

Issue 75 Autumn 2017

Dialogue

WN BULL



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Member of InvoCare Australia Pty Limited
ABN: 22 060 060 031

Dialogue Publications
© 2017

ISSN: 1832-8474

Dialogue is published quarterly by

Dialogue Publications
- a publishing division of
WN Bull Funerals

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Copies of *Dialogue*
can be obtained by
calling (02) 9519 5344

Cover Image:

Patsy Healy & WN Bull Staff 2017

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'Stop! In the name of love . . . ' are the opening lines of a Diana Ross song. Amazing that these words have stayed with me; they seem to capture the spirit of this edition of *Dialogue*.

Stop or pause or be still, for a moment. Let the deep urgency or painful uncertainty settle, a little. And, in that stillness and the moment held, something can happen. We can see or feel or hear someone or something that is speaking to us.

I wonder about Eileen Azjan, who heard voices and suffered through life. Her daughter and nephew who capture or held their grief and love for Eileen, found this stillness in words. This is part of the skill of Marjorie Pizer and the reason I continue to include her poems in 'Poets Corner'.

Stop! For goodness sake, stop and make room as Cindy Maddox exclaims in her article. Rob Greenop writes so well about his history and that long line of people who make him who he is; 'nothing is lost and all in the end is harvest', as I read once on a bereavement card.

125 Years of WN Bull Funerals is also about the need to stop and give the whole of one's attention. It is a sacred moment when a family's life has come to a sad and sometimes tragic stop; it is a sacred moment when they make that phone call, when they meet a member of staff, when they are accompanied on a funeral.

Erica Greenop captures that eerie feeling when our narrow and rigid world, safe in its sureties, slips and opens a little, and a familiar cry lets the whispers of love and connection sound quietly.

Even the divisions and tragedies of our world can lose some of their hopelessness in the vision of One Heart of Mission. We can bear the pain of compassion knowing that there are people and projects in the places of need. Stopping can help us 'bear the pain of compassion' and call forth our own responses.

Even 'In Praise of Idleness' may be telling us something. So, from all of us at WN Bull Funerals, may the mellowness of Autumn and slow (we hope) onset of Winter bring time and space for mulling and pondering and a wondering gratitude.



WN BULL FUNERALS CELEBRATING 125 YEARS.

written by Richard White

We are celebrating 125 years of WN Bull Funerals. This is not simply a ‘back-slapping’ exercise, an acknowledgement of longevity. Those of us who work for WN Bull or have retained close association with the company believe that there is a certain quality or tradition that has persisted through these years. Moreover, this tradition is also a heritage, an accumulation of wisdom and experience that we hope will inform the company for years to come.

‘Leaders in Personal Service’ is the advertising motif that WN Bull has adopted in recent years. Such a claim could be seen as a marketing tactic typical in any service industry. There is a note of ‘one-up-man-ship’ about it, inevitably. To be a ‘leader’ in the field could significantly influence choices people make in a competitive market place. In the funeral industry, distinctiveness is important. Cost is, of course, an influencing factor, but it is not definitive. Reputation, familiarity and initial impressions all come into play.

I have been associated with WN Bull Funerals for thirteen years, seven and a half as a full time employee; I am unashamedly biased in my affection, appreciation and regard for the personnel and the spirit of this funeral company. Personal service is more than a marketing tactic. ‘The customer is always right’ used to be the catch phrase in business; the expression implied that the well-being and satisfaction of the client was of paramount importance. I suspect this is no longer the case.

The prevailing political and commercial climate stresses efficiency, profit and budget considerations over the needs of, and benefits to the client or customer. Vision statements and codes of practice aside, experience would indicate that minimising of staff, self-service practices, recorded messaging and the like are tending to eliminate the person-to-person encounter. If this is true of businesses in general, how or why would a funeral company put such emphasis on personal service? Let me give an example from a slightly different context.

I am thinking of dying and death and the emotions associated with these occasions. Even the death of a pet can be illuminating. Our dog, Mate, was seriously ill and we eventually decided to have him euthanized. The relationship I had established with our local vet made a difference to how I experienced this stressful event.

Mate was chronically ill with a heart complaint. He was in his fifteenth year, a long-time, loyal family friend. The vet had assured me that once he stopped eating he would be suffering distress and this occurred; I booked an appointment for the next day.

When I entered the vet’s premises, Tracy, the receptionist came round the counter and greeted Mate. I was slightly surprised. ‘Surely she knows why we are here and there’s this unselfconscious, affectionate greeting. What’s she on about?’

I was churning inside, holding it together. I wasn’t ready or capable of spontaneous displays of kindness or affection; they were to come in a few moments. Before we went into the surgery I did manage to ask Tracy not to be kind to me on the way out; that would be too much.

Mate was euthanized and I held him as the ‘green dream’ did its quick and painless work. The vet wrapped him in a blue bunny rug and I carried him out to the car. There was no one in the office when I walked through.

These last moments of Mate’s life were accompanied by human kindness. The memories of those kindnesses remain. Death and kindness can often go together and the experience of grief is softened and deepened. It is as if the kindness enlarges and illumines the sadness; to be truly human is to share in and receive gratefully the humanity

“ Personal service, the quality of interaction, respect and relationship is the affirmation of preciousness. ”



of others. In this understanding, the heart-breaking reality of death reveals and affirms our essential relationship with one another.

It is true that there would be no sadness if we had no love, no sorrow if the ties of affection had not grown, year by year. It is true, too, that in this context of loss the accompanying affection and presence can make a great difference; they can reaffirm the reality of loving and offer a glimpse of enduring affection and living.

Tracy probably is unaware of the impact her kindness had on me; she was doing her job, genuinely and personally and thus was a blessing for me and others who attend the clinic. To be a blessing is no easy thing; it is the challenge that continues to face WN Bull Funerals after 125 years of service to the community of Sydney.

Recently I attended a gathering to acknowledge Steve Ross’s 20 years of service at WN Bull Funerals. Steve is the senior embalmer and a funeral conductor. Last year, Patsy Healy, General Manager, celebrated 25 years of service and James Brooking retired after 15 years as a full time administrator and conductor.

Steve, Patsy and James tell a similar story. They speak of the people and families they have met and cared for and the deep satisfaction this has given them. These long-standing staff members testify to a way of being with and for people that robs death of some of its loneliness and

hopelessness. More than this, they affirm by their actions and by their presence that ‘all real living is meeting’, as Martin Buber puts it.

Personal service is about ‘real living and meeting’. It is that eye contact that transforms an exchange into a connection, desolation into compassion.



