



Dear LSN Supporters

Does spirituality have to be 'real' to be of value? was the question posed by Professor John Swinton of Aberdeen University, at the launch of the British Association for the Study of Spirituality in January 2010. It was a way of drawing the circle wide; a way of including academics and practitioners from a range of disciplines and professions, who have come increasingly to see the importance of integrating spirituality, defined often in secular humanist terms, in their chosen field of study and in their relating to students, patients and clients. The inaugural conference of BASS, held at Cumberland Lodge some months later, covered all aspects of contemporary spirituality: spirituality and education, spirituality and psychotherapy ... and medicine, nursing, mental health ... multiculturalism, the workplace, business and management, the young, old and mature, and the dying. Even spirituality and UFOs got a mention. Intriguingly, for some of us, God, the Real, became the elephant in many rooms that summer in Windsor Great Park.

Philosophically and theologically, the meaning of *real* has always been problematic, and easy or outdated definitions are rightly challenged. But it's not a word to relinquish lightly, especially in the field of spirituality. If you've been a regular reader of this newsletter, or if you came to our final Gathering in April, you'll know that last year I recorded a series of 21 conversations in which people shared with me the story of their spiritual journey to date. It will be possible, once the interviews are all fully transcribed, to check precisely how many times particular words were used by my interviewees, but I don't need software to tell me that one of the most important words for many of them was *real*. *I'm certainly not prepared to say that my experience was just emotional*, said Ann, *it was so real. There aren't many times in life when something is really real. You remember those times, when no matter how much scepticism and cynicism you can muster, you can't destroy something.*

Ann's description fits exactly with what David Hay says in his book *Something There – The Biology of the Human Spirit*, when he challenges those who deny the reality of spiritual experience: *To suppose that religious experience is a creation of the language and philosophical culture is to place it in a realm of extreme subjectivity*, he writes, *[but] when you talk to people who have actually had the experience, it simply does not fit with this supposition and does not resemble the category of subjective production or imaginings.*

With apologies then to Don Cupitt, authentic spiritual experience is real because it's an experience of the Real, or as some contemporary philosophers call it, the Really Real or the Hyper Real. John Caputo, for example, writes: *To have a religious sense of life is to long with a restless heart for a reality beyond reality, to tremble with the possibility of the impossible ... So rather than being carried off to some illusory and fantastic realm, which is what critics of religion like Freud and Marx have concluded, faith, hope and love are what we need to keep up with what is really going on in the real beyond the real, the open-ended hyper-real beyond the constricting limits of the present.*

This is a long way away from Alain de Botton and his widely-reviewed *Religion for Atheists*, in which he suggests that religions are *intermittently too useful, effective and intelligent to be abandoned to the religious alone*. No, says Alain de Botton, in effect, spirituality and religion don't have to be real to be of value.

Which really misses the point, as fellow writer Mark Vernon counters in a recent article in *The Tablet*: *Religions aim to open adherents to that source of life, or spiritual sustenance, that is expansive of our humanity. Goodwill and well-being may follow. They also may not. But when they do, they are happy by-products of the main task, which is not actually to have a successful life. It is to come to know God. ... It is striking, he continues, that atheistic writers and researchers are coming to a new appreciation of religion. Going are the days when faith could simply be written off. Nonetheless, I suspect their ideas will founder because a basic and obvious question is being avoided. Might human well-being actually have something to do with God?*

Really!

**Fare well,
Eley**

*Fountain in garden of Lumen URC, venue
for our Gathering*

In This Issue:

**Beyond the Spirituality
Revolution with David Tacey**

**Highlights from our
final Gathering**

**Backwards to the Future by
Alan Horner**

Sister Maureen Farrell

Bookshelf

Pinboard

Thanks and Farewell

Beyond the Spirituality Revolution Interview

with David Tacey

David Tacey's ground-breaking book, *The Spirituality Revolution - The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality* came out in 2004 and had an immediate impact on many readers here in the UK even though it was based largely on his work with students in Australia. Having spoken to David a number of times since the publication of *The Spirituality Revolution*, it was a real delight to be able to hear from him in person during our final Gathering on 21st April. This is an edited version of the conversation, which is available in full, both the text and the video recording, on the LSN website www.livingspirituality.org.uk

EMcA: I know there are at least two people in our Gathering today who would describe reading your book as a defining moment in their own journey. Does it surprise you that it could have had such an important impact on an individual?

