



Let Joy Fill Our Hearts!

Dear Readers, Sai Ram!

In this country, in the weeks leading up to both Christmas and the close of the calendar year, a certain quality of frenzy seems to fill the air. Yet, somehow, amongst all the razzamatazz of materialism and hype, a pure sense of spirit prevails. It manifests as hope. Hope for life to improve, hope for peace to pervade mankind and hope for disaster, misfortune, disease and poverty to disappear from the earth. In the week between Christmas and the New Year there seems to be an armistice - a truce - that allows people to be at home with their families and let the world stop for a while. This is a temporary break before the normal pattern of life resumes at its hectic pace again.

During this time let us all reflect on how very lucky we are to be the recipients of a true knowledge that helps us all transcend the ups and downs of life, transcend the brittle peace of material placebos and seek lasting timeless peace in the Kingdom of God that is to be found within each of us.

How lucky we are to have a teacher guiding us from the form to the formless. Sai Baba gives us the tools to navigate our way to peace through the apparent hardships and seeming injustices of life with increasing acceptance and recognition rising within us that there is indeed a perfect plan unfolding and a Divine purpose in all that occurs. May the close of this year find you filled with peace and joy!

Love and Light,
Rosemary Perry, National Chair

SSSSO UK

National Conference 2008

*'Stepping Out into Action,
Walking Forward in Practice'*

Saturday February 2nd 2008, Bentley Wood High School, Clamp Hill, Stanmore, Middlesex, HA7 3NA

Our theme this year is taken from one of Swami's discourses and is one that, in the context of our Organisation, recognises that the SSSSO UK is now a mature Organisation - over 40 years old with many varied activities and projects in place. It has within it a very high proportion of spiritually awakened and

spiritually aware followers of the profound teachings of Sathya Sai Baba. The theme recognises too, that the majority of members in our Centres and Groups are widely read, deeply versed and very experienced in the various practices that Swami advises. So, as a theme, it invites us all to come together to celebrate the wonderful knowledge that has been made available to us by Sai Baba, join together in the full confidence gained from our spiritual practices and walk forward together unitedly, in fully conscious integrated awareness and a state of receptivity, to wherever he may guide us as his ambassadors of Love, Peace, Truth, Right Action and Non-violence.

The day will be a nurturing day reconnecting us all to the Source together, an inspiring day of review and taking stock. It is also a day of looking forward positively.

Keynote Speakers for the Conference:

**Dr Thorbjørn Meyer and his wife,
Mrs Marianne Meyer, from Denmark**

They will each speak separately on their experiences in the context of the theme for the day. They both have a wealth of experience of working as office bearers at many levels within the Sai Organisations in Europe and have many insights and much wisdom to share. Dr Meyer is Chair of Zone 7 and also the Director of ESSE (the European Sathya Sai Education institute). He and his wife both sit on the Education Committee of the Sri Sathya Sai World Foundation. (*Zone 7 comprises: Region 71: Austria, Czech Rep., Germany, Hungary, Slovakia; Region 72: Belgium, Denmark, Greenland, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden; Region 73: Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland.*) There will be an opportunity to pose questions to both Dr and Mrs Meyer and to the National Wing Co-ordinators.

We are very pleased to have some of our former National Chairs also come as honoured guest speakers to address us on the theme for the day. Registration forms for attending this conference were circulated to Regional Chairs a month ago today, on 9th November 2007, and have been sent to all Centre and Group Chairs for distribution to their members. A contribution of £20 is requested to cover the overall costs for the day. Any surplus that may remain after all expenses

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have been settled will go to support a good cause within this Organisation. Last year, the money left over was allocated to help SITA and SSLTP with technical equipment.

As delegate attendance will be kept at 360 for comfort in the hall, booking right now is highly recommended. *Though open to all, it is certainly hoped that as many office bearers will attend as are able, along with anyone else who would like to come.*

National Conference 2008 Planning Group

Region 1

United Nations Day Celebration

On Sunday 28th October, 13 Members of the Putney and Roehampton branches of the United Nations Association joined the Merton Sai Centre Sunday Devotional Singing at the 'Sai Mandir', Effra Road, Wimbledon, to celebrate United Nations Day. Their President, the Mayor of Wandsworth Councillor Stuart Thom, along with the Mayoress and Vice-President Godfrey Shocket accompanied them.