“ A funeral is *the* place or moment where we are at our most vulnerable or open, where the personal in all its gestures and meaning supports our loving, gives hope and tempers the emptiness of death. ”

Image
The Funeral Service of John Desmond Harris
Owner and Director of WN Bull Funerals, 1986 - 2010

The celebration of funerals is a ceremony that began when human beings first demonstrated their humanity. Archeologists would maintain that evidence of burial rites is among the earliest indications of an emerging cultural life. It is a deeply human activity. Just as the death of any person is sensed as a loss of something, someone precious – ‘not people die but worlds die in them’ – so whatever affirms and promotes human preciousness is integral to the funeral process.

Personal service, the quality of interaction, respect and relationship is the affirmation of preciousness. We all know what this feels like, how simple and ordinary its expression; we know too the bleakness of loss and confusion.

A funeral is *the* place or moment where we are at our most vulnerable or open, where the personal in all its gestures and meaning supports our loving, gives hope and tempers the emptiness of death.

125 years of personal service is more than a marketing slogan; it is an extraordinary privilege, a gift and a delicate and mysterious quality, hardly won and easily lost. This celebration is first and foremost a reminder and a challenge never to take this privileged position lightly.

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STOPPING TRAFFIC

written by Rev. Cindy Maddox

To the middle aged woman who gestured angrily and yelled as we passed...
To the thirty-something man in the power suit who honked and forced his black SUV through our line...
To the person who tried to pass us and then moved his car into our lane to block our progress...

Perhaps you don't know. Perhaps you didn't recognize the hearse and the flapping flags on the first few cars. Perhaps you didn't notice that we all had our lights on and our hazards flashing. Perhaps your mama never taught you to show respect to the dead by showing kindness to the grieving.

“ And if their grief doesn't stop the world, at least it should stop traffic. ”

You couldn't know, of course, that the woman inside the hearse was only twenty years old. You couldn't know that she leaves behind parents and siblings and a young husband and a one-year-old baby girl. You couldn't know anything about the person in that hearse or the many people who followed. But you still could have stopped. You could have waited. You could have recognized that someone else's pain was greater than your need to get to lunch.

Her parents saw you—you were just the first of many who will be impatient with their grief. Her younger siblings saw you—breaking the chain of cars that separated them from their sister's body and their parents' arms. You see, a funeral procession is not about getting to the cemetery at the same time. A funeral procession is a chain of connection, a visible sign of the invisible bond of grief. To the grieving, it is inconceivable that the world keeps going when their world stopped. They cannot understand how the rest of the world keeps spinning, not aware that it has lost something precious, when their world will never be the same. They will go through the coming weeks and



months and maybe years with a hole in their gut that will be virtually invisible to everyone who passes. But for this day, this moment, they are seen. And if their grief doesn't stop the world, at least it should stop traffic.

As a pastor, it is my job—and my honor, my blessing, and my burden—to sit with families in the midst of their pain, to hold their hands, to try to bring them comfort when the unthinkable has happened. I listen to their stories. I help them plan a service that honors their loved one. I help them choose a scripture for the service, whether they know many by heart, or know only that their loved one believed, or know only that they want something religious just in case. We create a bubble, or maybe a cocoon—a safe space where they can remember and cry and laugh and sit together in grief and anger and know that whatever they're feeling is OK. It is heart-breaking to sit in those front pews, and it is gut-wrenching to watch those who sit in the front pews. But we are in it together—this thing called life, this thing called grief, this thing called love. And then we move from that space, together, for one last difficult act after so many others—one that nobody ever wants to imagine but always fears—to see our loved one's remains laid in the earth. So we follow the car in front of us, knowing that we are still in it together, still bound by our shared grief even as we go out into this busy, impatient, insensitive world.

So for those of you who were so angry that a funeral procession made you a few minutes late, I have a few suggestions. The next time this happens, try not to think

“ To the grieving, it is inconceivable that the world keeps going when their world stopped. ”

of the fact that you missed one rotation of the lights; think instead about what the people in those cars will miss. Try not to think of being late for your lunch date; think about the people who will never again get to meet their loved one for lunch. Try to consider that maybe you could inconvenience yourself for one moment to allow a hurting family to stay together, to show them that you see them and you recognize their loss.

I hope you can do this because one day, you'll be the one driving with your lights on and your hazards flashing, needing to follow closely so you don't lose your connection, don't lose your way. And I hope the world will stop for you.

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“ Eileen’s path was far from an easy one and yet she never despaired or lost her faith. She had so many of the qualities that were extolled in the beatitudes. ”

“For we are God’s Masterpiece.” Ephesians 2:10

EILEEN JOSEPHINE
AZJAN NEE GAFFNEY

written by Charlie Strasiotto
Adapted from the eulogy from her Requiem Mass

We came together to mourn the death of Eileen Azjan who passed away from this world and into the next on Sunday the 10th of July 2016.

rosary beads clutched in her right hand. It is my hope that in her final days she was comforted by her family praying the rosary next to her hospital bed.

“ Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in Heaven. ”

All who knew Eileen remember that she was a remarkable woman-sharp, witty, socially conscientious, direct and refined. She was also in life a very prayerful person with a strong connection to her Catholic faith. She was especially devoted to the Virgin Mary and often prayed, with her

The Beatitudes show us that it is the unconventional people who receive the grace and light of God, not those who live easy lives. Eileen’s path was far from an easy one and yet she never despaired or lost her faith. She had so many of the qualities that were extolled in the beatitudes.

She was gentle and not prone to raising her voice or speaking harsh words. She mourned - her daughter, her sister and her nephew. She had the thirst for what is right and just - unusually for her generation she held no prejudice against people of other nations and religions.

“ ...despite the enormous social stigma ...Eileen was never bitter or angry about her life. ”

Instead she took an interest in everyone personally and their lives. This quality is what allowed her to remain socially connected to people even through her long illness that left her bedridden and immobile. She wrote letters, called people on the phone and knitted scarves and blankets for those less fortunate.

Of all the lines in the Beatitudes the one that most speaks to me of her life is “Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in Heaven.”

In life Eileen was tormented by mental illness that took the form of many voices. Throughout her days she suffered constant mockery, barbs and vicious comments all coming from within her own head. The stress of this may have made another person bitter but despite suffering so greatly and being denied peace and quiet in life, and despite the enormous social stigma this mental illness placed upon her, Eileen was never bitter or angry about her life. Instead she remarked that she had lived an interesting and good life. It is her resilience and strength of character that made her who she was. Her incredible grace under pressure makes me believe that her rewards in the next life will be great indeed.



