

William Shepherd - a profile

William Shepherd was born an Englishman and brought up an Anglican Christian in the south of England. By the age of 50 William Shepherd's worldly experiences and his academic learning led him to conclude that the scientific evidence for a supernatural order apart from the natural order was overwhelming. Whether we label this divine reality God or Nature, the Life Force or the Holy Spirit is of much smaller significance than our recognition of a spiritual realm and of its mysterious nature.

In short, William Shepherd recognises the inalienable sovereignty of the Human Spirit...and the need to approach our world with a profound sense of mystery and wonder. This insight continues to inspire his work.



William Shepherd acquired his academic knowledge of life, the universe and everything from studies in the mechanical sciences, the liberal arts and the work & wealth accounting of the modern world at *Christ's Hospital* School, Sussex; *Churchill College*, Cambridge; the *University of East Africa* in Nairobi; *Stockholm and Uppsala Universities* in Sweden; *Massachusetts Institute of Technology* in Cambridge, USA; and *Wheelock College* for teachers in Boston.

William Shepherd's worldly experiences have been gained working and living in the city regions of Stockholm, London, Nairobi, Blantyre, Muscat, Luxembourg, Boston and Los Angeles; and the rural small town environments of Kenya's Rift Valley, New England's Martha's Vineyard and Canterbury in The Garden of England.

William Shepherd took a Swedish wife in 1969 and was married to her for fifteen years, their marriage being blessed with a daughter in 1973 and a son in 1975. Since setting out into the world once again as a single man, William Shepherd has been graced with three intense and loving relationships: with a Jewess of Polish extraction from St. Louis in Missouri; with a Catholic from Bogota in Colombia; and with a painter from Moinio in Finland. His private time, energy and enthusiasms have been devoted to scholarship and to the calling peculiar to the poet, artist and gentleman of letters.

After his return to old England from new England in November 1987, William Shepherd lived in a small studio apartment on Kungsholmen in the centre of Stockholm, and within walking distance of evensong at Canterbury Cathedral. In August 1990 William Shepherd opened an office in Rye, Sussex and declared himself the first scholar of the Cinque Ports Academic Inn. He remained in Rye until the spring of 2007 living some part of each year in Sweden and cruising England's - and occasionally Europe's - home waters in the summer months.

As he gazed across the rooftops of the Old Benedictine Monastery towards the rolling Sussex downs beyond, he dreamed of the day when he and other Academic Inn Scholars would tend their gardens, sing their songs, and cross the sea in boats to meet with their friends a day's sailing away (with a good south-westerly) at the other end of the ancient water trails across the English Channel.

By the age of 60 William Shepherd had begun to lose patience with people who did not approach their lives and their world with mystery and wonder - the JB Priestley formula. Anyone who does not realise there is a spiritual world outside or alongside the material one is just plain barmy. Frankly the evidence is overwhelming. Here is what he thinks about the things that really matter.

We are here, in this place, in this time and with this life, to muck about - a thought William Shepherd shares with Kurt Vonnegut who at the end of his life - he died in 2007 - concluded that everybody was guessing. Nobody really knew very much at all. This was fine. The real danger came from guessers who believe their guess is the truth and try to make everyone else go along with them - or else.

If you are going to spend your life just mucking around then work is good and being creative is good work. Making sense is better than making money. Some of us muck about making children and bringing them up. Others arrange for others to do the job. But as kids need good male role models in their life and these are in short supply William Shepherd does his bit as a daddy and an ex-daddy from time to time. Otherwise for the time being he devotes himself to singing in Sussex, scribbling in Devonshire and providing back-up for others - on the Leopold Kohr circles of concern principle. His nation is his circle of friends.

A final thought. So many thoughtful men and women throughout time and space have concluded that there is some sort of reward and retribution system in operation - karma, heaven & hell etc. - from powers beyond our understanding that by way of an insurance policy in case they turn out be right - and because any other attitude would be churlish - it makes sense to be nice and kind to people - and maybe to wasps & cockroaches too. Mind you I'm just guessing.

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