Children, youth and adults conducted the devotional singing, which included many English and multi-faith songs. Following a candlelight procession by the SSE children, there were readings from the writings of Kofi Annan, Dag Hammarskjold and the preamble to the United Nations Charter given by members of the UNA, interspersed with quotations from Swami on 'Peace' and 'Unity' given by children. A booklet of devotional songs, readings and Swami's quotations was produced for the event and given to all the members of the UNA.

"The service was an uplifting amalgam of music from tabla and harmonium, singing and chanting and readings by the Mayor, other UNA members and the charming children of the congregation. Afterwards there was a blessing for world peace at the adjoining Ganapathi Temple, followed by very generous hospitality." Jo Stocks – Secretary, Putney UNA

"It was a tremendous experience for us and I was impressed by the beautiful songs and prayers in the Mandir. Many thanks for the uplifting and spiritual service. We felt honoured to be invited. It is good that we get to know more about our different cultures and also about how much we share – the love of God and the Divine within us." Margaret Yearsley, Putney UNA

Swami's 82nd Birthday Celebration

Region 1 Devotees celebrated the 82nd Birthday of Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on the 25th November 2007 at a Regional celebration hosted by Brixton Sai Centre,

supported by all the Centres in the Region. Over 700 devotees gathered to celebrate the occasion. The event commenced with Vedic Chanting and devotional songs, followed by a drama "All Faiths are one" performed by SSE students.

A former student of Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba and also a former UK National Spiritual Co-ordinator, Kiran Patel shared his experiences of enlightening moments with the Avatar. He ended his talk emphasising that one's life should reflect the unity of thought, speech and action.

The SSE students performed an Education in Human Values drama and two poetry recitals. A former BISSE SSEHV Programme student spoke about the experiences she had gained when undergoing the course.

The SSE boys from various Centres performed "Villu Pattu" (Bow Song) taking the audience on a spiritual journey filled with devotional singing, narrating our beloved Lord's anecdotes with humour. This was followed by a Bharata Nityam, performed by SSE students to six devotional songs, which was inspired by the multi-faith (Sarva Dharma) emblem concluding the performance with the singing of 'Happy Birthday'!

The audience was privileged to sing bhajans with the worldwide known singer Sumeet Tappoo, an ardent devotee of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. He was the Youth Leader for the NSW Sathya Sai Group, Australia, for a number of years. His ambition in life is to make a difference in this world and to positively influence the youth of today through his music. The powerful final talk and message, given by our second speaker of the day, brother TN Giridhar, also a former Student of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba really made the event even more enlightened. The celebration concluded with an inspirational musical item from the youth followed by a medley of devotional songs. The SSE children were invited onto the stage for the cake cutting and finally Arathi was performed and 'Maha Prasadam' distributed. Bhagawan's inspiring presence was truly felt by all.

Region 1 Service Day

"Engage yourselves in service activity. Consider social service as service to God. This is the best way to earn God's Love. Love all and serve all. Your entire life will be sanctified thereby." Sri Sathya Sai Baba

On Saturday 18th November, Region 1 held its annual Regional Service Day, as part of Swami's 82nd Birthday celebrations. Following Swami's teaching of "Service to Man, is Service to God", three key service activities

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were planned for the day:

- Spires Homeless Shelter - A group of devotees set off early in the morning, to the shelter, where they prepared, cooked and served a vegetarian meal to the guests.
- Liquid Love - The third phase of the blood donation project was held from 9.30am till 1.30pm at the Merton Sai Mandir. A total of 88 devotees have donated blood through the Liquid Love sessions in R1 this year.
- Entertaining the Elderly - Approximately 120 guests from Age Link, local residential homes, and senior citizen clubs were invited for an afternoon of refreshment and entertainment. Nearly all the guests were collected from and dropped back to their residences by around 25 volunteer drivers. A variety of entertainment programmes had been prepared for the day including a quiz and magic show by the SSE children, a magic show and the popular Bingo Jingo by the youth. The guests thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon with many of them expressing their excitement for next year's activities.

