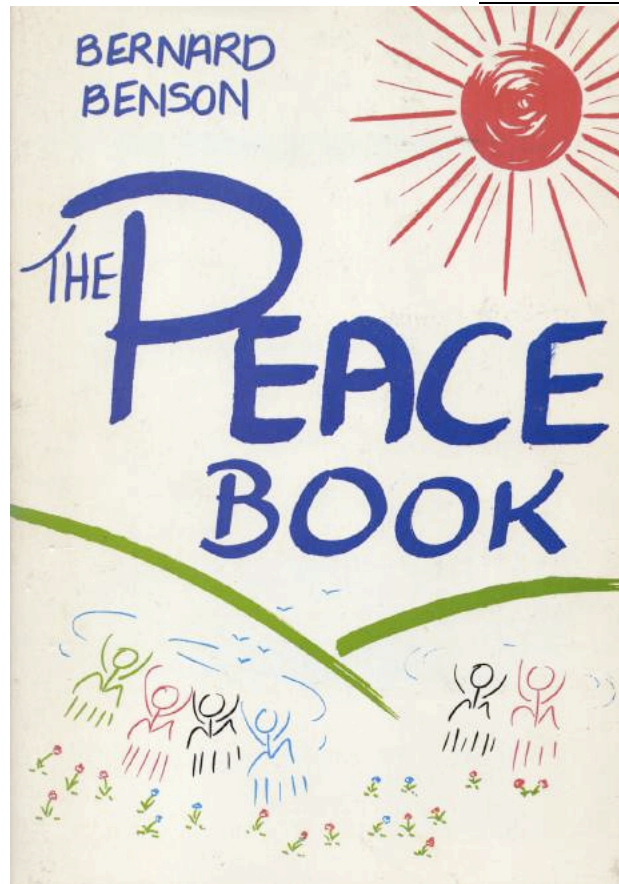


# **BERNARD S. BENSON**

(28 January 1922 – 15 May 1996)

- inventor and British author and writer of *The Peace Book* -



Bernard Benson was born in the UK. He was a fighter pilot during World War II, and later worked on the design of early British missiles. He emigrated to the United States where at Douglas Aircraft Co., in Santa Monica, CA, he worked on the Douglas F4D Delta wing fighter and various Douglas missiles.

Early in the 1950s, he founded Benson-Lehner Corporation with George F. G. Lehner, a psychology professor at UCLA. Soon after its founding, futurist Donald Prell joined the company as Vice President, Application Engineering. The new company was successful, as it filled a niche designing systems that were used to provide data input and output to and from the early computers. The B/L machines semi-automatically read oscillograph and photographic flight test data producing punched tape and IBM punch cards which were then entered into computers. After being processed, the data was then automatically printed on large flatbed graph-plotters. This process automated the formerly manual reading and subsequent hand-plotting of data. B/L plotters soon became the industry standard and were sold worldwide. After an IPO the company expanded into the field of high speed photography. Two photo-mechanical engineers, Guy Hearon and Harry Katt, were hired, who designed a series of 16mm, 35mm, and 70mm high speed cameras and accessories.

In 1961, Benson was one of the first persons to warn against the privacy risks raised by computers, claiming that digital data could one day be fed into a single system, leaving individuals at the mercy "of who or what controls the machine".

Early in the 1960s, Benson retired and moved to France, where he purchased the Chateau de Chaban located in the Dordogne. While living there with his first wife Jane Lysbeth Saville Sneath and their seven children, he began writing children's books based on the philosophy of a group of Tibetan monks, who shared his estate. Benson tried to make their philosophy readily understandable to both young and old. He then married Maryse Lheureux, a friend of his eldest daughter. He wrote several other books including *Alice in Plunderland*, *the Book of Life*, and *The Minstrel*. All are hand-written and illustrated in Benson's distinctive style.

He spent his last years energetically promoting Peace as a Life Insurance policy for his three young daughters with Maryse. He sold Chaban and moved to the South of France – where he focussed on a *Peace Bird* project to bring children to all the world's leaders – begging them to stop despoiling the

planet and make peace between each other. His philosophy is summarised in this forward to *Alice in Plunderland*:

#### AUTHOR'S NOTE

From time to time man has been inspired either of himself or by his ego to great and noble heights, but historically he has been the servant of his ego, subservient to the desire for power and wealth. Those who have emerged at the head of society have, in general, been those with these characteristics in excess.

