

# SOUTHERN INSIGHT

Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation,  
Christchurch, New Zealand

Newsletter 45

Autumn 2013

## UPCOMING MEDITATION RETREATS 2013-2014

All retreats are suitable for both new and experienced meditators and are accessible to people of any or no religious affiliation. The cost of each retreat covers all food and accommodation. Teachers receive donations.

**Half day- non-residential retreats:**                      **Sunday June 16 2013** <sup>12.30 – 5.30pm</sup>                      **\$10**  
**Christchurch (Mary Potter Centre,**

These half day retreats are a chance to take a break in the midst of business and to connect with what the practice of meditation can really bring to our lives. They are held at the Mary Potter Centre in Christchurch in the months of March, June & August. Go to our website, E-mail us, or register for local update E-mails to find out more.

**Beginner's Course in Insight Meditation**                      **May 2013**                      **\$30**  
**Christchurch (Opawa Zendo)**

This 5-week course will provide instruction for insight meditation. Beginning with focusing the attention on the breath, the mindfulness practice calms and concentrates the mind, allowing us to live more fully in the present moment. The course is suitable for beginners or those wanting a refresher. Di Robertson will teach the course. She has been meditating since 1994, has undertaken many meditation retreats and taught beginners' courses since 2001. For further information and registration Contact Di on 338 7070 or email [diana.r@xtra.co.nz](mailto:diana.r@xtra.co.nz)

**Spring retreat**                      **early October 2013 ( dates TBC)**                      **Staveley Camp**

We will be running a retreat in spring this year. Dates and arrangements for this are to be confirmed so watch this space and check out our website for updates (<http://www.southern-insight.org.nz/>)

**Summer Retreat 2014**                      **Friday 24<sup>th</sup> Jan** <sup>evening</sup> - **Friday 31st Jan** <sup>midday</sup>                      **cost TBC**  
**With Subhana Barzaghi, &Jeremy Logan**                      **Staveley Camp**

The summer retreat for 2014 will be led by two much loved insight teachers. We will update you on the format and focus of this retreat later in the year.

**The closing date for registration is one week before the retreat starts.** Information about registration is inside the back cover of the newsletter.

**Costs:** Retreat costs for the spring 2013, and summer 2014 retreats are still to be confirmed but are set to be as affordable as possible and will include a sliding scale: See also "top up" fund information in this newsletter.

**Southern Insight Meditation** is a non-profit, non-sectarian group run by volunteers with the aim of making available the teachings and practice of Insight (Vipassana) Meditation through retreats, courses and talks. Our website is <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>



## Future retreat events:

### Dharma Gathering - January 2015

Plans are underway to run our fourth Dharma Gathering event. This is offered by Southern Insight in conjunction with the Diamond Sangha Zen Tradition. The format of the Dharma Gathering melds meditation with more interactive practices – workshops, bodywork, poetry, art, movement, debate and discussion. The event has been very popular – so look out for it again in early 2015.

### Enquiries:

[Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com)

Why do I meditate?

To open my heart, and to be blissfully aware.  
To notice deeply.

**Southern Insight Meditation** is a non-profit, non-sectarian group run by volunteers with the aim of making available the teachings and practice of Insight (Vipassana) Meditation through retreats, courses and talks.

We are also a charitable trust and donations are tax exempt. Our website is <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

Greetings all,

It is only March 2013 and we have already been lucky to have two very successful (and very different retreats) led by inspiring teachers.

The 8 day January retreat with Yanai Postelnik was very well attended and for many a deeply profound and enriching experience.

In March we began the first of our three half- day retreats in Christchurch and were particularly fortunate to have this led by Sharda Rogell visiting New Zealand from her home base at Spirit Rock Meditation Centre in Northern California.

Later this year we will be holding two more half-day retreats in June & August. These help to carry us over the hump of winter and are a great lead in to the spring retreat in October.

