

SOUTHERN INSIGHT

Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation, Christchurch, New Zealand

Newsletter 48

April 2014

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.

Embracing awareness— a Day long retreat May 31st 2014 Mary Potter Centre, Christchurch
With Sharda Rogell cost \$35

We heartily welcome back Sharda Rogell – a teacher and practitioner of great experience and wisdom who has dedicated her life to helping people along the path of compassion and insight. More details are available inside our newsletter. To register call Sarah 027 6693824 or E-mail Chrys on southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com

Beginner's Course in Insight Meditation May 2013 Christchurch
This 6-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

Half day- non-residential retreats: July/ August 2014 (date TBC) Christchurch
Cost \$15

We will be running more of these popular half day retreats — 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. Go to our website, or register for local update E-mails to find out more. <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

Discovering true wellbeing – Thursday 2nd (evening) – Sunday 5 October 2014 Staveley Camp
With Julie Downard and Di Robertson Cost 160*

Part of being human is our heartfelt wish for wellbeing and ease, but often society points us in directions that only bring a temporary happiness. Insight practice uncovers the innate wellbeing that we all have within us and allows us to live our lives from this place. This retreat is suitable for those new to meditation and those with an established practice. See information inside newsletter or phone Paul to register on Tel: 381 0444.

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 are set to be as affordable as possible and longer retreats include a sliding scale: ***Sliding scale:** *the actual cost of the retreat is the higher amount, however it is possible to pay a subsidised rate, for those on limited income, anywhere from the actual cost down to the bracketed figure. 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>



*Be like the bird that pausing in her flight
a while, on boughs too slight,
feels them give way beneath her - yet sings,
knowing that she has wings.*

Victor Hugo

Future retreat events:

Dharma Gathering - January 2016

Unfortunately we have been unable to secure a suitable venue for the fourth Dharma Gathering event in 2015 – so this is now going to be postponed until January 2016. The Dharma Gathering 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 2016.

Also in 2015.....

Summer retreat 2015 –with Subhana Barzagli & Jeremy Logan & one day retreat in January with Rick Hanson – watch this space!

Enquiries:

Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com

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,

This is turning out to be the season of mists for those of us in Christchurch, but down South and elsewhere the Autumn is more enticing. It is nice to reflect that Southern Insight folk are all over the place and the sun will most certainly be shining on some of you!

In this newsletter we have a notice about the Alexandra Insight Sitting group – a hub for those further South. This group is keen and will be planning some interesting events in the next year. You are welcome to connect with them if you live locally or are just passing through.

On the theme of linking with others - Southern Insight joined with the Theravada Buddhist community of Christchurch in March to welcome and host a visit from Ajahn Chandako – abbot of the Vimutti monastery just south of Auckland. This was a wonderful chance to sit and practice with a highly experienced teacher from the Thai forest tradition – but it also made a great connection between the two groups here in Christchurch and we look forward to more shared activities.

Over the last few weeks Di and Julie have been facilitating a large group that have taken up the chance to do the on-line “Awakening Joy” course. This has been an opportunity – not only to connect with teachings and practice of developing happiness – but to do so with others who bring their own knowledge, openness, and genuine desire for joy. Very inspiring!

At the end of May we again welcome Sharda Rogell to Christchurch. Sharda’s wisdom and compassion in her teaching draws many followers so her one day retreat will be very popular. Check out the information here and be sure to register so you don’t miss out.

As usual - this newsletter has more information about our upcoming retreats as well as articles, poems and details about how to connect through southern insight’s newsletter, Facebook and website.

In joy - enjoy



Discovering true wellbeing

With Julie Downard & Di Robertson

Thursday 2nd evening – Sunday 5th October
 Cost: \$160*.
 Venue: Stavelly Camp

Part of being human is our heartfelt wish for wellbeing and ease, but often society points us in directions that only bring a temporary happiness. Insight practice uncovers the innate wellbeing that we all have within us and allows us to live our lives from this place.

