

Love and Light

SSSSO (UK) – monthly update



9th August 2006

Listening to a Legend...

Dear Readers,
Sai Ram to you all, what a month July was! As well as the lovely hot weather in London – and of course in Prashanti, the Organisation was proud to share in afternoon tea by 'Royal Appointment' for our National Youth Co-ordinator and his wife (*please see Special Feature*). We were also delighted to have, on the last weekend in July, Phyllis Krystal sharing her golden experiences with us. At the tender age of 92, Phyllis captivated the audience with a trip down memory lane. (*See article further on*) I was fortunate enough to spend two glorious weeks in Prashanti in the physical presence of our Beloved Bhagwan. It was wonderful to see, on Gurupurnima Day, Swami distributing bicycles to the physically handicapped young people, and then in the afternoon, see Him listening to the International Sai Symphony Orchestra concert that so reminded of the BBC 'Last Night of the Proms'! Today in Prashanti, the special Shiva Yagna has begun for twelve days.

(For more details please see www.srisathyasai.org.in).
I look forward to seeing many of you this month – at the Isle of Wight Satsang on Saturday 12th and on the 26th at the NYP 'All-Night Bhajans' in Central London.
Love & Light
Shobhna Patel, UK Chair

Isle of Wight Satsang 'Living with Sai'

Ryde Theatre, Lind Street, Ryde, Isle of Wight, PO33 2NQ
Saturday 12th August from 11.00am – 2.30pm
Refreshments from 10.00am – please bring a packed lunch.
This is an invitation to the 'Isle of Light' (as Swami calls it!) Annual Satsangs have been held there since 1990 and were founded by Pat Hathaway who is 90 this year. For more information and to register attendance contact: livingwithsai@yahoo.co.uk

National Youth Pilgrimage 2006 All-Night Bhajans

Saturday 26th – Sunday 27th August 2006
Coram Fields Nursery, 93 Guilford Street,
Russell Square, London WC1N 1DN
Time: Sat 9.00pm (Sharp) until 6.00am.
All Adults and Youth welcome.
Contact: Shitu or Rita for information 07967 372 128

*"Criticising others and finding fault with them
comes out of egoism."* Sathya Sai Baba

National Teachers' Day 2006

All Office-Bearers, Teachers, Teaching Assistants and those working with Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) are invited to take part in the National Teachers' Day on Sunday 3rd September 2006 in the Winston Churchill Hall, Ruislip, Middlesex. To register, please contact:
Sharmila Parikh, National SSE Co-ordinator:
0789 0042160 or email c.parikh@tesco.net

National Ladies' Day 'Giving Wings to Our Hearts' Nr Dunstable, Bedfordshire Saturday 14th October 2006

Application forms will soon be available in every Centre and Group. Only ten ladies will be selected to be representatives from each Region. We aim to inspire these 80 ladies to seed new ideas for all their Sisters within all the Regions.

Rosemary Perry, National Vice-Chair

Love Walking on Three Feet! (Walking stick included...)

The weekend of the 29th and 30th July saw a downpour of grace for some lucky individuals across the country. After celebrating her 90th birthday in 2004, Phyllis Krystal once again agreed to visit the United Kingdom and address two very special events in London. Phyllis is a remarkable lady. At 92 years, she is still travelling the world and imparting the work that has been inspired and given to her by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Phyllis truly is a "living legend" one of the first few western devotees to visit Prashanti in the early 1970s.

Saturday 29th July saw 500 people attend the Sathya Sai National Interfaith Forum with Phyllis Krystal. The event opened with a spectacular oriental 'Lion Dance' and martial arts piece. This set the scene for the uplifting and elevating talk that was to follow by Phyllis Krystal. Phyllis spoke about the challenges of being on the spiritual path and described some of the ways we can unpeel the many layers of behavioural patterns that conceal our inner-selves. Her technique is both effective and creative, allowing us to free ourselves from the negative energies inhibiting our personality and enabling us to progress in life. Through vivid stories of her close contacts with Swami and her gentle warm, humility and wisdom which she displayed throughout the session, the participants learned techniques such as 'The Maypole', the 'Tree Meditation', 'Cutting the Ties'

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(Cont'd) and other tools that would support the participants in being freer and happier.

