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## Next issue

*Meditation News* is published quarterly by WCCM in the UK. Contributions are warmly welcomed.

Please send articles for the next issue to:  
**uknewsletter@wccm.uk**  
and events to:  
**events@wccm.uk** to reach us by **1 November 2023**.

Space is limited and if the item exceeds 700 words please contact us in advance.

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-  **020 8095 4442**

## Going From Strength to Strength

As I move toward the end of my term of office as the UK National Coordinator I would like to think that our community is stronger. But what does that mean?

Two years ago the effects of the pandemic were being felt everywhere by individuals, communities and organisations and reassessments were being made about what is important. We talked about the 'new normal' and what that might look like. In the UK about 100 meditation groups had stopped meeting and yet new varieties of online and hybrid groups appeared. Outreach work in Schools and Prisons came to a complete standstill and yet the articles in the previous newsletter demonstrate that once again there is significant activity. And, we have become more aware of being part of a global community through the many online offerings received from Bonnevaux. In all of these ways we could say that we are stronger. At the heart of our community there is a real sense of direction and purpose, a strength which not even a pandemic can stop. Indeed as we saw when that sense is challenged, it can be the catalyst to bring out the best in us. We become empowered to respond. I think this is why I eventually accepted my current role.

We are now at another significant point of change, as there is no obvious successor to take over the role of UK National Coordinator, (please let me know if you would like to volunteer!), however this gives us another opportunity to grow stronger. As a volunteer led community we continually demonstrate the strength in working together and being part of a team. So, as we go into another phase without a National Coordinator I believe we have got to embrace a more team-based approach as our 'new normal'. Indeed, while writing these words I came across a great illustration from the natural world.- the beehive which is a wondrous example of working together as a complex organised com-



munity. Each member plays a crucial role in the hive's operation and is dedicated to its mission. This works through the combination of clearly defined roles, communication and collaboration.

With all this in mind the Action Group are currently putting together a plan for some reorganisation and simplification of the WCCM in the UK with a renewed emphasis on supporting local online and in person groups and regional initiatives. Hopefully, these plans will be agreed in November at the National Council meeting when those in leadership positions are invited to meet to discuss our future development. Change is not always easy, but with our sense of purpose and direction we will adapt to the new circumstances and make it work.

Our strength is our community and while I need to take a step back from the demands of my current role, I look forward to contributing as we find new and innovative ways to build the WCCM in the UK and share the gift of meditation with the many who are desperately searching.

With grateful thanks to you all for your encouragement and support over the last two years.

*Julie Roberts*  
National Coordinator  
WCCM in the UK  
[uknationalcoordinator@wccm.org](mailto:uknationalcoordinator@wccm.org)

Meditation News: changes to how we distribute our newsletter.

TAKE ACTION NOW!



So in 2024 we are planning to change how we share both the UK and international newsletters making them available online in a format that you can read on a screen or print at home if you prefer.

Subscribers will be notified by email when a new issue is available. For those who need to receive a printed copy, you will be able to request this from the UK office and there will be a suggested donation to cover photocopying and postage.

In preparation for this change...

- ◆ If you receive emails from us already you do not need to do anything at this point because we already have your email address.
◆ If you do not receive email communications from us but have an email address, please email the UK office uk@wccm.org as soon as possible to update your details.
◆ If you do not have an email address, we will contact you in due course.

Thank you for your continued support.

Julie Roberts National Coordinator WCCM in the UK

Over the last few months the Action Group has been considering what might be the best way to go forward with publication and distribution of the UK newsletter. Our colleagues around the world in the USA, Canada, France and Australia have already made the move to online only, as have some of our UK subscribers. This has the benefit of being more environmentally friendly and is a significant cost saving. (The cost of production and mailing of the quarterly newsletters is currently around £10k per annum).

Goodnews books Christian. See online the range of books, talks, and DVDs WCCM in the UK Distributors. Resources for schools and churches. Sale or return book-packs for events. Goodnews Books St John's Church Complex 296 Sundon Park Road Luton Bedfordshire LU3 3AL 01582 571011 orders@goodnewsbooks.co.uk www.goodnewsbooks.co.uk

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wccm.uk/donate

You can also send cheques to:

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Please include your name, address and email and make cheques payable to:

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If you are a UK taxpayer you can Gift Aid your donation, which increases the amount we receive at no extra cost to you. Information about Gift Aid and a declaration form is available online or from the office.

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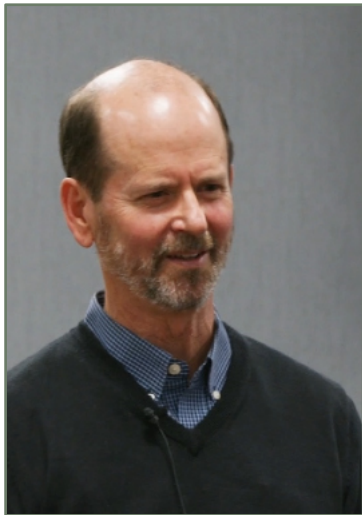


## Annual Conference 2023: How the light enters with Rev Dr Mark S Burrows

It was a great pleasure to attend the 2023 conference. The opportunity to meet up with fellow meditators, brought the realisation, yet again, of how much our lives were impoverished and curtailed by the necessary restrictions of recent years. It is sobering to reflect that the lives of too many are continuously curtailed by poverty, ill health, war and unjust social systems.

