



Welcome to this twice-termly newsletter,

with news about what's happening in the School around the world. You've received this due to your interest in the School of Economic Science and I really hope you will enjoy reading it.

This first issue tells you about:

- Online classes from New York
- Cycling with local children in Johannesburg
- Money, a new 5 week course in London

Please feel free to e-mail this on to interested family and friends.

With very best wishes, Christine Lambie

Building a School - Proyecto Satyam

Neda and Guillermo Berardone, Buenos Aires, Argentina

The Buenos Aires School is very small (less than fifty of us), but it seems to have new projects springing up all the time.

Philosophy, Economics and Sanskrit groups, development of land for a future residential home, a city house for the School, a hand-built (our hands!) environmentally friendly eco-cottage, a Sanskrit-Spanish dictionary, and now a Saturday School for children. This story is about 'The Cottage' . . .

In 2003, with our few pesos, wedding gifts from some of you and real credit (an interest-free loan and the use of a small 'casita' to live in) from Guillermo's mother, we were able to start buying, clearing up and developing an acre of fertile land 40km outside the city, in order to create a beautiful place for philosophy retreats. It was a transformative process for us too!

In 2008 we started with the first building, a secure shed for storing construction materials and tools. A severe flash flood turned a 100m long infrastructure ditch into chocolate soup for weeks, but conveniently showed us that the foundations we were building needed to be raised by an extra half a metre.

Informed that the casita might be sold, we decided to add bathrooms, a mezzanine and kitchenette to the shed, and so the cottage was born - although several stages of metamorphosis and a steep learning curve lay ahead. . . as you would expect, given two complete beginners attempting to design and build a house themselves!

Realizing that with so few students whatever facilities we did manage to develop would hardly be used for years, Guillermo had the vision of setting up an environmental education centre to provide children from inner-city schools with direct contact with trees, mud, bugs, bonfires, etc., and to inspire them to love, marvel at and care for nature through educational activities and by example. And so "Proyecto Satyam" came into being . . . and we started studying how to make the cottage into a showcase of environmentally friendly building.

It turned out to be the perfect cheap laboratory for testing out candidate green materials and technologies for the future main house, on a small scale and at a lower cost.

We were helped throughout by:

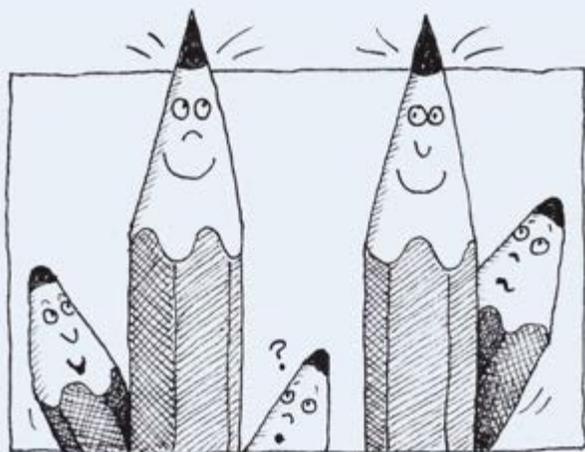
- remote advice and moral support from architect friends;
- onsite assistance from a couple of daring builders who were willing to try new things with us, e.g. spend weeks balancing atop 12 tree trunks 6m off the ground;
- Guillermo's general level of consciousness in overseeing every inch of the construction; and in not falling down from precarious places;
- fearlessness and focus: in tackling each new challenge, and in applying mathematics for the reciprocal roof structure and other calculations;
- efficient office work, generally done before 8am and after 10pm, keeping clients happy and enabling us to buy building materials - some prices were going up on a weekly basis!
- help from a couple of the students in the School - Jorge with all things electrical and Luciana who spent many weekends just working willingly alongside us;
- our general ignorance with regards to how much work anything was actually going to involve.
- the most potent, creative and satisfying process of simply being physically present and familiar with the site, seeing the needs (or mistakes!) as they arose, finding a fresh solution for them with the materials/muscle available, and then diving in and applying body, mind and heart.
- tangible and beautiful working surfaces to concentrate on and great enjoyment of the manual tasks;
- stamina and energy that stemmed from the fact that all this is dedicated to uplifting many fellow human beings and not just for me.