This newsletter is has an interesting article on what treats await the wandering meditator travelling to Vietnam, as well as some cyberspace tips for those travelling on the internet! It also includes some reflections from yogis on our summer retreat...and if buzzing bees bother you when you are sitting...something very practical you can do about it!

Enjoy

Why do I meditate?

It is part of Buddhist practice – and is one of the ways in which we may develop the qualities of a more peaceful mind, and a kind and gentle heart.  
This is why I “aspire” to practice meditation.



## Beginners Meditation Course

May 2013

Cost: \$30.

Venue: Opawa, Zendo

This 5-week course will provide instruction for insight meditation. Beginning with focusing the attention on the breath, the mindfulness practice calms and concentrates the mind, allowing us to live more fully in the present moment.

The course is suitable for beginners or those wanting a refresher.

Di Robertson will teach the course. She has been meditating since 1994, has undertaken many meditation retreats and taught beginners' courses since 2001. She is a trustee of Southern Insight Meditation (<http://www.southern-insight.org.nz/>).

For further information and registration  
Contact Di on 338 7070 or email [diana.r@xtra.co.nz](mailto:diana.r@xtra.co.nz)

**Location:** is the Garden City Zen's Group Meditation Room at 4 Kennedy Place, Hillsborough (cnr Opawa Road).

*Follow the pathway along the side of the garage.  
The meditation room is behind the cottage.*

**Getting There By Bus:** Take the #28 Lyttelton Bus from the Bus Exchange and get off at the Grange Street stop. Walk along Opawa Road towards the Port Hills to the next side street which is Kennedy Place.

**Getting There By Bike or Car:** Travel east on Brougham Street to Garlands Rd. Continue straight through at the lights onto Opawa Rd and past Grange St. Kennedy Pl is the next street on the left and is opposite Hillsborough Park.

## Summer Retreat Reflections.....

It is nice finally to have met Yanai, about whom many fine things have been said.

I came to trust Yanai remarkably quickly. It was like he held me in the palm of his hand. I sat there in meditation on his palm, tiny and incredibly fragile, yet loved and therefore uncrushable.

It wasn't that I felt he loved me individually, he barely knew me, but rather that he wished for us each to burn for ourselves a clearing in the fields of suffering, and he gave himself fully to helping us.

That is love if ever there was a dictionary definition. I love Yanai, wherever he is at this moment, and somehow I trust him completely, and those two things together fortified me very much.

I also nourished myself in the company of the stream that sparkled and spun its way around smooth boulders, going somewhere it supposed but playing on the way, tumbling and splashing and carefree and comforting, chuckling in a friendly way which put me at ease.

"Right effort" has in the past often seemed like a tight-rope or knife-edge, between the tightness and struggle of too much effort, and the lazy uncurbed mind of too little.

But "right effort" has been slowly coming more to feel like it exists in a great field of gratitude and forgiveness and friendliness; wherein the effort is made in such a spirit of lovingness, that tightness and struggle get less of a foothold, and there is greater comprehension of when to rest or lighten up; and there is a richness that is attractive, and a beautiful curiosity, so that too little effort is a less likely scenario.

Yanai's teaching (and no doubt his mere presence), the many other teachings I've encountered, the uncluttered days at Staveley, along with efforts towards an ongoing uncomplicated daily life here in this world, have all grown these developments, and are allowing me to keep them alive.

With love, Guy.

## *Summer Retreat Reflections.....*

When telling friends that I'd gone on a silent retreat, the common response was 'that sounds nice and relaxing'. My experience was otherwise. Tense feelings were present throughout the meditation practices, and in the breaks I found myself habitually rushing around despite no need to. Silence became a magnifier through which thought patterns became glaringly obvious. Without the escape that speech provides, this became embarrassing and added to my discomfort. The dharma talks were warm and direct, addressing the heart of what I was experiencing. Tension continued to build until the retreat was almost over. I then realised the falseness of my ideas of where I was at. The collapse of these was painful, upsetting and humbling. I felt I was at the beginning - and always would be.

