classing this as seen in the park even though it was on a ride home from work (direct connection that doesn't involve getting in a car!). One sitting nicely drying his wings on a rowing ramp/beachy thing, and then others at Dight's falls on the way past. Dight's falls was great for birds, herons, cormorants and memorably a group of ducks floating down the rapids just under the falls, looking like they were on a pleasure ride, checking out the scenery and goings on as they were carried along...



24) 14.10.2011 Common Seagull. Again on the ride to/from work at Dights falls.



25) Various – Green (Grass?) Parrots – Australian Ringneck. See these little guys around a lot – forget to put them in, not sure if they are a less colourful version of the rainbow lorikeet? They are usually feeding on grass somewhere – will have to take more notice of the colours etc next time through the park...



Extremely absolutely Best Top Movies of all time

1. Romeo & Juliet (Baz Luhrman)
2. Midnight Cowboy
3. Kill Bill Series
4. When the Music's Over – the Doors
5. Trainspotting
- 6.

Coolest Artists/Albums/songs of all time that haven't been ruined for me through overplay...

1. Pink, Floyd Wish You Were Here
2. Blondie, Autoamerican
3. Devo, Are We Not Men
4. Howie Day – Acoustic guitar
5. Split Enz – I Hope I Never
6. Breakfast at Tiffanias
7. I think I love You
8. Midnight Cowboy
9. The Doors
10. Moby, Play, Why Does my Heart Feel so Bad.
11. Rocky horror Picture Show, I'm going home

The year of living dangerously...

April forced meditation for half an hour each day. *Learned that is not as easy as I had thought. That it is relaxing, but just as good in fact more engaging somehow (in a non-engaging sort of way), is to just spend some time being quiet but cognisant of the environment around you. Small movements of the neck or something just to help you connect to the moment and be present in the now. Also good were slow deliberate movements of routine. Folding up a shirt or pants after wearing for a day and placing neatly away. A little Confucian? Japanese also. Will try spending more time taking breaks to connect with the present. Think I am quite good at that in any case?*

May getting up at 4:30 (two hours earlier) each day (and going to bed two hours earlier (with the kids)). *Not as life changing as expected. Realised it is more what you do with the time. Staying away from television is a big plus. Going to bed with the kids is good too. Being quiet in the house an issue also!*

June Cook a meal from a cook book (dinner party suitable) once a week. *Unexpectedly enjoyable, taking the time to do the shopping and then an hour or two by myself in the kitchen – mind you it is when the results are good – yet to see how I feel when something does not go quite so well.*

1. **Romanian Stew** – 4.6.11 - basically a colourful vegetable stew. *Not a lot of wow factor, but pretty solid as a stew and pretty solid as foods go (I don't like the word hearty – kids detective books overused it for me in my childhood). Good for winter – nice with toasted buns and butter – needs a very small amount of rice on one side as a cleanser.*
2. **Thai Beancakes and Asparagus** – 11-6.11 – *Couldnt find navy beans so used Cannelini beans instead. Mix was very good but had a lot of trouble frying the actual fritters for some reason. Started out with too much oil, but then second time round (the advantage of cooking for 4, still had issues – thought might have been the beans or the fact that pan was too hot, or not hot enough – maybe try a bit cooler next time with less oil to help cook through? Asparagus was really nice – and easy – cover in olive oil and bake for 7 minutes – just right, much easier than steaming or boiling.*

3. **Corn Fritters** – 13.6.11 – stuck for dinner so did some quick corn fritters – one of my favourites. Only had creamed corn unfortunately that didn't do them any favours – again difficulty frying – found a lower heat for longer was better as cooked right through without burning...
4. **Red Lentil & Wine Lasagne** – 17.6.11- Not bad – wanted something a bit different in taste, liked the red wine angle. Ended up just a tiny hint of too dry and the wine flavour was quite strong – used a Pinot Noir which while light is quite distinctive. Next time I might go a bit heavier on the chopped tomatoes and tomatoe puree, ease up on the wine just a little, or use a shiraz or something a little less recognizable. Pretty good all up though.
I am enjoying the process and the bread rolls and table set etc...
5. **Indian Potato and Pea Curry** – 24.6.11 – Really nice. Thin sauce but tasty. Potatoes etc cooked nicely rather than being like a traditional Indian curry where everything becomes a bit more homogeneous – not that that isn't nice, just different.
6. **Mediterranean Chickpea and rice** – 2.7.11 – Described as an unusual dish, it probably is. Nice, however a bit more of a side dish than a full on main. Not a lot of sauce through it but with a bit of butter (which was optional), came together nicely.

What was really nice, as for the week before, was that Ewan and Freya and I all had a hot chocolate while I picked out the recipe, and then did the vege shopping down at Greythorn shopping centre while Ange took Siella to an eye appointment. Nice being a part of local community and nice getting everything slotted into other things rather than a big Doncaster shopping Town Coles trip.

Post note – October and still doing it which is great. Fallen into a bit if a routine of shopping and cooking on a Saturday – like. Ange's Moroccan recipe book is now the favourite...

July

No alcohol at all (dry July)

Actually signed up to Dry July on-line. There is now Feb-fast, Dry July and Sober October – sign of an over thinking, over saturated metro sexual society?

Did a worksafe 15min health check the other day at work. Blood pressure a little high, bad cholesterol ok, good cholesterol a shade low, waist measurement a shade high (no accounting for different body shapes!?). Exercise on the minimum, but probably drink just a little too much based on more than 3 times a week, more than 2 drinks per session. The more important thing was to give your system a break to clean itself out the nurse was saying – so Dry July will be a good thing.

7th July – not sure feeling any better but realise how often I reach for a drink just to relax. Gin & Tonic to cook with, scotch late at night, just to be with my thoughts and to relax... slightly dangerous..

31st July – don't think it has done me any good physically? Felt good at swimming yesterday – will start again and see how I feel... Nice to know I can do it if I need to. Was quiet good being in control the whole time – not having too many at work functions and getting tired, slurring words etc. Did miss it cooking and a scotch to relax over at night or doing work (at night also).

August

Write a poem a day

Finding this difficult – nice when I manage but difficult to make the time amongst all the priorities (like work and sleep!)... and difficult in terms of poetic inspiration. Makes me realise I must weave things into my life that are good. A little too introspective perhaps Brendon?