This retreat is suitable for those new to meditation and those with an established practice.

To register phone Paul on 03 381 0444 or E-mail Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com. Or check out registration forms and information on our website <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>
 *sliding scale is available down to \$80. "Top up fund" also available. Please ask.



Embracing Awareness

One-day retreat
 Sharda Rogell
 31st May 2014

Living with awareness is the conduit that allows for the beautiful qualities of our heart/mind to shine forth.

Sharda Rogell, – a highly respected and experienced Insight teacher will lead a one day meditation retreat that will draw on the practices of mindfulness and metta (loving-kindness). A chance for both those new and experienced in meditation to sit with a skilled teacher much appreciated for her wisdom and compassion.

Cost: \$35
 Please bring food for a pot luck vegetarian lunch
 Venue: Mary Potter Centre, 442 Durham Street, Christchurch
 Registration essential:
 E-mail: Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com
 or Tel: Sarah 027 6693824

About the teachers:

Sharda Rogell

Sharda Rogell has devoted her life to guiding people along their spiritual path. Insight and mindfulness (vipassana) meditations and contemplative inquiry are the foundations of her practice for cultivating embodied presence and an awakening heart. She is a teacher at Spirit Rock Meditation Center in Woodacre, California as well as other centers worldwide.

Julie Downard

Julie Downard has been practising meditation since 1991 when she was living in England. Over the past twenty three years she has done intensive practice with teachers in both the Insight and Zen traditions in India, England and California. Julie has been teaching on retreats and Dharma Gatherings for the past seven years. She lives in Christchurch and is a co-founder and trustee of Southern Insight Meditation



Di Robertson

Di Robertson has 20 years experience in insight meditation, with intensive retreats and daily life practice in England and New Zealand. She has taught beginners' courses since 1999 and led several half day retreats. She lives in Christchurch and is a co-founder and trustee of Southern Insight Meditation.

Embracing it all — the January 2014 retreat.

Storms (inner and outer), water tanks run dry (not a crisis – I was assured of this by the teachers – just an....experience??) The Staveley retreat with Subhana Bazarghi and Jeremy Logan was another challenging, changing, sweet, subtle gift to the year ahead...here's how some other's found it ☺ Meg

When I think of the 2014 retreat the words of a Leonard Cohen poem come to mind.

*"Raise a tent of shelter now, though every thread is torn.
Dance me to the end of love".*

Taking the time to retreat from a busy life and meditate in a peaceful environment has been fantastically restorative and a great start to the new year. We were lucky to have such wonderful wise teachers and a supportive community of participants. I'll do this again soon!

Heather

Just remember to be aware.

Just remember to be aware,
Turn on the switch,
And fill the tank.

Watch the body, feelings, mind,
be kind to craving, aversion, fear,
Feel the despair,
allow the tear.

Just remember to be aware
Turn on the switch
And fill the tank.
But are your internal channels blanked?
An air block can need serious attention
but not in the form of anal retention.

Just remember to be aware.

Body aching, feelings quaking,
Mind is wandering here and there.
The ego talks of "my, me, and mine"
Try a bit of "thou, thee, and thine"

Just remember to be aware.

If you think that people hate ya
Let go and learn from mother nature.
A leaf can kiss you,
A flower can bliss you.
Be grateful that you're bloomin' well here.

Just remember to be aware.

Mind won't stop thinking, so let it be.
Examine the doubt, the hurt, and the pride,
then let it all go and get on with the ride.

Jos

FEAR came over for a cup of Tea.
Told me about the Car needs fixing, me dying
old and alone,
no Retirement plan and this and that.

I listened patiently and after some time FEAR
went on its way again.

What a lovely guy to be so caring for me.
I hope I didn't offend him too much by just
sitting and watching him.
I really don't want to lose this old friend of
mine.

Lots of Love and I'm sure we will see each
other soon again.