THIS WIND
HOWLED ACHE.

written by Katherine Azjan
In loving Memory of her Mother

The wind howled
The day of my mother's funeral.
I like to think that it was the Holy Spirit
Gusting my grief,
Raging furiously in elemental sympathy.
How I wished
I could come with her.
I ached,
Longing.
This Wind Howled Ache.

Inwardly
Keening silently.
My mother
Dead.
The wind keened my ache.

I'm just jealous,
I murmured.
My heart beat in time.
Mum at peace.
Pain free.
All too hard, this life of mine.

Blustering clouds,
Brooding foreboding.
The one sunray
Solitary,
Pierced the clouds.
Illuminated the casket.

I moved,
Momentarily blinded.
Did not want to miss
Mum's funeral
Or forget.
The wind howled my ache.

With every mourner,
The church door groaned and banged.
"Wuthering Heights"-like,
Sending the wind howl a-hurting,
Echoes down the aisle,
"I wish I could come with you"
My voice strained.
The coffin retreated.
How I wished.
This wind howled ache consumed me.

Where's Alex?
I thought distractedly
Where's my Son?
Not dead in a car accident.
I hope.

The oak door gust trumpeted Alex's arrival.
Relief,
He is alive.
One small leaf curled before the coffin.
Resting at last.
Final and fitting.
The Wind Howled My Ache.

Spirit Wind Cleansing
Rebecca's tear strained face
Desolation felled.
The numbness displaced
My Mother clasped
Into God's final embrace

Consoled and whole,
Held lovingly kind,
This Spirit Wind binding,
The brokenness;
This Howling Wind Ache of mine.



COURTESY OF
THE BRITISH CROWN

written by Rob Greenop

Some years ago, when writing my life story, I set about tracing my family roots. At the time I had no idea who I would find and how intrigued I would become with some of the ancestors I came across.

When I started my research, I didn't even know the name of my paternal grandfather, let alone what he did or where he had been born. Slowly I found my way back to a William Charles Greenop, a many times 'great' grandfather, who was born in the City of London in 1620.

London, with its dirty squalid alleyways, open sewers and hand pumps to supply water to the population must have been quite a challenge. What was William like, how did he dress, did he survive the great plagues of 1665 and 1666, perhaps his house burnt down in the Great Fire that followed as the plague subsided. Only my imagination could fill in the gaps.

Researching through records can provide names, dates of birth, and sometimes occupations, but it is 'imagination' that has proved most rewarding in my writing. Provided I can relate the period of an ancestor's life to some historical fact or something 'visual' such as a television production a

picture emerges that for me becomes quite real.

I remember 'Little Dorrit' by Charles Dickens, that depicted life in London in the mid 1820s. Watching the BBC television series featuring Tom Courtney as William Dorrit I felt, if I looked hard enough, I would see great-great grandfather, another William Charles, sitting beside him in some coffee house. Hopefully William Charles did not end up in the Marshalsea Prison for Debt as did Dorritt.

This 'grandfather' William Charles, a butcher in Cowcross St in the heart of the City, was the oldest son of Edward Boylling Greenop. William Charles had two brothers, great-great-great uncle Edward, who sought opportunity abroad and migrated with his family to America, and great-great-great uncle Joseph, of whom, during my initial research, there was no further trace.

As writing my life story progressed I wondered who were the first Greenops to arrive in Australia. Were Erica



and I the first to come and settle here? Of course, a little research soon showed that we were not, by a long shot. A John Greenop was recorded in the Ballarat area in 1842 and since then over the years others had come and gone. Did all these Greenops come seeking adventure and fortune, were they all truly law-abiding citizens or was there a black sheep in the family somewhere.

And then, on a chilly autumn morning walk, I was listening to my pocket radio when the ABC presenter interviewed an English historian and author about his recent book covering many of the trials at London's famous Old Bailey Central Criminal Court. One interesting fact to emerge was that records from as far back as the late 1600's were now on the internet. Knowing that my roots stretched back to the City of London I wondered if any distant relatives had been arraigned before a judge on some charge or other, and if so what had become of them.

“ Was one of them the first to arrive, back at the turn of the 19th century or was the apparently ‘law-abiding’ John of Ballarat the first? ”

Knowing the notoriously severe sentences handed out for the most minor of crimes, had any of my forebears fallen foul of the law? If so was the seriousness of their crime enough to see them transported to Australia? Was one of them the first to arrive, back at the turn of the 19th century or was the apparently ‘law-abiding’ John of Ballarat the first?

At home I accessed the website and had immediate success when I came across great-great-great uncle Joseph who, back in 1820, had sailed from Tilbury on the river Thames for a 14-year visit to Van Diemen's Land. He was a villain. Undoubtedly, he had been the first.

Our impression of Australia on a hot sticky morning in 1964 was most likely in great contrast to that experienced by Joseph 144 years earlier. Our flight to Sydney had taken 36 hours and was in reasonable comfort of a British Overseas Airways Comet aircraft, whereas his non-stop sea voyage from Portsmouth in the 520 ton sailing barque Juliana had taken 116 days. I'm sure his view, if he had had one, as the ship sailed up the Derwent river towards Hobart Town, would have been quite daunting to a young man born and bred in London. We had had little to complain about in our economy class seats, while I'm sure he would have described the conditions he endured, confined below decks in the damp and cramped conditions that he shared



with another 188 incarcerated passengers, as atrocious. Needless to say, while we had come under our own volition, he had come courtesy of the British Crown.

William Charles, his older brother, was a respectable member of society; Joseph, just over 5ft tall, was a brush maker. Brush making was considered a skilled trade and its members were usually literate. Perhaps it was an ability to read and write that lead him to a life of petty crime. Not that the charge, that saw him and nine accomplices standing in the dock in the Old Bailey, could be considered petty. Unfortunately for them they had been caught in possession of forged bank notes and consequently all pleaded guilty to the charge of the ‘Intention to Defraud the Governor & Company of the Bank of England’. At that time this charge came under the category of ‘treason’ where the sentence, if guilty, was to be ‘hanged, drawn and quartered’. Perhaps luck was on their side that day, or maybe it was because of their guilty pleas, for instead of the gruesome fate that could have befallen them each was sentenced to transportation. Joseph was just 22.

Existence in the backstreets of London at the turn of the 18th century was far from easy. Had he been a wayward youth all his life? Perhaps, being small, he may have flourished as a ‘cutpurse’ or pickpocket before sliding into the more serious side of crime? Somehow, I felt sorry for him being sentenced to the other side of the world, most likely for the rest of his life.