September

No television at all

Not proving that drastic must admit. Good however – highlights were the plane trip to San Francisco which actually felt liberating – not having to feel like I had to get a movie in. Strange how it takes me deciding not to do it as an experiment – I was incapable of recognising it as a burden before.

Conclusion : Television is not that big a thing in my life. Happy to take or leave as it goes.

Post month note – now watching far less – in fact little at all.

October

No dairy based food (milk cheese etc) for a month

2 days in – too early to tell but have found a good margerine substitute and milky soy for coffee – between Mocoona decaf and soy – back to being enjoyable...!

Day 7 and no real change – Ange thinks she has lost weight, could be the bread and other wheat she has given up, or just learning to use the scales!

Despite finding a now acceptable coffee alternative (decaf with normal milk was just not cutting it), very little difference. Again though something I hadn't picked was being forced to eat different dishes rather than fall into the rut of the same pasta dish I just couldn't go past at lunch ...and finding out that I really enjoyed the variety!

Will force myself to eat different things more often from here on in.

Getting to end now (few days left), am really missing dairy: chocolate, cream, milk, butte, cheese... No real physical effects I am noticing – not even weight loss which I had expected a bit. Am feeling the loss though – life is a better place with dairy foods. Might keep up the soy decaf coffees and even breakfast instead of milk as gives more variety to diet which has got to be good, but am adding all the rest back in pretty damn quick!

- November* Sketch a sketch a day
- December* *Slight extension of sketch a sketch a day. Admittedly Nov/Dec have been a bit of a break from things. Have continued to sketch a bit and want to/will continue.*
- January* Not say no (as opposed to saying yes all the time). *Subtle difference – about trying to be positive in all things.*
- February* Spend 10 mins of dedicated time each day with Stella, Ewan and Freya.
- March*

What makes a good religion/Life Philosophy?

- It would avoid idolisation. A good philosophy should reside in the person not in an external God.
 - It would preach detachment – taken from Buddhism I can relate to this being a source of pain and emotive thinking clouding reality.
 - It would retain energy. Life is about the living, action and participation. Calmness and inner peace are good and they would form a part of it, but so is excitement and ambition and activeness, as long as pure and unselfish.
 - It would recognise nature and a larger all encompassing force at work. Others seem to sense this and I feel I have also. I don't know what it is but there is something there, some connectedness, some larger Way. Borrowing from Taoism and the Jedi.
 - It would preach peace. It would take from Christianity in terms of doing unto others as you would have unto yourself.
 - It would not preach pain and loss as necessarily a bad thing. It would preach ways of dealing with them, of understanding them.
 - It would recognise balance and the necessity of opposites. Good bad, calm, energetic etc. The need for one with the other. It would teach on how to manage these.
 - It would encourage free thinking and humour, reflection and self reflection, and randomness.
 - It would be about doing the right thing, not necessarily adopting a predetermined set of morals or right and wrong. Drinking, eating meat etc are sometimes the right thing to do. The right thing to do needs to be appropriate and the underlying reasons real. This might introduce some inconsistency and even unfairness – what is right for one person might not be for another but that is a part of life in some respects?
 - It would encourage practical confirmation of its ideals, and even adjustment of the ideals in the face of reality.
- The founding base of all of its teachings would be truth, and honesty, and reality.
 - It would place a strong emphasis on being in the present moment, but it would recognise that the past and the future reach into the present through a continuum of cause and effect.
 - It would have a cool symbol and maybe not take things too seriously.

Sleep table. Realised spent the last three nights up and thought it worthwhile recording for my benefit how much sleep I am getting...

		Hours sleep	
5.7.11	Bed approx 10:30, up 2:30 -4:00, woke 6:50	7:00 approx	Up thinking it was 6:40 in morning! Time on email and to myself.
6.7.11	Bed approx 11:00, up 1:30-3:30, woke 6:50	5:50 and poor (cold sleep)	Thinking about work and then checked email and spoke to UK for a bit re SSOW
7.7.11	Bed approx 10:00, up 1:30-2:30, woke 7:10	8:10	Ate too much last night – woke needing toilet and a drink – up thinking re work (Office Leader role), and diary
8.7.11	Bed approx 10:00, woke 12:00-2:00, woke 6:50	6:50	Work and slipping behind on email on mind
	Average	7:00 avg	Not bad although not sleeping well – definite feeling of going backwards
12.7.11	Bed approx 5:00, up at 7:00, bed 9:30, up at 7:00	11.50	Home early from work - Light sleep fitful for short period, blocked up and not really pulling the rest from it that I need!

To Do

- See film “Emperor and the Assassin” (the story of Chinas first emperor)
- Study structure of hive bees
- Mao’s Biography
- Sailing – Power Boat course, Skippers license
- ~~Donate to Western kids charity – Smith family or Salvation Army. – taken up by all the causes get involved in in Melbourne!~~
- Take kids to orchestra
- ~~Look for examples of families taking a year off to travel~~
- ~~Read Seven Engineers book~~
- ~~Netball practice with Stella~~
- Search good photo art and order on line
- ~~Look into setting up charity – building infrastructure – three cups of tea etc.~~
- ~~Install Solar Hot Energy to Millicent~~
- ~~Try 5:00 am wake ups for a month~~
- ~~Try alcohol free for a month~~
- Landscape back garden
- ~~Floorboard rumpus room~~
- Paint outside of house
- ~~Piano for Stella~~
- Mandarin lessons for kids Balwyn High
- ~~Explore maelstrom literature – Edgar Allan Poe etc~~
- ~~Research volunteer day for family (St Vinnies)~~
- Organise Sydney weekend away.
- ~~Source Vic walking book from M&D~~
- ~~Bring back stamp collection from M&D’s~~