As always we were all grateful to Swami to give us the opportunity to serve him and feel his presence throughout the day.

Raj Rajasingam, Region 1 Chair

Region 2

24 hours Devotional Singing 10th -11th November 2007

This year's 24 hours of devotional singing saw all Centres and Groups within the Region taking part in a united effort to make this special 2007 year offering a truly sacred one. The programme began with the chanting of Ganapathy Pratharna and Sirsam, followed by the Narayan Upanishad and 11 recitations of the Gayatri mantra. A coconut was ceremoniously broken in front of a statue of Lord Ganesh, the Remover of Obstacles, and offered on a plate with fruits to the sound of the conch shell being blown in the background as the devotional singing began. The theme and purpose of this year's Akhanda Bhajans was a prayer for the welfare of the world and the invitation sent out to R2 devotees reflected this...

"Today we are having non-stop Global Devotional Singing by Sai Devotees all over the world. This is being done not for the sake of one individual, one nation, or one community. It is for the welfare of humanity as a whole." - Sri Sathya Sai Baba (Divine Discourse 08/11/1996)

The invitation to all Centres and Groups began many months ago, in preparation for the event. In September, during the monthly Regional committee meeting, a prayer to Lord Ganesh and Swami was offered for their guidance. All Centre and Group chairpersons present received tokens for their pre-programmed time slot; as each of the Centres and Groups were allocated one hour slots within the twenty-four hour period, with three slots also being given to the Region 2 Service, Spiritual and SSE Wings.

Two 'Unity' slots of 2 hours each were created, one to start off the Akhanda Bhajans on Saturday and the other to complete the offering on the Sunday. These 'Unity sessions' encouraged all Centres to participate by putting forward their singers to sing in a group, which consisted of others from throughout the Region.

In a completely co-ordinated and combined effort, musicians were available throughout the period and assisted those Centres and Groups that were in need of accompaniment. During the early hours of the morning the bhajans maintained their vibrancy and enthusiasm as the youth were given the lead up until the next programmed Centre slot.

It was a delight to behold devotees from the different Centres of the Region coming together and offering their prayers in the form of devotional songs in front of the magnificent altar that had been constructed. It is rare when every Centre participates in a Regional event but Akhanda Bhajan seems to be one occasion where this is possible.

The programme drew to a conclusion with the final Unity session, where Centres, Groups, Regional Wings were graced by the presence of Selva Kumar, National Spiritual Co-ordinator.

A continuous flow of vibrant and melodious songs built up in tempo to its highest point with a final 15-minute non-stop melody. The blowing of the conch shell completed the 24-hour Akhanda Bhajan for 2007. With the Arathi and closing prayers being offered, the expected tiredness of the 24-hour vigil was not evident. There was a renewed energy all around, and those that had stayed awake throughout were now busily involved in restoring the surroundings to its original state. What greater testament to the positive effects that can be brought about by merely listening and chanting of the Divine Name, can there be?

**Senthil Kumarathevan,
R2 Spiritual Co-ordinator**

Region 3

Multi-faith Akhanda Bhajans for World Peace

In Milton Keynes, another successful Multi-Faith Akhanda Bhajan took place this year, the fifth such annual event, organised by the Sai Centres of Luton and Milton Keynes. The 24-hour event started at 6pm on Saturday the 10th November, with purifying Vedic chants. Over the next 24 hours, a series of devotional singing sessions conducted by groups from different faiths, took place. Amongst the participants were representatives from the Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist and Hindu traditions.

There was a tangible spiritual atmosphere in the hall, and the strength of love was immense. Most of the groups had come to the event in previous years, and so it was a great time to catch up with old friends, and re-affirm our love and respect for each other.

All the attendees (participants and well-wishers) were treated to welcome hospitality, with sumptuous food provided by Sai devotees. The event was graced by the presence of Deputy Mayor, Jan Lloyd. During her 90 minutes with us, one of the performers was David Rennie from the Family Federation for World Peace, who sang a 1000-year old Korean song on loyalty. His rendition visibly moved many of those present.