The conference with its theme of “How the light enters, contemplative wisdom for flourishing in our broken world”, provided a welcome opportunity to step back from our experience of individual and collective brokenness and to consider possibilities for acceptance and flourishing in the midst of our vulnerabilities in the face of life’s difficulties.

Rev. Dr. Mark S Burrows’ message, delivered with gentleness, humour and compassion was one of acceptance of our imperfections in the knowledge that God’s love for us does not depend on “perfect offerings”. We are known and



loved by God who sees the Divine spark in us, alongside our limitations. This message, based on Mark’s understandings of the writings of Meister Eckhart and Julian of Norwich, was illustrated with music and poetry, weaving together old and modern voices. Mark’s deep knowledge of medieval history and theology shone through his presentation and made it all the more interesting and engaging.

Mark’s insight that God lives in all of us and delights in our divine spark which cannot be extinguished no matter what we do, gives us hope to persevere in getting to know our deepest selves. Mark calls this the great mystery of love and our task is to discover this and help others discover this too. Accepting and sharing our brokenness and vulnerabilities in the face of life’s difficulties and challenges, allows for the possibility of hope and healing. Mark pointed us to the words of Leonard Cohen “There is a crack in everything, that is how the light gets in”.

The workshops gave us the opportunity to expand and share our knowledge in different ways. The workshop facilitators generously shared their knowledge and experience with us.

High Leigh is a comfortable conference centre in a lovely setting and the good weather allowed for strolls in the grounds and chats with people along the way.

This was the first conference to have online participants and it was lovely to see our fellow participants on screen and to share a wave to each other.

Regular meditation sessions daily brought us together, as well as the opportunity to join the Oblates for their morning and evening prayer.



The contemplative Eucharist, celebrated by Rev Mark Ball and enhanced by beautiful music, brought together the themes of the conference and gave us an opportunity to quietly reflect together and to give thanks for our time in the presence of God and with each other.

A big thank you to all who worked so hard to make the conference such an enjoyable, challenging and contemplative experience.

Mary Howley

Books cited in Mark’s talks:

Mark S. Burrows & Jon M. Sweeney, Meister Eckhart’s Book of the Heart (Hampton Roads, 2016); ME’s Book of Secrets (2018); ME’s Book of Darkness and Light (2023)

Chelan Harkin, Susceptible to Light. Poetry (Soulfruit Publishing, 2020)

Jane Hirshfield, Nine Gates. Entering the Mind of Poetry (Harper, 1998)

Julia B. Levine, Ordinary Psalms. Poems (LSU Press, 2021)

Kei Miller, There Is an Anger that Moves (Carcenet, 2007)

Pádraig Ó Tuama, Readings from the Book of Exile (Canterbury, 2012)

Mary Oliver, Red Bird. Poems (Beacon Press, 2009)

William Stafford, The Way It Is: Selected and New Poems (Graywolf, 1999)

Rosemerry Wahtola Trommer, All the Honey. Poems (Samara Press, 2023)

Simone Weil, Waiting for God (Harper, 2009)

For those who didn’t attend the conference Mark Burrows’ four talks which were greatly appreciated are now available to view on video. One option is to watch them next year on WCCM+, (see [wccm.org](http://wccm.org) for details) which is a subscription service currently allowing one to access 300 hours of WCCM presentations.

However, if you are not a WCCM+ member and would like to view the talks we can forward a personal link to you. The videos have been professionally edited and the suggested donation is £40. The talks including the Q&A are approximately 4 hours long and would be an excellent resource for sharing with group members at meetings.

Please contact the UK office to arrange – [uk@wccm.org](mailto:uk@wccm.org).

## A Workshop at the UK Conference: 'The Haiku of Attention'

Why the choice of title? Father Laurence and leaders of WCCM silent retreats have often encouraged participants to write *haikus*. The wonderful speaker at this year's UK Conference, Mark Burrows, is a poet. It seemed appropriate to use a poetic form as a workshop focus. But most of all, it was the link to meditation that has drawn me to the haiku.

It has a short but clear form; its essence is single-focused attention on something in the natural world. Although there are often modern variations in both structure and focus, it should not have any intrusions of the personal—in other words, no 'I', no ego. But it can end with a playfulness, a lightness. What could be more allied to meditation?

In each of the two repeated workshops, we had curious

and engaged participants, some had knowledge of the haiku, most had not. In spite of initial reluctance, after the introduction and examples, all wrote their own verse.

There was a lot of laughter as we counted the required seventeen syllables, in the correct sequence, pointing out each others errors of form. Most of all we pounced on the 'I' or 'we' intrusion, in our own or other people's work. Groans from the writers as they realised how easily ego could creep into attention paid to a leaf, a flower, a bird.

A few people sent me *haikus* they have written since, a selection of which are here for you to enjoy.

It was a lot of fun and, of course, we ended with a meditation.

Valerie Quinlivan

Rose leaf, a rose leaf,  
with holes here and there, what fun  
says the caterpillar.

Rose leaf and a thorn,  
will keep us from the flower.  
The flower has no thorn.

David Greenwood

Yellow stone alone,  
Waiting for the golden hour  
To be lifted high.