Books Read

Date	Exercise	Other
17th Dec – 30 June 2011	The Singapore Story Lee Kuan Yew's memoirs.	Memoirs about Harry's life. Much more interesting than I would have ever thought given the hard stability of Singapore politics today... Actually quite a good book – fairly dry and a political account but good for what it was and interesting having lived in Sg.
27th Feb – 29th April 2011	The Book of the Sea, Edited by Aubrey De Seincourt	Collection of literary extracts about the sea. Great although not into all of the old poetry so much. More enjoyed the extracts from books
2 nd May – 16 th May 2011	Leaving Microsoft to Change the World John Woods	Very good material but formula written feel to the whole thing. Inspired and want to do something like this – filled a lot of gaps in knowledge. Dont like to think of it as finished but living on somewhere in me to be resurrected at the right time when I do something philanthropic in nature – some day.
16 th May – 6 th July 2011	Moby Dick Herman Melville	Fantastic start, subtle dry but full humour, you can sense the Herman Melville's intellect and get the feeling he writes in a way to keep himself amused. Trails off a bit after that and then gets life breathed into it with a short section of playwrighting (Sunset, Dusk...). Quite eccentric but really liked it – again get the feeling you are being taken along for a personal ride with HM – bit of experimentation and exploration for his own self interest and amusement/benefit. Big finish – fanfares and trumpets and full on but all in the right ways. Not out of control, a sustained release of energy not taking away from the rest of the book at all. Warm finishing a book feeling and more :).
1 July – 17 July 2011	Brave /new World Aldous Huxley	Birthday present from Ange. Out there for its time albeit unrealistic etc. Some good original thoughts on how things might go (have gone).
6th July –17th July 2011	Bhagavadgita	Filler – just felt the need somehow (spurred by looking for a book on Buddhism for mum). Good but long and not so contemporary. Enjoyed some of the introduction again but read limited parts of the text this time – the sort of thing you only do once I think... a bit boring the second time round trawling for the better verses.
18 July -18 August 2011	The Jungle Book Rudyard Kipling	Fantastic. Really enjoyed – pitched at a good level – aimed I am sure at reviving the love and passion and interest of the child in people in the world around them. Rare to find something like this that can be enjoyed so unequivocally to ones-self. Feel a better person and more comfortable with myself and my place for having read it.
20 –25 August 2011	Mawson Tim Jarvis	Reading this as have asked Tim Jarvis (who now works for Arup) if I can be a part (in some way) of one of his next trips. Really enjoying also. Very well written – again pitched well, not assuming or delusional or OTT like a lot of life stuff you come across! Honest and of substance and personal at a level able to be related to.

		Lots of good photography – would have liked to see it as a larger format coffee table book as well! Not a big fan of paperbacks with a ‘as seen on tv’ corner tag.	5 th December 2011 -	The Seasons of a Mans Life Daniel J. Levinson	Second go at reading this. The first was an impatient and confused try around 10-15 years ago. This time I was able to latch onto the mid life transition with a little more success. A scary book for me to read – all this talk of fixed periods of transition and stages etc... I am a big believer in not adhering to or being accepting of these things. Perhaps just now however this kind of suits me. Time to settle down for the kids, and for Ange, get her through her studies, and get a bit of stability financially (or at least clarity over where things are heading) Recommended (in fact given), by Peter Bowtell. I must remember to thank him.
10 August –4 th October, 2011	An Introduction to Buddhism Peter Harvey	Basically a Buddhist text book. Bit more than introduction I would say! Enjoying although at a level deeper than I really need, or that for a philosophy like Buddhism than it really needs for the majority of people to read. I like that it is there as a record however. Worthwhile to have written and have there as a reference. Ended up giving up on this. Too detailed and rambling on. Had my doubts about him possibly missing the whole thing about Buddha being against idolisation and this being the reason for lack of early images and instead images of his footprints etc. I might be wrong but should have been argued in any case – then started to get the feeling it was a conversion of a very long thesis paper for a PhD or something and lost faith.	31 st December 2011 -	Steve Jobs Walter Isaacson	Steve Jobs biography. Surprisingly straight laced as far as biographies go I must admit. Was expecting something a bit more out of the ordinary, like Steve Jobs himself. An easy read so far.
20 th August – 13 th September, 2011	Beyond Reason Uncle Brian’s new book (draft)	Pretty full on. Have to say on looking back once finished, I didn’t not enjoy it. Essentially two books. The first bashing emotive thought and more specifically Christianity as a religion – blunt and emotive in itself, a bit of a tirade! The second part is preaching the ills and what’s wrong with the American economy, suggesting a utopian equivalent based on GIT – gross income tax rather than tax on profits.			
13 th -25 th September 2011	Seven Engineers (The Felix Candela lectures)	Really good. Couldn’t read all at once but each lecture (it is a summary of a series of lectures by prominent engineers given in honour of Felix Candela), was a good read and not too long. Inspiring in terms of structural engineering. Strangely the least inspiring was Cecil Balmound who was less about structural efficiency or form, and more about number patterns that seemed a bit random. Sudoku engineering or architecture?			
4 th October 2011- end October	The Unforgiving Minute	A collection of a few stories from Tim Jarvis re polar expeditions. Good book, easy to read and not arrogant or anything. Felt it should have been a more detailed book about only the South Pole journey, and more science or purpose along the way.			
End October – late November	The River at the Centre of the World Simon Winchester	Really good. Timing was around when we were travelling through China and so could relate to a lot of it. He is a bit of an expert by the sounds of it and must have spent a lot of time there. Few funny things in there – unspoken relationship with his female warrior type guide!? Fe more than graphic and strange graphic sexual references in comments around the rape of Nanking – being unkind here probably – just something that made me double take at times...			
End November -	The Republic				
End November -	Plato The Heart Garden				