As in previous years, the local BBC Three Counties Radio station sent their Outside Broadcast Team to conduct their Sunday morning spiritual programme, 'Melting Pot', from our Akhanda Bhajan. Dhirubhai Mistry, the Chairman of the Luton Sai Centre, was interviewed and gave a commendable summary of Swami's teachings and how the singing was being conducted simultaneously worldwide. David Rennie presented a good case for promoting world harmony. As he said in the interview, "When we don't wish for animosity between given members of a family, why should we wish for this between nations?"

Michael Howson, the leader of the Milton Keynes Hare Krishna Group emphasised the oneness of all peoples, and the significance of good vibrations to rekindle our spirituality.

Sunday, being Armistice Day, conferred a sense of solemnity to the morning of the 11th. Two minutes of silence were observed. Nirasha Ramlugan, the teacher who was instrumental in getting the various faith groups together for the Akhanda Bhajan, made a display of peace-related posters created by children from her school.

The Akhanda Bhajan served to bring together different faiths, something that is desperately

needed in these troubled times. It also enabled us to work towards the prime aim of our Guru, to make us all realise that we are all indeed one.

Kishor Kumar, National Secretary

Region 4

Happy Birthday, Swami!

Friday 23rd November was a very auspicious occasion, as we celebrated the 82nd birthday of our spiritual guide and teacher, Sri Sathya Sai Baba. Thankfully, I found a few Sai Centres and got in touch with some devotees here. So on Friday, I attended a programme at the Leicester Ram Mandir.

I couldn't believe how many people kept coming and filling the massive hall. Only in India have I seen a larger gathering of Sai devotees. The program started with about 20 minutes of Vedic chanting by a group of male youth. Everyone sat with his or her eyes closed and just meditated to the sound of the chanting. Then the youth conducted devotional songs. Many of them sang so sweetly and the musicians played their instruments with such skill – I was really impressed with their talent. The Centre had also set up a screen, projecting video and images of Swami listening to bhajans in India from previous occasions so it gave the feeling that he was actually there – well, I know Swami's always there ...but you know what I mean!

The SSE children performed an informative but also hilarious play entitled 'If God had voicemail!' Basically, the premise was set around a girl who felt very frustrated by school, friends and family. So she has a dream that she calls a hotline to speak with God. She reaches an automated recording where the operator says:

"Hello, you've reached Guidance On Divinity, also known as GOD. Unfortunately all our Gods and angels are currently occupied. Your position in the queue is 108 – but don't worry, that's a very auspicious number! To leave a message for Ganesh, press one, Hanuman, 2, Krishna, 3."

And then they show what all the different Gods are doing ...Hanuman is giving this conference on bridge-building to several monkey students, and Ganesh is climbing the Himalayas with some friends, etc... it was so cute to see all the little British children dressed up!

Of course at the end of the dream, God calls the girl back on her mobile, and tells her that she doesn't have to call to reach him, but she just has to say Aum (the sound of creation) to connect, and that connection with God is stronger than any other technological

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connection possible!

A former student at the college in Prashanti Nilayam gave a very candid speech about his experience living there, and the interactions he had seen and heard of Swami. One of them was about a time where Swami won an arm wrestling match between himself and two wrestlers. The wrestlers were convinced he had used some kind of divine power to beat them, but Swami explained he didn't, but in fact beat them because since birth, a negative thought had never entered his mind, he had never doubted himself – and so he won by using the strength of his mind. The student also gave the analogy of the Sai organisation being like an ocean, where Swami is the epicentre. If a pebble is thrown into the water, it ripples throughout the entire ocean. If Swami says in a discourse this month to meditate more, people across the globe immediately start to meditate more. Anything Swami says or does has an impact on the rest of the world.

Of course the best part of the whole evening was the grand finale. Everyone started to sing a special Happy Birthday song for Swami and a giant cake was brought out, along with balloons, sparklers, confetti, 'Happy Birthday' signs and little children dressed as different planets rotating around a poster of Swami! I felt such peace being there that night. When events run smoothly and are well organised and rehearsed, it truly shows how much love and devotion went towards making it successful. I'm looking forward to attending future events here – it's such a relief when you can connect with communities like the Sai organisation away from home. I guess it's just having some familiarity in your life that helps to keep you grounded.