Big red umbrella  
Standing stiffly on duty  
Until the rain falls.

Tall and thin and proud  
The young princely blade of grass  
Bows to the wind

Fr Elias Polomski

Pink flower in bud  
Grows upward towards the light-  
Catches morning sun.

Spoon resting by plate  
Dips into a bowl of soup  
Then returns to rest.

Pamela Winters



Do you have any questions about your meditation practice, or your spiritual life in general?

Meditation Companions are experienced WCCM meditators who are there for you to talk to, in confidence.

Contact Bob Morley.  
rgm1@live.co.uk  
tel. 07704 419526.



WWW.WCCM.ORG

## EARTH CRISIS FORUM 4



### Focus: Ecological Grief

Gratitude, pain, new ways of seeing and the ways we might go forth

with Jason M Brown  
Simon Fraser University



THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER  
ONLINE 11.00 - 12.30 pm  
Vancouver, Canada time

There is no cost for the event but please register below

<https://wccm.org/events/earthcrisisforum4/>



## Three day Silent Retreat – Nympsfield July 2023 'Turning to the Other, Finding your Own Space'

The theme of the retreat was about holding the balance between 'living for others and making space for oneself'. Stefan Reynolds who gave short talks each day very helpfully drew examples firstly from the wise words of the Desert Fathers, then subsequently from the rule of Saint Benedict.

Finally he drew teachings from his own book on the Biblical text 'The Song of Songs' and from the writings of Saint Bernard.

It was a classic silent retreat based on a daily intensive one hour session - which comprised 25 minutes sitting with some chanting, 10 minutes of walking meditation, and a further 25 minutes sitting.

Each day also included a session of Lectio Divina and ended with Compline. Sadly without the musical support of one of our members who is seriously ill.

Each day there was also the opportunity to meet one to one with an experienced group leader or spiritual director. There were words of encouragement once a day from one of the retreatants. The retreat ended with the celebration of the Eucharist together on the Sunday led by Rev. Jude Carpenter. The spiritual atmosphere of the retreat was intense. We all seemed to drop effortlessly into a deep and united silence. The layout of the room seemed to produce this.

The feedback from the closing session was enthusiastic and that all despite some shortcomings in the accommodation and catering.

I thought to myself that this reflected "poverty" in the biblical sense in contrast to my usual pampered western lifestyle. I kept telling myself: migrants and refugees would be delighted with this!

I pay tribute to the leader Barbara Jones and a small team



MICHEL QUOIST - PRAYERS OF LIFE

of supporters who inspired and organised the retreat so successfully.

Here is an image produced by one of the participants at the final session feedback. She had noted our traditional symbol of the Two Doves on the bookmark and it came alive for her.

I think it demonstrates how deeply affected she was by the retreat and the extent to which she had integrated the message of the retreat and how it expresses the deep spiritual meaning of our community. What a blessing the retreat was for her as well as for all of us!

I came away with the strong intention and aspiration to serve the community in person, on the ground, in groups. Maranatha. Come Lord Jesus.

*Shelagh Layet*

## The Space Between Words: How to read the Bible and other Sacred Texts



How to read any sacred text is an art for us to re-learn.

Monastic wisdom saw it as one of the arts of prayer – *lectio divina* (literally 'divine reading'). It goes beyond rational analysis and scholarship (al-

though supported by these approaches) to the deepest and universal spiritual meaning which touches our vision of reality.

This course opens *lectio* as a way to experience the full meaning, both in the words and the empty, silent spaces between them, uniting mind and heart. It enriches consciousness, opening the eye of the heart with the key of

the sacred texts. This art then prepares us for the deepest art of all, meditation itself, which takes over the language frontier into the reality the words point to.

In this series Laurence Freeman will help us rediscover the art of reading any sacred text contemplatively, by learning to engage with the books that make up the Hebrew and Christian Bible. After giving an overview of world scripture, Laurence will guide a way into reading the Bible as if for the first time or, as Cassian said, "as if we had written it ourselves." Each session will be interactive and there will be small groups between the monthly classes that will read given texts together.

This WCCM *Special Series* online course in 9 monthly sessions begins on Monday 25 September 2023 and runs until September 2024. Full details of the schedule and themes are on the WCCM Events page [wccm.org/events](http://wccm.org/events). You can register for the full course or a single session.

## Maintaining hope - developing a vision



THE FOLD

In 1996, a friend visited our home, which back then was in the middle of a forest clearing. She commented, "It's just like being on holiday in this peaceful place, surrounded by trees". Our children were young and our working lives full, but here it was that I discovered the value of contemplation and experienced the emergence of a vision: to one day create a contemplative rural retreat that resourced people in the practice of solitude and stillness surrounded by nature.

Inspired by Rowan William's book, *Silence and Honeycakes*, in 2011 I began inviting people to come aside for reflection in our home and garden (with coffee and honey cake too!). But, just as Anne Morrow Lindbergh says, in her philosophically meditative book, 'Gift From The Sea', this can pose a challenge for many, "It is a difficult lesson to learn today – to leave one's friends and family and deliberately practice the art of solitude for an hour or a day or a week."



THE FOLD MEDITATION

So I just kept on sharing, through my writing and talking to as many people as I could, about how to build peaceful time aside and the practice of meditation into everyday life.