Despite all the hiccups and changes of plan along the way we are very pleasantly surprised at how harmonic and beautifully organic the cottage has turned out. . . and that it hasn't fallen down!

It has been used for philosophy weekends, study days and environmental workshops and it's just a lovely space to be in. And soon it will be a very good complement to the new educational project for children in town. . . so watch this space, and do come and visit! It's real, it's natural, it's just "good for being" - satyam.

More about this project, including all the ecological details and lots of photos to tempt you over, on [filosofiapractica](#)

The photo shows Guillermo on top of the unfinished building.



Top Tips

Items recommended by readers

1. **A Virtual Choir, Eric Whitacre:** This composer led a virtual choir of singers from around the world. He talks through the creative challenges of making music powered by YouTube, and unveils the first 2 minutes of his new work. Watch the lecture at [TEDchoir](#). Then see the finished piece at [Sleep](#).

2. **Matthew Syed:** In this 5 minute youtube clip

Matthew Syed discusses what it takes to become a top sportsman or woman. He states that excellence is due to the transformational power of practice. See the interview on [youtubeSyed](#)

3. **The Letters of Marsilio Ficino Vol 8, translated by the School:** Ficino has recently been drawn more fully to the world's attention by the references in HRH Prince of Wales' book *Harmony*. In volume 8, Ficino is seen boldly preparing to defend his philosophy against opposition in the papal curia.

A philosophy student in London shares her experience

Finding Freedom at Home

Anita Kourtis, London

For the last 10 years I have been at home with my children, the youngest of the three now almost at school.

During that time there have been many ups and downs, and strong personal developments and freedom. I always assumed that if it were possible, I would stay at home with any children I had and when my first child was born I had a real sense that this was what I was here for; but as time went on the situation started to differ from my expected outcome. . .

Children don't necessarily behave in a predictable way and this combined with the intense attachment started to take its toll on my confidence. When I was working, there had always been a level of positive feedback, but with children this was different. I could 'do everything right' and work really hard but the hoped-for outcome (compliant and grateful children!) did not necessarily materialise.

As a result the image I had of myself (as being efficient, competent,) began to be eroded. I fought to get back to the person I had been, until one day feeling the familiar sense of failure creeping over me regarding a child's behaviour I simply said out loud 'Oh well, she is who she is.' A simple piece of knowledge, but really hearing it had a profound effect on me. It released my need for perfection and left a sense of acceptance, not so much acceptance of her or the situation, but rather acceptance of myself.

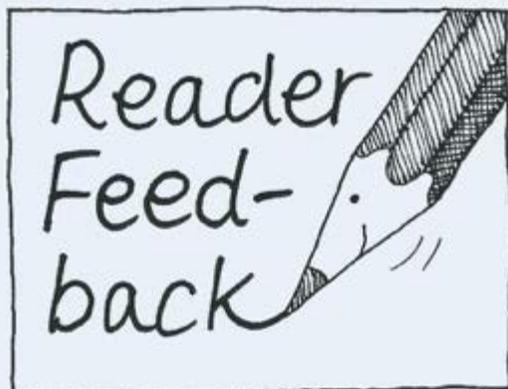
So I subsequently practised changing the inner ideas I hold about myself and changing the responses and experiences of my inner life. I am now no longer trying to get back to what I was; I am simply ready to move forward. Being at home bringing up the family has brought me face to face with myself on numerous occasions and shown me that my real being is actually fluid and only fixed by habit.

The knowledge and practice satisfy my mind, but my heart too plays a part and surrender in this area has been vital. Singing has always been a much-loved part of my life, but it was not until I was asked to perform that I really discovered its scope. Nerves and concerns were always a problem until I remember before one performance deciding to give it all up and perform as a gift.