“ He served his 14 year sentence as a convict and was then granted a ticket-of-leave to be a free man. ”

I would like my story to have a happy ending, that he reformed his errant ways and became a leading citizen of the expanding colony that would one day become Tasmania. Unfortunately my research discovered the darker side of Joseph's character.

Extracts from the archival records in Hobart relate how he was repeatedly in and out of trouble during the 14 years of his sentence. A charge sheet details several

instances of his being absent from his workplace, being insolent, refusing to obey orders, drunkenness, forging a work-pass from his lawful master and then absconding, and finally the theft of some cedar planks from the Crown which saw him brought before the local magistrate. Not surprisingly this misdemeanor saw him imprisoned in the newly opened Launceston gaol. Somehow he managed to make another break for freedom and when apprehended several days later insulted the District Chief Constable and made threats against the policemen who had arrested him. Not surprisingly Joseph ended up back behind bars. On release he was shackled in a chain gang to carry out public works. Other punishments ranged from having to work overtime, being confined to the watch-house overnight - a requirement that on more than one occasion he appears to have ignored - receiving 25 lashes and having to work in irons for 3 months.

And so what fate finally befell him? He served his 14 year sentence as a convict and was then granted a ticket-of-leave to be a free man. But from there on I have found no trace of him, either in Van Diemen's Land or in any of the other colonies on the mainland of what would become Australia. Maybe he, like so many other convicts, to disguise their criminal past, changed his name and reentered society to start life afresh. Somehow I don't think he would have ever reformed.



Put those you love in the hands of those who care

Of all life's celebrations the funeral liturgy can touch us the most deeply.

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As the funeral liturgy expresses faith, it also contextualises the life of the deceased with traditional and contemporary elements.

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THE ONE HEART OF MISSION

written by Peter Gates
Deputy Director | Catholic Mission

There is much joy and cause for celebration in living the Gospel and sharing the Good News despite the challenges facing the Catholic Church in Australia today. Beyond the horror exposed by the Royal Commission and declining numbers in church attendance and vocations, there is an active and alive church engaging with all members of our communities and making real and lasting difference to the lives of so many here in Australia and around the world.

In almost every sector the Church is present and leading God’s mission – a mission of love and mercy. In health, education, social services, working with the vulnerable and marginalised, caring for the elderly, the dispossessed, the hurt and broken, the faithful are full of hope and inspiration.

Pope Francis has challenged Catholics and invited all people to have a heart of mission and in the many voices of all peoples to bring (God’s) love to each other and the whole world. This is the case through the work of wonderful missionaries who serve in many and varied

parts of the world.

In Papua New Guinea, the first efforts to begin to counter the global HIV/AIDS pandemic began after the turn of the millennium. Sister Julienne Rasoazananoro remembers because she was there. The Madagascan-born Daughter of Wisdom has been leading education, prevention and treatment programs in Papua New Guinea ever since.

‘At the time I began to undergo training in HIV/AIDS [in 2003], if you had HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea, you would die,’ says Sister Julienne matter-of-factly. There

was simply no course of treatment available yet, and even after the first procedures for testing were put in place, it took six weeks for test results to come back from Australia, which was the nearest laboratory. ‘Sometimes the patient wouldn’t make it before the results even came back,’ says Sister Julienne.

“ Pope Francis has challenged Catholics and invited all people to have a heart of mission... ”

The overwhelming and immediate need across some 50 parishes and 15 villages along the Fly River in Sister Julienne’s local community, inspired her bishop to request that she undergo formal HIV/AIDS training in order to establish a local Catholic Church response through community prevention and treatment. In 2004, she received training from the National AIDS Council, supported by the

Australian government. Later that year, she trained in HIV/AIDS counselling, which is still a major part of her work in Kiunga, in Papua New Guinea’s Western Province. By the end of 2004, she was asked to coordinate the HIV/AIDS program for the entire province.

The comprehensive program focuses on education and prevention, with lessons on precautionary measures to prevent the spread of infection to children, and how to identify symptoms so that quick and decisive action can be taken. ‘Transmission can happen at conception, delivery and during breastfeeding, so it is important that everybody is aware of how it can be spread, what precautions to take, and how to get tested,’ says Sister Julienne. ‘If post-exposure prophylaxis is administered within 72 hours of contact, there is a chance infection can be prevented.’ For this reason, Sister Julienne and her staff now test for the virus in the prenatal stages. ‘Even if the mother tests positive, transmission to the baby can still be prevented with the right medication straight away.

There is a big issue with HIV/AIDS in the Western Province; because of the remoteness of the area, not many can access the services for prevention, testing or treatment. There is also a lack of government services for them,’ Sister Julienne says. When she and her staff saw a spike in positive cases nearly ten years ago, they realised the urgency of the situation. ‘That’s when we began our outreach program,’



Claudette and Felicitous, who work with Sister Julienne, prepare for the day’s work

she says. 'People could not come to us because they had no transport, so we went to them. We walked for 16 hours in some instances.'



Sr Julienne prepares for HIV/AIDS outreach in PNG's Western Province

Sister Julienne says one of the important achievements of the program is the impact it has had on stigma around HIV/AIDS. No longer are children shunned or discriminated against if they are HIV/AIDS positive, which was common not so long ago. 'Kids are well accepted now, all children learn and play together with no discrimination, because they know it is safe to do so. That is part of the education. We provide information for all children in the local schools and do free medical check-ups and testing.'

“ In celebration and reflection of such outreach and care around the world and here in Australia all people are invited to the biennial conference, *Mission: one heart many voices*...”

The program is funded by Australians through the work of Catholic Mission. Sister Julienne, who has been a missionary in Papua New Guinea since 1997, says it is crucial work. 'Those with HIV/AIDS would die if we were not here. We lost many before. That motivates me. I witnessed many deaths even in 2003. The fear was very strong.'

'Our work is great and numerous, but our staff is few, and often we go without pay for long periods. But whatever is given, we are really using it well, and we appreciate the help we receive and the ongoing care and support from Australians.'

In celebration and reflection of such outreach and care around the world and here in Australia all people are invited to the biennial conference, *Mission: one heart many voices* which will bring together in Sydney this May those living and leading this work of love. For three days from May 15-17, those who are inspired to strive creatively for justice, peace, reconciliation and God's mission of mercy will come together to listen and share the many and diverse voices that are an expression of the one heart of mission. The conference will explore the complexity and issues surrounding leadership, formation, theology and the practice of mission.

