

Dr Norman Stanley Capstick MD FRCP

2nd March 1925 - 13th February 2018



A Celebration of Life
Saturday 3rd March 2018 3-5pm

Programme

Music: 'Cavalleria Rusticana'

We meet in our School-house classroom, sitting in the round. On display are some of Norman's many certificates, and photographs of him through the years. A candle has burned for him since his transition, and that flame now burns on a round table at the room's centre.

Welcome and Introduction - Susan

Norman, part of the Family - Mike, Vanessa and children

A Sufi Blessing - Jessica

Poem - Zea

Letter to Norman - Marie



'To be remembered by what I have done...' - John will introduce a time of reflection, or prayer, to the music of 'The Meditation from Thais.' Listening to this tranquil melody, which meant such a lot to Norman, provides an opportunity to gather personal memories of his countless 'good thoughts, good words, and good deeds,' sending our love and appreciation winging its way to him on his great journey.

Legacy - Mike

Publications - Marie



Norman's wish

Invitation – Susan. During the music “When you wish upon a Star,” a champagne toast is prepared. As we read the song-lyrics and reflections, Norman’s god-daughter Indira will pour us each a glass, ready for the toasts to come.

“When you wish upon a star
Makes no difference who you are
Anything your heart desires
Will come to you.

*If your heart is in your dream
No request is too extreme
When you wish upon a star
As dreamers do...’*



Norman loved this song, and told us that its apparently sweet and sentimental lyric conceals a mystical intent. The brightest star in the heavens is Sirius, long revered as symbol of high Summer, abundance and illumination. Many pages of Norman’s extensive archive of research and meditative reflections explore the role of that brightest Star as guide to the extensive ‘inner heavens’ of our own psychology-spirituality. Beyond the Moon, beyond the Sun, the divine Light of this greater Star ‘illumines all dark places.’ To follow your Star is to cultivate that great Light. Throughout his long life this was Norman’s great endeavour – and, now, most surely, his great attainment.

Proposing the toasts

Susan – ‘Please be upstanding...’
Tony – to Absent friends
Any further toasts
Mike – with closing words.



Music – Norman and his dear Elizabeth loved musical theatre. The cheerful refrain from ‘Hullo Dolly’ plays, as we make our way downstairs for tea – which includes Zea’s home-made vegan chocolate cake.

Supporting Norman's wishes



Norman gave everything to the School, and we will continue his Great Work as he wished. Details for donations can be found at www.imaginalstudies.org; also by contacting Mike, Susan, John and Marie c/o 'School House.' Do be in touch.

The verses below come from poet John Masefield's 'A Creed,' joyfully expressing that exalted perennial philosophy Norman taught us over so many years.

*"I hold that when a person dies
The soul returns again to earth;
Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise,
Another mother gives new birth.
With sturdier limbs and brighter brain
The old soul takes the road again.*

*Such is my own belief and trust;
This hand, this hand that holds the pen,
Has many a hundred times been dust,
And turned, as dust, to dust again.
These eyes of mine have blinked and shone
In Memphis, Troy and Babylon...*

*...And as I wander on the roads,
I shall be helped and healed and blessed;
Dear words shall cheer and be as goads,
To urge to heights before unguessed.
My road shall be the road I made;
All that I gave shall be repaid.*

*So shall I fight, so shall I tread
In this long war beneath the stars;
So shall a glory wreath my head,
So shall I faint and show the scars,
Until this case, this earthly mould
Be smithied all to kingly gold."*

*As dear Norman would have said, quoting his own great teacher;
'The Light be with you and shine upon you...'
Blessings, until we meet again.'*

Tributes given to Dr Norman Capstick, MD FRCP, at his Celebration of Life, Saturday 3rd March 2018

(following the sequence set out in the illustrated Programme)

1. Welcome and Introduction - Susan

“Welcome to this Celebration of the Life of Norman Stanley Capstick.

All of us here have known Norman, for varying lengths of time, so you don't need me to tell you what a wonderful and special man he was. I had the honour to know him for 48 years and now have the honour to introduce this celebration of his life.