Just before lockdown, in 2019, we moved to a small former working farm, on the English/Welsh border of Herefordshire. In much need of loving restoration, we planned to build a wooden garden room there in which the meditation group established in our previous home could continue to meet, and to hold Introduction to Meditation courses. Hoping people could also drop-in for meditation.

Months of torrential rain followed by a pandemic, delayed but did not deter us. Lockdown was spent re-establishing a productive vegetable and flower garden, designed for us by one of our retreatants. It was not an easy move, from an

ordered home and floriferous garden, to something like the opposite. As strong winds, storms, and prolonged rain (on clay soil!) beat down, we had to trust in our vision, and The Fold would seem an apt name for the meditation room.

As social restrictions slowly lifted, building materials could be sourced again and construction progress in earnest. Drainage systems were put in, land cleared of pernicious overgrowth, and an orchard planted. However, any return to group gatherings, was still looking unlikely. Only individuals or couples could come, so we had to prepare The Fold for self-catering instead. We resourced it with books and materials for self-guided meditation and contemplation. I could no longer travel to lead retreats in other parts of the country. I stayed put and, like so many of us, established the unexpected ability to lead meditation and courses online.

We drew encouragement from our time spent as volunteers at Bonnevaux - during early days of its transformation (2018). There we experienced the beginnings of a vision being nurtured into a beautiful reality, as damaged buildings and land, discarded, dilapidated, were slowly being brought back to new productive life; just as we were doing on a far smaller scale. It takes strength to maintain a vision in those earliest days. The physical and mental tenacity to re-store, re-plant, re-claim, when little return can be seen, takes real focus. Early pioneers for Bonnevaux, custodians of a place yet to become, were Andrew and Delyth Cresswell and David Simpson. They so thoughtfully greeted and guided us as we did our little bit to plant, clear, sweep, cook and, most critically, gathered us to the rhythm of meditation each day. The silence maintained at the centre of what could so easily have been disorder was like a hub of hope in what was to come. To this day, we are grateful for time spent there, in that new beginning, and having the example of those hope-bearing people.



THE FOLD SIT SPOT

Meditation keeps us grounded and attentive, despite all that whirls about in the world: slowly we come to see things quietly growing, even from the ashes of neglect.

Plans can be changed in an instant, but when belief and faith in a vision remains, the creative spirit still moves. In March 2022 and 2023, instead of my planned in-person introductory courses running in The Fold, I have run two online from it (on behalf of Meditatio, London.). The Fold – our wooden room in the garden – was being used as a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



*Maintaining hope - developing a vision continued from page 6*

place from which groups of people were connecting “by wire” across thousands of miles: to learn about meditation. How could we ever have planned for that! It reminds me of my father, who in 1966, from his new shed in the garden, was delighted to make his first wireless connection (using Morse Code) to a fellow amateur radio enthusiast - in America! We were doing something not so very different from our wooden room in the garden, but with the added advantage of images!

And my outlook has changed. Leading a meditation group online, since 2020, I have been surprised to discover that the silence of meditation is just as rich via a computer screen as it is in-person. We have all widened the tent pegs, accommodating new ways to gather and run courses and retreats, and I sometimes wonder what John Main would have thought of this development (living as he did before the internet)? No doubt he would have embraced the challenge. Sharing the gift of meditation in these new ways has been transformative – and caused a renewal of thinking.

A trickle of people to The Fold has gradually increased. Hard-pressed clergy, people from different faiths and traditions, others simply seeking restful reflection in nature, are invited to meditate with us if they choose. All of them leave having learned more about meditation as an essential way for life, contemplation, and WCCM, through books, CDs, information, resources, and talking together.

We are now inviting the local community to drop-in for meditation on the last Friday of each month.

And, a word from our first visitor to The Fold, “the wide-open views enable heart and mind to unclench and rest – which of course you know and have planned for.”

The Fold is as much hybrid as the ways we are all now connecting.

*Tina Jefferies*

*WCCM Meditation Group Leader and Founder of The Fold,  
www.sanctumretreats.org*

*Thank heaven for meditation*

Minute by minute my life slips away,  
How much longer will my heart let me stay?  
the only gift that I possess  
life, is  
Tossed to the wind as I process.

Nought do I bring to each tiny second, but  
A hailstorm of wrath from way before  
Or dreams of the future to explore.

No time here to stand and stare  
at the beauty of nature.

Feel clean fresh air,  
I fill my thoughts with strife and misgiving,  
Eat my heart out with the ugliness of living.  
Distressed to the core of all that might happen.  
If I don't change my thoughts from their crazy pattern.

(My sleep being thwart with dreams unreal)

To my non thinking part I must gently appeal.  
Bring back the knowing of my beautiful self.  
Before my body enclosed me I had naked good health!  
More like a breath with fairy soft wings  
Making decisions without thrashing it through  
Instinctively knowing what I must do.  
Maintaining my joy, understanding my past  
Sensing, discerning, all wise to the truth  
Not crazy and troubled to wear myself out  
with mountains of fear.

If I lived with peace quietly would stillness appear?  
If I tried hard to listen to me could every minute  
more lovingly be?

Try coming to stillness  
The wise monks would say,

Would that bring us to heaven  
In our own special way?

We don't need to wait it will arrive in our hearts  
Peace with understanding - before we depart!

