



# Southern Insight

Newsletter of Southern Insight Meditation, Christchurch, New Zealand

Newsletter 67

July 2020

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2020

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 food and accommodation. Teachers receive donations.



### Spring Retreat 2020: 25 Sept – 2 October

**Jeremy Logan and Di Robertson. A sanctuary in difficult times**

Cost \$295 (150) \* plus dana

Venue: Staveley Camp, Canterbury

In these unprecedented times of radical change and uncertainty, a new world is being born. Courage and compassionate presence strengthen us to face into the chaos and not turn away. With wisdom and determination we can move forward together to create a world based on justice, kindness and shared resources rather than on greed, hatred and delusion.

The practices of Insight Meditation support our inherent capacity to awaken to wisdom and open heartedness. In attending to our own suffering, we realise that our personal welfare and happiness is intimately connected to the wellbeing of all life. This silent retreat is suitable for both those new to meditation and those with experience.

**Registration for our retreats:** please register [online](http://www.Southern-insight.org.nz) at [www.Southern-insight.org.nz](http://www.Southern-insight.org.nz). Any problems registering, then please email us or phone (contacts below). **Retreat registration closes 18<sup>th</sup> September** (note this retreat has no 'weekend option').

**Enquiries:** by e-mail to [Southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com) or phone Rachel 027 5030458, or see our website: [www.southern-insight.org.nz](http://www.southern-insight.org.nz)

**Costs:** retreats and courses are set to be as affordable as possible to cover the cost of the retreat itself. Teachers receive *dana*. \*A sliding scale or subsidised rates for those on a limited income is available. See also "top up" fund information in this newsletter. Please enquire.

NOTE: We offset carbon emissions from teacher travel to our retreats through EKOS ([ekos.org.nz](http://ekos.org.nz))

*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*



try this  
give yourself entirely to this moment  
laying everything else aside  
just the crystal-clear occurrence of this  
moment

rather than carry so many cares  
instead of carrying them as weight  
carry them as light  
the light and warmth of loving availability

leave no (present) stone unturned  
laying everything else aside for a time  
give everything to this moment  
as if behind everything there lies a great  
peace.

Guy W.

Kia ora koutou

Are you beginning to thaw?

Do you see a change in the light? A  
lengthening of the day? A small bud; an early  
flutter and chirp?

Is the watching and waiting over – or did you  
not even notice that you were holding your  
breath?

Here it comes...(whatever *it* is)

Here it comes...

This yearly moment of magical resurrection.....

Enjoy!

Meg 😊

**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.

**E-mail:**

[southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com)

**Post:** 16 Ward Street, Christchurch

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

## Future SIM events in 2021

What will we be doing in 2021? Certainly we will be doing something but it may have a different format to the past – we are adapting!

## Summer retreat: 23- 31 January 2021

Some form of this yes! Depending on travel possibilities and teacher availability. We are holding these dates with our venue – Stavelly camp. Please keep an eye out for announcements and updates will also be on our website...

<http://southern-insight.org.nz/about/upcoming-events/>

## Awakening Joy programme

"Awakening Joy" is a transformative and internationally recognized course created by leading Insight meditation teacher James Baraz. It is designed to awaken joy through engaging themes and practices that incline the mind toward well-being and deeper insight. For the past six years Southern Insight has been offering a supported group programme led by Julie Downard, where participants explore the themes and teachings together. Julie will offer this course again in 2021. If you would like to go on a mailing list for updates - email Julie at Southern Insight [Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.Insight.Meditation@gmail.com)

**Reminder: RETREAT REGISTRATION - GET IN EARLY – see cut-off date!**

## Events offered by other Sangha

There are an increasing number of events in the Insight tradition available around the country these days, which is wonderful. Here are a couple that might be of interest, both involving 'home grown' Southern Insight teachers – Di Robertson and Julie Downard.

### *Coming home*

#### **with Di Robertson**

Daylong Meditation and Mindfulness Retreat,

9:30-4:30, Sunday August 2nd  
Fairfield House, Nelson

Registration: [Registration Form](#)

And information:

[rogerwilde1@gmail.com](mailto:rogerwilde1@gmail.com)

### *Finding the Heart of Freedom –*

#### **With Jill Shepherd and Julie Downard**

Aug 21 - 30, [Te Moata](#), Coromandel

The Four Noble Truths that form the heart of the Buddha's teaching invite us to examine our relationship to dukkha: stress, distress, unsatisfactoriness, suffering. Most of us though, have an instinctive resistance to suffering, so we need to practice working skilfully with the different levels of fear that often show up along the path to freedom. As we learn how to release ourselves from the confines of these fears, we're able to live with greater ease, happiness, and peace, and to connect with the wisdom and compassion that are our true nature.