International and local presenters, experienced and expert in their field and an estimated 500 participants will together to be empowered with a vision of mission that is scriptural and theological, enabling and encouraging and inspiring all to take up the challenges the Gospel, Pope Francis... love lay before us.

Held every two years, this conference is once again being supported by WN BULL Funerals as Principal Sponsors. In 2017 it is the 125th Anniversary of this company that has for so long provided a sensitive and compassionate care for people at the end of their lives. This is a ministry of mission that is very much a part of the *Mission: one heart many voices* conference. In the words of Patsy Healy, the General Manager of WN Bull, "I feel I make a safe place for people at this moment. I sort of hold them, not physically, but emotionally, in some way. They can relax a little knowing that I, and our funeral team, will look after them. We hold them so they can just be."

And this mission of love, mercy and care can be traced back 125 years to the company founders, William and Mary Bull. They began their business with an emphasis on care for the poor, on patients who died at the major Catholic Hospitals not receiving a pauper's funeral. They understood the importance of funerals and the importance of every human life, and death.

The work of WN Bull Funerals is a living example of mission and one of the many voices of the one heart, one mission - God's mission to bring life and love to all.

For more information about the Mission: one heart many voices conference visit www.mohmv.com.au or contact 1800 257 296

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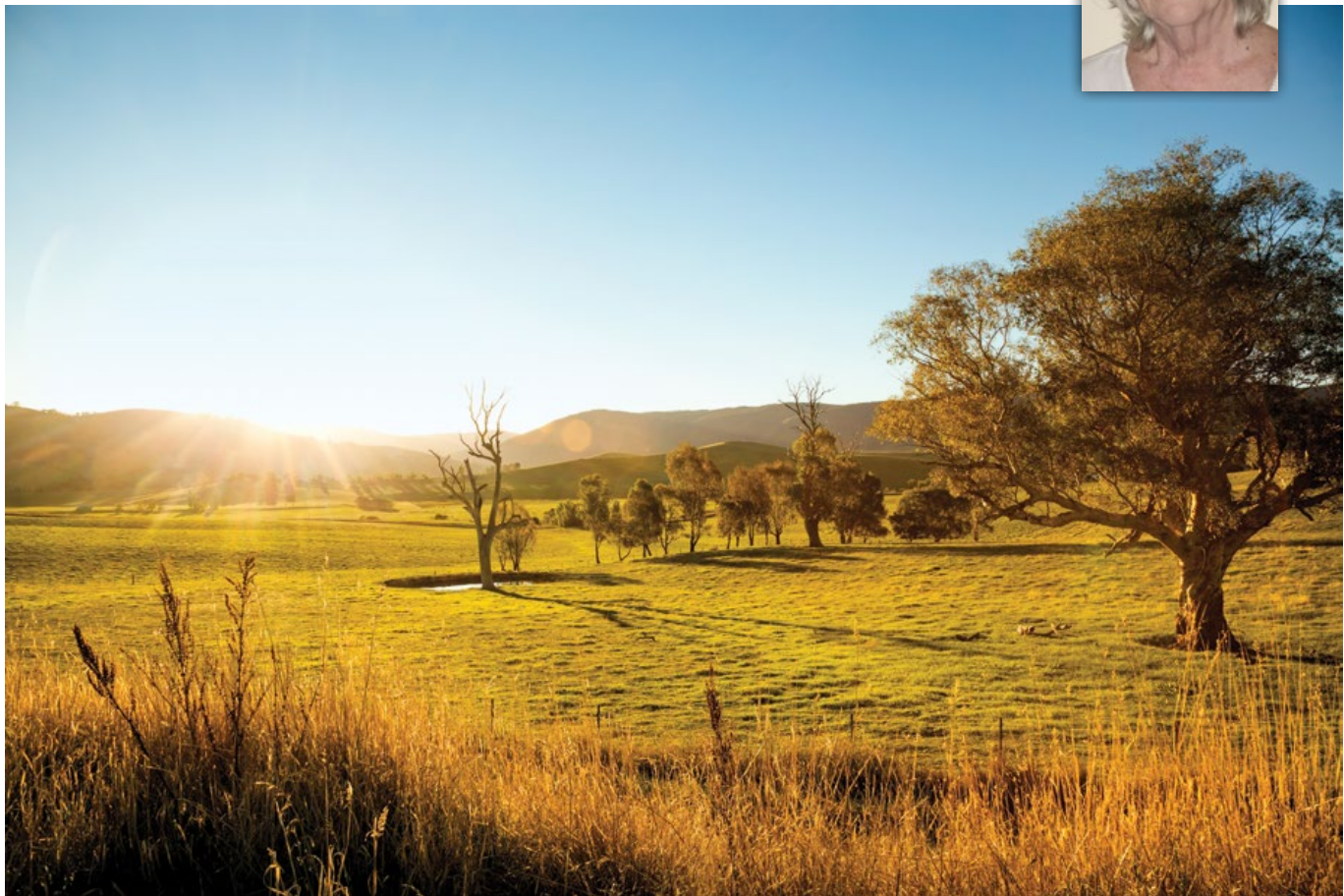
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Skyline Function Centre (External)



NORTHERN SUBURBS
MEMORIAL GARDENS
AND CREMATORIUM



“COO-EEE”

written by Erica Greenop

The night of July 3rd 2003 was cold. Nearly mid-winter. After dinner I placed the candle from the dinner table, on the table outside, drew back the curtains so we could see it in the darkness. It's a tradition with us, lighting up a tiny piece of our world for someone who has died, until we are ready to let them go. Rob's mother has died. She had lived in a nursing home in Kent in England in failing health and unflinching opposition to her carers for quite a few years. She did not take kindly to having to be cared for. Typical, we thought. Even at the end of her life, Granny was a strong woman. Determined. Stoic. Characteristics, after she had gone, to remember with gratitude.

So she was in our thoughts that night. To honour her memory I prepared dinner the way she used to prepare her best dinners at her home in London. She used to do this for us when our children were small and we travelled to London at Christmastime. She set the table with silverware, linen serviettes. Our little Aussie children thought this was probably how the Queen had her dinner. A jug of iced water on a silver tray to catch the drips. Glass tumblers. A bottle of cold Niersteiner Riesling. Crystal wine glasses polished so the candlelight made patterns on the tablecloth. Chicken with homemade stuffing and winter sage from

her garden. Bread sauce. Tiny sausages wrapped in bacon. Roast potatoes with crunchy bits. Sprouts from Joan's veg patch by the back gate, gravy made with chicken giblets. Jane used to raise her glass and look at her granny to make sure she was listening and say, "My compliments to the chef," and the kids would chink their glasses across Granny's dining table and say, "Cheers." Granny manners, we used to say.