DT: It does surprise me to some extent, and I'm obviously moved and touched by that, and it's lovely to hear that feedback. As you know, I work in a university context where spirituality is kind of frowned upon, and regarded with a good deal of fear and almost contempt by people who don't quite understand what I'm talking about. So it's lovely to think that although I'm working in a university setting, that readers such as those you've mentioned do find points of connection with what I'm talking about.

EMcA: Now despite the fear and hostility you've encountered in the academic world, the book was really very optimistic, very expansive in its tone and mood and vision, and yet at the same time, you were very careful to highlight the darker, more dangerous aspects of contemporary spirituality. Ten years on, do you feel your optimism was justified? Where would you say the Revolution is now?

DT: I think it is a slow revolution ... I think it is undoubtedly a universal movement, but I think it has stalled a bit at the moment. Everyone is so concerned about financial issues ... I am an optimist by nature, and where I see signs of hope I see signs to justify optimism. But also, as I was writing the book, I was very conscious that the churches, at least the ones that I was in touch with, were not offering the hand of generosity toward the spirituality revolution. The Catholic church in particular, in Australia, was making disparaging comments, saying things like *spirituality is a waste of time*. And the Cardinal in Australia made the comment that *spirituality is an unnecessary adjunct to faith*, which is still resounding in my ears. And I thought, *No! No! - I'm not going to be any part of this morbid attitude*. So I deliberately wrote it with an upbeat tempo - hopefully I didn't overdo it, because it does have its problems, but I think it's a legitimate social movement and has a great and almost wonderful future.

EMcA: Do you think that future is possibly enhanced by the fact that the movement is, in a sense, being driven underground, because the froth-and-bubble has now lapsed, it's going to be the sort of hard-core perpetrators, if you like, who will carry it forward in a less visible way?

DT: Yes, I think some of the froth-and-bubble is what is often called the New Age movement. I'm not sure about in the UK - I haven't visited the UK for the last couple of years - but here in Australia, the New Age movement seems to have run out of steam to a large extent and I think that's kind of a good thing ... I mean, I'm a little prejudiced, but it takes it [spirituality] all too lightly and mistakes spirituality for narcissism, whereas spirituality ought to be the opposite of narcissism, and a way to break out of narcissism.

EMcA: As far as I'm aware, your book was the first to highlight the seriousness of this particular spiritual path - the discipline and the conscientiousness of those involved - and I remember being very struck when you wrote that *Thy will be done, not follow thy bliss, is the hallmark of authentic spirituality*. Has your confidence in the seriousness of contemporary spirituality been vindicated in the last ten years?

DT: That's a really tough question, and a good question. One thing I think I can comment on is this: as spirituality becomes more popular, there is the danger that it becomes sort of normalised, and the sense of mystery, or sense of surprise in it, the sense of being encountered by another Voice, another Will, is in danger of being lost. And I guess that's what the churches have feared all along, frankly, and I can

see now, in hindsight, why the churches have been so disparaging towards personal spirituality, because it can easily get derailed. We don't have too many checks and balances in place to make sure we get back on track, and yes, I think the hallmark of any authentic spirituality is definitely the phrase *Thy will be done*, NOT *My but Thy!* And as spirituality becomes more common and more popular, that difference between the personal will and the Divine will, I think gets lost or blurred. People talk about *my spirituality* you know, as if it's something that is entirely theirs, and it's not seen as a gift, or as coming from a sense of grace if you like. So the danger is in losing the special nature of it. We have to remember that the word *spirituality* comes from the word *spirit* and that *Spirit* is Other than the personal will, not just part of the personal will. So there has to be a sense of tension or dialogue and I see that being potentially lost in the popularisation process.