I experienced freedom, complete unity, as well as the technical challenges of singing and therefore of surrender and enjoyment. . . giving the best you can and not minding about the result.

When I sang at my Dad's funeral I had to work very hard at surrendering all the small ideas about myself and devote the event to my true Self. I experienced a unity beyond anything I have ever known - a moment of coming in touch with the brilliance and freedom and greatness of the music and what went into composing it. It was a moment of complete unity, not only with Dad, but so much greater and more complete. What was enjoyed was the sense of freedom – the total relinquishment - not having to hold on to anything.

So through all the ups and downs of the last 10 years I have found freedom through knowledge, practice and surrender. Freedom has been a total giving up, even giving up the image I project of myself, and falling into a loving substance, a natural balm, what I am meant to be.



Reader Feedback

'I think that it is a wonderful tool to keep us connected even though we reside thousands of kilometres from each other.' Toronto, Canada

'Congratulations on the 'Insight' newsletter! It is great.' Wellington, New Zealand

'Thank you so much for the eNewsletter. I think it's perfect! It is short, precise, the articles are interesting and remind one of the wider School family, as well as share ideas we could try at home. Being home with our baby this last little

while, it is especially nice to have this contact. I am sure others who are travelling or perhaps not at the School for a break, will also appreciate it.' Pietermaritzburg, South Africa

Art in Listening

Ben and Joke van Leeuwen, Eindhoven, Holland

Inspired by the successful formula of Art in Action in England, the Eindhoven branch (started in 2002, now 50 students) of the School in Holland has created an "Art in..." of its own.

We wanted to offer the public the opportunity of listening from stillness and also support young musical talent. So we began with a concert in a theatre in a suburb of Eindhoven, with performing artists from the ages of 10 to 25 years old from various Schools and Academies of Music in Holland, who were offered a stage for gaining concert experience.

The subtle element which made all this special was the stillness exercise given to the audience at the start of each concert where the audience was invited to listen from a deep inner stillness. One listener said: "A very special experience of strength and dedication. The listening exercise really makes a difference in experience".

Another tool we used in later concerts to help the audience to a deeper level of experience was giving the visitors at the entrance of the theatre a proverb on paper to sharpen the listening. One example was: *'Where music is – are the ears – where the ears are - is the mind – where the mind is – follows the heart – where the heart is – joy rises.'*

At the end of the concert, visitors were asked to give some response on how they experienced the concert with this proverb in mind. One listener said: *'When I was really present, I was touched in my heart and very joyful.'*

That first concert in February 2008 was a great success and people were most enthusiastic about it. We had an audience of just over 100 - it was a very promising result to continue the Art in Listening concept.

What has been built up since then is a network of many parties with the School as the orchestrator. Several organisations make sponsoring contributions. All of this is organised by the wonderful combination of people called 'the School' who have taken this on with great dedication as a community service and as putting philosophy into practice.

Since that first concert, a program of four concerts each year has developed. Audiences have stabilized at around 95, making the whole event a healthy formula in all respects.

The concerts showcase a broad selection of different student musicians and instruments, and the last concert of the season program is always a laureate concert with a final exam musician. Next season, 2011/2012, Art in Listening will move to another theatre of higher quality and capacity, in a suburb of Eindhoven called Nuenen, where Vincent van Gogh lived and worked on a great number of his paintings.

With a total of 1400 visitors in 15 concerts, since the start of Art in Listening in 2008, the formula has proven to meet the demands of the audience, and the listening from stillness is very much appreciated.

For more information see our website: artinlistening - all in Dutch, of course, but the photos are great! *The photo shows a student violinist performing at one of the concerts.*

Thanks for reading

Subscribe Free – click on the link below to sign up.

Please keep that feedback coming. I need all your suggestions of personal stories, insights, links, articles, cartoons, video clips – anything that will be of interest to our philosophy community. Do you know someone in the School who has an interesting story to tell? E-mail me at: editor@seslondon.org. Thanks again for reading, CL

The views in expressed in this document are not necessarily those of the Fellowship of the School of Economic Science

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