My personal experience of him was like having a very special father who guided me to be, and to become, the best ‘me’ that I could be. When I met him, I was young, and uncertain how to live my life. He truly taught me how to Live, to practice the Art of Living.

Although he and his wife Elizabeth had no biological children, I subsequently learnt what a wonderful paternal role he played with many people.

In his professional life Norman was an innovator, part of the great move to help people who previously had been shut away in institutions (asylums), by bringing them into community life and creating opportunities for them to contribute to and become part of society. He was at the forefront of research into, and practice of, Psychological Rehabilitation. His project “The Ferring Experiment,” was one of the first shared homes in the community for former mental hospital patients to live independently. It also brought him to Sussex.

Norman's own early life in Bradford, Yorkshire, was humble. His father ran a butcher's shop and, when a boy, it was thought that he might enter his uncle's furrier business.

But Norman had a different path. He did very well at grammar school and was supported to pursue his medical studies at Cambridge and in London at Bart's, a special place which remained close to his heart. It was while in London, once qualified and working as a junior doctor in the 40s and 50s, that he met his teacher, Dr. Agatha Mills, and began his Philosophic and subtle studies; sometimes called ‘Metaphysics,’ sometimes ‘the Yoga of the West.’ Agatha had studied at the great Al-Azhar University in Cairo and she continued to be guided by her teachers as she imparted their wisdom to her students in the UK, teaching ‘the Art of Living.’ I met her once, again a humble person, living simply in a small flat, having taught for many years.

Norman continued to attend sessions with Agatha in London after he moved to Sussex, travelling up to Chelsea and back, after his working day. Then, in 1972, he began teaching Philosophy and meditation himself, in Worthing. I was at that first class, and at college next day, I told my new friend Marie about it, and she joined us for the following session. Other people came, introduced still others, and the classes grew, mainly through personal contact and the occasional leaflet. People stayed for longer or shorter times, but each having the

opportunity for as much study as sought. Norman always encouraged others, like myself, to study and to learn of the outer and inner worlds

Over the past few years, Norman was aware that the end of this life was coming. He wasn't afraid. In fact, quite looking forward to his next adventure, he would joke about being able to soon "go over the chimney pots" and onward. Although he confided he was "not looking forward to the nappy stage."

For Norman reincarnation was not just a belief it was a reality, an actuality. He knew that he would continue.

He wanted to go knowing that he had achieved his intentions for his current life. His life's aim was that his teaching Legacy would be passed on and continue, and we know that in this and in so many other ways Norman's influence will go on. He touched many lives throughout his; the many patients whom he helped, the students and people he inspired, and many, like myself, whom he encouraged to study and to learn. Still others were warmed by his radiant personality, his humour, his morris dancing, his hospital panto organizing, not forgetting the way he charmed the many ladies and helpful young staff who shared his last home. Even in his latter years, he flirted and regularly proposed to several of them.

Having had the role of teacher passed to him from Agatha, Norman fulfilled this role with many students. He was well-established professionally, and he taught the Philosophy in in his own time. It became his life-work. His ambition was to continue the School and establish it on a sound footing for the future, so he retired early from his professional work and concentrated on every aspect; formalizing a Constitution, exploring becoming an educational trust or charity, public as well as private teaching, mentoring his senior students, and much research and writing. His ambition was to ensure the School continued after his lifetime and, as Agatha had entrusted it to him, so he passed that responsibility on to us. And so, his School continues, in classes in this very room, in presentations and meditation sessions in other places. As we will hear later, the School is soon to be established as a Community Interest Company.

I'd now like to invite others to come forward to share their contributions about and for Norman. You'll see from the programme you each have, that there will be a period of quiet, with music, for silent reflection, or prayer, and that we conclude with a champagne toast to the fulfilling of Norman's Wishes.

So, Mike, over to you."