I watched the candle in the darkness outside. The flame was tall and steady. I feel sad when I think of Rob's mother. I would like to have asked her about the war years. I would

like to have heard her stories. But I never got close to her. Maybe she never let me. So I wondered, that night of her death, because I wonder these things, if she would come from Kent England via Pymble Australia on her way to wherever it is she was going, to say goodbye.

“ There is a moment, at the start of deep night, when things go quiet. I could feel it, the mood of night time stillness. ”

There is a moment, at the start of deep night, when things go quiet. I could feel it, the mood of night time stillness. I watched the candle flame, yellow and orange at the bottom with its little halo reflected on the specks of darkness, disappearing into the night at the top. I heard someone call "Coo-eee, coo-eee." The candle flickered and the flame blew sideways and went out.

Next morning I asked Rob if he had heard someone calling 'Coo-eee.'

"It sounded so near," I said, "Just outside the window."

"Mother's nickname among family and friends was Coo-eee," he said. As if he had more reminiscing to do.

"Really?" I didn't know his mother's nickname was Coo-eee. She didn't seem to have been a 'Coo-eee' sort of person. "Why was that?"

"She used to call out 'Coo-eee' when she arrived at friends' homes to visit, if they were round the back or inside somewhere and no one was answering the door."

"Really?"

"She used to call out 'Coo-eee' to Joan, when she came home, across their back gardens, to say 'I'm home, all's well,' without going in."

"Really?"

"Yes," said Rob quietly. His eyes have gone like sea pools. "Yes. Really."



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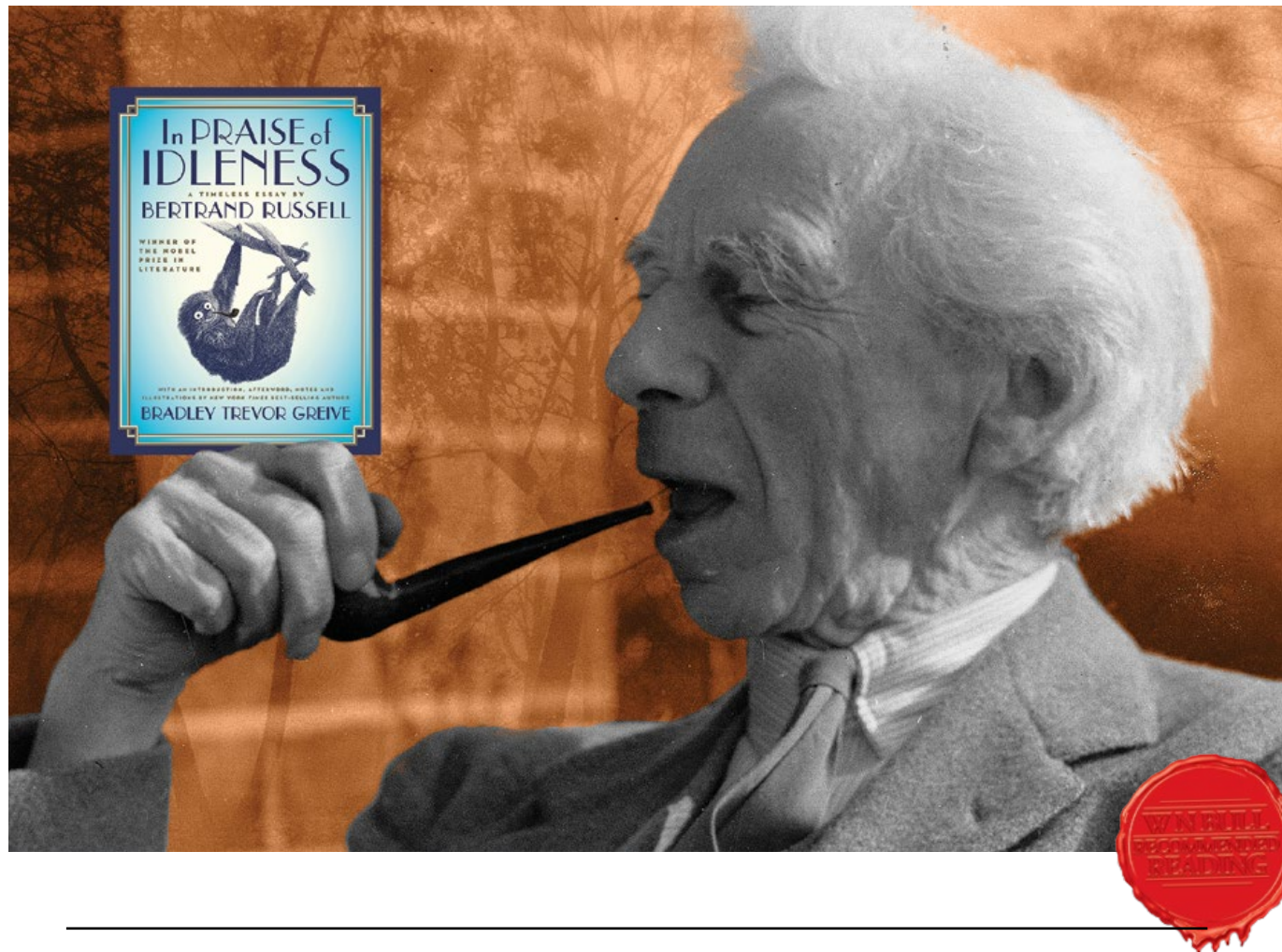
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IN PRAISE OF IDLENESS

BY BERTRAND RUSSELL

INTRODUCTION, AFTERFORWARD AND NOTES
BY NEW YORK TIMES BEST SELLING AUTHOR, BRADLEY TREVOR GREIVE

Reviewed by Richard White

What a strange book to choose for Recommended Reading! It was either an inspired choice or an example of the editor's eccentric and misplaced reading enthusiasm. Or, this particular treatment of the life and work of Bertrand Russell and presentation of his 'timeless classic' is 'a delight to read and will enhance your creative thinking ten-fold' as the back-cover endorsements exclaim.

But, then again, this book is a little like a one-in-a-million eulogy at a funeral; the speaker is fulsome in her praise, humorous and clever; the deceased comes alive in the stories and quotes; the gathering warms to the speaker's wit and knowledge; then, something strange happens.