EMcA: You write in the book about the loss of lights and illuminations that the traditions used to provide, and the need to re-establish methods to bring in light and illumination to this more personal journey. What advice would you have for people who are committed to this new form of journey but recognise their need for lights and illuminations along the way – because it's often a very lonely, isolated pursuit, isn't it?

DT: Yes, it is, and it's ironic because most people define spirituality as connectedness. It's so ironic if our search for connectedness leads to disconnectedness, to alienation ... But I think what Bernadette Flanagan is doing in Dublin is of interest to me – that's what she calls *The New Monasticism* ... We do need those techniques, those methods; we need all the help we can get, and the monasteries are full of these kinds of help, and it's very important that we try to encourage the monastic orders, and people associated with those orders, to share what they have with the general public as much as possible, because of the need for help, and signs of guidance and direction.

EMcA: So would you say more generally that part of the future of contemporary spirituality is going to involve a re-negotiation with the tradition? A re-navigation of that relationship between the contemporary spiritual search and what the traditions have to offer?

DT: Yes, I do think that, and I also think we've been here before in the Christian tradition. If you look back again at the 16th century, that's the century which has been pivotal. That's the century when you had Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross coming up with their paths of interiority. You know, Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle*, and then having some of that work drawn into the institutions by Ignatius of Loyola. And that's because at the time, the rise of science, the rise of education, the rise of the so-called intellectual enlightenment, made people query and doubt the received wisdom of the traditions and so in other words, I think that whenever there is a period of decadence, if you like, or dullness and deadness in the traditions, it is often the mystical pathways that serve to vivify and enliven those traditions. So, in a sense, I don't think there's anything new, really, about what we're experiencing at the moment. It's just that we have old, ailing institutions that need to be re-introduced to their own interior lives ... Like David Hay says in the UK, the spiritual urge is *ineradicable*, that's the word he uses a lot in his work, and I find that a very interesting and a very heart-warming word. You can't get rid of it, it's there... As Mircea Eliade would say: *it's innate*, and I do find that a source of optimism, and if the traditions can connect with that, that's marvellous.

EMcA: And this re-engagement with interiority – does it have an essential outworking in theology? What is the relationship between interiority and evolving theology?

DT: Yes, I think there's an important relationship between them. I mean, it's evolving theology that makes sense of our experience. It was St Anselm who defined theology as *faith seeking understanding* and I think that continues today and I think you might say it's more *spirituality seeking understanding* that we need now, and I think that process – *theo-poesis* – is very important. Karl Rahner started it, very much, in 1950s, 60s, 70s. Recently I've been getting steeped in the work of William Johnston, who was a Jesuit living in Tokyo, and spent most of his life living in Japan. His book, *Mystical Theology* (sic)*, seems to me to be very much a trail-blazer in terms of the kind of theo-poesis that's needed in order to track what's going on... But I do think that theology needs to be very alert to its responsibility to provide a discourse in which spiritual experience can be received into a framework of knowledge, so that it doesn't just remain a matter of personal experience, or even of faith, but also it actually does connect with knowledge – that's the role, I think, of theology.

**Mystical Journey; Arise My Love – Mysticism for a New Era.*

Highlights from the Final Gathering 21st April 2012

Our final Gathering, *Beyond the Spirituality Revolution*, was a very special day and we've been deeply touched by the responses of many of the people who were able to join us for what was part wake, part celebration: a poignant, puzzling but thankful end to LSN. Every detail: the wonderful venue, with its light, bright space, glorious stained glass window and extraordinary meditation cell; the hauntingly beautiful music of violinist Teresa Brown; the abundant and delicious food provided by Simon Denton and his café team; the moving liturgy devised by Diane Reynolds, and the contributions of key figures in the life of the network – among them, Gwen Cashmore, Paul Renyard, Ruth Harvey, Murdoch Mackenzie and Margaret Horner, reading one of her late husband Alan's poems – all these came together in an amazing day that became so much more than the sum of its parts. As much of the content as possible will be put on the LSN website: words, sound and images, to enable those of you who weren't able to join us in person to experience something of this day to remember. The texts of all the talks and the worship liturgy are also available from the LSN office by email or as hard copy by post – email or leave a message on 01908 300559 up till mid-June, or on 01908 242693 thereafter.