Each day, there will be sessions of guided and silent sitting meditation, walking meditation, group discussion, individual meetings with the teachers and a period of optional, gentle mindful movement.

Registration information [here](#)

## About the teachers

**Di Robertson** has over 25 years' experience in insight meditation. She has taught beginners' courses since 2000, has led a number of



short retreats and co-taught longer retreats with senior teachers. She lives in Christchurch and is a co-founder and trustee of Southern Insight Meditation. Di also works as an ecologist and is a stepparent and grandparent.



**Jeremy Logan** Jeremy has been involved in Insight Meditation since 1984 spending several years in the east and in Europe learning and practicing meditation. He has been

teaching retreats throughout NZ since 1992. Jeremy currently lives in the Wairarapa working as manager of a community counselling and family violence prevention centre and has a small private counselling practice.

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**A note on Dana:** you may notice that most of our retreats mention the word "dana". The registration fees 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 teachers' sharing of their depth of knowledge and expertise. The amount given is up to the giver.

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**Julie Downard** has been practising meditation since 1991 when living in England. She has practised intensively

with teachers in both Insight and Zen traditions in India, England, California, Australia, France, and New Zealand. Julie has been teaching on retreats and Dharma Gatherings since 2007. She lives in Christchurch and is a co-founder and trustee of Southern Insight Meditation.



## Dharma Song CDs Music by Ramon York

Ramon York has produced a CD of his beautiful dharma songs and very generously donated a number of these to Southern Insight to sell as a fundraiser. We were very lucky to have Ramon play some of these songs to us one evening on retreat— what a treat! Not only are the words a great teaching but Ramon has set these to music in a gorgeously gentle and uplifting way.

The CDs cost \$20, and if you would like to order one please contact Southern Insight.

## An Imagined Letter from Covid-19 to Humans

Stop. Just stop.

It is no longer a request. It is a mandate.

We will help you.

We will bring the supersonic, high speed  
merry-go-round to a halt

We will stop

the planes

the trains

the schools

the malls

the meetings

the frenetic, furied rush of illusions and  
“obligations” that keep you from hearing  
our single and shared beating heart,  
the way we breathe together, in unison.

Our obligation is to each other,  
As it has always been, even if, even  
though, you have forgotten.

We will interrupt this broadcast, the  
endless cacophonous broadcast of  
divisions and distractions,  
to bring you this long-breaking news:

We are not well.

None of us; all of us are suffering.

Last year, the firestorms that scorched the  
lungs of the earth  
did not give you pause.

Nor the typhoons in Africa,China, Japan.

Nor the fevered climates in Japan and

India.

You have not been listening.

It is hard to listen when you are so busy all  
the time, hustling to uphold the comforts  
and conveniences that scaffold your lives.  
But the foundation is giving way,  
buckling under the weight of your needs  
and desires.

We will help you.

We will bring the firestorms to your body

We will bring the fever to your body

We will bring the burning, searing, and  
flooding to your lungs

that you might hear:

We are not well.

Despite what you might think or feel, we  
are not the enemy.

We are Messenger. We are Ally. We are a  
balancing force.

We are asking you: To stop, to be still, to  
listen;

To move beyond your individual concerns  
and consider the concerns of all;

To be with your ignorance, to find your  
humility, to relinquish your thinking minds  
and travel deep into the mind of the  
heart;

To look up into the sky, streaked with  
fewer planes, and see it, to notice its  
condition: clear, smoky, smoggy, rainy?  
How much do you need it to be healthy so  
that you may also be healthy?

To look at a tree, and see it, to notice its  
condition: how does its health contribute  
to the health of the sky, to the air you  
need to be healthy?

To visit a river, and see it, to notice its  
condition: clear, clean, murky, polluted?  
How much do you need it to be healthy so  
that you may also be healthy? How does  
its health contribute to the health of the  
tree, who contributes to the health of the  
sky, so that you may also be healthy?

Many are afraid now.

Do not demonize your fear, and also, do  
not let it rule you. Instead, let it speak to  
you—in your stillness,  
listen for its wisdom.

What might it be telling you about what is  
at work, at issue, at risk, beyond the  
threats of personal inconvenience and  
illness?