To this longstanding condition, something new has been added. Technology has provided mankind with the ability to move people, objects and information anywhere at all, often at lightning speed, and the space historically separating peoples has vanished. Furthermore, technology has also yielded the mastery of physical energy, and finally through the vast power of modern computers to search and recall limitless masses of data, those who are given, or seize power can now infiltrate and control the life of the people down to the very finest detail. Thus those in power have now gained absolute power.

With an excess of speed, and no progress in the mastery of the ego, man has neither the wisdom nor the compassion to handle these vast forces. Society has thus become so fragile that its destruction is now easy, its survival in jeopardy, giving rise for the first time in man's history to the pressing need to modify his basic nature. Merely creating a new system will no longer do it. The basic human material must now change. This is a lot to ask.

The transition from a materialistically oriented society towards a philosophic orientation is now clearly under way in the West with a search for enlightened understanding replacing the long-standing dedication to the accumulation of objects. There are, here and there, clear signs that those with this orientation are being propelled by society to the surface to assume the role of leadership.

Frequently referred to as "new age" thought, a term still searching for its meaning, society is once again picking up the thread of the great spiritual Masters who pointed the way, particularly about two and three thousand years ago. This thread, already distorted by the ego of its interpreters, was essentially broken when mankind, like a pack of mad dogs fighting over a bone, invented the religion of materialism, made possible by technology. The new direction of thought is the result of the pressing need, with signs of new leadership emerging.

Can this revolution of enlightened understanding spread across the globe in sufficient breadth and depth in time? It would require a miracle . . . but it is just possible . . . if man is willing to come face to face with the reality of the world he has created, and understand that if he fails, the game is up!

*Alice in Plunderland* is offered in the hope that it may bring some light where there is now predominantly only heat.

Bernard Benson  
Chateau de Chaban,  
France  
May, 1978

Bernard fell in love with David Gordon's songs – particularly *Child for a Day*, sung by David's brother, Cat Stevens – now Yusuf Islam, which means 'Peace' in Arabic. He arranged for David to have



the exclusive rights to create a musical adaptation of the Peace Book and invited David Gordon and David Woollcombe + their respective families to come to Chaban and write the adaptation. While there, the families met the Tibetan Buddhist monks whom Bernard was shielding from their Chinese oppressors. They became early spiritual and financial supporters of the Peace Child project. David Gordon completed three of the most poignant songs of Peace Child while staying with Bernard at Chaban – and the teachings of the Tibetan monks – and the peace generated by their prayers and chanting – have infused the Peace Child project ever since.