Backwards to the future

We row backwards,
only seeing where we have been –
the wake of our passage,
the rings in the water,
the small splashes of the oars –
not seeing where we are going,
simply pulling as we are pulled,
trusting our direction, destination,
and unable to look without losing
rhythm, speed, grace;
while those with us,
with their own dreams,
join in the drag and drip of oars,
sharing the journey.

© **Alan Horner** – from 'A Picture With The Paint Still Wet' 2005

This was included, with another of Alan's poems, *The Map*, in the closing liturgy on 21st April.

Sr Maureen Farrell FCJ

We were very sorry to hear of the death in March of Sr Maureen Farrell FCJ. Sr Maureen had been unwell for some time and died peacefully at Kersal Hill Convent, Salford, in the 58th year of her religious profession. She was a member of LSN's Associate Staff for some years from early 2002, having been asked to become involved by our then Chair, Murdoch Mackenzie, and Director Ruth Harvey. A former Ecumenical Officer for Greater Manchester, she was a sought-after spiritual director and retreat giver. She was a faithful and enthusiastic member of the LSN team, and we remember particularly the great delight she took in being a volunteer helper at the Commonwealth Games in the summer of 2002.

Bookshelf

Wherever possible all the titles mentioned in the Bookshelf section of *Living Spirituality News* will be available to borrow from the Willen Library. For further information contact the Librarian, Barbara Merrifield, on 01908 242693, or library@thewellatwillen.org.uk The library catalogue is online at www.thewellatwillen.org.uk.

William Bloom: The Power of Modern Spirituality – How to live a life of compassion and personal fulfilment (Piatkus £13.99) This is a wise and serious book whose publisher would do well

to drop the reference to personal fulfilment in its title and the back cover reverence for the author's *mind, body, spirit* credentials. Bloom is an experienced, thoughtful and well-informed defender of spirituality. *The accusation that contemporary spirituality has no values ... is untrue*, he writes, and goes on to suggest three key components, *connection, reflection and service – golden keys* – which, he argues, would provide an effective framework, a common language, through which to explore and promote the riches and values of contemporary spirituality.

Susan Cain: QUIET: The Power of Introverts in a World that Can't Stop Talking

(Penguin Viking £20.00 hb)

It's only towards the end of this fascinating and widely reviewed book that the author mentions anything overtly spiritual – she writes of the powerful influence of her much-loved Grandfather, a studious, quietly-spoken Brooklyn rabbi, and then, in a note about how she is using the terms *Extrovert* and *Introvert* she draws the ancient distinction between action and contemplation. Yet even with these scant references, there's much here of relevance, especially given the emphasis on personality typing in a number of contemporary spiritual tools, methodologies and techniques.

Raymond Chapman (ed): The Practical Mystic – Evelyn Underhill and Her Writings

(Canterbury Press £19.99)

A new collection of extracts from a wide range of Evelyn Underhill's writings, arranged thematically and with a helpful biographical and critical introduction by the Editor. The layout and references could be much clearer and the presentation is rather forbidding, but the content is worthwhile and illuminating, and provides a compact introduction to Underhill's influential ideas and insights.