2. Norman, part of the Family – Mike, Vanessa and Children

“Dr. Norman Capstick, 1925-2018. Eminent psychiatrist and doctor; official and unofficial Godfather to, and loved by my children and their mother Vanessa; dear family friend; teacher, mentor, like a father to me. He would have been 93 yesterday. Norman was delighted to be finally admitted off the planet, free from the physical world - a trip to which he had been patiently looking forward, since he lost his beloved wife Elizabeth.

Norman and I met in 1982, and I can safely say he has been the best and most enduring influence on my whole life. If I ever seem calm, or positive, or happy, or grateful for my good fortune, it's because of what Norman taught me. He taught me how to listen to the quiet voice within, and how to look for the radiance of an inner sun. In turn he cheerfully and affably radiated a calming and wise influence over my children. When, during one of many happy dinner parties at Aldsworth Avenue, little 3 or 4 year old Eden stepped forward and dropped up to her chest into the fish pond in her party frock, we retrieved her quickly, but once she was safe, if not dry, Norman, Elizabeth and we, the guests, laughed.

My heart hurts at the moment, but I know from him that this is just me being sad for myself, when it makes much more sense to be grateful for all he gave me.

He would often give us a greeting he learned from his teachers, “Be happy, be cheerful, be at peace.”

I will be happy, be cheerful and be at peace, and grateful for having someone as positive as Norman has been and will continue to be in my life.”

3. Jessica - a Sufi Blessing

“I’d like to read a small Sufi prayer for the Soul to support Norman as he’s travelling towards the Light...”

‘O Thou, the Cause and Effect of the whole Universe,
The Source from whence we have come
And the goal toward which we are all bound; receive this
Soul who is coming unto thee into thy parental arms.
May thy forgiving glance heal his heart.
Lift him from the denseness of the earth,
Surround him with the light of thine own Spirit.
Raise him up to Heaven, which is his true dwelling place.
We pray thee grant him the blessing of thy most exalted Presence.
May his life upon earth become as a dream to his waking Soul,
And let his thirsting eyes behold the glorious vision of Thy Sunshine.’

Amen

4. Poem - Zea

'Why are you crying?
Do you think that I'm gone?
I haven't left you,
I'm where I belong.

Anytime you are lonely,
anytime you are sad,
Anytime your heart breaks,
anytime you are mad,

All you have to do is close your eyes
and I'll be there with you.
You see, the world may take my body,
but that's all it can do.

Don't stop the memories of the times we shared,
It's the gods' way of helping you through.
Take time to laugh when life gets hard,
the way we used to do.

A smell, a touch, the morning sun,
they all will help you see,
I'm still there, I never left,
now smile once more for me.

Live each day, keep looking up,
my life was not in vain,
I finished the task I was born to do
That's why I couldn't remain.'

(edited from a poem by Sue Lueck Carlson)

5. Letter to Norman - Marie

“Dearest Norman – What a wonderful correspondent you have always been! Your first letter to me, that I have here still, was way back in April 1974. You had asked for a report on our first attempts at meditation – that ‘going within’ to research and explore - and you replied so swiftly to my first, enthusiastic, beginner’s report, sending five pages of helpful support and suggestions. Now your wonderful Archive of papers and writings, held here at our ‘School House’ in the Reading Room, contains two box-files of your wise and considered counsel. There’s one box charting the years you taught and tutored me through the great stories and symbols of the mystic journey –first with the Grail Castle of the Western Mystery Tradition you yourself had been taught, but then, as your own research developed, with new creative adventures in the imaginal. Your inner world was always filled with image, colour, atmosphere, radiant Presence. The second box holds letters about classes and curriculum; our later exchanges, when you trusted me to teach, and together we mulled over thoughts and plans, both expansive and detailed, over our premises, meetings of the different groups, publicity, public lecture programmes, looking to the future.