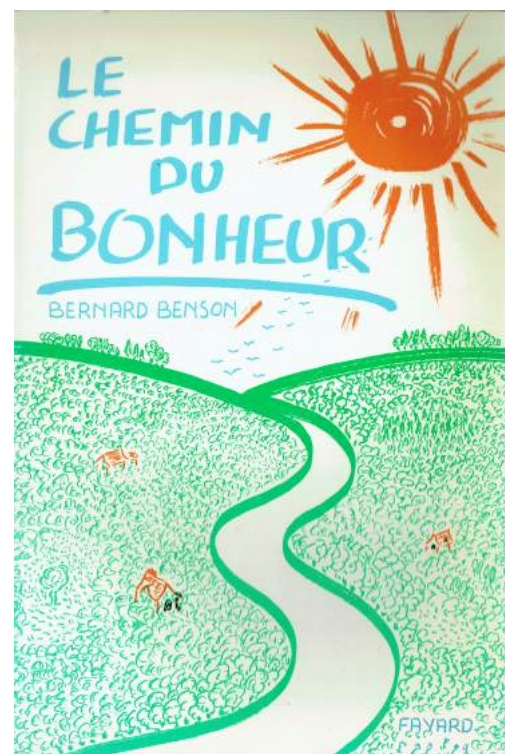
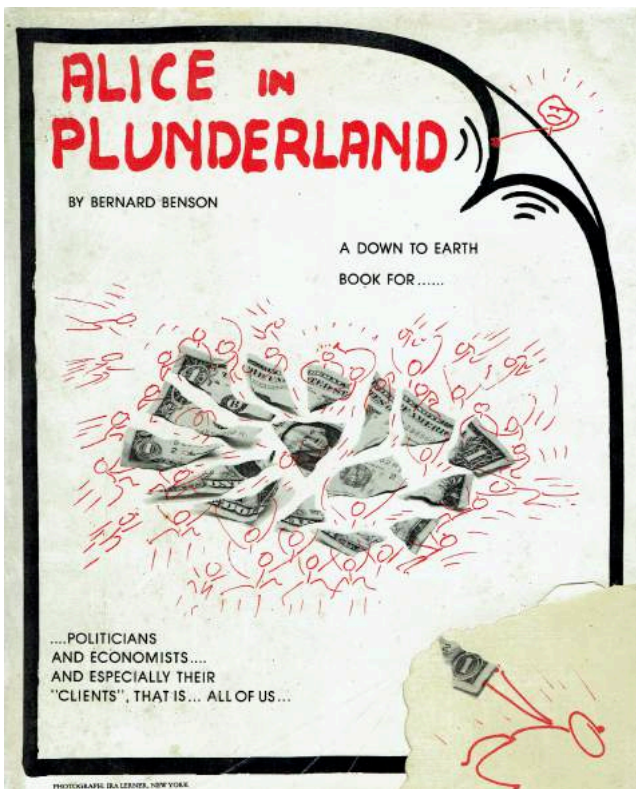
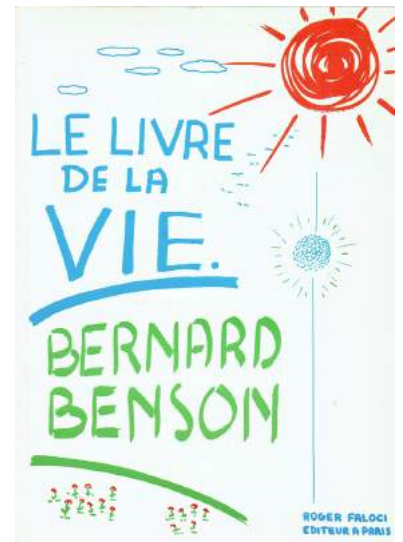
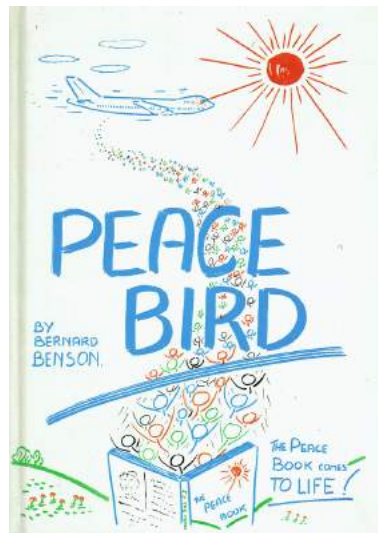
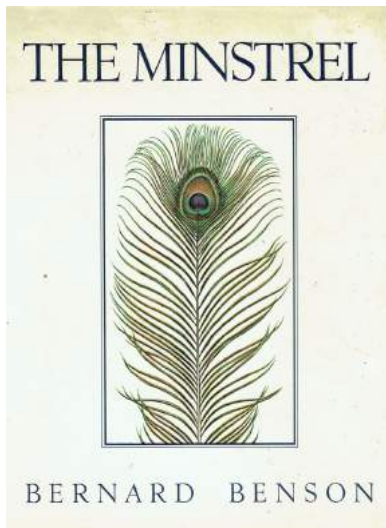


*Bernard with Maryse at Chaban*



*Bernard with one of his Tibetan teachers*





*A Selection of Bernard's Books – The Minstrel, inspired by the Life of Elvis Presley; Peace Bird – bringing the Peace Child story to life; The Book of Life and The Path to Happiness – both distillation's of Bernard's philosophy, and Alice in Plunderland – a stinging rebuke to the insanity of capitalism and the unregulated market economy.*

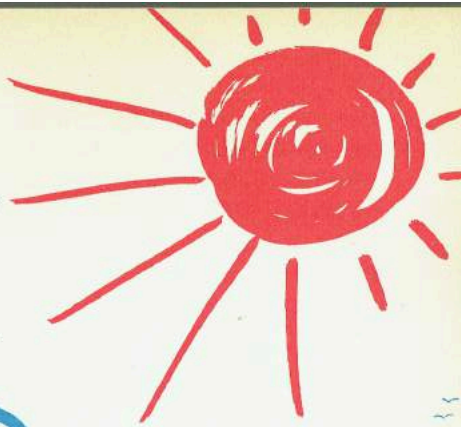
Bernard's books remain in print in many languages – and are an inspiration to Peace Child in every show we do. The central idea of the Peace Book – to imagine the future as you want it to be, and then flash-back to the present and tell the story of what you are going to do with your life to bring that future about – remains the defining characteristic of all Peace Child shows. Though Bernard is sadly no longer with us, his books, his ideas, and his drawings continue to inform the Peace Child activities all over the world – as the examples of his writing on the next few pages demonstrate.

THEY WERE SINGING AND DANCING...