The 'relaxing' part of the retreat came in the weeks to follow. Having dropped some ideas, I felt refreshed, open and inspired to practice.

*A yogi*

### **Remembrance - A retreat with Yani**

Retreat memories

Encircling my mind

My new found freedom

Enveloping me like a warm blanket.

My body reclaimed

Breathing finds a well of peace and calm.

Remembering and forgetting

Arriving and dissolving.

New found spaciousness and joy

Compassion flows freely

Ease is here.

*Ann*

## On missing the retreat with Yanai..but carrying the practice on anyway.....

*Best wishes for a lovely retreat. I'm gutted to be missing it. I'm in LA with my mother who has had an urgent health crisis so I've come to help her put supports and care in place. The last time Yanai was here one of my daughters was getting married so I missed that also.*

*However I've found from my previous visits here with my mother that the mindfulness training I've had from Southern Insight Meditation over the years has been the best preparation I could possibly have had to deal with some pretty huge things here with my mother. She's unable to do anything for herself following a stroke, and advanced diabetes with heart problems and nearly blind etc. Over the past two years I've had several long stays here, getting her into care, selling her house, sorting out all her stuff and dealing with her distress- in a country where I don't know the system and it's a very complicated one at that. Anyway now she has deteriorated further and can no longer stay where she is. This has been very upsetting to the point where she couldn't swallow because she was so taken with fright!*

*Previously when I've been here (and this time also) I've brought my iPod with various dharma talks and also my copies of Eckhart Tolle books and audio talks. They have been such a huge help.*

*So just to say thanks for all your hard work over the years in faithfully putting on these retreats. The results for me have been on-going and I'm very grateful to you and the steering committee for your efforts. And of course Yanai for his dedication to his life's purpose.*

a letter from Averil Overton to Southern Insight

*He who binds to himself a joy  
Does the winged life destroy,  
But he who kisses the joy as it flies  
Lives in eternity's sun rise,'*

-- William Blake ...

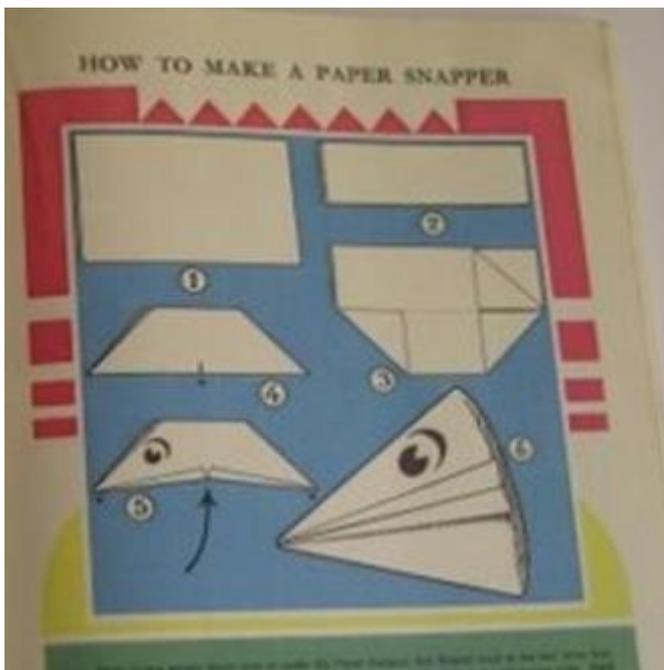
How to make an insect liberator as seen in action during the bumble bee invasion at Yanai's retreat.