Sunday 30th July was reserved for the youth, over 230 youth gathered from all corners of the country for a special session with Phyllis Krystal. Phyllis is an expert on Youth issues and very in-touch with the issues and challenges that concern them in their daily lives. Phyllis discussed many topics such as peer pressure, dating, relationships, marriage, parents, and many others. She patiently took endless questions from the floor and gave lucid answers clearing doubts and offering both hope and peace to the young minds. One could see the impact she had made upon them when they went up to her at the end in tears to say thank you.

Tailpiece: After we took Phyllis home from the interfaith event, we asked her if she wanted to relax, she said she was not tired and that Swami always made sure she had plenty of energy. She spent the entire evening taking calls from people that needed urgent attention, in between talking to us, and playing with our son, Achintya. She went to sleep pretty late and woke up very early the next day. One could see Swami's own traits in her... Phyllis Krystal is one of those rare bastions that the world will one day write about when discussing Swami's Mission. She really is Love walking on 3 feet! (Walking stick included)...

Rita Chudasama, Co-ordinator, Sathya Sai Interfaith

Region 1

Regional SSE Sports and Fun day

The 15th of July was the Annual Region 1 Sports Day for its SSE children and a 'Fun Day' for the parents and youth. It started with three OMs and followed with a march past and other events according to age group. With the Grace of Swami, the day was the ideal day for outdoor sports. Dr Shanthi Parameswaran, former Regional SSE Co-ordinator, opened the event with the lighting of the lamp. She spoke about sportsmanship and what Swami has said on this, "All are winners, and there are no losers at the Sai Sports Day." This is one of the events where all the Centres and Groups work in unity in our Region. The event was organised by our SSE teachers and youth.

There were entertainments for youth and adults as well. The Worshipful Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Councillor Mary Reid, was the chief guest. She kindly presented the Shield to the winning boys and girls' team. She also presented the certificates to the winners of the events and to all the children who participated. It was a wonderful day of fun for all who came.

Region 1 Basic 'Teachers Training' Day

A basic teachers training was given to parents and youth who have showed interest in becoming SSE teachers. The National Trainer, Dr Mahesh Narayan, opened the Day. Former National SSE Co-ordinator, Mrs. Ratnasingham

spoke about the teacher's personal spiritual discipline (*Sadhana*). Various other trainers spoke about the five teaching techniques that we use in the SSE syllabus. The National SSE Co-ordinator, Sharmila Parikh, spoke about the administration involved in the SSE wing. It was also 'refresher' training for those who are teachers already. Attendance certificates were presented to all the participants. The feedback was very positive and hopefully the non-teachers and youth will take up teaching in the future.

Something Beautiful for God

On Sunday 23rd July, Region 1 embraced the 'Something Beautiful for God' (SBG) programme. An event was held where members from all Centres and Groups attended to learn about the programme and to work together to make clothes and gifts for less fortunate children across the world. Mr. Kumar Kathiramaiah, SBG co-ordinator, gave a warm and enlightening talk to the attendees. With material kindly donated, all attendees worked together to plan what to make, cut the material accordingly, and commenced sewing garments. Centre members have also taken material and ideas away with them to introduce to their Centre's devotees. This is the first of two events being held this year across the Region 1. It was another successful day blessed by our Lord's Grace.

Keith Sithabesan, Chair Region 1

Region 2

Guru Purnima Celebrations

Padhuka Pooja & Prayer Offering To Our Guru

Saturday 15th July 2006

On a most glorious morning, with the full sun shining in the clear blue skies, the scene was set for a most powerful Pooja offering to our dearest Lord. 225 smiling faces gathered together at Harrow High School to participate in a 'Padhuka Pooja', performing ceremonies to the Lotus feet (*Padhuka*) with offerings of rice and flowers.

A beautiful pair of silver Padhukas (sandals), with all necessary materials for the Pooja, was lovingly distributed to each and every one of those devotees who had not brought their own pair. Seated serenely, soaking up the jasmine-filled air, the ritual commenced with prayers to Lord Ganesha (remover of obstacles) and Goddess Saraswathi (Goddess of Knowledge). We were extremely lucky to have the Pooja officiated by Pandit Shri Gowri Shankar who has participated in many Yagnas in the presence of our Beloved Swami in Prashanti Nilayam.

