

# SOUTHERN INSIGHT

## Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation, Christchurch, New Zealand

Newsletter 52

August 2015

### UPCOMING MEDITATION RETREATS 2015/16

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.

**The Spacious Heart**                      **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> (evening) - Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October**                      **Staveley Camp**  
**with Jeremy Logan and Di Robertson**                      **Weeklong Cost \$280/140\***  
***Weekend option (limited places) Cost \$125/65\****

Through meditation our capacity to be compassionately present for our immediate experience grows. It enables us to be fully present for joyful moments, and to open to and tenderly hold the most difficult parts of ourselves. It deepens and enriches our experience of life, allowing us to move beyond conditioned patterns and to respond to life creatively. Jeremy and Di are warm and grounded teachers with a great capacity to help us find the wisdom to work in daily life. This will be a great experience for beginners and experienced practitioners alike.

**Enquiries: Email: [Southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com) or Phone: Chrys 027 286 8653**

**Beginner's Course in Insight Meditation**                      **October 2015**                      **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 e-mail [diana.r@xtra.co.nz](mailto:diana.r@xtra.co.nz)

**Dharma Gathering**                      **8<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> January 2016**                      **Staveley Camp**

This summer we will be running our long awaited third dharma gathering event. The format of the Dharma Gathering melds meditation with more interactive practices: workshops, bodywork, poetry, art, movement, debate and discussion. This is collaboration between Southern Insight and the Diamond Sangha Zen Tradition.

**Enquiries: Email: [Southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com)**

**Recollective awareness meditation**                      **Sunday November 22<sup>nd</sup> 12.30pm – 5.00pm**                      **Christchurch**  
**With Jason Siff**                      **Cost \$15**

Southern Insight welcomes Jason Siff who developed this approach to vipassana meditation when he was a Buddhist monk in Sri Lanka in the 1980s. For the past twenty-five years, he has refined this open awareness meditation practice, and has trained several teachers in the US and Australia. He is visiting Christchurch for the first time and will offer this half-day workshop as an introduction to the practice

**Enquiries: Email: [Southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com)**

**Registration** can be by post or E-mail See back of the newsletter for more information or download a registration form from our website. <http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

**Costs:** Retreats are set to be as affordable as possible and longer retreats include a **sliding scale\***: the actual cost of the retreat is the higher amount; however it is possible for those on a limited income to pay a subsidised rate, 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>



Walk and touch peace every moment.  
 Walk and touch happiness every moment.  
 Each step brings a fresh breeze.  
 Each step makes a flower bloom.  
 Kiss the Earth with your feet.  
 Bring the Earth your love and happiness.  
 The Earth will be safe  
 when we feel safe in ourselves.

- Thich Nhat Hahn

### Future retreat events:

In 2016 we will be again be welcoming back Sharda Rogell for a one day retreat 6<sup>th</sup> March 2106 – look out on our website and in our newsletters for more information.

#### Enquiries:

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

In this newsletter we have a surfeit of riches. Many people have sent in items to share - so many there is enough for another newsletter (which is lucky because there will be another one in November!)

This reminds me how much this newsletter is for you and by you. If you want to use this as a way to connect with others (perhaps you are starting a sitting group or want to join with one) – you are welcome to let us know and we can include it here. Alternately our facebook site is another great place to post up links and make connections (see more information on that in the newsletter).

We have items exploring three themes in this newsletter. Firstly some wonderful reflections on mindful parenting. Lives of parents and children can be so chaotic – and seem to offer every reason not to be mindful. In here there are some lovely examples of how a practice founded in mindfulness can be brought in to ease the way for parents and prepare our children for life.

Secondly we in Southern Insight are exploring ways to take up the many kind offers of help that we get from people. This isn't just because we could do with a hand (always nice)– but because as a group we recognize more and more that bringing the dharma into people's lives is a great way to practice. We personally get such benefits from it that we want to share this. There are several items in here from people who perform various roles – reflecting what it has meant to them. If you are interested in doing more with us or might be in the future there is also a way to let us know.

Thirdly – and beautifully in tune with these two other themes is our Internet ramblings column which highlights articles and links on equanimity and compassion – how to care but not to worry!