Article from a Sai Vistor submitted by Ramesh Mistry, Chair Region 4

Region 5

Events in Newcastle

We have PowerPoint presentations every quarter in the Newcastle Sai Centre to keep our members updated with the events happening in Prashanti Nilayam. In line with that initiative, we had one such presentation on the 28th September showing all festive events of that quarterly period. Members enjoyed it thoroughly as it had the latest close-up pictures of Swami and also details of various events. It was an opportunity to see and pray to the Divine in the present physical form.

This was followed by a 30-minute presentation by Dr. Sandeep Diwan regarding his recent Kailash - Manasarovar trip. He shared with us the difficulties of the arduous

journey in detail. Seeing the beautiful lake and the divine mountain on the large screen instilled bliss and serenity in our hearts. The pictures gave everyone a wonderful insight about the place. Mr. Srinivasa Moorthy helped by preparing the PowerPoint slides.

The Sri Sathya Sai Education in Human Values (SSEHV) programme came to an end on the 2nd December 2007. Nine volunteers including four professional teachers undertook the programme. Everyone came to understand the human values inherent in him or her through this course. They understood that by studying the teachings of Sai Baba we can understand them clearly but to *realise* his teachings they have to be put into practice. For six days, continuously, everyone was living the values with all their thoughts revolving around the values. It was an exhilarating experience for everyone and all the participants could feel the love in them growing, thereby nurturing peace, right conduct and non-violence. Four different trainers from BISSE (British Institute of Sathya Sai Education) facilitated the training and worked as perfect role models for the members.

Akhanda Bhajans went off really well for four hours on the 10th November. The hall was lit by candlelight and the people attending clearly felt that love is light and the light of love takes us to God while all the time the devotional songs were being sung in the background.

Swami's Birthday was celebrated in our Centre on the 23rd November 2007. The programme started with Vedic chanting followed by devotional singing. Swami's picture was kept in a jhula (swing) and beautiful songs were sung combined with the swinging of the jhula. Many of us got emotional to see Swami in a beautifully decorated jhula and the love, which poured through Him, engulfed us all and took us to a state of bliss as usual. This was followed by distribution of Prasadam.

Yogesh Solanki, Chair Region 5

Region 6

Celebrations

We as a Region have been busy with Swami's birthday celebrations at Rochester, Ashford, Woking, Hove and Southampton and a Regional Ladies' Day at Guildford. It is always good to receive a short report from these places for others who could not participate to have an idea as to how we as a Region celebrate for the good of everyone's spiritual growth and transformation. I attended **Woking Group**, who with their new Chair, Deirdre Major, and her team, put on

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wonderful devotional singing which, under Kartiga's tuition, had some of the youth leading the singing, accompanied by some very musical newcomers. Selva Kumar, our National Spiritual Co-ordinator bought us together with the subject of 'Right Action' and encouraged all to help in a Christmas play. Birthday wishes were sung to Swami and all enjoyed a lovely birthday cake!

Hove Group, celebrated with many in attendance, some having travelled from Crawley, Fairlight and Chichester. Devotional songs were sung accompanied with maracas and tiny cymbals in a packed room with a lovely overhead canopy made of saris. The Hove medley of love songs, which was so melodiously sung by Joyce and Pam, lifted our hearts with joy.

...And another birthday cake was enjoyed!

Southampton Group celebrated on the Saturday in the Parmars' home and again on Sunday at the Vedic Society Hall, Southampton. Two children, aged 8 and 9 years played the tabla and harmonium. Some other children performed a play on 'Becoming aware of selfishness and the monkey mind' and a dance was performed about the Guru. A youth spoke on Swami's life and message.

...On Friday 23rd November Sangeeta and the **Ashford Group** had a birthday gathering for Baba. What I gathered was to be an informal, impromptu affair turned out to be a most delightful evening with a practical and loving demonstration of how a 'Satangha' together can make things happen. Some 50 persons attended with a cross section of our community from 7 year old children to elders. Some 15 of them were under 18 years of age. Multi-faith prayers opened the celebration and devotees came from as far as Dover, Folkestone, Faversham and Ashford. The children were given a poster/picture competition to participate in ...and some amazing talent manifested. All these lovingly drawn pictures were then sent to Puttaparthi to Swami ...along with a birthday card signed by all present at the celebration. The young ones also had turns in reminding us that Swami has a great sense of fun and pun, reading out some of the very best in Sai Humour.

