

## **Ian Potterton**

Ian Potterton was born in Sydney Australia in February 1961. He thoroughly enjoyed his childhood exploring the untouched natural bushland of Northbridge and Tunks Park on the middle harbour of Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour). Early on he found a great interest in the water that later turned into a career at sea as a master mariner class one, ship's captain. Being blessed with saintly parents who he never saw drunk, place a cigarette to their lips, raise their hands at each other or even shout in anger, left him with a strong moral compass that broaches no form of deviousness. Potterton has experienced his life in sections; rooms even, wherein one activity ceases, is completed and done with and packed away, and another starts. A room in his life that has stayed firmly open however, is a deep abiding fascination with Hindu Yogic Culture. Even today he practices daily *Kriya Yoga* Meditation.

## **Early Life**

### **Wreck Bay**

Potterton spent every available moment scooting down to the bush around Wreck Bay even as a small boy of five- official maps of the place call it Willoughby Bay. Along with a small fisherman's knife he used to shuck the delicious Sydney rock oysters from the sandstone tidal range and eat them out of hand. His beloved Mother soon realised what was going on and asked; rather insistently, for a dozen of these beauties to be bottled and brought home for her especial consumption. Poddy mullet and bream would be caught and cooked over a small fire with the eucalyptus leaves and twigs imparting their own aromatic and unique flavour. Swimming at high tide in the bay was a must. Potterton fondly remembers the sparkly clear salt water, shining in the Southern hemisphere's temperate sun. It was a scene that was edged into the young boy's mind as from a bygone age from more sylvan times. Indeed the surrounding trees, rocks and two fresh water falls have stood there for untold tens of thousands of years from the custody of the now gone Cammeraygal Aborigines.

### **Tunks Park and Flat Rock Drive**

On occasion Potterton would climb the Northbridge suspension bridge, even as his own father climbed the cabling as a boy when it was a real suspension bridge. This bridge was a larger version (two lanes) than the still existing Hampden suspension Bridge in Kangaroo Valley.

Native long necked tortoises could be seen swimming and sunning themselves on the banks of the creeks that flowed into the concrete culvert that drained the valley under the playing fields on Tunks Park. Loach-like fish were also seen swimming in the two creeks that joined just upstream from the bridge. With the added water and deep gorge ending in the creek, the forest became thicker and had an element of temperate rainforest and was a real treat to wander through.

## **Work Ethic**

Potterton would wake up fully refreshed at 1am most mornings and at 5 years old started helping the local milkman deliver bottles (when that was how milk came in), throughout the Cammeray area. This carried through to his teenage years. Even at seven years old, crates were left out at various places and Potterton solely took over the Cammeray milk run. On Potterton's beloved Father's death bed Dad was asked when the young boy started his milk run days and a smile creased his Father's face and he said "at five." Potterton clearly remembers his much loved Father saying that he was awoken by his son calling out from the front door saying "I want to be a milk boy!" That was the first and last time his Father had to open the door at 1am. The boy Potterton learn how to

do it himself from then on- and to return to bed at 5am. Potterton contends the secret to consistently getting up early feeling fresh as, was going to bed at 7:30pm when he felt sleepy, and not fighting it. It also made Potterton financially independent, even as a boy.

### **Music**

Potterton was regularly to be found out in the garden of his Cammeray home singing at age two or three. His parents noticing his interest in music and bought him various instruments, but it wasn't until he visited a school friend's house that he first played on a set of drums, and instantly felt this was his instrument. Potterton's first kit was a silver Pearl drum set with Paiste cymbals. He played with his first band *Double Vision*, in the Sutherland area, sometimes even as far South as Wollongong. Being Seventeen, Potterton was the eldest boy in the band. The bass player Craig was sixteen, as was the guitarist Ross and Neil the singer. Initially worried that Potterton had to drive long distances from the lower North Shore to the South of Sydney, even for practice sessions, the other band members didn't immediately see it working. But they later said that Potterton's enthusiasm won them over. Potterton felt he wouldn't have played with anyone else, so tight was the musical fit.

A couple of years later Ross the guitarist decided, well- his dad did, that Ross needed to spend more time on his HSC and left the band. With his replacement Potterton simply lost his own enthusiasm as the band's dynamics changed so he left the band too.