In joy – enjoy .....Meg ☺

## Spring retreat 2015



### The Spacious Heart An Insight and Mindfulness Retreat

with Jeremy Logan &  
Di Robertson

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> (evening) – Friday 9th October  
2015

Venue Staveley Camp

Cost \$280/\$140\*

Weekend only (limited places) \$125/\$65

*Through meditation our capacity to be  
compassionately present for our immediate  
experience grows.*

Jeremy and Di are running this week-long retreat together for the first time. They are both warm and grounded teachers with a great capacity to help us find the wisdom to work in daily life. This will be a great experience for beginners and experienced practitioners alike.

For more information e-mail

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

or find registration forms and info on our website

<http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

*\*Sliding scale is available down to half the full cost of the retreat. "Top up fund" also available. Please ask.*

## Other Spring events

### A flying visit from Winton Higgins

On **Wed Oct 21**, Sydney insight meditation Winton Higgins will be facilitating our evening meeting at Ferndale School, offering a talk on a secular approach to insight meditation.

Winton began meditating and practising the dharma in 1987. He took up teaching (mainly vipassana) meditation in 1995, in city classes and on silent residential retreats in Australia. In 2003 he became one of the regular teachers of the Bluegum Sangha and now also teaches for Golden Wattle, Beaches sanghas, and for Sydney Insight Meditators, which he helped to found in 2005.

Winton's meditation teaching has developed towards non-formulaic insight practice based on the Buddha's original teachings. While inclined towards secular Buddhism he fosters interest in the original teachings and their affinity with modern life.

Winton will also be teaching in Wellington. Find out about his visit here:

<http://abet.net.nz/winton-higgins-2015/>.

### A Path to Awakening – Urban Dharma Yatra

Sunday 6th September 2015 12.30pm – 4.30pm

A walking retreat day led by Julie Downard

A Dharma Yatra is a walking meditative pilgrimage. Its purpose is revealed in its name: *Dharma* means the teachings and practices for exploring and uncovering what it means to be alive; *Yatra* is the Sanskrit word for pilgrimage. While many pilgrimages head outward to holy destinations, we are deeply interested in exploring the here and now; in our relationship with ourselves, each other and the nature.

Our *yatra* will take place wet or fine, walking silently in single file through the beautiful eastern Christchurch landscape, living lightly on the earth. There will be regular breaks where we will stop to be still, to meditate, or to replenish our energy with a snack.

See info on our website

<http://Southern-insight.org.nz>

## About the teachers



**Jeremy Logan** has studied and practiced insight meditation for the past twenty-seven years, and has been teaching retreats throughout New Zealand since 1993. He lives in the Wairarapa and works as a

counsellor, supervisor and facilitator of change programmes.



**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 2000 and led several half-day retreats. She lives

in Christchurch and is a co-founder and trustee of Southern Insight Meditation.



**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.

**\*A note on Dana:** The registrations costs do not cover any payment to teachers for their teaching. They will receive only what you offer as Dana. Dana is a gift by each person in the spirit of generosity to reciprocate the teacher's sharing of their depth of knowledge and expertise. The amount given is up to the giver.

## Mindfulness for Children



<http://meditateincapetown.org/childrens-classes/>

On week day morning's I have the choice to walk, cycle or drive my son Erik to school. Most days we walk. Walking to school with Erik is a special experience. As Erik and I walk, I practice gratitude on our journey, reminding Erik, that for millennia our bodies have walked and for those lucky enough, walking is one of our most natural forms of transport. It is walking that connects us to our environment, our sense of place and our community.

Most days we see different people and at least once on our walk, Erik and I will have a chat, this creates a place to connect, sometimes briefly 'How's your day' in passing, a smile, or a hello. Erik has become really wonderful at creating connections. Another connection is with our environment. Erik and I discover different flowers, what's in season. Most importantly what flowers are overhanging the footpath so that we may use this opportunity to collect a posie of flowers for Erik's teacher, Benjamin. I discuss with Erik how fortunate we are to have locals whose gardens line the streets and share their seasonal beauty with us. For these connections and discoveries we foster gratitude and mindfulness.

As Erik goes to sleep at night we do a resting body meditation, 'breathe in -relax the feet, breathe in -relax the legs.....' as we go through the body, we arrive at the chest/heart we say 'breathe in – thank your legs for carrying you to school today' or "thank you heart for beating so that I may enjoy my friends." I do this to help Erik settle in to a restful sleep, and also to remind us of what it is to practice gratitude through the day – our early morning walk to school, the flowers, the connections and now back to our hearts, our place of rest. These walking, observing, and connecting rhythms in our day are tools that craft my beautiful journey

as a parent and student of life. These tools awaken gratitude and mindfulness in our daily rhythm.