Who am I what can I say  
I'm addicted to thinking, self-talk everyday  
Moment by moment my thought wants to grow  
Takes my attention away, new themes to sow.  
The present moment is lost in this melee of thoughts  
My level of awareness reaches just nought.

How can I calm the voice inside make thinking  
unimportant  
Perceive without comment, leave gaps between fears,  
would make life less discordant?

These pauses, gaps that I could fill with truth beyond  
all musing  
Could give me back my 'isness', stop the ceaseless  
pondering  
Embrace the person who is me, glimpse pictures of  
eternity.  
Surrender to the moment where our problems don't  
exist  
Meditate to stay awake to reach unbinding bliss.

Chris Hill

## Meditatio Outreach News

This second Meditatio letter brings more news of the development of **Outreach** in the UK and some exciting Climate Crisis International Information that I hope you will be interested to hear about.

Early next summer may seem a long way off, but do make a date in your diaries that Sarah Bachelard, who is the WCCM International Coordinator for the Development of Contemplative Church, is coming from her home in Canberra Australia, at the end of the first week in June 2024 to spend two weeks with us here in the UK. This is a wonderful opportunity for our community. There will be a residential weekend at the Minsteracres Retreat Centre in County Durham running from the 7th -9th of June. This will be followed by a week of visits to some of the regions to explore and support the growth of Contemplative Church. Sarah's visit then concludes with a full day on June 15th at the Meditatio Centre in London. Some of you will have heard Sarah speaking or leading retreats, and you will know how insightful and inspirational she is. More information about her visit, or 'Gathering' as it is being described, will be in the next Newsletter. This is just for your information to keep the dates clear!

Terry Doyle has been busy expanding his work with the homeless and asylum seekers. He is encouraged by the interest and impact of sharing meditation with people 'on the margins'. He wanted me to bring your attention to a new video that he has posted on Youtube about a initiative with North East Opera. This can be accessed on the WCCM Outreach Page under Social Justice. If you scroll down you will find it just under the recording at Ampleforth of a retreat that Terry led. If you haven't watched it yet you have something very special to discover and enjoy. It is called *The Joy of Encounter*. Just beneath it is Terry's recent recording: *North East Opera: She's Like the Wind*. ( //youtu.be/Asv9nQT-31g )

The work of introducing Meditation to Children is continuing with Pat Hays and her team of volunteers. Today we can see how children are being strongly affected by the stresses of modern life and we know that meditation would help them. Recently at a conference in the USA Noel Keating described precisely how he introduced meditation into schools in Ireland. We are using a very similar



approach in the UK. If you are interested and would like to see Noel's presentation please contact Pat Hays at patcmschools@yahoo.co.uk.

There will be more news next time of exactly how people will be able to support the new way of working with primary age children, which does not require being familiar and confident about going into schools, but willing to experience the great blessing of being able to spend time with young people, joining them and their teachers doing something that they love.

The international events that I wanted to mention are the Earth Crisis Forums that are coming up. On October 12th the next one will be from Canada and will be led by Jason Browne. He will be talking about Ecological Grief. In December there is a Forum to be hosted this time by New Zealand, led by Kathy Egan, a meditator and Counsellor working on resilience. This Forum will be sharing the impact of the devastating floods and storms that New Zealand has endured recently. We are hoping that in February Meditatio will be able to bring you a special Forum from Fiji. The emphasis with all the Forums is on the role of meditation in coping with these events, and bringing a contemplative mind to the changes and adjustments in our relationship with nature that are so vital. Details of the Forums are again to be found on the Outreach page of the WCCM website. Just click on Earth Crisis: Climate and Ecology'. All the previous Forums are available there, as is the link to the active and lively Blog which has come about because of the amount of interest generated by these international Climate Crisis moments of deep sharing.

The Outreach link is: [www.wccm.org/outreach](http://www.wccm.org/outreach)

Diana Ohlson

## News for clergy who meditate

I am new to the role of *Special Interest Coordinator for Clergy* who meditate, with a particular focus on contemplative church which is the heart of ecumenism. I am hoping to come to know some of my fellow meditating priests in the UK. and together we can promote meditation and contemplative church in our own areas.

There is a strong sense among many people of faith that God is at work and spiritual renewal is beginning to shine in the world. So we can be optimistic about the future of the church opening ourselves to and being available for God's work in and through us.

To start with, if you are clergy or know of clergy who meditate I would appreciate knowing a little about you and your contemplative/ meditation experience. Alongside

many small meditation groups, I am sure there must be contemplative church also happening in many places already and it would be good to share our experiences with each other.

I would also like to know of clergy who would like to help form an ecumenical network of clergy with this interest. I realise clergy are ever busier in their diverse ministry but a contemplative clergy support group would help hold the space of silence and stillness from which we can serve others.