After looking around for another band and doing many auditions Potterton settled on the Playground; an inner city pop rock trio. The talented guitarist Karl was ensconced in a Riley Street terrace house that doubled as a recording studio and rehearsals too. So the out of pocket expenses for hours of rehearsal studio rentals disappeared. And coupled with Karl's extensive underground contacts saw the band play regularly in the city and lower North Shore. An altogether satisfactory arrangement in contrast to the hours of travelling required before even playing with the last band.

In 1985/86 Potterton can't quite recall the exact year, he became friends with an excellent musician by the name of Melvin, an English bass player. Melvin was a bit of an activist who had protested the decision to site nuclear cruise missiles at the Greenham Common base before coming to Australia. Potterton grew quickly in ability with many hours practice each day to keep up with Stewart's high level of skill. At some point Stewart asked Potterton to back him up in an audition with a guitarist. Stewart's behaviour was suspiciously cagey but not knowing what he was up for, Potterton said "yep okay." In a small rehearsal studio off Wattle St across from the Wentworth park dog track, Potterton first met Jeremy Oxley- formerly of the Sunnyboys and their lead guitarist, singer and songwriter. Potterton has stated "of all the guitarists he had ever had the good luck to play with; Jeremy was by far the most talented with an amazingly strong and melodious set of lyric tenor 'pipes.' His song writing skills earning him a world-wide following of adoring fans that even when we later played as the *Fishermen*, filled every hall; and Oxley's fans were not let down, he delivered each and every week a blistering performance."

Soon after that, Stewart came back with the word that he got the gig and that there is now a push to find a drummer. Although Oxley had been quite taken with the drumming; even leaning over towards Potterton in the studio saying "creamy hi hat work," Potterton was in no illusion as to the professional level musicians who would give their eye teeth to tour with Jeremy. In fact Potterton was still working as a ferry skipper on Sydney Harbour. It was really surprising when a further

audition was arranged. The upshot was Oxley invited Potterton to join his new band called the *Fishermen*. But the feeling in this trio was pretty special indeed. On numerous times; as any musician will attest, Potterton felt what Oxley was going to play and the kit and hands simply followed along, supplying whatever beats that Oxley's guitar & musical creativity called for. And Stewart's bass was 'tight as.'

## Hinduism

Potterton was from even before he could toddle utterly fascinated in what was before and what came after this journey called life. Previous extensive work in *Raja*, the *yoga* of mind control, left him with indelible *memories* that set the course of his life. The catalyst of returning back to *Hinduism* occurred in Pitt St Sydney when that part was still a street, as a boy of nine. The *Hare Krsna's* were dancing on the other side and even though his Mum tried to shield the young boy from the sight behind her voluminous skirt, She failed miserably. As the sound of the ancient Indian musical instruments touched the boy's ears, the *Mridangam's*, *karatalas*- finger cymbals and *harmonium* all fitted together to lift his heart in Divine Joy. Potterton's parents weren't so flattering in their appraisal of Indian *bhajans* and strictly forbid their young child from going over to them- he was held firmly, wiggling was to no avail. But as his child-like heart expanded to the rhythmic beats, the young boy heard a voice say "This.Is.Real.Culture!"

For the next couple of years, the young boy badgered his parents to allow him to go to the *Hare Krsna Temple* in Buckingham Street in Surry Hills for their Sunday service. They, being good Anglican's forcefully forbade him having anything to do with these er, people. I'm sure I can't recall their exact words. But having the accrued money from years of work as a milk boy and an unquenchable thirst for *Bhakti Yoga*, Potterton confronted his father at age eleven and said flatly "okay if I can't go alone, then come with me!" The child's beloved Father had shock written all over his face and the boy simply walked out and as Potterton passed outside the kitchen window said "I'll see you at 8," and caught a 202 bus down Miller street across the Harbour Bridge, into the city of Sydney. This started a beautiful devotional period in the boy's life with the quite amazing monks of Srila Prabhupada Bhaktivedanta Swami. They loved Krsna – they radiated It; my association with these saintly men benefitted me greatly. And I found the Bhagavad Gita and the amazing Shrimad Bhagavatam too. Much later Potterton found that even the perfect practice of *Raja Yoga* is useless without *Shraddha*, *Bhakti*. The child Potterton lost himself in devotional chanting, with weekends in their Alexandria Spiritual Sky incense factory dipping the sticks into vats of essential oil and chanting the Lord's name.

