

News Bulletin: April 2008



There are a number of groups around the world who identify themselves as SoL communities with a great variety in configuration, level of development, and capacity for implementing the kind of integrated action learning approach envisioned by SoL. Of course, that's what makes being part of SoL so exciting: it is a true learning journey for its members. (www.solonline.org)

Now SoL has a network of local communities connected mainly by informal, personal relationships and is fast-moving toward becoming a global community. Members are all linked by a few core questions and a common idea of what it means to be a citizen of global SoL, operating democratically and non-hierarchically and with a robust capacity for collective learning and coordinated action. A minimum infrastructure helps SoL members around the world to

- Accomplish meaningful initiatives
- Share learning across a broad network
- Have connections and conversations around the world
- Invite in newcomers
- Organise and fund research projects, meetings, and other activities

SoL in the UK: Change is in the air!

During SoL UK's first ten years, we have grown many exciting projects, networks and friendships (see www.sol-uk.org). However, with the departure of Eve Mittleton-Kelly as executive coordinator, we find ourselves at the crossroads of change.

21st May 2008: SoL Strategy Day

One of the strongest aspects of SoL's principles of operating democratically and non-hierarchically is that the members set about learning collectively in order to get what they need from the local, regional and international SoLs. This year, SoL-UK will put those principles to the test by re-envisioning SoL-UK for its local and visiting members. We see this time as a gateway-opportunity for all our members to think about what they like most about SoL and to consider how to make it even better. The present directors like to work collaboratively with SoL members: with that in mind, we have decided to get things moving by organising a couple of preliminary activities to establish how we can all share in a SoL UK learning conversation for change.

To begin the process of re-envisioning SoL for the 21st century, Tony Hodgson, Arie de Geus and a few others have already started to interview some key members, mentors and SoL friends prior to joining a small group of SoL-UK directors and members on 21st May for a Strategy Day.

Tony Hodgson is great at facilitating learning through visual thinking and we are looking forward to spending 21st May with him. The aim is to come up with fresh ideas on how to make SoL a great place to meet and learn about organisational learning and the learning organisation.

This steering group will then let you know the outcome of the interviews and preliminary Strategy Day and will ask for your feedback, suggestions and views. Later in the year, a SoL Council forum will be organised. It will be dedicated to the changing face of SoL UK and will take place at the head of one of the events in the Programme.

Tony Hodgson is a founder Metabridge AB, collaborator with the Schumacher Institute for Sustainable Systems, senior adviser to Global Leaders Group, member of the International Futures Forum and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. He is also a Director of Decision Integrity, a small research enterprise working on holistic approaches that benefit sustainable systems, projects, communities, organisations and societies.

The 3rd SoL Global Forum: Muscat, Oman - April 13-17, 2008

'Bridging the Gulf': Learning Across Organizations, Sectors and Cultures

SoL Global Forums offer a brilliant opportunity for different SoL fractals to meet together. While technology shrinks distances, our world grows in complexity. Success depends upon what we learn by working across organizations, sectors, and cultures. The Oman forum aims to

- Reach beyond boundaries
- Create new connections
- Strengthen the global community
- Share experiences
- Gain insight and understanding
- Discover new collaborations

Several of SoL-UK's members are attending Oman. We will let you have their personal feedback and photos in our next bulletin.

Programme of SoL-UK events: 2008-2009

In our January newsletter, SoL's president, Arie de Geus, wrote about some of the exciting learning events that took place last year. This year will bring many more. Below, you will find details of the first two events. Both are taking place at the LearningHouse in Islington (pictured below).



'Practising Presencing': Study Group 1 **Thursday 8 May, 6pm to 8.30pm** **@ the LearningHouse**

To start this year's programme of events we would like to invite you to the first of 6 study groups led by Didier Clement:

This event is free to SOL-UK Members. As a special introductory offer there will be a fee of £7.50 for other SoL Members and £10.00 for non-SoL members. Please register with anward@sol-uk.org by 24th April 2008.

The term 'Presencing' was first used by Peter Senge and Otto Scharmer in their book of the same name. It is an interesting collective process, based on emergence that allow for deep changes, more adapted to the complexity at hand.

The evening format will be that of a study group. After (re)familiarising ourselves briefly with the process, we will aim to practice together and share our experience of using Presencing. It will be very much about experimenting and exploring the approach collectively. Ultimately, we would like to develop a strong community of practice around Presencing.

No previous knowledge of Presencing is required. Bring your ideas, your willingness to work with others and to share your opinions.

The evening will be facilitated by Didier Clement. Didier is an experienced management consultant and coach. He works with large organisations to help them solve complex business challenges and is particularly interested in developing ways to help organisations manage themselves better. Didier has used Presencing approaches in various ways to great effect.