I would be delighted to hear from you on this issue. Please contact me at [sueclarke538@gmail.com](mailto:sueclarke538@gmail.com)

Sue Clarke



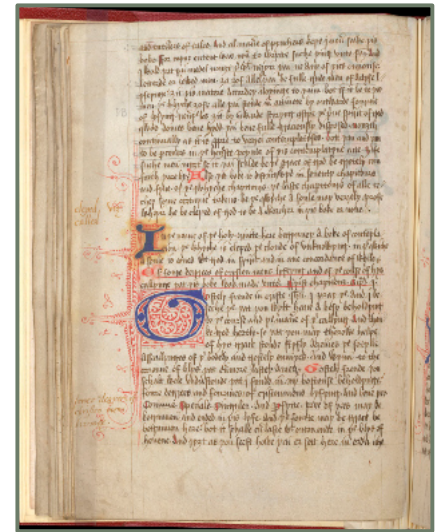
## Living with the Mystics – The Cloud of Unknowing

Last summer, our traditional quarterly gathering of 20 to 30 meditators at Ambleside focussed on the sharing of our experience of ‘living with’ the great spiritual classic known as *The Cloud of Unknowing*. This is an anonymous work of Christian mysticism written in Middle English in the latter half of the 14th century. The text is a spiritual guide on contemplative prayer in the late Middle Ages. The underlying message of this work suggests that the way to know God is to abandon consideration of God's particular activities and attributes, and be courageous enough to surrender one's mind and ego to the realm of “unknowing”, at which point one may begin to glimpse the nature of God. *The Cloud of Unknowing* focuses on the *via negativa* road to discovering God as a pure entity, beyond any capacity of mental conception and so without any definitive image or form. This tradition has reputedly inspired generations of mystics, in particular John of the Cross. The English Augustinian mystic Walter Hilton has at times been suggested as the author, but this is generally doubted. It is possible the author was a Carthusian priest, though this is not certain. It is also possible, but again doubtful, that it may have been written by a woman; the author is contemporary with Julian of Norwich. Perhaps it is most appropriate that the author is unknown!

Margaret Ives, who introduced the day, summarised “We simply have to ‘unknow’ everything we thought we knew about God, because our human knowledge is expressed in words, and words are inadequate to express the Divine mystery that is God. To experience an awareness of God’s Presence and be inspired and guided by it, we must enter this cloud, and linked with this is the process of Forgetting. ‘Contemplation’, the author says, ‘requires us to hide all people and all things past, present and future, and all accomplishments under a Cloud of Forgetting. When I say you must forget everything in creation, I mean not only the creatures themselves, but also everything that they do and are, as well as the circumstances in which they find themselves. There are no exceptions. You must forget

everything’. Sometimes, using slightly different language, he says that in contemplation we must have nothing but a “naked intent” to come into union with God; we must, as it were, strip our souls bare and present ourselves as naked, so as to be clothed with His love.”

*The Book of Privy Counseling*, written by the same author, which continues the themes discussed in the *Cloud*, was also discussed. It is less than half the length of the *Cloud*, appears to be the author's final work, and clarifies and deepens some of its teachings. In this work, the author characterises the practice of contemplative unknowing as worshipping God with one's *substance*’ coming to rest in a *naked blind feeling of being*, and ultimately finding thereby that **God is one's being**. Experience, in keeping with the mystical tradition, is considered the ultimate means by which a Christian can and should relate to God, and the practice of contemplation in *The Cloud* is thus focused on ‘piercing this cloud of unknowing with a dart of longing love’; this is the experience of God by the contemplative.




Bob Morley

Christian Meditation in Cumbria - July 2022

Picture from *Theological miscellany*, including the *Cloud of Unknowing* from the Robert Harley collection in the British Library. CC by 4.0.




Did you? See page 2 for important information about receiving *Meditation News* in 2024.




# WCCM

## Bonnevaux & Meditatio Centre Online Events


**METANOIA - LET YOUR MINDS BE REMADE**  
21 November - Jane & Dennis McAuliffe  
12 December - Mark Carney



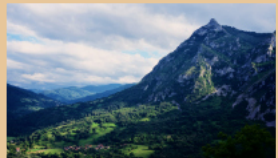
**THE JOURNEY OF CONSCIOUSNESS**  
14 October - Laurence Freeman




**THE SPACE BETWEEN WORDS: HOW TO READ THE BIBLE AND OTHER SACRED TEXTS**  
9 sessions starting 25 September - Laurence Freeman




**GENTLY INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT: LESSONS FROM JOHN OF THE CROSS FOR TODAY**  
18 November - Prof Peter Tyler



**THE GIFT OF THE ALWAYS NEW: CHRISTMAS EVE VIGIL & CHRISTMAS DAY CONTEMPLATIVE EUCHARIST**  
24 & 25 December - Laurence Freeman



**BREATHING FOR MEDITATORS IN ADVENT**  
Thursdays in Advent - Lucy Barnes





## Monastics in the World – WCCM Oblate Community

Meditation creates community. Meditators who experience personal transformation through a daily practice seek to express this in ways suitable to their own path. Oblation is one of these.

The World Community is ecumenical and the Oblate community specially reflects this. However, the WCCM as a whole acknowledges a special relationship to the Benedictine tradition which was the first in the western Church to form a stable form of inclusive religious life and, in succeeding generations, has always adapted to the needs and circumstances of the age. Oblates live out their oblation in

a spirit of 'obedience, stability and conversion' and promise 'to share always in the life and work of our Community'.

The basic element of the Oblate Community, is the 'cell'. This word has a long monastic tradition referring originally to the monk's cave or room. With us it is used to describe presence not only physical space. The cell meets with regularity, to meditate, to share the Word, to consider their ways of sharing in the work of the wider community and where time allows share a meal together. All are welcome.