By sixteen, Potterton had a growing urge for an actual meditative technique that found the youth walking the streets of Sydney, following up every meditative lead. Finally, at age eighteen Potterton found TM- *Transcendental Meditation*, from the *Beatles* fame, developed by *Maharishi Mahesh Yogi*. That night Potterton prepared himself by bathing in a sense of almost reverent awe, and drove in his car to a quiet local park and sitting in the front passenger's seat, relaxed his body and within a couple of seconds of TM practice went deeply within. His consciousness, a point of concentrated intuitive perception moved up the spine, then turning horizontal at *Ajna chakra* moved along its *nadi* towards the forehead, and out into an infinitude of a Being who was fully aware to the youth's arrival in His Presence. All the misunderstandings, abysmal misuse in the inadequacy of a verbal language and various decisions that had or were to be made vanished in that infinite light-filled Consciousness. After returning to outward consciousness and finding the organ of speech inactive- a

*Karmendriya of action*, Potterton saw what changes had occurred, And what changes were still outstanding and constituted his life's work.

After some years of devoted TM practice, Potterton again hungered for a technique that allowed longer periods in the meditative state; which they didn't allow.

### **Self-Realization Fellowship- SRF**

Potterton was called to the *Path for this life* when he complained to a friend "I've read all your spiritual books and they just don't light my fire, haven't you anything else?" Potterton's beautiful friend said "Then you must read *Autobiography of a Yogi* by *Paramahansa Yogananda*." The next day he swung by Adyar Bookshop, then in Market Street Sydney. The book was bought and when Potterton got home he has said "I opened the front cover and read the first line of chapter one. Tears streamed down my face as a celestial troupe of female angels sung (*Apsara Devas*) with divinely played instruments (*Gandharva devas*) accompanied this loving and sweet sentence over and over 'you have come home, you have come home'. He said "I knew I had at last found my *Guru* and the *Kriya Yoga Technique* was what I was looking for; after all those years." Potterton was twenty five.

At twenty seven years of age Potterton flew to Los Angeles to attend his first SRF Convocation in August 1988. He reported he was stunned to find that there was an active monastic community dedicated to *Paramahansa Yogananda's* work in disseminating His teachings and the *Kriya Yoga* technique. Brother *Achalananda*, now Vice President of Self-Realization Fellowship initiated Potterton into *Kriya Yoga* at Mother Center atop Mt Washington. Brother made such an impact on the young Potterton that a seed was placed in his mind that took only a couple of months to germinate. Later that same year, a year's leave was granted to Captain Potterton from Sydney Harbour State ferries and he went to live at the SRF Hidden Valley Farm above Escondido in San Diego County. It is on the lower slopes of the 7,000(foot) Mt Palomar with its 200(inch) Observatory. As an added bonus Brother *Achalananda* was the resident Monastic in charge at the Farm. Happy months sped by under the tutelage of the amazing Hidden Valley monks.

In June 1989 Potterton left the SRF farm and catching a general cargo ship crossed the Pacific Ocean, returning home to Sydney via Auckland New Zealand.

### **Marine Career**

It was in this period; with spare time and a desire to experience a larger marine field than just Sydney Harbour, Potterton flew to Far North Queensland and started working ex Cairns to the Torres Strait Islands. After returning to work on Sydney Harbour, Potterton was assigned the *night spare* position. This included doing a 20:00 till 21:30 *Harbour lights cruise*. It wasn't long before Potterton attended Sydney College of Marine Knowledge and commenced his Second Mates Class One; a yearlong course held each day and after going straight to the Quay to work the nights on the Harbour. After passing all the subjects, the state marine board issued him with a Class Three Masters Certificate. However it was foreign going certification that Potterton had his eye on. A chance meeting with the then President of the Merchant Services Guild of Australia- now the AMOU, saw Potterton given a coveted six months understudy role on their crude and product ships: Caltex Oil Tankers . He sailed overseas that very next Saturday. After many happy years seeing the world but seeing more the sea, Potterton attended Sydney College again, this time for his Masters & Mates, another year long course. At completion, a once in a lifetime opportunity was given him; a start with

the world's most prestigious tanking company: *BP Shipping*. Potterton passed his orals for Chief Mates Certificate straight off under the illustrious Captain Thomas De Meaune – who sadly passed on Tuesday 29 August 2017 (his Funeral was well attended). Within days he was called to sea and joined his first ship with *BP Shipping*- a 110,000(MT) tanker ex- Singapore on a world trading spot charter run. It wasn't long before Potterton was doing his orals examination for his Master Class One. It was Oil & Gas endorsed, Full DP.