I know I am not alone in also treasuring many special cards with inspiring messages. You poured yourself out to guide and help others, with the most steadfast patience and tolerance of all our ups and downs – for your eyes always saw further than ours the larger picture of karmic events unfolding from the distant past. Your meditation books, bequeathed to us for quiet reflection, tell more of the struggles you underwent to grow your vision; hopes often dashed, dreams not yet fulfilled – but also the glories of what could be, if we would only look to the larger picture, and the need there is in our time for such teaching and companionship.

In being such a wonderful correspondent, you yourself were following the tradition of your own great teacher Agatha, many of whose letters to you are also in the Archive. They show how generous you have always been with yourself, with your time and efforts and practical help. Agatha writes with such gratitude for all your contributions; supporting her financially, and enabling her last years to be comfortable and peaceful, whilst shouldering the great task of developing the School she and her teachers sought to establish.

When you began teaching here in Worthing, in 1972, you were the rather awe-inspiring ‘Dr Capstick,’ our ‘magician in the tower’ (for we met in your office and it was indeed a tower.) But it wasn’t long before you said, ‘call me Norman.’ We felt honoured! Over the years, you became – and remain - revered teacher, guide, mentor, brother, friend. My special delight is that as we worked deeper into the Alchemical Mysteries, you wrote to me as your ‘soror mystica,’ meaning ‘mystic sister,’ the special name the Alchemists gave to their helper.

This won’t be my last letter to you dear friend, for you have merely let slip, at last, the burden of earth that weighed so heavy these last years of frailty and confused thought. Restored now to strength and clarity, you will continue to watch over us from your abode of Light; a sure guide and presence, until we all meet again upon the next turn of the wheel.

You always added a special salutation to your letters, varying it according to the plans we were discussing; ‘Salutations on the Path of Jupiter,’ (one of Agatha’s publications), ‘Salutations to the Golden Harvest,’ ‘Salutations on the planes of Peace, Hope and Light,’ ... Now I return these, and more, with my love and gratitude, today and in all the days to come. Salutations dearest Norman, Salutations, Salutations!”

6. 'To be remembered by what I have done...' – John

"It is a privilege to speak today to help celebrate dear Norman's Life. Having been a student of Norman's for over 30 years I am grateful for the wisdom he imparted to myself and his many other students.

I would like to read you a few words he knew very well and wished to have said. They belong to his Archive of wonderful lessons and practices - and I remember how they have been said by him on behalf of others who have made their transition, as he now has.

The words ask us not to mourn and think of ourselves, but to look to the sky, to remember all the gifts given - for the power of thought is a little recognised force for good. As Norman would say, thoughts are not 'airy-fairy' but a true power by which we not only help ourselves, but others around us.

So, here are some verses to guide our thoughts when the quiet music plays..."

"Passing away like the stars in the morning
Before the approach of the glowing SUN;
Thus I would vanish from Earth unto haven
And be remembered by what I have done.

Up and away like the dew of the morning,
Hast'ning unseen to its home in the SUN;
Thus I would steal away gently and loving
And be remembered by what I have done...

Even as Spring gives way to the Summer,
Winter approaches when Autumn is gone;
Thus I would climb to an altitude sweeter
And be remembered by what I have done.

When gathered the harvest, home goes the reaper,
Leaving the fields that in Spring-time were sown;
Thus I would yield to my Creator without murmur
And be remembered by what I have done...

Tho' I be missed in the flesh, do let my absence
Be as a power sometimes to think on;
Offered as a bloom, the flower of the Spirit
That some may remember what I have done."

(from the Archive)

We will now spend a few minutes in reflection, or silent prayer, to the music of 'The Meditation from Thais.'"

7. Legacy - Mike

“Before Norman left Aldsworth Avenue, he asked me several times to arrange for me to take on ownership of his house, specifically so that the School he founded and the work he had done would be secure. As his executor at the time, and also his friend, I had to turn down his offer, as it was most likely that he would need the value of his house to provide for his old age. As it turned out, he did need care for the last few years. But his main wish was always that the teachings he received would be continued, and I did promise him that whatever legacy he left to his school, we would not just keep safe, but would build on.