Richard Holloway: Leaving Alexandria – A Memoir of Faith and Doubt (Canongate £17.99)

Once, out jogging on Hampstead Heath on a summer evening, I came face-to-face with Richard Holloway and Richard Harries deep in, presumably theological, conversation. Both of them, for me, have been among the very best of bishops, but one has stayed in the church and one has left. This poignant memoir, written, in Karen Armstrong's words with *integrity, intelligence and wit*, tells why that leaving became, in the end, inescapable. *It was the deepest irony of my life*, writes Holloway, *that I had ended up the kind of bishop in my sixties I had despised when I was a priest in my thirties. Now I had come back to where I started from and knew the place for the first time. I could no longer talk about God. I felt glutted with the verbal promiscuity of religion and the absolute confidence with which it talked about what was beyond our knowing.*

Rachel Joyce: The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry (Doubleday £12.99)

I confess I've not yet read this book, but given the delight of reviewers in all sorts of papers and journals, I can't wait to get into it. When Harold Fry leaves home one morning to post a letter, with his wife Hoovering upstairs, he has no idea that he is about to walk from one end of the country to the other. He has no hiking boots, or map, let alone a compass, waterproof or mobile phone. All he knows is that he must keep walking, to save someone else's life. Erica Wagner wrote in *The Times*: *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry arrives at a time that's right for it, and for us: it sits neatly alongside Alain de Botton's Religion for Atheists, or Richard Holloway's memoir Leaving Alexandria ... But Joyce's sense of the spirit, and of what pilgrimage means, is broad. 'When we think about pilgrimages now,' she says, 'we don't have to assume that they are to religious places...'*

Martin Laird: A Sunlit Absence – Silence, Awareness, and Contemplation (OUP £11.99)

A beautifully produced follow-up volume to Laird's earlier *Into the Silent Land*, but my sense is that this has come out rather too soon, as if the first book was the fruit of his whole life to that point and he hasn't had time to replicate that depth or lyricism. It's still helpful and insightful, full of resonant quotations, excellent on struggles in prayer, but it's sometimes awkward and stylistically self-conscious. Having said that, the author is speaking in various places in the UK in the coming weeks (see Pinboard) and if you get the chance to hear him in person, welcome it with both hands!

Maggie Ross: Writing the Icon of the Heart – In Silence Beholding (BRF £6.99)

Maggie Ross is the pseudonym of the Anglican solitary Sr Martha Reeves and I was fortunate to hear Maggie/Sr Martha speak at a recent Mayflower Conference in Oxford, entitled *Beholding, Loving and Bearing God*. Her work is new to me and I feel I've been missing out. This latest book is a collection of

revised essays on themes as diverse as *Cranberries*, *Barking at Angels* and *the Walrus of the Living God*. Lest you be put off by such an eclectic selection, this is from her introduction: *Silence is context and end, beholding the means. In the final analysis, this is all we need to know. This silence is not absence of noise; it is the vast interior landscape that invites us to stillness. At its heart, in our heart, it is the Other.*

Rupert Sheldrake: The Science Delusion – Freeing the Spirit of Enquiry (Coronet £19.99)

Rupert Sheldrake is a serious scientist – a biologist – who speaks out against the orthodoxy of scientism and the belief that science already understands the nature of reality and only has a few gaps and details to fill in. His work and theories have proved controversial, drawing hostile criticism from some members of the scientific and academic establishment but an enthusiastic and hopeful welcome elsewhere. In this new and, for many, exciting book challenges the *Ten Dogmas of Modern Science* and points the way to new possibilities of creative dialogue between a science liberated from materialist ideology and the world's religious traditions. *Much remains to be discovered and rediscovered*, he concludes, *including wisdom.*



Pinboard

Companions on the Journey

We have compiled a list of groups and organisations that LSN has liaised with in various ways over recent years, entitled 'Companions on the Journey' – never complete or up to date, but our best effort. Most of the entries have their own mailing list - you might like to join, or find out more about some of them. We have emailed the list as an Excel file to all those for whom we have an email address, but if you would like a hard copy by post, please contact the LSN office on 01908 300559, or alternatively, the Willen Library on 01908 242693.

Website Recommendations

Tony Jaques, Warden of the Othona Community in Dorset, points us in the direction of the website www.spiritualityandpractice.com saying that he finds it a *most valuable resource – one of the shapes of things to come for the more fluid 'institutions' of the future.*

Linda Murgatroyd highlights the bi-monthly e-newsletter of the Art and Spirituality Network, available through www.artandspirituality.net (artandspirituality@gmail.com), as another valuable resource, and one which also offers the opportunity to publicise events and insights on art and spirituality issues.