Unbeknown to the speaker, most probably unintended, an image of this genius or exemplary human being begins to form; he or she could be sitting on the seat beside you. But, they are more than the speaker's words, flights of fancy and quirks and foibles; this much loved and admired person

has taken flesh and blood; they have become human in ways you have never known before; your imagination and your own creative responses have put the countless pieces together and there they are, on the seat beside you. What's more, you are not sure whether you like them anymore!

This was my experience of reading *In Praise of Idleness*. It is something I have only glimpsed before, in my preparing of eulogies and celebration of funerals. Now and again, while attending funerals something like this has happened where I have felt an inner churning or chugging, a trying to

make sense, a trying to relate to the person I knew or whose life is being declaimed or exclaimed in pictures and words.

Extraordinary, that it is possible to put the bits and pieces of a life together, to tease and enlighten and reveal the person and at the same time, unconsciously, scarily, to reveal yourself, the chosen and favoured eulogist, at the same time! But, that is not all.

“ It is essential to the capacity for light-heartedness and playfulness... ”

Bradley Trevor Greive (BTG from now on) quotes generously and fondly from Bertrand Russell's writings. He describes Russell as one of the great thinkers, individual and distinctive and contemptuous of the conformity and mindlessness of his contemporaries. He was one-of-a-kind and the rules and beliefs of ordinary people were not for him. Or, better, if he could not rationally justify these rules and beliefs, then he discarded them.

Russell was a classic non-conformist and that was how he was first portrayed to me. An atheist, a sexual libertarian, that is an advocate of 'free love' and everything that went with it and a deeply committed pacifist. According to BTG, Russell also 'was said to enjoy up to seven double-glasses of scotch a day: Red Hackle was his favourite poison – a whisky label as unpretentious as the philosopher himself.' He was also a smoker; nothing politically correct (PC from now on) about old Bertie.

BTG also relates an incident where Russell was boarding a seaplane in Norway and asked to be seated at the back, with the smokers, joking that smoking would be the death of him. The plane crash landed in the sea and the only survivors were the small number in the back, the smokers.

All these details are told with sparkling or darkly sardonic humour; the lightness of tone, combined with the sprinkling of quotations from the deceased works, makes this an entertaining as well as enlightening read. The central essay, 'In Praise of Idleness', seems out of place when BTG details Russell's extraordinary daily writing output of 3,000 words, letters, articles, books. He was prolific and he praised idleness!

My edition of the book, a most attractive and enticing tome, has an illustration of a sloth, pipe in mouth, hanging from a branch. This is the Master at work, or better, not at work; and that was the secret of his creativity; he allowed time for the creative process.

A generation that cannot endure boredom will be a generation of little men, of men unduly divorced from

the slow processes of nature, of men in whom every vital impulse slowly withers, as though they were cut flowers in a vase. *The Conquest of Happiness*

What attracted me to this book was the realisation that I was in danger of becoming one of these 'little men', terrified of boredom, always looking for things to do or at least for distractions that took me away from seeing and listening and being. I think this temptation is part of the air I breathe, part of our technological and distracting culture.

Idleness, as Russell states, makes people happy. It is essential to the capacity for light-heartedness and playfulness, which creates the ideal environment within which to discover hidden talents and new skills. Engaging in play offers easy access to one of the most creative states a person can attain, which is why having time to think about things for no reason other than that it delights and stimulates us is often the key to breakthrough ideas, and thus the path to genius and joy . . .

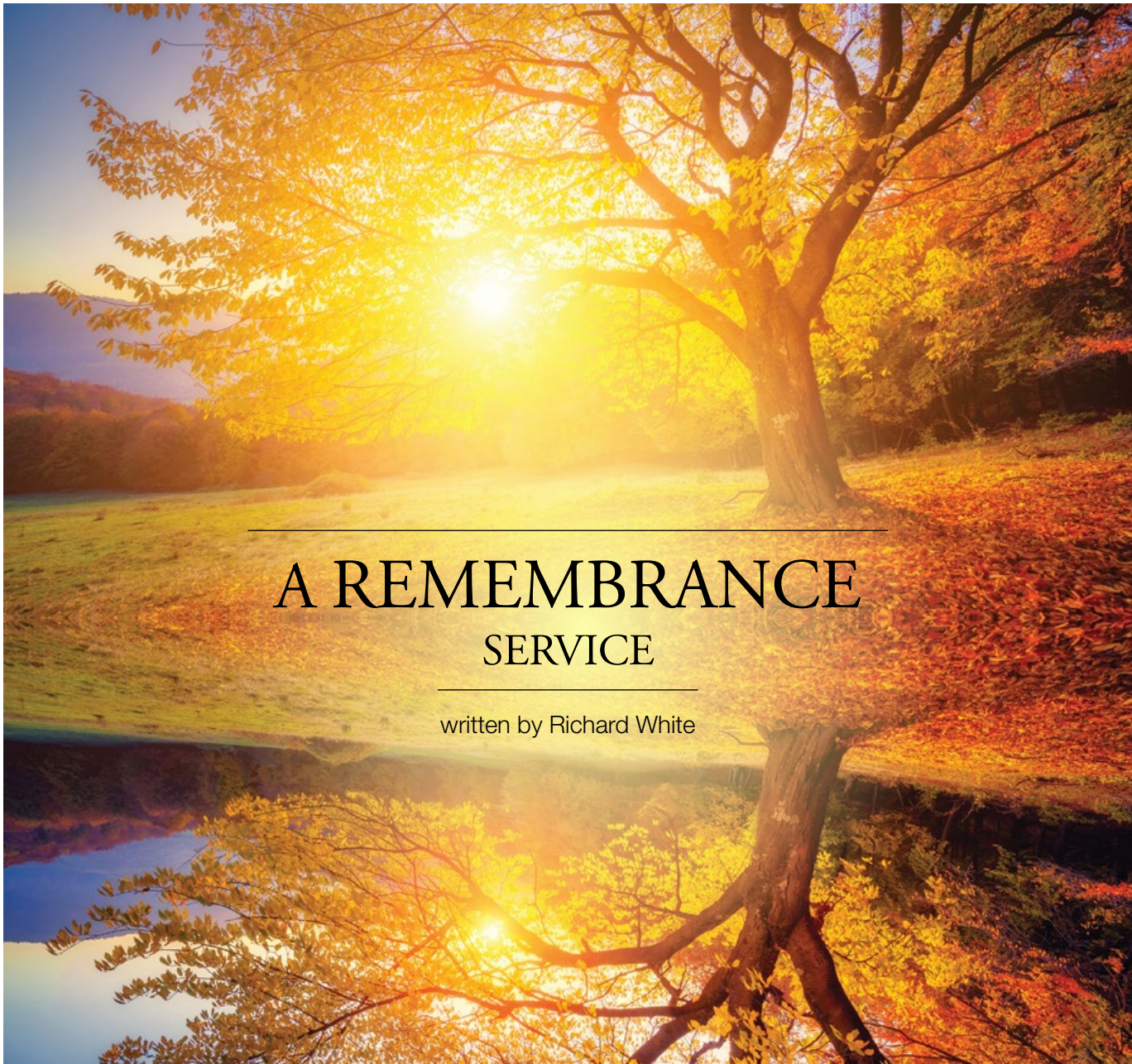
You could read this little book in a couple of hours, but it took me weeks. I kept looking at it, flicking through a bit, reading the pull-out quotes then putting it down. When I did get round to finishing it, that strange thing happened, which I noted at the beginning; I began to think.