...AND EXCHANGING LITTLE GIFTS OF FLOWERS AND CAKES AND THINGS... EVEN THOSE WHO DIDN'T KNOW EACH OTHER.

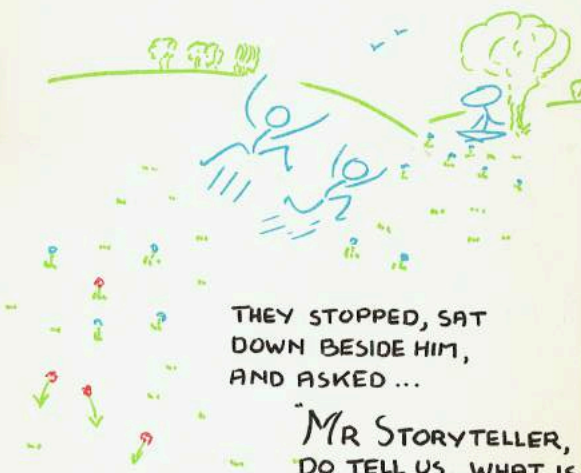
IT WAS BY FAR THE BIGGEST HOLIDAY OF THE YEAR ...



ALL OVER THE WORLD, IT WAS..

# PEACE DAY

TWO LITTLE CHILDREN WERE DASHING AROUND WITH THE OTHERS... WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN THEY SAW THE STORYTELLER SITTING ON A TREE STUMP ... ALL SMILES.



THEY STOPPED, SAT DOWN BESIDE HIM, AND ASKED ...

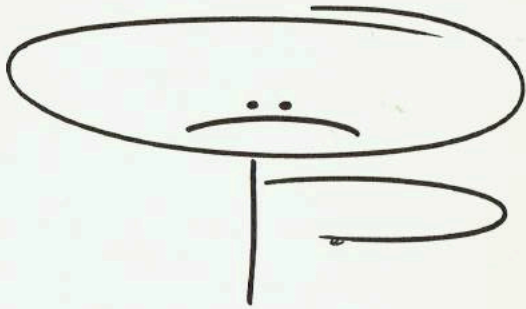
"MR STORYTELLER, DO TELL US... WHAT IS THE STORY OF PEACE DAY?"



"SIT QUIETLY AND I'LL TELL YOU, 'CAUSE WITHOUT IT... OR WHAT LIES BEHIND IT, YOU WOULDN'T BE HERE, NOR WOULD I!"



"EVER SINCE MAN FIRST STARTED TO ROAM THIS PLANET, WHICH FLOATS SO PEACEFULLY IN SPACE, HE HAS CONCENTRATED PRIMARILY ON ONE THING...."