Sport

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	Exercise	First split	Total	Weight	Other					
						29.9.11	Weight only		96.1 kg	For years I sat at 87.5, in Singapore the figure went up to 92 aroundabouts, gone up again. I have a feeling most of it is around my midrift – Ange allowing scales into the house (for our dairy free month), at least lets me see it and provides some motivation for doing something about it....
						2.10.11	Ride – To Springvale Rd and back	19.01 / 37.15m	10.67k	Slow ride out – must be uphill ever so slightly, nice on way back...
19.2.11	Swimming		250m		Doncaster Pool – 50m sets before I need a stop.					
5.3.11	Swimming		250m		“	8.10.11	Run – To pond and back	22:04	95.6kg	Slow jog – knee felt fine, breathing still constrained. On the initial shallow start slope, at least I did not stop...
30.4.11	Swimming		500m		“ – felt a lot better – could do 50m laps reasonably easily.	12.10.11	Ride into work	97:37 total (17.2k m/hr)	26.0k	Up at 5, off at 5:30, in at just after 7:00, industry breakfast at 8:00 – Feel good – clean, and like I have been working – legs anyway.
7.5.11	Swimming		600m		500xfreestyle, 100x breaststroke. Didn't feel as comfortable as last time.			90:44 active		
21.5.11	Swimming		500m		Felt ok – tired after a lot of work on floors etc!	14.10.11	Ride home from work	88:51 total (18.5k m/hr)	26.0k	95.1kg Didn't feel too bad. Joints (knees mainly), feeling a bit loose and almost but not quite tender....
25.5.11	Swimming		250m		Amara pool (Singapore)			84:13 active		
4.6.11	Swimming		500m		Didn't feel so good – swallowing a lot of water which will be a problem in the sea. Got a bit better when I either had more flotation (through not breathing out so quickly), or keeping head up (looking forward rather than down).	15.10.11	Swimming		400m	Around 15 mins
						18.10.11	Ride into work	83m total (19.5k m/hr)	25.8k	Up at 6:05 off at 6:22, in at 7:45 – Feel good again awake, clean, fresh. Unfortunately left work pants at home (despite being reminded by Ange!), so taxied home - \$30, bus back and starting work at 9:30... hmmm.
18.6.11	Run – To pond and back	22:48			Reasonably slow jog to test knee. Not too bad , could feel a few strains early on but wore in through run. I could hear the constriction in my breaths which was slightly alarming – reminded me of hearing it when immersed in water at Richmond pool after the accident. Seemed to loosen up and didn't notice it about half way through. Had to walk the last couple of blocks to avoid having to take a crap in the bushes! Probably accounted for a minute or two...	18.10.11	Ride home via Albert Rd / Abbotsford	65min approx total (17,7k m.hr)	16.53k	94.7 kg Not a good day at work, decided to ride home after a lunch that did not agree with me...
						22.10.11	Swimming		400m	14 mins – Felt good – stopped half way through for a quick rest.
30.7.11	Swimming		500m		Felt pretty good – swimming 150-200 m stretches at a time	29.10.11	Swimming		500m	95.5 kg 15mins (13.5 @ 400m) – felt ok, outdoor pool which is 50m laps instead of 25. Wouldn't have been able to do that a year or two ago where I was only able to make 25m in a lap!
24.9.11	Ride		15.3k		To Chandler Hwy and back. Felt pretty good. Saw a sign to the city 19k at the 5 or 6 k mark so do-able and will probably give it a go at least for ride to work day	05.11.11	Swimming		400m	96.0kg 15 mins. Didn't feel good at all. Lethargic and stopped every couple of laps for decent breaks. Trouble getting breathing right –

8:35pm, 2nd August 2001

Brendon McNiven 14 Park Street, Richmond, VIC 3121 Honda CB750/4 black, LR 996, Southbound Hoddle Street having just turned out of Albert St East Melbourne. Zero blood alcohol.

Rowhan Keats, 8 Crawford Way Sunbury, VIC 3249. In mother's car (Robyn Keats) – white Mitsubishi Magna FCJ967, No alcohol. License 516 883 94, DOB 15.6.77 Turning from North bound Hoddle Street across traffic into York Street.

Senior Constable Humble, Yarra Traffic Branch – Brunswick.

Dry night (dark), returning home after having had dinner with a work colleague.

Turned right into Hoddle Street. I was first at lights and so was in front of other traffic also turning right behind me (two lanes of right hand turn traffic). I seem to remember being in the right or middle lane and having no time to react – no time to hit brakes or anything. – accident report given to Swann insurers shows left lane but not sure if accurate – would need to check with Police report (do not have copy).

Policeman attending estimated I was travelling at 60 – 70 kph based on damage and injuries. Speed limit in this section of road 70 kph.

Rowhan Keats was charged with failing to give way and fined \$160. The extent of my injuries were not known to be severe at the time of accident. My mother and father said that the policeman attending felt quite bad that this was the only fine when he called up later to check on me and found that my condition was serious. My first real memory was the face of the ambulance paramedic leaning over me. I was taken to emergency at Alfred Hospital. I saw Angela (my wife) at around 10:00pm and Stella (my 3 month old baby girl). The triage nurse had tried contacting Angela via my mobile phone to our home number. I remember asking Angela to keep Stella away from the hospital as I was afraid she may pick up some disease. We had other small talk before being taken into surgery at around 11.30 – 12am.

I was taken into surgery at that time to have surgery on my left leg. The triage nurse was aware that I had broken my left leg and had broken ribs. The severe damage to my lungs had not been ascertained. The damage to my lungs must have been identified during the hours in surgery. I was put into a drug induced coma and had a tube put down my throat to breathe. My left lung had apparently collapsed and I had severe damage to my right lung. This was most likely a result of the broken ribs. My lungs went into shock and had difficulty absorbing oxygen. This was described as Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS). The surgery on my leg was completed in a few hours and I was then transported back to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU).

tend to over-breathe and need to burp to equalise all the pressure in my stomach!

12.11.11	Swimming	400m	94.5kg	12.5 min, First time I have done continuously! Fairly slow, in the medium lane and in fact a slightly younger woman actually overtook me at one stage! There were people doing walking and running in the slow lane to my defence but does beg a few questions doesn't it. Just took it easy and could have kept on going. Ligament on the outside of my knee is quite sore
30.11.11	Swimming	400m		Amara pool on a SSH trip to Singapore. Helped clear out all of the muck and dryness from the flight and really set me up well for the day. Energy and focus.
02.12.11	Swimming	200m		Night out with Phil and Patrick the night before meant tired yesterday and a bit of a cold creeping up – not doing much resting to give myself a chance to fend off. Swim this morning more about clearing my head and hopefully setting myself up for the day...
06.12.11	Run	500m?		After two failed front tyres preparing to ride into work, decided things were against me and went for a run – only managed to end of park connector and back – dire – knee twanging and sore. Have now booked into see a proper specialist for an opinion on what to do!
10.12.11	Swimming	400m		Tried for the first time to swim 400m non-stop – without a break. Needed a short stop only towards the 325 mark. Was breathing heavily when I got out of the pool at the end but more or less did it. Was very slow – people passing me like I was standing still in the fast lane. ...and knee quite sore to walk on afterwards – what was a little worrying is that it was sore on the inside not just at my hamstring tendon...

I remained in this coma for seven weeks (Refer to attached emails for a running diary of my condition during this time).

I have no memory of the coma, only of dreams which I believe were later. My first memory was of September 11 on television. I also remember talking to doctors during lung surgery and of waiting for general anaesthetics to kick in which never did (hopefully inaccurate!). Vague memories of operating theatres, being kept to one side of a corridor seemingly forever, of being given incorrect surgical procedures – epidurals etc! (most likely mixed up memories after



Stella's birth). Many other vivid dreams, some wonderful, most frightening and based on a heightened sense of paranoia from the drugs. Was apparently given amnesiacs to suppress memories with result of uncertainty about what was real and what was not.