For more information contact [oblates@wccm.uk](mailto:oblates@wccm.uk)

### Oblate Events

**Annual UK Oblate Weekend** Monastery of Christ our Saviour, Turvey. Beds 14 & 15 October.

**UK Oblate Community Days:** Saturday 20 January 2024 10.30 - 16.30 IN PERSON ONLY @ St. Mark's. London.

**Benedict's Well:** Weekly online Oblate led prayer session and talk. Mondays at 9am. Contact: [wccmbenedictswell@gmail.com](mailto:wccmbenedictswell@gmail.com)

### WCCM Oblate cell meetings

**Cambridge:** Contact [oblates@wccm.uk](mailto:oblates@wccm.uk) for new cell contact.

**Berkshire:** Online Zoom meeting on the last Wednesday of each month from 14.15 - 15.45. Contact: Angela Greenwood [angelagreenwood@hotmail.com](mailto:angelagreenwood@hotmail.com) 01344-774254

**North London:** Meets at Christ the King Church, Cockfosters. Contact: Philomena Phillips [philomenaphillips51@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:philomenaphillips51@hotmail.co.uk) or on 07970-971674

**Northern Cell:** Online Saturdays 7 October, 4 November, 2 December, 6 January 2024 14:00-15:30. Contact: Angela Gregson via [oblates@wccm.uk](mailto:oblates@wccm.uk) for more information

**Scotland / Borders Cell:** led by Eileen Dutt. Contact [oblates@wccm.uk](mailto:oblates@wccm.uk) for details.

**Western Cell:** led by Janet Robbins. Contact [janet@jrobbins.co.uk](mailto:janet@jrobbins.co.uk) for details.

**UK Led Online Oblate Cell Meetings:** Sundays 14.00 - 15.30 12 November, 10 December, 14 January 2024 & Wednesday Evening 19.30 - 21.00 22 November, 20 December, 24 January 2024. Contact Angela Gregson via [oblates@wccm.uk](mailto:oblates@wccm.uk) for more information

## Events

Events from the beginning of October. Please visit the WCCM in the UK website for more details and to check for changes and additional events: [//wccm.uk/events](http://wccm.uk/events)

### The School Events

**Contact: Ailsa Adamson** [ailsa.adamson@gmail.com](mailto:ailsa.adamson@gmail.com) or phone UK office: 020 8095 4442.

**Saturday 30 September to Friday 6 October. The School Silent Retreat.** Leaders: Alex Holmes and Joanne Caine. Venue: Whalley Abbey, Whalley, Clitheroe BB7 9SS

### Wales

**Saturday 14th October 10.00 for 10.30 - 3.30. Quiet Day: 'Establishing peace in ourselves - being places of peace for the world!'** Leader: Chris Whittington Venue: Tymawr Convent, Lydart, Monmouth NP25 4RN Suggested donation £10. Bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee provided. Contact: Diana Morgan [diana\\_g\\_morgan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:diana_g_morgan@hotmail.co.uk)

### Southeast England

**Friday 13 – Sunday 15 October. Going deeper in silence, stillness and simplicity.** Leader: Brijji Waterfield. Venue: The House of Prayer 35 Seymour Road East Molesey UK, KT8 0PB Cost: £200 (Standard) £220 (Ensuite). Contact: [admin@christian-retreat.org](mailto:admin@christian-retreat.org) 020 8941 2313

### Northeast England

**Friday 13 to Sunday 15 October. Tai Chi and Christian Meditation.** Venue: Ampleforth Abbey, near York YO62 4EN. [www.ampleforth.org.uk](http://www.ampleforth.org.uk). Leader: Fr Christopher Gorst OSB and Terry Doyle; Cost: £330 (En-suite) £300 (Standard); Contact: [www.ampleforth.org.uk](http://www.ampleforth.org.uk) or 01439 766099

### Northwest England

**Saturday 30 September and every last Saturday of each Month (except August and December) Manchester Meditates – A day of gathering, meditation and peace in the city centre.** Organiser: Pat Higgins and Joanne Caine. Venue: Friends Meeting House, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NS. Cost: No charge Contact: Joanne Caine–0161 307 4264 / 07776 426911 [joannecaine2@gmail.com](mailto:joannecaine2@gmail.com) or Pat Higgins–0161 962 8661 [patricia\\_higgins@hotmail.com](mailto:patricia_higgins@hotmail.com)

**Saturday 7 November 10:00 to 15:00 Living with the Mystics – Thomas à Kempis.** Leader: Diana Raven. Venue: Ambleside Parish Centre, Vicarage Road Ambleside LA22 9DH. Cost: Suggested donation £5. Drinks provided, please bring your own lunch. Booking Contact: Bob Morley 0770 44 19526 [rgm1@live.co.uk](mailto:rgm1@live.co.uk)

**Friday 10 to Sunday 12 November. The Hying Retreat.** Leader: tbc. Venue: Monastery of Our Lady of Hying, LA5 9SE. Cost: £150 (Conc. £100) residential



## Events (continued)

### South West England

**Mondays weekly 18:30 – 19:00 Meditation on Zoom from Ilminster.**

Cost: free. Contact: Alexis le Fèvre; waterratviolet@gmail.com for an invitation.