As the health of a tree, a river, the sky tells you about quality of your own health, what might the quality of your health tell you about the health of the rivers, the trees, the sky, and all of us who share this planet with you?

Stop.

Notice if you are resisting.

Notice what you are resisting.

Ask why.

Stop. Just stop.

Be still.

Listen.

Ask us what we might teach you about illness and healing, about what might be required so that all may be well. We will help you, if you listen.

By [Kristin Flyntz](#)

## Training precepts – thoughts for life off as well as on retreat.

Those of you who have attended retreats may have heard of the concept of “precepts”. These are commonly read at the beginning of a formal practice held in community with others. In the Buddhist tradition these are intended to help create the container for practice – something that supports the mind in becoming steady and developing clarity.

These precepts are often expressed in the negative ie describing what a dedicated practitioner will refrain from doing. However, in a recent sitting group session Dermot shared these which have been expressed in the positive. Articulated this way it is becomes clear what they offer us can support an intentional way of being outside of retreat. An antidote to the confusion and competing demands of modern life.

## Five Training Precepts (expressed in the positive)

*I will train myself to support, extend and appreciate the life of all living beings.  
I will live with a sensitive and responsible awareness for the whole ecology of life.*

*I will train myself to dwell more and more in the mind of spontaneous generosity.  
Daily I will give material support, emotional support, and be an example to others of awakening in action.*

*I will train myself to use the senses to further awakening, explore Dharma, and to come to know the world more profoundly and more compassionately*

*I will train myself to communicate in a skilful and compassionate manner.*

*I will train myself to be ever more directly aware of how nutriment affects the mind and body. I will eat and drink and nurture myself and others in a way that supports awakening.*

[Tarchin Hearn](#) founding teacher of the Wangapeka Retreat Centre



One way to open your eyes to  
unnoticed beauty is to ask yourself  
‘What if I had never seen this before’  
What if I knew I would never see it  
again?’

From “the Sense of Wonder” by Rachel Carson

## Offerings from yogis on retreat...



I accompanied a bee to work today  
Out in the grass in front of the lodge

He didn't say much, but didn't mind me  
tagging along,  
I thought.

Dusting, cleaning, polishing, pollinating  
Four small clover buds in half a minute  
Busy day. I was exhausted.

Later having eaten, and now blobbedly  
reading in the car seat tent side  
I glanced down having heard him  
humming his tune  
As he visited yet another clover flower  
Phew, busy alright.

In the forest,  
The din of 10,000 bee violins accompany  
the birdsong.  
While on the lawn the dandelion shines  
Like a tiny sun through accumulations of  
clover clouds

By night, as I return to my tent the  
dandelion sun has set  
Shrunken down till dawn's call.  
Not so the clover, now resembling stars in  
the grass's sky

Those crazy buttercups insist on dancing  
through the night  
While that busy bee will be home in bed  
turning buzzes in Zzs

Brent C.

## APPRECIATING THE MIND

Be friendly with the mind.  
Let it be its mad old self.  
Be loving and oh so kind towards the  
mind, with its wanderings and its old, well  
laid grooves.

Be friendly towards this mind, let it learn  
this friendliness is reliable, let it learn  
friendliness towards itself.

Let it learn to observe itself, keeping pace  
with its own hoppity skippity, running wild  
self.

Let it learn not to believe itself too readily,  
let it doubt, inquire, delve. Become  
familiar with those storms of panic or  
dread that cascade into the mind, so that  
they are not such an ambush each time.

Give thanks to the mind, with all the  
complexities of life it navigates. Give the  
mind permission to relax. See how truly  
relaxed the mind can become?

Encourage the mind to quieten, so that  
the doors of the mind can open wide.  
Develop an eye for which pursuits of mind  
lead to dissatisfaction and discontent, and  
gently discourage such diagonals of mind.

Give the mind a mission: to make an in-  
depth study of whether worrying is useful  
or necessary. In making such a study, the  
mind might be truly convinced, through  
and through, and find itself more and  
more frequently embodied in the  
awareness of the answer to that question.

Take an interest in the mind's reactions to  
powerful and difficult emotions. See if the  
mind can stay steady and loving in the  
face of the full force of these emotions.

Be interested in this funny old mind, sometimes flailing, reactive, angry, ludicrous, sometimes patient, open, sweet and kindly. Get to know this marvelous old mind, with its seemingly infinite intricacies.

Love this mind.  
It does its best.

Guy W.