At this stage, after some years in care, we don't know what he might have left to his school in terms of financial assets, but we have his fabulous library, his notes and his papers, and we need to not just store them, but to develop them.

So today we can announce the formation of a Community Interest Company, which will be Dr. Norman Capstick's Foundation. This CIC will be a not-for-profit Trust which will carry on Norman's work into the future.

So rather than flowers, we are inviting well-wishers to contribute to the continuation of Norman's work into the future. Details will be available on the imaginalstudies.org website by the Equinox launch, or from members of the school.”

8. Publications - Marie

“Amongst all these lovely photographs of Norman enjoying the physical world, I have a picture to show which I like to think of as being ‘Norman in the imaginal world’ – the inner but larger world of visionary imagination, archetypal images and dream.... Look – it’s the Alchemist!



[Photo shows our School-House classroom display, to which was added a large print of the Alchemist illumination from the famous ‘Splendor Solis’ manuscript of 1582]

....and this Alchemist IS Norman, for, of course, his chosen name for his introductory groups of public lectures and classes was - ‘Alchemies.’

It’s a glorious golden painting isn’t it – High up on the mountain, with the abundant Tree of Life ahead, the Alchemist points to the flask of transformation with a dramatic invitation spelled out in the floating banner, which reads, ‘Let us go and seek the Natures of the Elements’...

Just as dear Norman taught us, these elements are the classical ‘Fire, Water, Air, and Earth;’ symbols and prime components of all. Not impossibly remote from us, but found within our own psychology-spirituality. They can be contemplated in that Great Work of transformation; the Alchemical Quest to turn our own base materials (the various messes we make of our lives) into useful compost, even unto the Alchemical Gold of a vividly alive, wise and loving life - Time’s immortal golden moment.

Norman conducted many demanding and intricate studies of inner, spiritual Alchemy, formulating a masterly vision which he was always in the process of writing into a course. After my PhD on the Tree of Life archetype ('Active Imagination as Education') I was also writing courses - inspired by the Alchemist and his companion illuminations (who all belong to a fabulous manuscript in the British Library, revered as the high point of alchemical literature.) I made and taught a psychology master's degree, which was a hard slog through the academic world, but created opportunities to publish new ideas honouring meditative 'inner journeys' as valid research. Out of it all - a twenty-year project so far - has come the lovely possibility of presenting these glorious illuminations as a public and friendly introduction/companion to those inner studies researched by Norman.

Although our two courses at first seemed quite distant, Norman and I gradually saw how they are linked by the Alchemical maxim to 'Square the Circle.' My research celebrates the circle of the year, round the seasons and great festivals of the great tree of life – lots of parties and ceremonies! Norman's research aligns with the symbol of the tree as a glorious crystalline cube whose square faces and inner dimensions create a spacious, inner 'temple of the heart.' It became a lovely joke between us that together we were going beyond the traditional squaring of the circle to 'Cube the Sphere!'

In later years, I used to take copies of the Alchemical illuminations along to St George's, and Norman and I would talk about them and all they could mean for the teachings. I treasure my photos of him with them, and am so glad I was able to tell him that the first 'School' book is really happening at last. The manuscript is with the publishers, to be unveiled later this year!

All the Alchemist's beautiful illuminations want to be included, and to speak, so there's a lot to be finalised – but here we are on the brink of Spring, which always brings round alchemical beginnings, and it is lovely to be able to announce that our long-term project for School publications is now a reality.

So, dearest Norman, we 'leap into the Light' and approach those sunny uplands where we see you, the Alchemist, standing waiting for us to follow... Thank you again for your blessing. In this first new book, you will see how you and the School are referenced, thanked, and in the notes, quite a few glimpses given about the Mysteries of Egypt and the ancient temples of Memphis - where Pythagoras learned his philosophy, and from whence come so many of the deep archetypal patterns and the tradition of Light from the inner Star.

May our 'mystical marriage of Circle and Square' shine with all the radiance of that Star. On behalf of all your students, past, present, and to come..."

THANK YOU!