June 2012

1-3: Holy Rood House, N Yorks: Risen Christa, a women's spirituality weekend with Nicola Slee. See www.holyroodhouse.org.uk Contact 01845 522580 or theologycentre@holyroodhouse.org.uk

9: Sisters of St Andrew, Edenbridge, Kent: We have seen the Lord, a quiet day with input, space for reflection and exploration of the ways in which God can be seen and known. See www.sisters-of-st-andrew.com Contact 01342 850 388 or thecentre@sisters-of-st-andrew.com

12: Tabor Carmelite Retreat House, Preston: Bread for Life, a day of reflection around bread-making. Contact 01772 378030 or tabor@carmelite.net See www.tabor-preston.org

13: St Marks CRC Sheffield: Mindfulness and Compassion in the Workplace, with John Darwin. An evening event at the Centre for Radical Christianity in Sheffield. See www.stmarksCRC.co.uk Contact 0114 266 3613 or info@stmarksCRC.co.uk

14: Sarum College, Salisbury: Two Faiths and a Vision for the Economy, one-day course exploring finance from two faith perspectives, Muslim and Christian, with Tarek El Diwany and Peter Selby. See www.sarum.ac.uk Contact 01722 424800 or courses@sarum.ac.uk

14: St Bede's Pastoral Centre, York: Silk? Satin? Muslin? Rags?, an invitation to explore the spirituality of clothing, with Ann Bowes. See www.stbedes.org.uk Contact 01904 464900 or admin@stbedes.org.uk

15: Edinburgh: Healing Sounds of the Wandering Dervishes of Turkey, evening event featuring Turkish mystic Sufi music, poetry, stories and images, with Latif Bolat. See www.latifbolat.com Contact 0131 331 4469 or mesp2008@hotmail.co.uk

16: Stillpoint, Oxford: A Sunlit Absence – Silence, Awareness and Contemplation, with Martin Laird. A day of teaching and practice. See www.thestillpoint.org.uk Contact matt@thestillpoint.org.uk

22-24: Othona Community, Dorset: Stillness and Mindfulness – The Power Within You, a weekend of stillness and of learning how 'to be', how to accept 'what is', with the goal of acquiring these tools for better emotional and physical well-being. With Anna Howard and Stafford Whiteaker. See www.othona-bb.org.uk Contact 01308 897130 or mail@othona-bb.org.uk

25-29: Schumacher College, Devon: Harmony - How can we use the age-old principles of 'Harmony' to create more sustainable and meaningful lives for ourselves as individuals and as societies? With Hossein Elahi Ghomshei, Ian Skelly, Satish Kumar, Emma Clark and Adam Hunt. See www.schumachercollege.org.uk Contact 01803 865934 or admin@schumachercollege.org.uk

29- 1 July: Redlynch, Somerset: Walking the Story of the Universe, with Greg Morter, Richard Adams and Ian Mowll, in association with Greenspirit. Walk the story of the Universe, from the Big Bang, through the creation of the stars, galaxies and planet Earth. See www.greenspirit.org.uk/cosmicwalk/ Contact 020 8552 2096 or contact@greenspirit.org.uk

July

5-9: Othona Community, Dorset: Nature and Spirit – Exploring the Vital Connection, guided opportunities to explore what it means to encounter Nature in an intentional, contemplative way, with ecologist and psychotherapist, Julie Walker. See www.othona-bb.org.uk Contact 01308 897130 or mail@othona-bb.org.uk

7: Dublin: Into the Silent Land: The Practice of Contemplation. New Monasticism Ireland hosts a day of teaching and practice with Martin Laird. See www.newmonasticismsireland.org Contact 087 203 3006 or sophiasociety@gmail.com