A most charming and unusual touch to the evening was the hanging of a Jhula.... a small basket (cradle) with a picture of Swami in the cradle to symbolise Swami, the baby. A long string of pearls allowed you then to lovingly rock Swami in the Jhula. Not having seen anything like this before, I did not know what to expect. A most sweet and delightful feeling was to happily surprise me, as I gently

rocked Swami back and forth for his birthday treat. Everyone came up to have a turn and the room took on a most lovely vibration.

**Bahnoon Karim Agnew,
Region 6 Spiritual Wing Co-ordinator
Region 6 Ladies Day Meeting**

Held in Guildford on November 18th, the day was charged at the start by a guided visualisation on 'Shakti's Inner Self-Discovery' (taken from the original script by Aime Levy) and by the chanting of Durga Vedas, which were explained beforehand and translated by Graham Cailles. Our hearts soared. Rosemary Perry, our UK National Chair, talked about the barbaric Chinese custom of binding women's feet for the sake of the perceived beauty of the day, and her spontaneous past life experience of this. We were asked how future generations would view today. With our implants, bo-tox injections, cosmetic surgery and other methods of beautification ...are we any better?

Bahnoon Agnew, R6 Spiritual Co-ordinator, then spoke about the reaction of Ramakrishna's wife to her husband's behaviour, and the subsequent reaction of Bahnoon herself on discovering, in a book by Connie Shaw, that Ramakrishna was Mohammed reincarnated.

After a shared lunch, Pierrette Poirot taught us all a meditative circle dance to Mother Mary. As we all sang, "Ave Maria, gratia plena," asking for her blessings and grace, this was a deeply moving experience. Stephen Perry then gave a PowerPoint presentation on 'Glimpses of the Divine Feminine in Ancient Egypt'. He described and showed us various cosmogonies and infected us with his love of Egypt. David Ash played the guitar and sang tenderly to our Divine Mother, through the forms of Mother Mary and Kwan Yin. Himanshu Vora intrigued us with glimpses of the 'Sathya Sai Inner Self Awareness programme' (SSISAP), which is to be relaunched and offered to all Regions, he also presented an 'Interactive Workshop on the Feminine Principle'. With each and every feminine example and principle, our beloved Sai shone through, reminding us that He is both the feminine and the masculine - our mother and our father and all roles in our lives: He is our all.

At this day toiletries for the Women's Refuge in Hove were collected, as were stamps, used printing cartridges and old mobiles, (recycled for the benefit of the SS School in Leicester), and articles for Something Beautiful for God.

Philippa Malcomson, Chair Region 6

Region 7

Combined Birthday and Ladies Day Celebrations

The combined Regional Birthday and Ladies Day celebrations at Patchway, Bristol, on Saturday 24th November 2007 were amongst the most memorable to date. The stage and altar were beautifully and immaculately set and Swami's chair and robe, positioned in the audience, was a reminder of His constant presence.

Ladies Day - 'Love and Service'

The morning started with soul stirring devotional singing. Hearing Swami's words on the role of women set the scene for the morning session. We continued with inspiring and touching talks on the role of ladies as mother, wife, grandmother and daughter. There were plays on the changing role of women through the ages, the importance of conserving water, a vivid dance programme, a quiz, and talks on the Easwaramma Trust and service activities in our Region. These items were interspersed with readings from our SSE students. It was a comprehensive programme touching on many facets of Swami's teachings.

Birthday Celebrations

The joyous atmosphere continued into the afternoon: a video of Swami entering Hillview Stadium set the scene for what was to follow, and uplifting bhajans raised the atmosphere still further.

There was an inspiring story on how Swami's omnipresence and omniscience brought one of Swami's robes to a devotee in Radnorshire. There was singing of Taize chants; a talk based on our recent Regional Pilgrimage and a report on the main messages from the recent World Youth Conference in Puttaparthi.

Throughout the day, our able comperes kept the programmes on track.