Erik and I often walk hand in hand; this is our heartfelt connection to each other. The image is of my hand nestled against Erik's hand tucked safely inside. Erik's hand is full of a continuous upwelling of joy; my adult hand creates a sense of security and love. This imagery of 'hand in hand' is deeply familiar and reassuring to both mother and child. The simple qualities of connecting through familiarity give reassurance to both self and child. These connecting qualities allow me to feel I can parent from the heart, a deeply familiar place, a 'well' to be filled. Reassurance in self gives me permission to slow down, to observe and connect with both people and our environment. Self-loving has to begin with us. Through self-loving and heartfelt connections as parents, we sow the seeds that encourage our children to develop essential foundational qualities such as courage and resilience, vital skills to nurture curiosity and live 'well' in our world.

**Heidi**

Children! Number one at disturbing the peace. Mindfulness helps me to say "never mind". And with that letting go; that "never mind"; that abandoning of my aversion to chaos, there comes a spaciousness. Within this spaciousness, any necessary reprimand is more likely to be lovingly and skilfully delivered. And I am more receptive to the infectiousness of their exuberance.

**Guy**

*If you are interested in being part of a mindful parenting group; to be able to share the challenges and insights and specific practices that have nurtured children's wellbeing – and your wellbeing as a parent  
Contact Fi at [FionaGrahamster@gmail.com](mailto:FionaGrahamster@gmail.com)*

**How about connecting up with our Facebook page?**

<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernInsight>

## Internet ramblings – *Gratitude, Equanimity, Compassion and Mindfulness.*

Every day I am grateful for the wisdom of Buddhist teachings and the teachers out there whose talks are available via the internet, as mp3s, on YouTube, or as blog posts. I've had considerable cause to explore the concept of equanimity and compassion and in doing that realise I have a lot more to learn on this topic. My deep concern over what is currently happening to our planet and to our fast diminishing capacity to address the problems we face has frequently led me to worry.

This One Earth Sangha post <http://www.oneearthsangha.org/articles/equanimity-and-denial/> highlights that to be truly equanimous (rather than indifferent) to the plight of all living things on this planet we need to engage with the truth of what is happening rather than simply ignoring it or denying it (as most of us are effectively doing). Equanimity requires us to stay connected and grapple with the discomfort and the things that such connection asks of each of us. Our greatest task then is really about reconnecting – with ourselves as a start and then with others and the planet, through compassion.

Paul Gilbert talks about this really well here (thanks to Lindsay Lyons for this link) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GKVMILwzdY>. Stop for a bit. Make time and watch or listen to this. I was moved by his comment that we have to slow down to work with compassion in a world that constantly incites us to go faster and faster. It helped me to understand how slowing down and being mindful is a way to begin subverting the system that keeps us on this path.

And to end on a positive note: Check out this <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUI6tUCtY28>. It is a lovely video looking at Native American approach to sustainability. It is one of the best descriptions I have heard of "presence", and at 4.5 minutes long it is well worth taking time to watch.

Happy ramblings  
Chrys

## Offering service



<http://onlynativejapan.com/2013/01/09/jizo-the-japanese-small-buddhism-stature/460>

### Why Serve the Dharma?

There are many ways to practise.

We can attend formal retreats, and we can carry our practice into our daily lives, so that mindfulness and wisdom thread through every moment of every day. Sometimes it can be hard to make the transition from one to the other, as the difference in conditions seems so great. On retreat, we are surrounded by like-minded individuals, supporting our practice and working with the precepts of non-harming, we are still, silent and our attention can be primarily turned inwards. Generally we are in some beautiful, peaceful setting. In our daily lives we are surrounded by people who may not share our path or our ethics, we are very much relating to others, with the mind focussed outwards, we may be busy, and there is a lot of stimulation. We are certainly moving our bodies a lot more, and faster.

One way to really support this transition, and to help carry mindfulness, metta, equanimity and compassion into our daily lives, is to engage in some 'daily-life-like' practices while on retreat. One of these is the daily retreat work period. We may notice if we were washing the dishes on retreat, our mindfulness at home is quite strong while doing dishes. Personally I made a point over some years of doing every kind of retreat job on at least one retreat, to help develop strong mindfulness in a number of different daily activities. I've found this really helpful and supportive of my daily life practice.

Being in a service role on retreat is a natural extension of this. Cooking on retreat, means being present with the planning mind, the anxious mind, the figuring out mind, some bodily movement, a little bit of mindful speech and interaction with the vege-chopping yogis, the glorious pleasure of offering food in support of everyone's practice, and working with our inner response to the appreciation and praise that comes back to us.