Representing all those present and also on behalf of all those not present, the Regional Chair conducted the Pooja with guidance from Pandit Ji who indicated at various stages throughout the Pooja when chanting and offerings were to be made in unison by all the devotees gathered. Each ritual or physical action at each stage of

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(Region 2 cont'd) was most beautifully explained. Various offerings, including a combination of milk, honey, sugar, butter, juice, flowers, rice and coconut were offered and the Padhukas lovingly washed. With each offering came a prayer to guide us and protect us through our lives. For example the offering of honey – symbolises sweetness. All prayed for everyone to act “sweetly” in word, thought and deed. Part of the Pooja represented prayers for health and wealth for one and all in the nation and for all one’s desires, both material and spiritual, to be fulfilled, bringing peace and prosperity to the world. The vibrations created from the Pooja were then consolidated and digested by finishing with a most uplifting hour of melodious devotional singing, offering salutations to our Guru. After a delightful lunch was served, devotees dispersed with a glow on their faces, full of joy and bliss.

Anila Kumar Modi – R2 Youth Co-ordinator

Region 5

Happy Holiday Schools

Two one-week SSEHV ‘Values Alive’ Holiday Schools were held in Burnley, Lancashire, on the 3rd to 7th and 10th to 14th July, which was funded by ‘Awards for All’ through Peaceful Solutions. It was run in co-ordination with a local residents’ group. This year in Burnley the children have 9 weeks holiday, so the local residents welcome the holiday schools. Statistically, the area is at the bottom of the social table for housing and education, etc., so the events were much needed. Around 45 children attended each week, although a few children came to both weeks. As always, the programme was SSEHV in its entirety, focussing on a different value each day. All the lessons came from the newly published Book 1M for 7 year olds. The children especially enjoyed the dramatised stories, enjoying most of all making the ‘props’. The children were lively, to say the least, and were always wanting to ‘do’ rather than ‘be’. They did, however, manage to do a silent sitting in the morning and a relaxation exercise before leaving. Artwork, games on the field, and the songs were favourites and they loved singing ‘I am the way I am’, which they sang to the local Member of Parliament when she visited on the final day. Another highlight was a Magician, who made the children laugh a lot [and the staff too!] He was so good with the children – bringing fun and joy as well as prizes. Each child went home with a sculptured balloon. In the area, and in the nearby school where most of the children attend, discipline and behaviour are very problematic. Many of those who attended had learning difficulties, were labelled Attention Deficit HD, had behavioural problems and many could hardly read. It was very exhausting and we only hoped that the children had retained some of the knowledge about the values. It was uplifting on the second week to know that

four children, who had attended last year, remembered the 5 values and their fruit symbols this year.

On the last day I asked if anyone would like to share what he or she had learned this week and one little girl said that she had learned, “to like myself”.

Barbara Edmondson, Member of BISSE

Region 8

On the Bonny Banks of Loch Katrine

July saw the celebration of Guru Purnima at Edinburgh and Glasgow Centres with special Bhajans and Prasad.

On the 23rd July in Glasgow, ‘Global Day for the Disabled’ was observed. A coach was hired to take 32 visually impaired people from Kilsyth, on an outing to the Trossachs region of Scotland. Starting off at 9.30 on a beautiful sunny day, there was a stop at Callander for a 20-minute break and then we proceeded towards Aberfoyle, and then turned off to drive up to the banks of Loch Katrine. Snacks were then handed out and after about an hour of exploration, shopping and simply soaking up the sunshine, we proceeded back to Bishopbriggs, near Glasgow, to the Delhi Darbar Restaurant. Our guests were treated to a lovely lunch from 1.30 pm to 3.30 pm, before being returned to Kilsyth. This has now become an annual event, an event eagerly awaited by both devotees and guests.

Ram Konar, Vice Chair, Region 8

British Institute of Sathya Sai Education

Musing on SSEHV Training

I am always surprised, pleasantly so, to see how after the first day or so, people seem to embrace the philosophy which underpins the whole programme. I’ve often wondered how and why this happens. I don’t believe that it is just because of the material that is presented, but more because the course allows for the very beautiful aspect that is the human spirit to shine through. This is the very essence of SSEHV. I have come to the conclusion that it is (the participants) attending the courses who make this happen. Michele White, BISSE

Online SSEHV Lesson Plans

BISSE is in the process of making its published teaching workbooks freely available online via www.ssehv.org.uk as a free resource for teachers, parents and anyone with an interest in teaching human values to children and young people. Follow the link on the homepage to download lesson plans in English and Spanish. Additional workbooks and more languages will be added over time, and we are currently working on translating all the books into French. Please do check the site regularly and watch out for updates in the SSEHV bi-monthly newsletter. If you are bi-lingual in English and another language and would like to volunteer to undertake the translation of some lesson plans in order for people in other countries to benefit from them, please email us. Many thanks to everyone that has to

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(BISSE cont'd) date already given their time to help to translate and upload this material. We hope and believe that it will prove to be a very valuable international SSEHV resource.