The finale was an outpouring of love to Bhagawan with the cutting of the Birthday cakes accompanied by the children, sparklers, bubbles, confetti canons, balloons and the birthday song, a really festive atmosphere!

Arathi to Swami then completed a most memorable day.

Regional Pilgrimage. (18th August – 2nd September 2007)

Swami blessed plans for this Regional Pilgrimage in early 2007 and we have felt Swami's guiding hand throughout the preparations and the trip itself. In the spiritual practice or 'Sadhana' leading up to the pilgrimage, the group was fortunate to receive guidance and inspiration at regular Satsangs from many, including Ishver Patel,

Dr Upadhyay, Sri Vedanarayan and Shitu Chudasama.

The Regional group of 29, consisting of office bearers, devotees and SSE children from the Region, received so much Grace during this trip, including: unforgettable Darshan, privileged seating, an unexpected discourse from Swami, discourses from teachers and students on the role of Swami's education system and countless personal experiences and examples of 'Sai Synchronicity'. Swami clearly demonstrated that he was aware of the group's arrival, accepting the letters sent by our Regional Groups and Centres on the first day. There were also Satsangs during the trip with Prof Anil Kumar and Sri Sanjay Sahani (Principal of Swami's Brindavan College). The group returned inspired and energised to carry on Swami's work.

Jay Sivaloganathan, Chair Region 7

Sathya School Leicester

Amazing Visit

I visited our Sathya Sai School Leicester on the 27th November 2007 and the Director of the British Institute of Sathya Sai Education (BISSE), Mrs Carole Alderman, joined me. Our visit was preceded with many high expectations, having heard so much about the school and its achievement. All that we expected we found to be true and so much more!

Our visit began with us being welcomed at our first sight by a beautiful mural, which brilliantly showed pictures and quotes that inspire the students, faculty and parents at this Human Values School. It set the scene marvellously for what was to come.

There was a wonderful sense of peacefulness when walking into the school building, the wet, rainy, grey of the outside weather was immediately dispersed and replaced with a loving, warm and welcoming atmosphere. Entering the hall where the Assembly had already started, the children were sitting lined up on mats in neat rows singing with beautiful voices, each group taking their turn flawlessly to sing an English devotional song, all very much synchronised, showing dedication, concentration and the fruits of patient practice. The staff members were sitting on the edges spread out evenly behind the children. Once Assembly was finished the children turned around to face each teacher individually, giving both teacher and children a chance to greet each other, the exchange was loving, respectful and pure. When it came to our turn, having only been there for minutes... there was a feeling of love and warmth that made us feel - not like visitors - but as if we had always been there.

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The first lesson we sat in on was focused on thinking about what you say to others, and how your words will make them feel. The lesson of 'Harmony of Thought, Word and Deed' was successfully delivered using interactive methods, discussion, and promoted doing good. The children participated in a way that showed they were not only taking in the moral value of what was being taught, but the practical value as well, and were encouraged to apply it immediately amongst their peers.

Each lesson had a charm of its own; we experienced learning about 'biographies', 'role plays focussing on current events', 'IT' and 'preserving the world's environment' with the older year Groups, and we heard about 'world leaders who are excellent role models', did puzzles, and watched angel arts and crafts with the younger ones. All the lessons were professional, interactive, inspiring and overflowing with human values, morals, ethics and high ideals.

Lunch was phenomenal to watch. Each class entered the room for lunch silently, took their food, settled into their seats and continued to eat in silence. When finished they cleared up their table, asked permission to take a wet cloth, wiped their place and then quietly returned to their class room smiling from ear to ear. We watched them in proud amazement from the eldest child to the smallest one.

The new mobile classrooms are fantastic; they are spacious, bright, and clean and have large windows, which allow an abundance of natural sunlight to come in, creating an even warmer atmosphere of love and happiness. They are well suited for the age group and have model modernised amenities.

If we thought the children were having fun in their academic classes, we had yet to see where the real fun begins. PE seemed to be everyone's favourite. They were so enthusiastic to set up, make teams, play the sport and then help clear up as well. There was lots of excitement in the room, and when asked who wanted to be the leader every single hand went up! We were amazed by the confidence and eagerness to assist, as well as the easy manner with which they accepted responsibility.