I learnt how to make these from the 1953 *Rupert Bear* annual when I was seven years old. There was a story called "Rupert and the Green Buzzer", which you can see here:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a\\_gLD3xNKb8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_gLD3xNKb8)

I've been making these snappers for more than 60 years - wrongly as it turns out - and using them to liberate bees who stray inside. They are the best thing for catching bees without hurting them or you. Here are the original instructions, which now sound very quaint



Most young people know how to make the paper snapper that Rupert used in the last story but in case you do not, this is the way. Take a sheet of stiff paper (or light card) ten inches long and eight inches wide (250 mm x 200 mm). Fold it in half with the hinge at the top as shown in Fig 1. Lift the lower

edges to the top fold on each side and press the folds (Fig 2). Unfold one side. Press both bottom corners and one upper corner inwards to the middle line as in Fig 3. Treat the other side of the paper in the same way then close up the lower edges again. (Actually, this is where it gets a bit complicated. What you need to do is once you've reached Fig 3, turn the whole thing over. Unfold what is now the top side. Fold both bottom corners and the remaining unfolded upper corner inwards to the middle. Fold up that flap then turn the whole thing over again and fold up the remaining flap. It should now look like Fig 4. )

Find the exact middle of the longer side at (A) and cut a little slit there no more than half an inch long as shown. Turn up narrow folds one on each side of either side of the slit as in Fig 5. Repeat on the other side of the paper. Draw large eyes on each side and make them match\*\*. Open the whole thing outwards at the points marked with an arrow so that the corners xx come together and there is your "snapper".

\*\* You don't have to do the eyes. The bees won't thank you.



## Internet ramblings

There are many people out there writing reflections on their experiences of Buddhist practice and also many people who perhaps do not claim any knowledge of Buddhism but who, nonetheless, are reflecting on the experience of being human in ways that might interest those who have learned something of the teachings of the Buddha. As part of managing the Southern Insight facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernInsight>), I've stumbled across a lot of articles that I've found interesting and useful – even it only to spark my own curiosity and to bring new questions into my practice.

This column is for anyone out there who is 'not into Facebook' (which, I suspect is most of you), but who might find the kinds of things I'm posting there of interest.

Most of you will be aware of TED talks ([www.TED.com](http://www.TED.com)) a treasure trove of educational talks on a very wide range of fascinating topics. Check out a talk given by a Canadian woman, Brené Brown, called *The Power of Vulnerability* [http://www.ted.com/talks/brene\\_brown\\_on\\_vulnerability.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability.html). This talk looks briefly at her research into human connection and her personal experiences of doing and analysing the research. It is funny but also moving and is a talk I've watched a few times because of what it offers. Well worth a watch if you have a spare 20 minutes one day!

Another written article I enjoyed and thought about is one looking at "What's better than Gratitude" (<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-science-willpower/201211/what-s-better-gratitude>) Where the author is reflecting on a study that assesses how people feel when they have received help and how they feel when they give help. It made me realise that perhaps we do people a favour when we let them help up or perhaps even when we ask for help even though that may not feel quite as good as offering it!

There are also endless one-liners out there that can be useful reminders to connect with the present moment. This is one I particularly liked:

*"Every morning I awaken torn between the desire to save the world and the inclination to savour it".*  
(E.B. White)

Happy travelling

Chrys

## A yogi in Vietnam



I had the opportunity on a recent trip to Vietnam to visit the home monastery of the well-known and much-loved meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh. When he left Vietnam on a peace mission to the West in 1966 he was barred from returning and forced into exile in France, where he founded the Plum Village monastery.

Tu Hieu monastery is in the wettest part of Vietnam, and according to custom, it was raining. I pedalled the five kilometres out of town on a rusty single-speed bicycle. I wandered slowly around, enjoying the lush pine forest, the lotus flowers, erupting frogs and glimpses of big fish swimming in the pond, picking my way along old stone paths covered in slippery moss. As is the case in every monastery I've ever visited, construction was underway – a lovely snaking walkway across the pond leading to a pagoda.