Being in a managing role takes this further, bringing speech into our practice in quite a substantial way, as we interact with participants. Sometimes this can bring up strong feelings – we may need to decline a well-meaning request or offer, or talk to someone about a sensitive issue such as snoring (!). There is much more planning-mind involved, and sometimes it means venturing out into the world for supplies. We are still very much on retreat, supported by the silence and the focus on practising together as a community, and this enables a real presence with these tasks.

For me this gradual progression through various service roles has been immensely beneficial as I've learned to include more and more of my daily life activities into my practice. I found that after a certain number of retreats it was easy to slip into a kind of complacency, an ease with the retreat form and surroundings, a 'yes, I've been here before, yes, I'm familiar with my inner life' mode, where the curiosity and alertness became dull. Stepping into service roles allowed me to bring some 'grist for the mill' into my practice, something new and challenging to practice with. In a way that made my practice really come alive in the daily life sphere.

Quite aside from the personal benefit of developing an open heart, when I felt the benefits of the practice and such gratitude for being fortunate enough to have encountered the dharma and to be able to practice, it felt very natural to want to share that, and to enable others to have the opportunity. There are so many beautiful aspects to the insight tradition, and the one of freely offering service to ensure that the dharma is accessible to others,

regardless of their financial status, is one of the most meaningful to me. At every level, we work together to keep costs low – participants contribute daily work, the cooks, manager and teachers all give their time and energy freely. The SIM steering group, those who take registrations and look after the bank accounts, the people who do the grocery shopping before a retreat, or organise one day workshops, make sure the word gets out to all by way of the newsletter, or liaise with the invited teachers and arrange their travel... so much energy and love goes into all of this. It is the heart's natural response to be compassionate, caring and generous, and service practice both allows our own heart's deepening, reaches out to others, and expresses who we truly are.

**Julie – steering group member, SIM trustee, budding teacher.**

I've been a member of Southern Insight since my first retreat in January 2007. I'm looking forward to celebrating ten glorious years in January 2017. I live 50 km north of Dunedin in a place called Flag Swamp, where there aren't a lot of Buddhists. It was pretty lonely without a community of like-minded people for friendship and support, so finding out about Southern Insight and joining them on my first retreat was a wonderful experience. So many lovely, kind, wise people; I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. Being able to take on the job of webmaster has been great because it's meant I can contribute something to the group from a distance. This was especially so during the second Christchurch earthquake, because I was able to use the internet to track all our members down and publish the news on our website. It took me ten days to locate everyone and we were so lucky because all our people were safe, although many lost a great deal including dear friends. I'm a bit embarrassed by the title: webmaster. It's much too grand for what I do. I'm using technology that hasn't improved much since 1996 so if anyone would like to help me do the job better that would be great. I feel so lucky to have found Southern Insight, I really love my dharma buddies and feel very grateful for their friendship and support.

**Lindsay – webmaster**

I must admit, on my first few meditation retreats, I was just trying to get through to the end; I didn't give much if any thought to all that went on behind the scenes to make the retreat happen.

I feel lucky that I was unwell for ten years and had all the free time one could hope for to plug away at this thing called "meditation practice". I alternated between being interested, being somewhat desperate, and wanting to be extraordinary; so with these the main factors pushing me, I persevered. One could even say I was "driven".

But for all my drive, I'm sure I would not have come nearly so far without Southern Insight Meditation. And I have come a long way in learning to be right where I am. I love that I am no longer trying to cross all my bridges before I get to them. I love that I can more readily find stillness, within which what is present is experienced: Even when what is present are emotions on the more difficult end of the scale, be it fear, grief, anger, overwhelming doubt, or whatever. It is a completely different, amazing experience, having the mind remain attentive, open and unresisting, and receptive to insight.

Nowadays I feel a great deal of gratitude to those lovely people who, many of them for many years now, put in many hours out of the goodness of their hearts, making Southern Insight Meditation the lovely warm friendly effective entity that it is; giving us, among other things, meditation retreats; precious opportunities to live and breathe the practice with amazing support and teachings, not to mention great food.

I myself have the rather grand title of "treasurer". I am very grateful to be able to contribute in this small way, considering all that Southern Insight Meditation has done for me, laying a pathway into which I have been swept to my great and enduring benefit. I encourage anyone who has the capacity to take an active role in this wonderfulest of groups.