13-15: Sarum College, Salisbury: Mysticism in the Modern World, conference to explore some of the ways in which mysticism is and has been used by those on the edges of Christian culture to shape their spiritual lives. See www.sarum.ac.uk Contact 01722 424800 or courses@sarum.ac.uk

16-19: High Leigh Conference Centre, Herts: By Whose Authority? An interfaith look at women and religious authority, chaired by Harriet Harris. Annual Conference of Modern Church. See www.modernchurch.org.uk Contact 0845 354 1909 or conference@modernchurch.org.uk

19-22: Othona Community, Dorset: Writing for our Lives, Othona's first creative writing workshop, in association with Alternatives, based at St James's Church, Piccadilly. Led by Jackee Holder. See www.alternatives.org.uk Contact 020 7287 6711

23-27: St Beunos, N Wales: Praying the Labyrinth. Exploring different ways of praying the labyrinth, with Maggy Cooper. See www.beunos.com Contact 01745 583444 or secretary@beunos.com

August

3-5: Woodbrooke, Birmingham: Nature as Monastery, Nature as Sanctuary, retreat led by Clíodhna Mulhern, for those who sense that it is a deepening connection in and through Nature, that we will find our own hidden wholeness. See www.woodbrooke.org.uk Contact 07929 328513 or enquiries@woodbrooke.org.uk

20-24: All Hallows, Dublin: Journeying with S/spirit, one-week summer school covering the concept of Reflective Practice, poetry/story/song and the spiritual journey, writing as a spiritual process, and spiritual autobiography. See www.allhallows.ie Contact + 353 1 837 3745 or mosullivan@allhallows.ie

20-24: Loyola Hall, Merseyside: Ignatius the Mystic and Mysticism Today, Annual Conference of the Spiritual Exercises Network, with Brian O'Leary. See www.loyolahall.co.uk and <http://thepilgrim.org.uk> Contact 0151 426 4137 or admin@thepilgrim.org.uk

31-1 Sept: Turvey Abbey, Beds: Listen with the Ear of Your Heart, discover how the word of God speaks to your heart through the practice of the ancient art of Lectio Divina. See www.turveyabbey.org.uk Contact Sr Judith 01234 881432 or info@turveyabbey.org.uk

31-2 Sept: Carmelite Priory, Boars Hill, Oxford: The Christ Consciousness and the Mysteries of Incarnation and Resurrection, a Wrekin Forum weekend retreat with Ravi Ravindra. See www.wrekintrust.org Contact 01243 576634 or carolduncan8hl@btinternet.com

Thanks and Farewell

Near the beginning of my talk at the Gathering, I quoted a line from the recent film, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*. *Everything will be alright in the end*, Sonny, the hotel manager, declared often, *and if it's not alright, it's not the end!*

It is the end of LSN as we've known it, and it's not at all clear if, how or in what form the work we've done might be continued in the future. But as I said at the end of that talk, while we don't know where the path might lead, we do know, as the poet Ann Weems knows, *that it's not over, this birthing./There are always newer skies/Into which God can throw stars.*

Which is not to say that things won't change, won't hurt and won't die, but it is to say that in the realm of the Spirit, the end is never where we think it is.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all of you who have supported and encouraged us over the years – we will miss you very much. Our normal email address and phone number will operate until mid-June, with Win Kennedy checking in and tying loose ends. After that, the best contact will be the Willen Librarian, Barbara Merrifield (01908 242693 or library@thewellatwillen.org.uk) with whom we have worked very closely and who is sure to give you a very warm welcome if you are able to visit in person. See the library leaflet (enclosed with this newsletter) for her working hours and more details about the library, and remember she is happy to arrange postal loans from the library stock, and that you can view the catalogue online at www.thewellatwillen.org.uk. Alternatively the CTBI Administrator (Churches Together in Britain and Ireland) on 0845 680 6851 or info@ctbi.org.uk will know how to direct your enquiry.

The Living Spirituality Network, The Well at Willen, Newport Road, Willen, Milton Keynes MK15 9AA
www.livingspirituality.org.uk