Kay
31.01.2014

.....A poem – made for Stavely



High Country Weather

Alone we are born
And die alone;
Yet see the red-gold cirrus
Over snow mountain shine

Upon the upland road
Ride easy stranger:
Surrender to the sky
Your heart of anger.

James K Baxter:

Internet ramblings

Internet Ramblings: Joy and Generosity

All the links outlined below can be found here
(<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernInsight>),
which non-facebookers can access to use the
links there rather than having to type or paste
them into your web browser! You never know,
you may also find a few other links of interest
while you are there.

I was intrigued recently to attend a gathering
focused on the idea of building a gift economy.
This video

(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_QLGvp_stl) of
Pavi Mehta explains something of what it is all
about. It was intriguing to meet someone who
lives entirely within the gift economy and has set
up a number of cafes and other community
facilities in New Zealand that operate in the way
Pavi describes here. (you can check out one of
them here:

<https://www.facebook.com/theearthhouse.peria.>)

In some ways, it is quite similar to the way many
of our Insight teachers operate but with a less
clear 'container' for helping people understand
how this works and what this kind of economy is
about. It is part of a much wider conversation
but it seems to be simply an extension of the
process of dana and reflect values such as
compassion and generosity. Hence, my
suspicions that in this sangha might connect with
the ideas here.

Here are another couple of links on the topic of
generosity – one from a Buddhist website and
one from Scientific American.

<http://www.thebuddhistvision.com/a-poor-man-asked-the-buddha-why-am-i-so-poor/>

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/generosity-is-its-own-reward/>

Quite a number of the SIM sangha have been
involved in a course called Awakening Joy run
from California by James Baraz. As part of that,
there has been an exchange of links on facebook
that are helping to remind us that the world we
live in is a pretty amazing place even with all the
suffering we find. Here are a few of the links that
may be of interest:

<http://www.gratefulness.org/brotherdavid/a-good-day.htm>

is a lovely video designed to remind us
that the everyday contains some great stuff that
we simply just have to bring to our attention.

<http://www.digitaljournal.com/pr/1782181> is a review of a book that can help people think about instilling a sense of gratitude into kids.

The Michael Leunig Appreciation Page has also been a source of some joy: Check these two examples out.

<https://www.facebook.com/175074566012104/photos/a.175075612678666.1073741826.175074566012104/233893236796903/?type=1&theater>

<https://www.facebook.com/175074566012104/photos/a.175075612678666.1073741826.175074566012104/231859103666983/?type=1&theater>

Happy travelling!
Chrys

News around the south

Alexandra Insight Sitting Group



We are an enthusiastic group of people that meets weekly at the Alexandra Community Centre (currently Mondays at 7.30pm) to practice insight (mindfulness) meditation and explore Buddhism in a non-sectarian contemporary way. Our weekly session begins with meditation followed by tea and coffee and discussion around a Buddhist topic.

For more information, please contact Jonathan 03 4487871 or email alexinsight@outlook.com

Excerpt from “Hardwiring Happiness” Rick Hansen

Imagine that your mind is like a garden. You could simply be with it, looking at its weeds and flowers without judging or changing anything. Second, you could pull weeds by decreasing what’s negative in your mind. Third, you could grow flowers by increasing the positive in your mind. In essence, you can manage your mind in three primary ways: let be, let go, let in. This book is about the third one, the cultivation of inner strength: growing flowers in the garden of the mind. To help you do this most effectively, I’d like to relate it to the other two ways to approach your mind.

Letting your mind be, simply observing your experience, gives you relief and perspective, like stepping out of a movie screen and watching from 20 rows back. Letting the stream of consciousness run on its own helps you stop chasing what’s pleasant and struggling with what’s unpleasant. You can explore your experience with interest and (hopefully) kindness toward yourself, and perhaps connect with softer, more vulnerable, and possibly younger layers in your mind. In the light of accepting, non-reactive awareness, your negative thoughts and feelings can sometimes melt away like morning mists on a sunny day.