Visit to the Houses of Parliament by the Good Values Club, Leicester

On 17th July, the children of the Good Values club in Leicester visited the Houses of Parliament in London at the invitation of the Member of Parliament (MP) for Leicester South, Sir Peter Soulsby. Forty children and teachers toured the chambers of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, as well as other parts of this most fascinating of buildings. The trip, funded by 'Awards for All', was part of an ongoing project at the Club to study and celebrate the best of traditional British values, which the children have identified as including respect, punctuality, good manners, leadership and multiculturalism. The British Values project will culminate in November with 'British Day', a cultural programme at the Club in Leicester. This follows on from 'India Day' and 'Africa Day' which the Club organised in January and April respectively

Carole Alderman, Director BISSE

Our 'CRB' Process Now Fully Launched

Our Organisation, having obtained 'Registered Body' status with CRB (the Criminal Records Bureau), and having 5 CRB-registered Counter Signatories; has begun to roll out its initiative to clear with CRB all our Teachers and voluntary workers. This has dovetailed nicely with the March 2006 announcement from Dr Goldstein, Chair of Prashanti Council, that there is now a 'Sathya Sai World Foundation' whose aim is bring all the International Sai Organisations into a high level of accountability and authenticity in all that we do. In future it will be mandatory to have CRB clearance for any SSSSO UK volunteer work involving children or vulnerable adults. As an Organisation we are fortunate to qualify for free CRB disclosure. We aim to set up local 'surgeries' where large numbers of applicants can be processed. (We have literally hundreds of applicants now waiting to get clearance.) In order to bring about our goal of having all our volunteers CRB cleared, the CRB steering team decided to first process and train all Centre and Group Chairs. This would have fourfold consequences for them: 1) So that they would personally understand the CRB Application process and thereby be able to assist and explain this to prospective applicants in Centres and Groups. 2) To qualify them as CRB 'ID Verifiers' and thus enable them to help our mammoth undertaking. 3) To expedite application in exceptional circumstances. And 4) to CRB clear themselves for all the voluntary situations they are involved in.

Our first training days were held in Wimbledon, South London on August 5th and in Coventry in The Midlands on August 6th. A PowerPoint Presentation gave

background to CRB and why we, as an Organisation, are committed to clearing all our volunteers. It posed and answered some 'FAQs'. Participants were able to 'ID Verify' documents in pairs to help familiarise themselves with this rather personal activity. Emphasis was made upon the confidentiality of doing such a thing and useful points given as to how to do this professionally.

All the applicants were then guided through filling in their application forms, simultaneously, with advice on common errors and pitfalls encountered by the CRB. It was also made clear that forms will not be 'given out' as any lost forms or spoiled forms not returned, create a charge, per form, of £34 to our account! Everybody learnt a lot from both days and the steering team (Sharmila Parikh, Keith Sithsabesan, Bharat Handa and Mukund Patel – unfortunately Kishor Kumar was unwell) heard new queries and encountered a few challenging and unforeseen points. Steve Perry kindly produced two marvellously condensed leaflets – one for Centre and Group Chairs, and one for applicants. These and other helpful material will be available by email from your Regional Chairs shortly. Feedback from the days was very favourable and many said that something that could have been immensely heavy was delivered in a relaxed atmosphere with a lot of fun and yet was a thorough grounding. Kind-hearted devotees at Wimbledon and at Coventry superbly supported these two events, in every way.

Rosemary Perry,

Lead Signatory CRB Steering Team

Forthcoming SSEHV courses are:

Cynwyl, Carmarthen – Intensive Foundation Course:
21st – 26th August,

Contact: **Zita Starkie 01267 275424**

Coventry – Intensive Foundation Training: 1st–3rd, 8th–10th & 29th October,

Contact: **Michele White 0116 233 9455**

North London – Mondays from September,

Contact **Subita Mahtani 07767 822 424**

SSSSO UK Bookshop

The bookshop has a **NEW WEBSITE**.