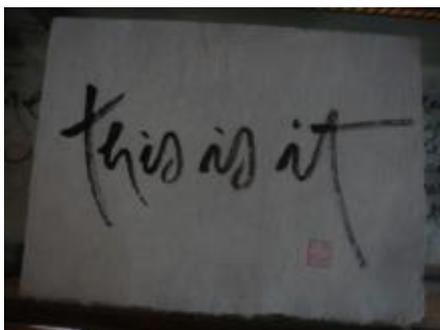
In the gift shop two monks were playing checkers, humming happily. The shop sells Thich Nhat Hanh's books and some of his beautiful calligraphy, but since each piece cost US\$80 I had to content myself with photos. No-one seemed to mind!



A smiling young monk came to open the doors of the Buddha hall. He gave me three incense sticks to offer to the Buddha. I wasn't sure of the protocol, but since practice is said to be one mistake after another I decided that what was important was what was in my heart when I offered them. A Vietnamese woman came to make her offering of what must have been 100 sticks. If the rate of progress towards enlightenment depends on quantities of incense offered I guess it's going to take me a very long time. I pondered the mother of all bells sitting on the altar and sat in silence listening to the sound of the softly falling rain, the hammering of the carpenters, the voices of the visitors and their guides. I listened to the birds. I listened to my heart.

Time to come home:  
'This is it.'

Julie



## ...Embracing the 'tainted glory of humanity'

From the Introduction to Jack Kornfield's recent book (2011) "Bringing Home the Dharma - Awakening Right Where you Are".

"The perspectives and teachings in this book are dear to my heart. For over forty years I have been practicing and teaching in this way. I have become more tolerant, kinder, more understanding, joyful and free. Not only in the meditation hall but in the grocery store, on the highways, at work, and at home.

You can too. This is not idealistic. I can also still be foolish, awkward and unconscious. But I have learned to bow with compassion to this too, to accept what Oscar Wilde calls the "tainted glory" of our humanity. And then to smile like the Buddha."

### A thought for Valentine's Day.....

"I wonder what would happen if I treated everyone like I was in love with them, whether I like them or not and whether they respond or not and no matter what they say or do to me and even if I see things in them which are ugly twisted petty cruel vain deceitful indifferent, just accept all that and turn my attention to some small weak tender hidden part and keep my eyes on that until it shines like a beam of light like a bonfire I can warm my hands by and trust it to burn away all the waste which is not never was my business to meddle with."

Ivor Smith-Cameron, "An Exploration Into God"

### Sayings of the Jewish Buddhist

Be here now. Be someplace else later.  
Is that so complicated?

## Southern Insight Steering Group

The steering group has 6 people who volunteer their time to run the organisational end of southern insight. There is also a number of folk out there who help us in many ways – thanks very much to all of you. If you feel you would like to get more involved – there are lots of little (and medium sized) jobs that we would very much appreciate a hand with. It is a tremendous group of people – very welcoming!

If you have any questions about retreats or other events, or would like to get more involved —here are the contact details of the Steering group, all of whom would be happy to talk with you:

*Di* 338 7070  
*Meg* 328 8052  
*Dermot* 381 4617  
*Rachel* 382 2019  
*Sarah* 027 669 3824  
*Chrys* 338 0313  
**E-mail:** [southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com)

## Sitting Group



Wednesdays 7.30pm – 9.15pm

Our “two venue” format for Sitting Group is working well. All are welcome to join us.

**First Weds of the month:** -Ferndale School  
**Second Weds of the month** Opawa Zendo  
**Third Weds of the month** - Ferndale School  
 (facilitated session )  
**Fourth Weds of month:** Opawa Zendo

If there are **five Wednesday’s** in a month – the default for the 5<sup>th</sup> Wednesday will be Ferndale School.

Addresses:

**Ferndale School** , 104 Merivale Lane, staffroom  
**Opawa Zendo** 4 Kennedy Place, (corner of Opawa Rd opposite the Hillsborough Domain).