My paranoid episodes and dreams stand out. Remember not being able to talk and desperately trying to write (did not have the control to form letters unfortunately). Tried to communicate to my parents, and sister who must have been present one of the first times I woke, not to leave me here, being convinced as soon as they went, they would be turning off the machines.

Went in weighing approx 88kg, lost approx 25kg along the way. Difficult to know exactly as I was never weighed until I started rehabilitation a week or so into Bethesda.

Had over 100 sets of x-rays done in the Alfred alone. Mostly on my chest which was being monitored very closely – at times on an hourly basis.

The details of ARDS is a little unclear. I know from the internet that it was first recognised around 10 -15 years ago at which time survival rate was 0%. Now

apparently up to a little under 50% survival. Survivors report many long term problems the most common being loss of stamina and fatigue.

Basically the organs starting with the lungs shut down one by one. Kidneys were also monitored closely for spread but were ok. Lots of chest drains for cavity between lungs and chest. A lot of work carried out on lungs for pneumothoraxes (leaks?). Seem to remember that one lung (left I think) was partially sealed off (using staples?) to contain these. Would need to confirm this with surgeons.

Damaged to personal property advised to Swann's solicitors Valentino Tyson & and Assoc. –
 E Valentino, Level 13, 575 Bourke Street, Melbourne, VIC 3000, 9629 3233 (for them to include in suit against Rowhan Keats)

RF900 Shoei Helmet	\$689
Shirt (high & mighty) cut off by ambulance paramedics	\$96
Levi 501 jeans cut off by ambulance paramedics	\$120
Leather jacket – not damaged	\$0
Necklace cut off by ambulance paramedics – able to be repaired	\$0
Watch	\$180
Shoes – undamaged	\$0
Backpack	\$65
Personal organiser	\$120
Mobile phone casing	\$20
Total	\$1290

Valentino advises that they are currently unable to find Rowhan Keats to serve notice.

Personal Injuries

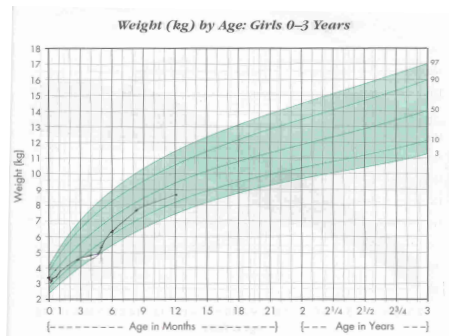
- Broken Left Femur
- Broken right wrist
- Dislocated left shoulder
- Broken ribs on both sides
- Punctured lung
- Collapsed lung
- Bruised Spleen
- ARDS (Adult respiratory distress syndrome)
- Tracheotomy (to deal with ARDS)

Permanent injuries

- Loss of majority of hearing left ear
 - Sealed (stapled) off part lung (left?) to restrict repeated haemopnuemo thoraxes. This is a strong memory but a little unclear – need to check with doctors. Doctors since have noted enlarged lungs.
 - Loss of some feeling in sole of left foot.
 - Scarring: wrist, thigh, holes both sides of rib cage 3 left, 6 right, neck (trachy), rear of head (collar), nose (due to nasal oxygen), various small monitoring equipment scars. Hole in stomach from peg feed tube.
 - Loss of stamina – this is improving slowly, I am unsure as to whether permanent or not.
 - Possibly (– likely) arthritis of wrist/shoulder in advanced years
 - Reduced range of movement in left shoulder
- Still not up to stage where I can run, but hope that this will come with time.

Other side effects

Stella was only three months old at the time and still breast-feeding. Angela obviously underwent severe stress and anxiety, the doctors could not give any indication on likely-hood of survival. The anticipated time of knowing kept pushing out further and further as my condition went up and down. As a result of this stress Stella did not receive the nutrients she required from Angela's breast milk. Her growth charts show a flat line for two months after the accident. Stella is still under normal weight although better than she was.



Angela also went through severe stress and anxiety herself, going to see a psychologist on three separate occasions after my return to home, at our own cost.

Myself, I am still subject to very emotional moments. Very strong memories of hospital /treatment etc. Often feel very vulnerable now, quite often scared of things like crossing the road and losing Stella or Angela. I also fear not being able to regain consciousness if I need to be put under general anaesthetic again. On the positive side a lot closer to my family.

Discharged Alfred Hospital 2 October 2001

Admitted Bethesda Rehabilitation 2 October 2001

Discharged Bethesda 17 November 2001

Return to work Program

14 January 2002 – 10 February 2002	12 hours per week
11 February 2002 – 03 March 2002	15 hours per week
04 March 2002 – 31 March 2002	23 hours per week
01 April 2002 – 12 May 2002	27 hours per week
Full time after this	

Lost opportunities and career development at work through being away for better part of a year.

Loss of marketing contacts on projects etc. Had to start again in many ways when returning to work.

Had to put off attendance at final round interviews of Jack Zunz scholarship taking place in Ireland (prize: financial management course in Switzerland). Will be able to resume this hopefully next year.

Lost stamina. I used to work 50-60 hour weeks commonly, reduced energy means hours worked are now limited, limiting the amount of work I can do to out of hours to further my career.

Sounds strange but feel can no longer put together sentences in a smooth coherent manner as I used to any more. Feel this came through so long not talking and then a long time being unable to talk (because of trachy)



Other relevant details:

TAC Insurance details
Claim No. 01/00808
Claims Officer: Cindy Koza 9664 6314
Nick

Occupational therapist (Bethesda)
Fiona Singleton 9426 8745 / 0417 120 593

Physiotherapist (Bethesda)
Meredith Liddle 9426 8700

Doctors

Bethesda
Dr Harry Widjaja (overseeing)GP
27 Erin Street, Richmond, VIC 3121.
9426 8773

Dr Stephen Doig (Orthopedics)
9 Erin street, Richmond, VIC 3121.
9428 6255

Dr Gary Sherman (ENT doctor – loss of hearing)
5 Erin street, Richmond, VIC 3121.
9427 1399

List of treating doctors at Alfred Hospital

Dr Bear (trauma/orthopedics)
Dr Kondogiannis (trauma/orthopedics)
Dr Sigston (trauma/orthopedics)
Dr Hooper (trauma/orthopedics)
Dr Marasco (Trauma/Cardio - Lungs)
Dr Roubos (Trauma/?)
Dr Mathews
Dr Atkins
Dr Stephen Doig (as above)

Insurance:

Bike insured and paid for Swann insurance. They are pursuing Rowhan Keats but have advised that they cannot find him to serve notice. Doubt they will pursue with vigour as only a couple of thousand dollars.