### **Sitting group – now also a regular monthly online event**

You are warmly welcome to sit with the Southern Insight sangha – now from wherever you are in the world! During lock-down, the regular weekly sits led by Di Robertson, and Russell Walker were very well attended. It was wonderful to link with people around New Zealand and even from overseas!

We will continue to offer this now on the **FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH**. If you are interested in joining and are not already on our “local events list”, Just email southern insight with the words “Zoom sitting group” in the title.

### **Christchurch Sitting group – Opawa Zendo**

Meeting in “corporal form” has also started up again. ☺

Time: Each Wednesday 7.30 – 9.15pm  
Venue: Opawa Zen Do (4 Kennedy Place).  
Koha/dana: for room hire and facilitator

This is open to all who want to practice meditation / mindfulness in the Insight tradition. Evenings have a varied programme. If you would like to go on the email list to receive monthly programme

updates – email **Di** at [Southern.Insight.Mediation@gmail.com](mailto:Southern.Insight.Mediation@gmail.com)

### **Dana for sitting group and Zendo**

We continue to make Wednesday nights available freely and without charge. Any dana/koha is gratefully received for venue hire (suggestion \$3) and facilitator. This is entirely up to you and should never be a barrier to participation – all are welcome regardless of circumstance.

For those who prefer, venue koha can be made directly to the Zendo: Account name: Zen Institute of New Zealand. BNZ: 02-0842-0152959-000 (please reference ‘Opawa zendo’).

Facilitator dana can be paid online to accounts available on the night.

### **Southern Insight has grown!**

We now have quite a few people holding regular roles with Southern Insight – thanks hugely to these people for making it possible to continue to run retreats and various events and support a community of people engaged in this practice. Some of these folk sit on the general steering and managing committee and others have roles outside this.

Di Robertson (teacher, trustee)	338 7070
Julie Downard (teacher, trustee)	
Guy Wilson (Treasurer)	382 2019
Meg Kilvington (trustee)	328 8052
Dermot Sallis (trustee)	381 4617
Sarah Tritt (trustee/registrar)	027 669 3824
Rachel Puentener (trustee)	382 2019
Chrys Horn	027 286 8653
Lois Cowan	0272894443
Marion Boyd	0274 516 322
Mike Reid	021 235 6814
John Collis	
Fi Graham	
Ali Begg (special diet coordinator)	021556708
Trevor Best	

## Registration for retreats

For Online registration for all our retreats visit [www.southern-insight.org.nz](http://www.southern-insight.org.nz)

### Online registration:

1. Visit <http://southern-insight.org.nz/about/how-to-register-and-pay-for-our-retreats/> to find the online registration form.
2. Complete this form and pay your deposit.
3. Payment of \$50 is required to confirm registration and many people choose to pay the full amount for the retreat when you register. **Please note on your form whether you are paying online and how much you have paid.**

### Online payment instructions

Account for payment:

*Southern Insight Meditation*

Account Number:

*Kiwi bank 38-9017-0230890-04*

Please note the following:

- *Particulars* box: put the initials of the teacher followed by "rt" and the year (e.g. JLDR2019 for Jeremy Logan & Di Robertson retreat).
- *Code* box: put how many people you are paying for (e.g. 1 person).
- *Reference* box: put your name e.g. J Smith

### Having trouble registering online?

If you have any difficulties registering online or would like to post a cheque rather than pay by direct debit then please feel free to call the retreat contact person (see website for specific contact for the retreat you are registering for) or email us at [southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com](mailto:southern.insight.meditation@gmail.com)

### Sliding scale of payment:

Retreat costs are set to be as affordable as possible and longer retreats including a sliding scale. The actual cost of the retreat is the higher amount, however it is possible to pay a subsidized rate, for those on a limited income, anywhere from the actual cost down to the bracketed figure.

### Top-Up Fund

The top-up fund is for those who find even the sliding scale rate is a barrier to coming on 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.

*NB: To pay less than the sliding scale, please talk with us before coming on retreat.*

### Refunds of Deposits

The deposit (or full payment if already received) for retreats is refundable up to the closing date of retreat registration.

Retreat payment can be refunded (less deposit or \$25 admin fee if position can be replaced from wait-list) if cancellation occurs after the final registration date but prior to the day before the retreat start date.

We cannot refund payment if cancellation occurs later than this. Exceptions for compassionate grounds can be made at the discretion of the steering committee.

If undelivered, please return to:  
13 Dacre Street  
Christchurch