**Events at St Mary's Minster Church, Ilminster TA19 0DU.** Cost:

Donations towards expenses. Contact: Susan Lendon susanlendon18@gmail.com 01460 52504

**Wednesdays weekly, except first Wednesday of the month 19:00-20:00 Meditation.**

**Wednesday 4 October Meditation Taster Evening**

**Wednesday 1 November Meditation with Speaker: Andy Wistreich**

**Thursday 21, 28 September, 5, 12, 19, 26 October. Learning to meditate - Six week introductory course.** Venue: The Well Centre for Spirituality, Bristol BS9 3EQ. Cost: Suggested donation to The Well's upkeep £20. Contact shelagh.layet@gmail.com or 07983 594182.

**Saturday 14 October 10:00-16:00. Homeward Bound... By Way of Stillness.** Leader: Alex Holmes Venue: Brownsword Hall, Pummery Square, Poundbury, Dorchester, DT1 3GW Cost: £14 Contact: rozstockley@copsewood.org.uk / 07929 007808

### London

**Wednesdays 19:00-20:15. Addiction and Grace Meditation Group.**

Venue: Kairos Centre, Mount Angelus Road, Roehampton, London SW15 4JA. Contact: May Nicol maymbnicol@aol.com 07768 310666

### Meditatio Centre

**St Marks Church, Myddelton Sq London EC1R 1XX**

**Contact: 020 7278 2070 meditatio@wccm.org  
www.meditatiocentrelondon.org**

**Repeating events at the Meditatio Centre :**

**Monday – Thursday 13:00-13:30. Meditation at the Centre**

**Every Monday 19:00-19:30. Meditation at the Centre**

**Every Wednesday 13:00-13:30. Meditation online** (Link: <https://bit.ly/wedmed> Meeting ID: 452 619 517 Passcode: 300137)

**First Thursday of every month 18:00 – 19:00. On Beginning Meditation.**

**Every Monday 19:00 – 21:00 Yoga with Lucy Barnes**

**Single events at the Meditatio Centre :**

**Saturday, 23 September 13:30-17:00. Living and Meditating with persistent pain; a body work retreat day.** Leader: Chris Hurley. Cost: £30/£15.

**Saturday 30 Sept 10:30-16:00. Hybrid. Thomas Merton and Transformative Power of Love.** Speaker: Sophronia Scott. Cost: £40/£20 Online: £25

**Saturday 7 Oct 10:30 -16:00. Capacitar Technique Workshop.** Leader: Denise Treissman Cost: £40/£20

**Sunday 8 October 11:00-13:00. Contemplative Eucharist (3rd in 2023) – thanksgiving for our 10th anniversary.** Leader: Fr Robin Burgess. Refreshments served afterwards.

**Saturday 14 October 10:30 -16:00. Hybrid. The Journey of Consciousness.** Speaker: Laurence Freeman. Cost: £40 /£20 Online £25.00

**Saturday 21 October 14:00 and 19:00. Celebrating 100 Years of the Prophet.** Musicians: Lennie Charles and musicians.

**Wednesday, 25 October 19:00-21:00. Online. The Role of Meditation in Jewish Spiritual Life.** Speaker: Rabbi Yoel Glick. Online only. Cost: £20/£10

**Thursday 26 October 18:30-21:00. Hybrid. From Christianity to Christ.** Speaker: Brother Martin. Venue: St Mark's Myddelton Square EC1R 1XX and online.

**Saturday 4 November 10:30-16:00. Hybrid. The Gifted Imagination.** Leader: John Bell. Cost: £40 /£20 Online £25.00

**Saturday 18 November 10:30-16:00. Hybrid. "Gently into that Good Night" – John of the Cross.** Speaker: Professor Peter Tyler. Cost: £40 /£20 Online £25.00

**Friday 24 November 10:30-16:00. Still Life Collage.** Speaker: Emma Douglas. Cost: £40 /£20

**Thursdays 30 November, 7, 14, 21, December 9:00-10:00. Breathing for Meditators.** Leader: Lucy Barnes. Cost: No charge, but donations welcome: [wccm.org/donate](http://wccm.org/donate)

**Saturday 9 December 10:30-16:00. Hybrid. "Why did God Become Human?"** Speaker: Daniel Horan OFM. Cost: £40 /£20 Online £25.00

**Saturday 15 December 10:30-16:00. Hybrid. How the Birth of Jesus changed Human Consciousness.** Speaker: Laurence Freeman. Cost: £40/£20 Online £25

## The WCCM Meditation App



The WCCM Meditation App is a user-friendly and practical companion for those who want to develop a more contemplative style of life while learning to meditate.

The app includes a meditation timer, links to daily and weekly resources, worldwide community news, information about WCCM online events and the web resources of the WCCM.

A feeling of connection with other meditators helps the beginner keep going and also deepens the experience. It helps to realise the deeply personal aspect of meditation is also communal.



## Keeping In Touch

If you would like to ...

- Receive Meditation News by email or post
- Find out about meditation groups in your local area
- Find out about the Lone Meditator Network

Visit: [www.wccm.uk](http://www.wccm.uk)

Email: [uk@wccm.org](mailto:uk@wccm.org) or Phone: 020 8095 4442

Or contact:

**WCCM in the UK,  
PO Box 80029, London, EC1P 1RE**

## UK OFFICE

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uk@wccm.org

www.wccm.uk

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**The School:** Contact UK Office

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