Bertrand Russell had become a human being for me. I was fascinated by his ideas and genius and I also was uneasy; his genius, his non-conformity, his extraordinary individuality had a dark side. His exuberant, powerful ego, visionary and brilliant, had its limits; when the end came, it was time for Russell to die. Something similar happened in my appreciation of BTG's cleverness with words and images.

There is a fine balance between humour and depth in the book. However, I felt that the capacity for cleverness and verve was overdone. BTG is a funny man but the temptation of funny men is that they can dull the edge of genuine darkness or tragedy. If, as Russell maintains avoidance of boredom is killing, so too is avoidance of loss and sadness.

As I am writing this, I am aware that the above comments are my reactions or qualifications to a book I value highly. *In Praise of Idleness* took me to the place that Bertrand Russell praised so highly, personal reflection and thinking. In particular, Russell and BTG took me to the place of funerals and eulogies and how we think and speak and 're-create' the person we think we knew and am sure we loved.

This is a good book. It worked for me and I am grateful for getting to know a little more, Bertrand Russell and Bradley Trevor Greive and Richard White, for all their limitations and for all their quirky humanness.



A REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

written by Richard White

Since 2006 WN Bull has been offering a Remembrance Service for clients and friends. These services have been held in the chapels of Macquarie Park Crematorium and more recently in Northern Suburbs Memorial Gardens and Crematorium.

For a number of reasons, we have decided to change the format and venue. In May of this year, the Remembrance Service will be held in the WN Bull Chapel in our premises at 164 King Street, Newtown.

When people ask ‘why would someone go to a Remembrance Service?’ it is not an easy question to answer. With a funeral at the death of someone we love or have known well, there is usually no choice; we cannot not go! Respect for the deceased person, support for the family and our own mixed thoughts and feelings impel us to be present. It is different with a Remembrance Service. Here we do have a choice. There is usually not the

high tide of emotion or grief; there is not the crowd and the pressures. It is easier to decline an invitation. However, this is what gives the Remembrance Service its distinctive value in the process of mourning.

Choosing to remember, putting our head and our heart in this place again, opening ourselves to the life, and the death, of the person we knew and loved makes them present to us and makes us present to them.

There may be a whirl of feelings or a painful emptiness; there may be just a quietness and a being there. This is where and how we have chosen to be and at levels we cannot understand, something is happening.

Freedom is like this; putting our head or heart somewhere makes a difference. It is like going to that party or gathering reluctantly or even resentfully and for some reason or other we decide to join in. When this happens

“ The remembering allows the ‘secret worlds’ to meet, for the one we loved to be more open to us than previously and for us to hear his or her voice in a new way. ”

there is a shift, a lifting, and we find an energy or lightness that was not there before. We have made a choice and we begin to see and relate differently. Something similar can happen with a Remembrance Service.

If there are levels knowing and understanding in our own selves, there are similar levels in the people we have known and loved. The poet Yevtushenko puts this well:

*Whom we knew as faulty, the earth’s creatures,
Of whom, essentially, what did we know?*

*Brother of a brother? Friend of friends?
Lover of lover?*

*We who knew our fathers
In everything, in nothing.*

*They perish. The cannot be brought back.
The secret worlds are not regenerated . . .*

The remembering allows the ‘secret worlds’ to meet, for the one we loved to be more open to us than previously and for us to hear his or her voice in a new way. There can be shifts in our affection, a lessening of hurt, some more understanding, a little acceptance...

This is not the drama and the words that are part of so many funerals. A Remembrance Service allows for quiet, for resting and the companionship of strangers, other friends and families who are doing their own remembering and listening.

“ Choosing to remember, putting our head and our heart in this place again, opening ourselves to the life, and the death, of the person we knew and loved makes them present to us and makes us present to them. ”

A Remembrance Service

FOR THE CLIENT FAMILIES OF WN BULL

Tuesday 2nd May, 2017
commencing at 6:30pm

WN Bull Funerals Chapel
164 King Street, Newtown

For those wishing to attend:
RSVP ~ Tuesday 25th April, 2017

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CHILDHOOD DREAMING

Who did I love in my childhood so far away across the years?
Was it my mother?
I was her first born, the awaited one and wanted.
It was never a comfortable relationship, I remember.
We did not understand one another.
She wanted me to conform but I always disappointed her.
Was it my father?
He was a silent man, old enough to be my grandfather,
Remote, immersed in his business.
I was only beginning to meet him when he died.
Was it my grandfather?
I was his favourite and favoured.
He was plump and comfortable and friendly
And bearded in a time when men were clean shaven.
He was religious and a good man
And more like a father than a grandfather.
Was it my quiet and lovely grandmother
Whose favourite was my next brother?
She totally accepted me.
She gave us puppies and kittens
And took us down to the wharves to buy fish
When the fishing boats came in;
She took us on picnics
And each month to visit the graves of her parents.
She, too, was a reader like me.
I loved them all in the fashion of a child;
They were the characters in the drama of my childhood
Until they began to die and, by my sixteenth year,
All were gone except my mother
And I was shocked forever out of the safety of my
childhood dreaming.

Marjorie Pizer



Copies of
Marjorie Pizer's books
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A Remembrance Service FOR THE CLIENT FAMILIES OF WN BULL



Client families of WN Bull Funerals are invited to attend a Remembrance Service
to be held in the WN Bull Funerals Chapel, 164 King Street, Newtown.

Tuesday 2nd May, 2017 commencing at 6.30pm.

Refreshments will be served at the conclusion of the service.

For those wishing to attend:

RSVP ~ Tuesday 25th April, 2017

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