Yellow daisies  
 Staring up at the world  
 Happy faces shine

Amelie MacKay, age 9

## Our True Heritage

The cosmos is filled with precious gems.  
 I want to offer a handful of them to you this morning.

Each moment you are alive is a gem,  
 shining through and containing earth and sky,  
 water and clouds.

It needs you to breathe gently  
 for the miracles to be displayed.  
 Suddenly you hear the birds singing,  
 the pines chanting,  
 see the flowers blooming,  
 the blue sky,  
 the white clouds,  
 the smile and the marvelous look  
 of your beloved.

You, the richest person on Earth,  
 who have been going around begging for a living,  
 stop being the destitute child.  
 Come back and claim your heritage.  
 We should enjoy our happiness  
 and offer it to everyone.  
 Cherish this very moment.  
 Let go of the stream of distress  
 and embrace life fully in your arms.

*This poem is from "Call Me By My True Names" The Collected Poems of Thich Nhat Hanh.*

## Getting our newsletter and hearing about local events

If you did not receive this newsletter by mail and would like to be on our mailing list, please phone Dermot on (03) 381 4617. Any donation towards the cost would be appreciated.

### Get it by e-mail!

In addition to the regular mail-out of the newsletter we send out the newsletter as a PDF attached to E-mail. If you think you would like to be on our e-mail newsletter circulation list all you need to do is send an e-mail to [Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com) with the words "**subscriber**" in the title.

If you would like to replace your hard copy with this E-version – include your name and address in the body of the e-mail and state "**remove from hard copy list**".

### Hear about local events!

If you would also like to go on [the local sangha contact list](#) to receive updates of local events in the Christchurch area – also state "**add to local list**" in the e-mail.

### Unsubscribe

If at any time you want to be removed from our e-mail contact list – just send us an e-mail with the words "unsubscribe" in the title.

## Retreat Booking Procedures

Please phone **Paul** on **381 0444** for a retreat registration form – or download a form from our website. <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

**The completed form and a deposit of \$50.00 should be sent to 6 Trent St, Linwood, Christchurch.**

Stamped addressed envelopes are appreciated when booking. Further information will be sent to you on receipt of your deposit. Please note that retreats will only run if there are sufficient registrations. Please make cheques payable to **Southern Insight Meditation**.

## Online payment instructions

The account to pay into is Southern Insight Meditation... [.ASB] **12-3148-0078078-00**

When paying online please use the following format:

In the *Particulars* box put the initials of the teacher followed by rt and the year (e.g. YP rt2013 for Yanai Postelnik retreat. – In the *Code* box put how many people are included in the retreat deposit (e.g. 1 person). In the *Reference* box put your name

E.g.

Particulars	Code	Reference
YP RT 2013	2 people	J Smith

**Please note on your registration form that you have paid your deposit online and state the amount you have paid.**

### Refunds of Deposits

The deposit for retreats is refundable up to the closing date of the retreat booked, less a \$5.00 charge for administration costs. Deposits cannot be refunded after the retreat closing date, and the money will be put into the Top-Up Fund.

### Top Up Fund

The top-up fund is for those who are unable to afford the cost of a retreat. Southern Insight aims to make retreats as accessible as possible to all, and it is possible to pay less than the lower amount in the sliding scale for a retreat. We encourage people to make use of this fund, which, thanks to the generosity of others who attend our retreats, is currently in a healthy state.

### Location

Our retreats are generally held at Staveley campsite at the foot of Mt Hutt. This is approximately 1.5 hours south west of Christchurch. For directions see our website

### Contact Details for Southern Insight

**E-mail:** [southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com)

**Post:** 16 Ward Street, Christchurch

**WebSite:** <http://southern-insight.org.nz>

E-mail is generally checked weekly. For a more immediate response call one of the numbers of the steering group members listed above.

If undelivered, please return to:  
13 Dacre Street  
Christchurch