### **Interest in Official Corruption**

For years Potterton has shown a great personal interest in seeing a curb put on police corruption and government malfeasance. In 2002 Potterton saw the giving up of privileged (not in the public domain) information by Mick Keelty, the then Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, to the Singapore authorities in the Van Tuong Nguyen case over drug trafficking. Australian Citizen Nguyen was hanged on December 2nd 2005 at age 25 in Changi Prison Singapore. I am of the opinion that the information passed on by Keelty played an important role in the decision to hang Nguyen. I sent letters to the AFP Canberra and letters to newspaper editors calling them out on this act by the Federal Police as outside of Australian Law. I was straight down the line in my opinion.

Then came the Bali 9 case wherein Keelty again gave privileged information, this time to the Indonesian authorities, even sticking his fingers up at Lee Rush (Father of Scott Rush, one of the Bali 9) and his lawyer friend Robert Myers- a Queensland barrister, who acted with honesty, dignity and integrity but was grossly disrespected in grand fashion. The outcome of this was a hugely messy and ugly affair that the Federal Police rode a very public rough ride through. After the machine gun execution of more Australian Citizens Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran in April 2015 in Nusa Kambangan Island, public opinion turned against the AFP with Mick Phelan A/ Comm. and then Commissioner Andrew Colvin making that infamous press conference of May 2015 wherein Colvin stated "we can't apologise for the role we have played ..." Colvin indicated no guarantees could be given that he would not do the same again should similar circumstances present themselves.

Potterton has stated publically many times "We cannot have the Australian Police involved in any way that influences the decision to go ahead with the execution of Australian Citizens."

### **The Federal Police Action Against Ian Potterton in a Foreign Country**

Potterton contends the AFP acted in black revenge against him, for the many critically negative statements made against them. In fact this very thing was said to Federal Agents Tanti's & van Hilst's faces in Thailand on the 20th November 2012. They refused to discuss Potterton's reasoning at all and changed the topic quickly.

Potterton has stated in his Complaint to the Federal Police the following:

"I accuse the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police of running a child sex case against me in a third world country that you could never run against me here in Australia: Impossible. And you did this with deliberate intent."

My career as an Australian Maritime Safety Authority AMSA Master Mariner Class One Certificate holder has been totally destroyed, with zero means of ever earning a comparative salary or wage and the joy that comes from a job well done. I now attend Hospital's; Doctor's and Specialist's appointments multiple times each and every week since discharge from a six (6) month hospital

inpatient stay, post return from the Federal Police action. I am crippled to a wheelchair in great pain for years now and will be for the rest of my life.

Potterton's extensive Complaint to Andrew Colvin, then Commissioner of the Federal Police received a half page reply. It is below.

Potterton's extensive Complaint to Marise Payne, of DFAT Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade also received a one page reply. It is also below.

Potterton's Complaint to Christian Porter Australian Attorney General received a mere half page reply. Its below too.

Potterton's Open Letter to All Australians

I am writing an open letter statement to all Australian Citizens on why I believe I spent time in a Thai jail and the huge extent of the Australian Federal Police- AFP, involvement.

It appears my many public and highly critical statements regarding the former AFP Commissioner Mick Keelty and the AFP have come back to haunt me. The subject centres on democratically vital topics such as whether a Government body- the AFP, can use its powers to obtain its own ends, such as they are, as previously in other cases and in my case, currently being played out to the death of Australian Citizens overseas. The question is this: Should the AFP be permitted to act in a way that is clearly outside Australian law and which could contribute to the decision to go ahead with the execution of an Australian Citizen? Is it not bound to act in a way that if an Australian Citizen were to be found guilty of an offence in Australia, a death sentence could not be sought? We saw Mick Keelty's hand when he went back up to an Indonesian court to speak for Scott Rush of the Bali 9 case, against Rush's death sentence; but not Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran, who were executed in a hail of bullets on the 29th April 2015.

My considered opinion, as I looked out from Bangkok's notorious Special Remand Jail, is that the AFP have enjoyed an unbroken string of such actions, and that right now they feel a law unto themselves, answerable to no one.

It is with great focus and resolve that I wish to shine a strong light of accountability on this mob. And it'd be good to clear my name too.