Salary continuance through Arup – ING plan 609325-6, claim no. 8462
Level 1, 17-19 Florence Street
Hornsby NSW 2077
PO Box 1605, Hornsby Northgate NSW 1635
(02) 9987 1577

ING insure 75% of salary after 90 days post accident date.
Benefit is reduced by any monies received from TAC.

TAC reimbursed part of sick leave – refer letter 28 February 2002.

Transcript of emails these were sent by Angela and give a good record of progress whilst at hospital - she found she could not take calls and talk about it – email was a good way of keeping people who would like to know up to date.

03.08.01

Hi,

Just to let you know Bren had an accident on his motorbike last night Thursday - a car pulled out in front of him.

As far as catscan can tell no head injuries and he could carry a conversation quite normally.

He's broken his left leg above the knee. Broken several ribs, possibly punctured a lung, bruised spleen, dislocated left shoulder.

He's been in intensive care all night and likely to stay there for a week. He won't be able to speak for a few days as he has tubes in his throat to help him breathe with the lungs problem

Pretty bloody scary but I think he should be alright. Two babies to look after now. I'll find out more today and will keep you up to date.

Love Ange xxx

06.08.01

Monday 6/8/01 update

A few days on now and Brendon is still under heavy sedation after the motorbike accident. He's had the all clear on his spine and head which is a huge relief. When I got to the hospital Thursday night he could wiggle his toes and turn his head. He's listed as stable. He will probably be in intensive care for a few weeks I would think. I don't know how much of this will be under heavy sedation.

He's lungs appear to be really badly damaged and that's why he's under sedation. It's like he is in a coma but at least it has been induced by the hospital not that his body collapsed into a coma. They've sedated him because he has a tube in his throat breathing for him.

He has broken ribs 3 - 6 on the left and they are going into the lung with each breath rather than moving outwards with the breath like ours do.

He's left lung isn't working at all and his right lung has an infection.

He's oxygen blood mix has been really tricky and over the last few days this is what they have been really concentrating on.

It's pretty scary and draining. I didn't realize that I wouldn't be able to talk with him after the leg operation. I just assumed he would be groggy, as grumpy as hell and able to talk - but the sedated him and we'll just have to wait to be able to talk with each other.

I haven't called you yet but will soon. Is your phone area code still 181 788xxxx? I just had this feeling that a lot of codes changed in the last year or so. I'm not thinking too clearly at the moment that's why I thought I'd send the email.

Love Ange xxx

07.08.01

I was going to try and call you today. I quickly called Amanda Cxxxx yesterday and filled her in. Brendon had a motorbike accident on Thursday night. A car apparently pulled out in front of him.

I got into the hospital and was able to talk quite normally with him. He could turn his head, wiggle his toes and knew which toes were being touched. He has had scans on his head and spine and everything has been given the okay.

He's broken his left leg above the knee and broken 4 ribs in more than one place. This has severely damaged his lungs. They are either heavily bruised or most likely punctured but they can't tell at this stage. He is under heavy sedation - a chemically induced 'coma' which is better than a coma which he lapsed into himself.

He had an operation on his leg on Thursday night and I stayed all night at the hospital. What I didn't expect was that I wouldn't be able to converse with him or for him to be able to look at me. He is on a breathing apparatus to control his breathing and to give him time to heal.

He's blood mix of oxygen and other gases needed to be adjusted because his leg injury was sending out fatty substances through the blood and was hindering his oxygen intake.

The hospital had identified this and he is slowly becoming more stable and has had a stable night.

He's in intensive care and it is day by day at the moment but I expect he will be sedated for a few weeks.

I'll keep you informed
love
Angela xxx

07.08.01

Brendon has had a stable couple of days. He's blood/oxygen mix wasn't very efficient a couple of days ago but they have worked this out and are constantly adjusting the mix and slowly slowly bringing his oxygen intake back down to normal levels.

Apparently a healthy person needs about 20% oxygen mix and his mix at the moment is at 70% about 4 times what he would normally need. He has been up to 100% over the last few days so some small improvements even just in the last few days.

Still under sedation and most likely that way for a least a week or two I would guess (only guessing) so that his lungs have time to heal.

I'll keep in touch
love
Ange & Stella xxx

08.08.01

Bren is getting slowly better but still under heavy sedation. His blood oxygen mix is getting slowly more normal and they have lessened the sedation slightly. His right lung is full of gunk which they can't seem to shift so they induced him to cough! And he did! which is good (I'm always telling him to shut up with his coughing - so to induce it seems funny). Take care and I'll keep up to date.
Ange xxx

09.08.01

Hi,

Just quickly they are reducing the sedation slightly and changed the breathing apparatus to one that isn't as powerful - so he breathes a little as well. Hope that makes sense.

Love Ange xxx

10.08.02

Hi,

They've been able to turn him onto his right side! and he is off the nitrous/oxygen mix.
Yay.
Have a good weekend at the caravan
Ange and Stella xxx

13-08.02

Thank you for the wonderful card I couldn't help crying when I read it. The card was so personal and you are right he does make so many people smile and it's the little everyday things which he puts so much effort into being a fun thing to do which makes him special.

He is slowly making progress but is having relapses as well. He seems to be filling up the cavity between his lungs and his rib cage with air which is constricting the lung expansion.

The nurses are on to this very quickly and watching him very closely. This has been a very long week and a half, but each day makes me hopeful. He's going to go through a lot of ups and downs but ultimately he is making his way to getting better - just very slowly.

Take care
love Angela and Stella xxx

14.08.01

Hi,

Bren has had some setbacks on the weekend with drainage pipes needing to go

into both sides between his lungs and ribs to release air. They seem to have it under control but it's pretty hard watching him so sick. He is still able to be turned slightly onto both sides and his oxygen levels are back up to 90% (they did get down to 65%).

One step forward two steps back it seems but they are still happy with his stable progress. Still under heavy sedation.

Glad to hear your able to get to the caravan so often. Another seal - you guys should charge appearance fees.