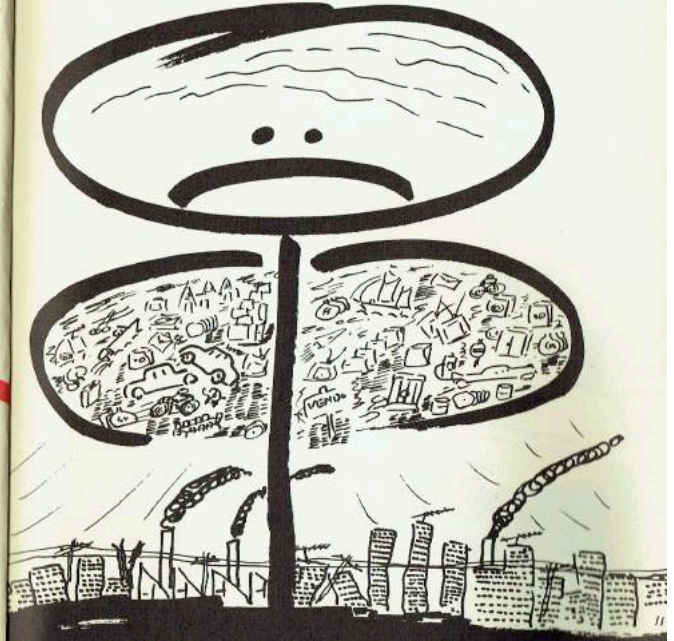


**HIMSELF**

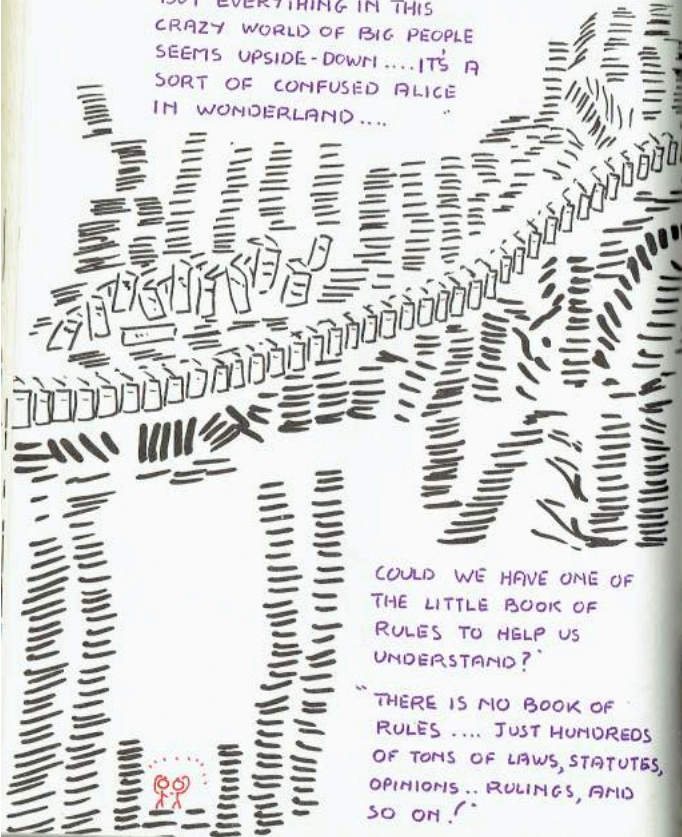
BUT RATHER THAN CONCENTRATE ON THE MIND OF HIMSELF, HE HAS CONCENTRATED ON THE BODY OF HIMSELF.

"NOT ONLY THAT, BUT HE SET NO LIMITS TO WHAT HE COULD DESIRE.... FOR HIMSELF....."

SO QUICKLY IT BECAME A RACE TO SEE WHO COULD GATHER UP THE MOST..... FOR HIMSELF.



"BUT EVERYTHING IN THIS CRAZY WORLD OF BIG PEOPLE SEEMS UPSIDE-DOWN.... IT'S A SORT OF CONFUSED ALICE IN WONDERLAND...."

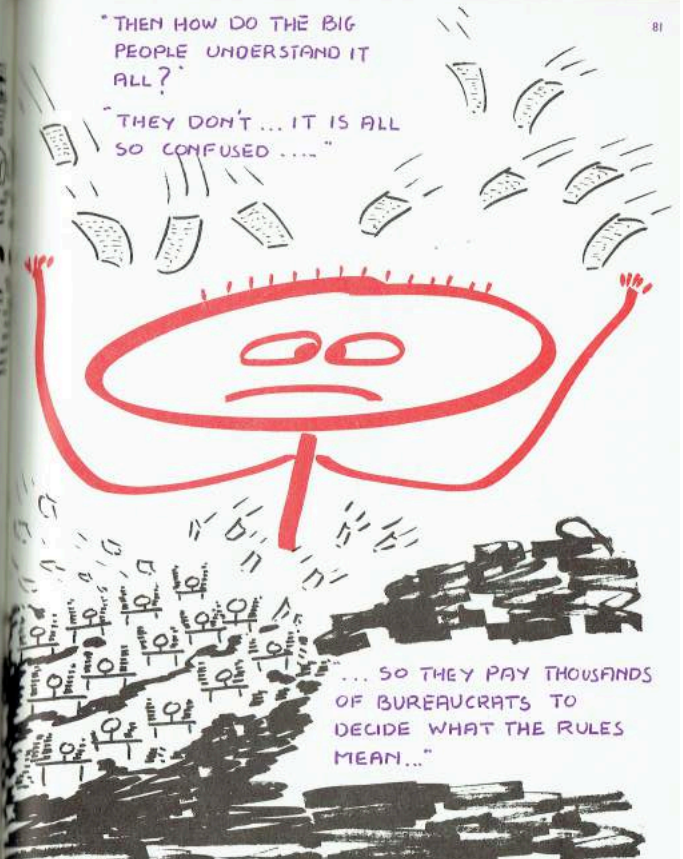


COULD WE HAVE ONE OF THE LITTLE BOOK OF RULES TO HELP US UNDERSTAND?"

"THERE IS NO BOOK OF RULES.... JUST HUNDREDS OF TONS OF LAWS, STATUTES, OPINIONS.. RULINGS, AND SO ON."

"THEN HOW DO THE BIG PEOPLE UNDERSTAND IT ALL?"

"THEY DON'T... IT IS ALL SO CONFUSED...."



... SO THEY PAY THOUSANDS OF BUREAUCRATS TO DECIDE WHAT THE RULES MEAN..."