Please visit it at:

www.srisathyasajibookcentre.org.uk

"We have come to recognise this ritual Yagna as important in the context of worshipping the Lord. The statements that are in our Vedas have told us to sacrifice everything, and through sacrifice, we should be able to get a vision of the Divine in us. Creation and its maintenance depend only on sacrifice. If there is no sacrifice, society will not remain intact."

Sathya Sai Baba



SPECIAL FEATURE

Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

Every summer, the Queen hosts a series of Royal Garden parties at Buckingham Palace. However, during special anniversaries, like this year 2006, the Queen gave an additional Garden Party (on July 13th) to honour the fiftieth anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme as well as her own eightieth birthday. Approximately 8,000 guests attended this unique Queen's Garden Party this year. I was honoured with an invitation to attend this and represent the SSSSO UK partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. I arrived with Rita, my wife, promptly at 2pm and we were ushered inside Buckingham Palace. There, a Marshal who took us to the front for the awards ceremony met us. Most people were dressed up for this special day. Gentlemen wore morning dress, lounge suits or uniform, whilst the women wore afternoon dress, usually with hats. The Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation (UK) and its National Youth Wing were being honoured with a certificate of thanks for services to Youth activities in the United Kingdom. We were introduced to various British and Hollywood celebrities and directors before taking our place. I was the final speaker when called up to receive our certificate. Before I received the certificate, I mentioned very briefly about the wonderful work silently being carried out by Sri Sathya Sai Baba and how the youth wing is always encouraged to take the lead in projects and events. I talked about how Sri Sathya Sai Baba believes that "Only Youth can transform Youth" and how he calls upon them to be leaders like lions – bold and courageous. This was well received and all nodded their heads when I said that in order for the Youth to be the leaders of tomorrow they must be the participants of today. When it came time to receive the certificate I was slightly stunned for a few seconds, when I read it. Instead of writing the name of the Organisation, the certificate bore Swami's name. This was a most thrilling surprise and for that brief moment, I felt Swami was there. After the presentation of certificates, Rita and I were then escorted to a special area and placed in a section along with some Beefeaters. Three separate routes were created from the Palace to the Royal Tea Tent, one for the Queen to walk down, one for the Duke of Edinburgh and the other for the Earl and Countess of Wessex (Prince Edward and Sophie), it's rather like Darshan – with people waiting either side. Rita and I were placed in the Queen's route where we waited to be presented to her, guarded by the Royal Beefeaters.

As the Royal band played the National Anthem, the Queen and the Royal party emerged from the Palace. The Queen looked very regal in a blue raw silk embroidered outfit, with a very elegant hat. Prince Philip and Prince Edward wore lounge suits and the Countess of Wessex wore a lovely summery pastel dress with an incredibly beautiful hat.

As the Queen was presented to her subjects, I could not believe what Grace Swami was bestowing upon us as an Organisation. When I looked around, we were standing next to Linford Christie – the famous sprinter, Helena Bonham-Carter, and the famous Hollywood director Tim Burton along with other TV presenters.

As the Queen walked gracefully by, it suddenly felt like something out of Darshan, there is a very special aura and energy around the Queen, something quite beautiful, enigmatic, and spiritual. As she walked past, staring and smiling at each one of us, we could not help but notice that her smile never once left her face. She was extremely patient with everyone and spent 3 hours greeting and welcoming people. Not once, did her composure change nor was there any sign of fatigue.

After the formalities were over, Rita and I went across to the tea tent, the quality of the food and the tea was of a high standard; no tea bags or plastic plates were to be found anywhere. As we sipped tea from the Royal china, various people would come over to us and chat, asking us what we were holding as only a few had received this special certificate.

At 6.00pm, the Royal band once again played the National Anthem, which was a sign for the guests and royals to depart.

Rita and I were pretty exhausted by the end and were waiting patiently under a tree as the Royals walked by. Suddenly – Sophie, Countess of Wessex, stopped and started walking towards us...her eye on Rita's feathery headpiece and dress. She complimented Rita on her dress and Rita complimented her on her hat. As I stood and watched, the two talked as if they were old friends, Sophie was extremely interested in finding out about our youth and in awe of the sheer size of our Organisation.

We are indeed grateful to Swami for letting us experience this once in a life time magical moment. It was such a humbling experience to be representing not only our Youth but also our Organisation.

Shitu Chudāsama, National Youth Co-ordinator