I'll keep you in touch.

xxx Ange & Stella xxx

15.08.02
Hi,

We had a meeting with the head doctor to get an overall view of Bren's health. He's at the stage (10 - 12 days from the accident) where the lungs are expected to reach their worst. Hopefully the worst was what happened on the weekend. He then will hopefully slowly start to get better. He has a condition ARDS (Adult Respiratory Distress Syndrome) where the lungs 'freeze' as a result of the trauma and don't absorb oxygen well and then 'leak' like they did on the weekend. If he can get through the next week as stable then there should be improvement from there.

The doctor advised us just to focus on whether he is stable/unstable rather than little details.

He is probably going to be under sedation for at least another 2 weeks possibly 4 weeks. Then a very slow healing process.

So from now on I'm just going to focus on stable/unstable for my own sanity and keep everything crossed for good luck.

Take care

Angela and Stella xxx

20.08.01
Bren is stable but it is going to be a very long haul. He is expected to be sedated for another 2 - 4 weeks while his lungs heal. We have another meeting with the big doctors this week so we'll see how he has fared after a fairly stable week.
Stella is just beautiful and I'm video taping things so Bren doesn't miss out too much. She plays with her hands now and has rolled over a few times with her nappy off. We are very lucky to have her.
Take care

Angela and Stella xxx

20.08.01

Hi,
Bren had an unstable day on Friday but he has managed to regain most of the ground he made during all of his stable days last week. So, he has been stable for 2 days since Friday.
We are meeting with the doctors again early this week to get another overall update. He's beginning to look fairly skinny now (not that he was a big lard to start with :0) but is a good colour and looks peaceful.
I'll keep in touch after the meeting with the doctors.
Angela & Stella xxx

22.08.01

Hi,
We had a meeting with the doctors yesterday. He is still on a plateau where he hasn't gotten any worse or gotten any better. But each day is a bonus towards improvement of the lungs. It's just going to be a very long haul.
He will still be under sedation for another 2 - 4 weeks.
We meet with the doctors again later this week so I'll update you early next week.
He had a stable night last night so has been stable for 4 days since Saturday.
Thanks for thinking of us
Angela and Stella xxx

26.08.01

Hi,
Bren has had a fairly good weekend. He's oxygen consumption is the best it has been and they have been able to get him to breathe a few breaths each minute. Eg: he will breathe 3 and the machine will breathe 14 for the minute (17 in total). The machine can identify when Bren is looking like he is going to breathe himself and either let him do it or help make the breath stronger. This all helps so he gets enough oxygen and also doesn't let him breathe too hard. He is on a lesser amount of sedation which is good, but still unable to communicate. Fingers crossed this is the start of good things. He will be expected to be in intensive care for at least a few more weeks if everything goes well. If there are any set backs (which is still likely) he will be in intensive care for maybe another month or so. He's still very sick but he seems to be tolerating alterations they make to his breathing and when they move him which is good.
We should be having another meeting mid week so I'll keep you updated.
Thanks
Angela and Stella xxx

29.08.01

Hi,
Bren has had a tracheostomy (spelling?) today and seems to have settled down quite well after the operation. This replaces the tubes which have been in his throat which could have possibly aggravated the tongue and vocal chords. He'll probably be a bit croaky when he finally talks. The trachey will be in for

about 6 - 7 months possibly. Is there a new Darth Vader stunt double needed?
:0)
Still under sedation but the amount has been lessened up apparently. Still not communicating.
Thanks
Angela and Stella xxx

30.08.01
It's been an out of this world experience this past month but there are so many improvements this week that it all seems distant. Trying not to get too excited too quickly but they are lessening his sedation and he was able to open up his eyes and blink them shut (not through any response to anything yet) but in time hopefully he will be able to communicate.
I really appreciate your offer of the house at the beach sounds really relaxing - we'll see how it all goes.
I'll keep you up to date with emails. It's going to be a very slow process.
Take care
Angela and Stella xxx

02.09.01
Hi,
We met with the doctor on Friday and he is pleased with Brendon's progress. His sedation is being lessened quite alot each day and he should be able to respond/communicate with eye contact within the next 5 - 7 days. Yay! At the moment he can open his eyes but not in response to voice (mainly by being moved around) but this will improve as the days go on and if he can keep tolerating everything going on.
He won't be able to talk yet as they are purposively keeping the tracheostomy in a certain way which prevents this. I think it's because the muscles around his lungs will be so weak that he needs to concentrate on breathing and not talking at this stage. He is initiating his own breathing most of the time now.
He will wake up very confused and the doctor dosen't think he will remember anything of the past month.
He's still in Intensive Care and I imagine will be for a few more weeks. Still no visitors at this stage.
So, at this stage, good news. Keep those fingers crossed :0)
Thanks
Angela and Stella xxx

09.09.01
Hi,
Bren is waking up slowly and can hear, turn his head, lift both hands and is beginning to lift his legs.
His eyes aren't quite focussing yet but he can see probably through a 'foggy eyes'.
He is smiling and puckered his lips to kiss Stella.
He can't talk yet with the tracheostomy but is trying too. He is mouthing words which must be frustrating for him. Just not sure if he is saying "coffee" or F**** You (only joking :0)). When he is well enough he will be able to talk. The doctors are purposively not letting him talk at this stage so he concentrates on breathing.

He is initiating all of his own breaths and the respirator is 'filling' them out for him. He has been sat up in a special bed/chair for an hour each day which is hard work for him but good for him.
He is very skinny and it's going to take a long time to get his muscles back. He's had the drainage pipes removed from the left hand side which is great. He's still draining out of the right side.
He gets tired quickly but each day we are seeing more great little steps.
Thanks for thinking of us
Angela and Stella xxx

10.09.01
You bet he can take Stella for a walk. We had some more good news last night. The doctors tried him off the respirator - so that he would not have the machine to support him. Well it was supposed to be for just a few minutes - he lasted 3 hours quite comfortably! I saw him today and he is getting so much more movement in his fingers and getting a little bit cheeky. He pulled out the feeding tube in his nose. He keeps trying to test himself to see what he can do eg. raising his hands, curling up his fingers, jiggling his legs.

When he is off the respirator the right side of his lung dosen't bubble which is a good thing. The respirator must be slightly too high a pressure for him. The more that he is without the respirator the more that his lung will have time to heal.