But just being with your mind is not enough. You also need to work with it, making wise efforts, pulling weeds and growing flowers. Merely witnessing stress, worries, irritability, or a blue mood will not necessarily uproot any of these. The brain evolved to learn all too well from negative experiences, and it stores them in long-lasting neural structures. Nor does being with your mind by itself grow gratitude, enthusiasm, honesty, creativity, or many other inner strengths.

These mental qualities are based on underlying neural structures that don’t spring into being on their own. Further, to be with your mind fully, you’ve got to work with it to grow inner strength such as calm and insight that enable you to feel all your feelings and face your inner shadows even when it’s hard. Otherwise, opening to your experience can feel like opening a trap door to Hell.

Whether you are letting be, letting go or letting in, be mindful, which simply means staying present moment by moment. Mindfulness itself only witnesses, but alongside that witnessing could be active, goal-directed efforts to nudge your mind one way or another. Working with your mind is not at odds with mindfulness. In fact, you need to work with your mind to build up the inner strength of mindfulness. Be mindful of both your outer world and your inner one, both the facts around you and how you feel about them. Mindfulness is not just self-awareness. While rock climbing, I've been extremely mindful of my partner belaying me and looking out for me far below!

When something difficult or uncomfortable happens – when a storm comes to your garden – the three ways to engage your mind give you a very useful step by step sequence. First, be with your experience. Observe it and accept it for what it is, even if it's painful. Second, when it feels right – which could be a matter of seconds with a familiar worry or a matter of months or years with the loss of a loved one – begin letting go of whatever is negative. For example, relax your body to reduce tension. Third, again when it feels right, after you've released some or all of what's negative, replace it with something positive. For instance, you could remember what it's like to be with someone who appreciates you, and then stay with this experience for ten or twenty seconds. Besides feeling good in the moment, this third step will have lasting benefits, for when you take in positive experiences, you are not only growing flowers in your mind. You are growing new neural circuits in your brain. You are hardwiring happiness.

*Dr Rick Hanson is a neuropsychologist and author of **Hardwiring Happiness: The New Brain Science of Contentment, Calm, and Confidence.***

Buddhist teachings are not a religion, they are a science of mind. - Dalai Lama

Christchurch 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 5th Wednesday will be Ferndale School.

Addresses:

Ferndale School 104 Merivale Lane, staffroom
Opawa Zendo 4 Kennedy Place, (off Opawa Rd)



Buddhist - lightenment

Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out.

Forget this and attaining
Enlightenment will be the least of
your problems.

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



Registration address change

Paul is a pillar of Southern Insight. He collects your completed registration forms, posts forms out and responds to phone enquiries for every

retreat. We couldn't run our retreats without him. In all this time the address has never changed. Now Paul and his family have moved – but lucky for us he will still keep doing this job.

The new address to post registration forms is **179 England Street, Linwood, Christchurch 8011.**

Paul's phone number stays the same: 381 0444

Thanks Paul!

Saint Francis And The Sow

The bud stands for all things,
 even for those things that don't flower,
 for everything flowers, from within, of self-
 blessing;
 though sometimes it is necessary
 to reteach a thing its loveliness,
 to put a hand on its brow
 of the flower
 and retell it in words and in touch
 it is lovely
 until it flowers again from within, of self-
 blessing;
 as Saint Francis
 put his hand on the creased forehead
 of the sow, and told her in words and in touch
 blessings of earth on the sow, and the sow
 began remembering all down her thick length,
 from the earthen snout all the way
 through the fodder and slops to the spiritual
 curl of the tail,
 from the hard spininess spiked out from the
 spine
 down through the great broken heart
 to the blue milken dreaminess spurting and
 shuddering
 from the fourteen teats into the fourteen
 mouths sucking and blowing beneath
 them:
 the long, perfect loveliness of sow.

(Galway Kinnell)

We can only be said to be alive
 in those moments when our
 hearts are conscious of our
 treasures.

— Thornton Wilder

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 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 179 England St, Linwood, Christchurch 8011

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

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