Each and every aspect of the school encompassed love, respect, understanding, happiness and enjoyment, just to mention a small number of the attributes. Usha, Hoe and their team offer a wide range of talents, expertise, dedication and capability. Each individual gives so much of himself or herself, embodies a calm, thoughtful and loving

demeanour as well as maintains a very professional manner. We sincerely thank the entire faculty for their warm welcoming hospitality and for making our visit such a wonderful experience.

I could go on and on. Our visit to The Sathya Sai School Leicester was anticipated with many high expectations - all that we expected came true and became so much more in reality.

Subita Mahtani, Region 2 Vice Chair

Sathya Sai 'Karate Kids' Move to Blue Belts Within One Year

On Sunday, the 18th November 2007, 27 Sathya Sai School Leicester pupils took their Karate grading examinations in the school hall. Nine of them were white belts taking the exam for yellow belts and 18 of them were yellow belts taking the exam to qualify for blue belts. After four hours the exams were over. Children were as young as 6 in the white belts and as young as 7 in the yellow belts.

Results were announced and belts given out on Friday, 30th November 2007. All the nine white belts passed to yellow belts with three children scoring more than 70%. All the eighteen yellow belts came out blue belts with 13 above 70%, out of which 6 were above 80%.

Their teacher was very happy with their results and said that the school results were very good.

Mrs Usha Lim, SSS Leicester

Record for supermarket vouchers!

The school received a very large number of supermarket vouchers. THANKS to all the SSSSO UK Regions that have participated. By August 2007 we had received:

- 16,095 Tesco supermarket vouchers
 - 11,217 Sainsbury's supermarket vouchers
- We will circulate photographs of the equipment that we will receive from the value of the vouchers, when it has arrived.

Articles submitted by Prabodh Mistry, UKCC - SS School Representative

Sathya Sai Bookshop

The bookshop has a regularly updated website.

Please find it at:

www.srisathyasaibookcentre.org.uk

The SSSSO UK Website

is to be found on:

www.srisathyasai.org.uk

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BISSE

British Institute of Sathya Sai Education

Information on the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values Programme can be found on:

www.sathyaiaihv.org.uk

Quotes from Sai Baba on Christmas and Jesus

"There are various theories about the date of birth of Jesus based on the 'bright star that appeared on his birth'. It is visible once in 800 years, it is said. Some say he was born on the 15th September. But, he was born at 3.15am on December 28th, 1980 years ago, (Swami said this in 1979). It was Sunday. The star that appeared that day appears only once in 800 years. Its appearance has nothing to do with the birth of Jesus. There is no rule that, when Divine energy or Divine Incarnation descends on Earth, a star has to appear. That is the opinion of devotees only. But, Jesus was himself a 'Star' of infinite value, spreading brilliance of infinite dimension. Why posit another less brilliant glow?" *Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. XI*

"The Great Teachers belong to mankind. It is wrong to think that Jesus belongs only to the Christians and that Christmas is a Holy Festival for the West only. To accept one of them as one's own and discard the rest as belonging to others, is a sign of pettiness. Christ, Rama, Krishna – they are for all men everywhere. The various limbs and organs together form a body; various States and communities together form the world. The sustenance given by Divine Grace, has to circulate in every State and community to make the World live in peace and joy. If this truth is realised, there will be no idea of difference." *Sathya Sai Speaks Vol. VIII*



Love and Light SSSSO UK
Significant Diary Dates 2007/8 please ask your Centre or Regional Chair for details

Month	Date	Event
December	9 th	NWC Meetings
December	15 th	Regional Meetings
2008		
January	5 th	UKCC meet
February	2 nd	SSSSO UK Annual National Conference
February	16 th / 17 th	Regional Conferences
March	1 st	UKCC Quarterly Meeting
March	8 th	NWC Meetings
May	31 st	UKCC Quarterly Meeting
June	8 th	NWC Meetings
August	22 nd – 24 th	National Retreat Stourbridge
September	6 th	UKCC Quarterly Meeting
September	13 th	NWC Meetings
November	19 th	Ladies' Day
November	23 rd	Sri Sathya Sai Baba's Birthday
December	6 th	UKCC Quarterly Meeting
December	13 th	NWC Meetings