He's smiling at jokes but I think he is quite frustrated now that he can actually see how skinny he is and what unco-ordination he has - but he is getting stronger each day.
Love to you all
Angela and Stella xxx

16.09.01
Hi,
Bren is doing pretty well. He has spent the last 3 days and nights breathing without the respirator. He has also had all of the drainage pipes around his lungs removed.
Today he went out in his special chair into Fawknor Park with oxygen bottle in tow for 5 minutes. Crossed the tram tracks and everything. We must have looked a sight. Two nurses, a ward support, Stella and I and Bren in his big chair! He liked getting the wind and sun on his face.
In the next few days the doctors will look at removing the tracheostomy - when he can competently cough up any muck. He will be able to talk again then. He'll probably never shut up!
He should be moved to a ward in a week or two. A huge milestone. There may be times where he relapses and needs to go back to Intensive Care for a few days - but on the whole he is on the mend :0)
He just now needs to keep well and work on getting back his strength. Each day he is getting more co-ordinated and is having lots of physio.
He's not ready for visitors as yet but I'll let you know.
Thanks
Angela and Stella xxx

21.09.01

Hi,
Bren has has a mixed week. He had his tracheostomy taken out and was able to talk to us a day later. Great to be able converse again. He is also getting more coordinated with his hands and getting a little bit of strength back in his legs. He also got moved to a ward for 24 hours but I think this was a bit quick for him and he was put back in ICU (Intensive Care Unit) with lung complications.

They decided to put back in the tracheostomy to help him clear his lungs and to put a drainage point in again. He also had some lung surgery to hopefully fix the collapsing. He won't be able to talk again as the trachey will block the vocal chords but the trachey may only be in for a few days anyway (not sure). He is still doing all of his own breathing - I think the respirator has been packed away for good (?).

He was moved again into a ward this morning - hopefully for the last time out of ICU.

Things are generally looking pretty good. He is in fairly good spirits. Just needs to take time.

Thanks
Angela and Stella xxx

24.09.02

Hi,
No-one has really talked about the leg but I think it has healed. He has little strength in that (left) leg and he also dislocated his left shoulder in the accident so he'll have to be careful building up the strength. I think he should be in the rehab hospital in about 2 weeks which I can't wait for. It means that he is medically well but just needs to become rehabilitated.

You should see the scars he looks like he's had a fight with a really bad knife thrower. :0)

Take care and I'll email later in the week.

Love Ange and Stella xxx

26.09.01

Hi, Bren has remained in the ward and is slowly getting better. He's had his drainage point removed and the chest xrays look good. Still has wires in his right hand which should be removed this week and the trachy will probably come out early next week. He will hopefully be in rehab in about a fortnight (?) No visitors yet please - I will let you know.

Thanks
Angela and Stella xxx

03.10.01

Hi,

He's moving to the rehabilitation centre today! Fantastic mile stone as theoretically he is medically okay. He has had his trachey out and is speaking quite well. He should feel alot more confident in a few days at the rehab (Bethesda) and it's fantastic for me as I can walk there in about 45 minutes. No more getting Stella, the pram in and out of the car as well

as trying to get a car park and paying parking fees.

Bren should be able to come home for a Saturday night visit probably in a few weeks - depending on how his progress goes. At the moment he can't even swing his legs off the edge of the bed to get out! He's very skinny and weak but getting more agile each day.

Love to you all
Ange and Stella xxx

07.10.01

Hi,
Thank you for the big card. Brendon enjoyed all your best wishes. Brendon is ready to see visitors now if you wanted to see him. He is still very weak and has asked that people only stay a short while about 5 minutes or so. He will be in hospital for a few more weeks yet so if possible please don't rush in all at once and also just 2 - 3 people at a time. He tires very quickly.

15.10.01

Bren is doing really well. He can take a few steps at a time now on the parrallel bars with support. I reckon another month or so as an inpatient at the hospital and then as an outpatient where he visits them rather than living there. He has the wires out of his hand on Friday and then hopefully that's the end of the operations. Yay!

He is in a room of his own at the moment as he is having pretty bad nightmares about the accident and as an after effect of all the drugs I think. May be delayed shock who knows.

He won't be there this Friday, Friday night or Saturday as he will be back at the Alfred Hospital with his hand operation.

23.10.01

Bren will be coming home for a visit with the Occupational Therapist on Thursday to see what equipment he may need to get around the house. The low futon may be a bit hard for him... guess he'll just have to sleep on the couch :0) Also looks like he may stay over on Saturday night. Pizza and video will be fantastic! He can walk with crutches now. Coming along well. May be home permanently in about 3 weeks.

Stella is doing well. Touching her toes and rolling more now.

Angela xxx

----- Original Message -----

01.11.01

Hi,

Bren is coming along really well. He is able to use crutches proficiently and even take a few steps without them.

His hand operation went well and was able to use the crutches the next day. Follow up xrays on his leg and chest look good.

He spent last weekend at home and will most likely spend all weekends at home from now on. He basically can move around the house to different resting

positions eg: bed to chair to couch etc. but dosen't have the energy to get up to make himself drinks or get anything. He still gets very tired.

So... with Stella as well, I'm running around like the proverbial blue fly. Great to have him home though.

Not sure when he will be out of hospital to become an out patient (eg. going to physio 3 days a week) but will let you know.

Take care and good luck on the Melbourne Cup.

Angela and Stella xxx

14.11.01

Bren looks like he will be home permanently maybe as early as next week (becoming an outpatient where he goes to sessions of physio 3 times a week. I'm waiting for official confirmation of this ie: it's just Bren saying it at the moment based on what the Physio said but I want to just check everything is okay eg: diet, mentally, physically.... Then I'll know I'm living!

Take care

Ange xxx

18.11.01

Hi,

Happy to say that Bren is home now permanently and is an outpatient attending physio 3 days a week.

Thanks for all of your support and kind wishes.

Love Ange, Bren and Stella xxx (Flash is still on leave at his Grandparents :0)



VICTORIA POLICE

Traffic Alcohol Section
20 Dawson Street,
Brunswick Vic 3056
24th October, 2001

Mr. Brendon McNiven
3 Appletree Drive,
GLEN WAVERLEY VIC 3150

Dear Mr McNiven,

A search of the records at this office reveals that a blood sample was taken from you at the Alfred Hospital on the 2nd August, 2001. The blood alcohol level of this sample was negative, no alcohol in the sample.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Diane Palaia'.

DIANE PALAIA
Per:
E.M. CURRIE
Sergeant 16254