'Co-creation':

Creating and prototyping new ideas and realities Thursday 26 June, 6pm-8.30pm @ the LearningHouse

This event is free to SOL-UK Members. As a special introductory offer there will be a fee of £7.50 for other SoL Members and £10.00 for non-SoL members. Please register with annward@sol-uk.org by 10th June 2008.

As individuals, communities and organisations, we need to be more imaginative than ever to solve the tough challenges we face.

More than that, we need to know how to turn great ideas, products and ventures into reality without compromising the wellbeing of our social and environmental systems.

In this workshop we will explore and experiment how to actualize ideas into reality and to determine the structures and conditions needed to empower and inspire people to produce great results.

Workshop framework: combines methodologies such as action learning, presencing and the world café, drawing on our learning from work at TeamAcademy (Finland) and LearningHouse (UK).

This workshop is facilitated by Timo Karjalainen and Eliza Hochman from LearningHouse.

LearningHouse

LearningHouse is a centre for learning and enterprise development. We facilitate participative learning processes to inspire great results in organisations and communities. We host a variety of events around learning, business and social change and act as a regular 'home base' for networks such as *The Society for Organisational Learning* and the *Pioneers of Change*. The LearningHouse centre is an inspiring working, learning and meeting venue in Islington, London.

Directions and map for the LearningHouse Ltd can be found on the website (below).

Address: Unit 3, New North House | 202/208 New North Road | N1 7BJ London,

www.learninghouse.biz/contact.htm

Draft Programme:

The draft programme provides provisional details of the 2008-2009 programme.

Full details of dates, venues, speakers, facilitators and numbers' restrictions will be confirmed very soon.

Link Workshop - Reviewing our learning on decision making	SOL Driven	
A chance to reflect or catch up on all the learning that we had from our workshops in 2007. During the day, we will review all the main ideas that we have explored last year and give the participants time to explore their own thinking individually and collectively about what is important for decision making in the context of organisation.		
Decision Making	1 Day tbc	Didier Clement

Decision Making: Lessons from philosophy	Oliver McAdoo Nigel Warburton	
Over the century, philosophy has attempted to provide answers to the fundamental challenges that humanity was facing. What did they have to say about decision taking and organisation? In this workshop, we will explore some key concepts about language, free will, knowledge and society... that will provide us with a new framework for understanding decision making in organisation		
Decision Making	1 Day tbc	Didier Clement

Memory, Attention and Decision Making	Edmund T Rolls	
What does the structure of the brain and the neurons can tell us about the way we take decision? Professor Edmund T Rolls will present his findings from his new book "Memory, Attention, and Decision-making: A Unifying Computational Neuroscience Approach". We will then have an opportunity to think on how these findings will apply to organisation.		
Decision Making	1 Day tbc	Didier Clement

Practicing Presenting		Didier Clement
Presenting is a key process to enable constructive change in organisation. A practice group has been formed that will meet regularly to practice the approach and discuss our personal interpretation and application of the process. The first session is on 8 th May. If you can't make it to the first workshop, please come to one of the others...		
Presenting	Evening (bi)monthly	Didier Clement
Inclusion / Exclusion in Decision Making		
Explore in more depth the concept of inclusion and exclusion in Decision Making		
Decision Making	Day tbc	Arie de Geus

Computer Models as Learning Processes		
How can new computer models and approaches help organisation to learn? What are the uses of simulation; agent based modelling and other approaches for the purpose of learning?		
Learning	Day tbc	Arie de Geus/Didier Clement

Review of Scenario Planning		
20 years ago, scenario planning played a major role in Shell to help them go successfully through the oil crisis of the time. Since then, the approach has been adopted and refined in various places. What is now the state of the art in term of scenario planning? Has it been successful? And how can it help us in today's environment?		
Scenario Planning	Day tbc	Arie de Geus

Trust & Openness	Pam Hurley	
<p>We usually think of organisations as operating through power. Trust has become a buzz word in organisations but like CSR, it is often used to promote an image of political correctness. But what happens if we start to think of <i>it</i> as the motor of the successful organisation?</p> <p>Pam Hurley, formerly of Shell Planning now works with major corporate clients and has developed some effective ways of identifying the important characteristics of trust and how to use them to improve performance. Pam is also an Associate Member of the James Martin Institute for Science & Civilization, Oxford.</p>		
	Evening tbc	Rosie Beckham

Myth & Scenario	Graham Galer	
<p>Graham Galer worked in Shell Planning for many years and knows the benefits of effective scenario planning. More recently he has begun to consider how great scenarios have transformed into influential political and organisational myths of historic importance that help us make meaning in our businesses, institutions and societies.</p> <p>If you use scenario planning in your personal and business strategies, this evening session will deepen and stimulate your understanding of the long-term importance of scenarios to our world.</p>		
Scenario Planning	Evening tbc	Rosie Beckham