**Guy - treasurer**

### ...introducing our newest Steering group member

I have recently joined the steering committee. The process has been rewarding, getting to understand the inner working of the group and more of an insight aims of SIM. It reinforces my personal commitment to practice. I have valued the warm and friendly welcome by the committee and their openness to hear my ideas. I look forward to developing my connection with this group of thoughtful, passionate and proactive people. Thanks for the opportunity to be involved

Lois – steering group



### Lost

Stand still. The trees ahead and bushes beside you  
 Are not lost. Wherever you are is called Here,  
 And you must treat it as a powerful stranger,  
 Must ask permission to know it and be known.  
 The forest breathes. Listen. It answers,  
 I have made this place around you.  
 If you leave it, you may come back again, saying  
 Here.  
 No two trees are the same to Raven.  
 No two branches are the same to Wren.  
 If what a tree or a bush does is lost on you,  
 You are surely lost. Stand still. The forest knows  
 Where you are. you must let it find you.

David Wagoner

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:

<i>Di</i>	338 7070
<i>Dermot</i>	381 4617
<i>Sarah</i>	027 669 3824
<i>Chrys</i>	338 0313
<i>Lois</i>	3326106
<i>Meg</i>	328 8052
<i>Rachel</i>	382 2019

### Want to get more involved?

There are lots of ways – particularly with the **spring retreat** and the upcoming **Dharma Gathering**.

At the *spring retreat* there is a chance to “shadow” people who do jobs so you can learn what they are about. These include: menu planning, registrations, coordinator, shoppers and transporters. We are also looking for a cook for the spring retreat and there is a position for assistant cook this time too.

*Dharma Gatherings* are the biggest events in our calendar, and provide a wonderful opportunity for you to get a little bit more involved with the Southern Insight community.

Planning for this is beginning now. We will need assistance with everything from being on the organising committee to picking up large tents through to shopping, transporting people, gear and food to Staveley, helping with registrations, helping with cooking, and managing on the retreat. If you think you might be able to help at all, then please get in touch and let us know the kinds of things that you might be able to help with.

If the timing isn't right for you at the moment but you would like to know about future opportunities you could join our “**SIM helpers**” list. We send out messages to this group whenever we are looking for a hand with things. If you want to join this group just email us with the words “SIM helpers” in the title.

E-mail at

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



## Registration for retreats – new e-mail option!

We offer two options for registering for our multiday retreats: e-mail and post. Instructions are below:

### Email registration:

1. Visit [www.southern-insight.org.nz/](http://www.southern-insight.org.nz/) and download a pdf or Word file of the registration form.
2. Complete this form by hand or on your computer.
3. Send a scanned version or Wordfile via e-mail to:  
[Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com)  
with the words “Registration for XXX retreat” in the title.
4. **Please note on your form whether you are paying online or by cheque and how much you have paid.**  
Your \$50 deposit can be paid online (see instructions below) or by cheque posted to the address provided in the retreat information.
5. You will receive a response acknowledging receipt of your registration along with more information about the retreat.

### Postal registration

1. Go to our website (<http://www.southern-insight.org.nz/>) and download a pdf of the Registration form. Alternatively call Paul Sapstead 381 0444 and request a form by post.
2. Complete the registration form and post to the address shown for that retreat
3. **Note on your form whether you are paying online or by cheque and how much you have paid.**

Your \$50 deposit can be paid online (see instructions below) or by cheque posted with the registration form.

Please include your return address for correspondence (a stamp addressed envelope is appreciated)

### Online payment instructions

Account for payment: Southern Insight Meditation...

Account Number: [.ASB] **12-3148-0078078-00**

Please note the following in your payment:

In the *Particulars* box, put the initials of the teacher followed by “rt” and the year (e.g. SBrt2015 for Subhana Barzarghi retreat).

In the *Code* box, put how many people you are paying for (e.g. 1 person).

In the *Reference* box, put your name

e.g. Particulars Code Reference SB RT 2015 2  
person J Smith

**Please note on your registration form that you have paid your deposit online and say how much you have paid.**

### Refunds of Deposits

The deposit for retreats is refundable up to the closing date of the retreat booked, less a \$10.00 charge for administration costs. Deposits cannot be refunded after the retreat closing date. That 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.

*To pay less than the full retreat cost, you must talk with a committee member before coming on retreat.*

### 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 the steering group members listed above.

If undelivered, please return to:  
13 Dacre Street  
Christchurch