Generation Y	Sally Bibb	
<p>What makes the Millennial generation, Generation Y, tick? Do you know how Generation Y-friendly your organisation is, and does it matter?</p> <p>If you are having trouble attracting, engaging or retaining Generation Y and if your managers are struggling to understand the younger workforce, Sally Bibb will open your eyes to their talents as well as their needs. She will also discuss ways in which boomers can learn to learn from this new, IT savvy generation.</p>		
	Evening: tbc	Rosie Beckham

Creating the future of SOL		Timo / Nazreen A. Subhan
Giving an opportunity for all SOL-UK member to co create the future for SOL using Timo's approach (butterfly of possibilities)		
SOL event	Evening: tbc	Nazreen A. Subhan

Spirituality Masterclass		Josie Gregory
In conjunction with Surrey University, a joint event with the foundation for spirituality in the work place.		
	tbc	Nazreen A. Subhan

Lessons of leadership for the new millennium		Tony Droar
About grounding Decision Making. Also around Paradigm & metaphor. Tony is a SoL UK member		
Member event	Evening: tbc	Nazreen A. Subhan

Emerging Economies, Culture and Approaches		
Learning more about the new emerging countries. China, India, the Stans		
	tbc	Nazreen A. Subhan

Inter-organisational Learning		
Looking at how in the client /contractor relationship, learning can happen. Learning on how to avoid legal dispute		
	tbc	Roy Woodhead

Theories of learning		
Getting familiar with various theories of learning. Piaget. Lev Vygotsky...		
	Evening series	Roy Woodhead

Can business save the world	Nigel Topping	
<p>“To explore the latest thinking about the role of business in the world and the possible sources of its transformation from the cause to the cure of many social and environmental problems.”</p> <p>“Thought leaders from academia, business, government and NGOs will present diverse views of how capitalism can evolve to use its power and creativity to restore our damaged environment and heal social inequity, whilst maintaining its fiduciary responsibility to shareowners. Participants will have ample time to discuss the ideas presented and will participate in a strategy café, exploring the implications of these ideas with fellow participants”</p>		
Member driven session	tbc	

Learning in complex organisation Uncovering the secrets of successful practice	Sharon Varney	
<p>“If we understand human organisation in terms of complex social systems, what does that mean for how we work to foster organisational learning? This question was at the heart of Sharon’s enquiry with developers and managers; all of whom had had some acquaintance with complexity theories. ”</p> <p>“In this workshop Sharon will present the findings from her research, including a new model to assist practitioners, and will encourage participants to explore some of the key issues in terms of their own experience.”</p>		
Member driven session	tbc	

Your Voice, Your Presence, Your Ideas ... from across the world

If you are a full SoL-UK member and would like to attend, suggest a topic or even organise a SOL-UK event, please get in touch by emailing Ann Ward: annward@sol-uk.org.

We would also like to hear from members of other SoL groups who may be visiting the UK during 2008-2009. You are welcome to attend our events and to suggest ways of interacting with your groups.

We keep our members informed of European Coordinators’ meetings but we would like to hear directly from individuals or groups, as your ideas and feedback will help to grow friendships and collaborations. An example of one of these collaborations is the presentation to be given at the Oman conference by the anthropologist, Michael Thompson (who gave a wonderful talk on ‘clumsy solutions’ at one of our decision-making workshops last year) and a SoL stalwart, Charles van der Hagen from Belgium.

Last Word: joining SoL UK

If you are not a full SoL-UK member but we have sent this bulletin to you, it is because we think you may be interested in some of our activities and might like to consider becoming one!

SOL-UK provides a powerful meeting place for organisations to share challenges, insights and experiences about organisational learning and fundamental institutional change. You will meet experts, practitioners and facilitators in formal and informal settings.

SOL-UK provides a space for its members to network and to learn from each other and research projects often develop out of seed projects generated within SOL-UK.

Most events are held in great venues in London and the Home Counties, but we occasionally organise events in other parts of the country.

SOL-UK organises a programme of learning opportunities each year: workshops; masterclasses; research conferences; networking opportunities and research programmes.

To remind you, here are some of the areas SOL-UK typically addresses:

- Human interactions, systems and behaviours
- Decision-making
- Change
- Strategy
- Leadership
- Sustainability
- Global, regional and local interactivity
- Ethics and Social Responsibility
- Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary
- Communication and Language

If you are interested in becoming a member, please contact Ann Ward (annward@sol-uk.org) who will get someone to contact you to discuss your needs. Whether you are a practitioner, consultant or academic/student; part of an SME, Public Sector or corporate organisation, we will have an appropriate package for you.

www.sol-uk.org