



Let's Go Forward!

Dear Readers, Sai Ram!

Last Saturday we held our National Conference in Stanmore. It seems to have been very successful judging from comments and feedback received by the Planning Group and the Council Members. Our Keynote Speakers Dr Thorbjørn Meyer and his wife Marianne, were a real hit! Their accounts of their extraordinary experiences of Swami were very insightful and the teaching/learning behind the stories was drawn out beautifully and demonstrated how skilfully the Avatar teaches us and profoundly transforms us no matter whether we are in his physical presence or on another Continent. There was wisdom, humour and love in abundance from them both. A full account of the day is in this issue.

Your Regional Chairs have been circulating information to all Centres and Groups about the forthcoming World Education Conference at Prashanti Nilayam in July. If you are involved in any of the three areas of Sathya Sai Education please make sure you avail yourself of the chance to join in this wonderful global celebration of Sathya Sai Education in the presence of Sai Baba himself!

Pre-conference meetings are being arranged by the Apex Co-ordination Committee of Sathya Sai education in the UK. As soon as plans are made your Regional Chairs will circulate the details.

The 6th March ushers in Mahashivaratri for us all – the night of the dark moon in its most distant position from the Earth. It seems as if Shiva rouses himself to be here for us on this night and his Cosmic Dance helps us to cast away any tendencies that we want to rid ourselves of and to offer us the opportunity to come closer to our True selves by mastering our 'monkey' minds. If you are unable to attend a Centre or Group to be with others, then meditate on a picture of Swami, listen to uplifting sacred music and chants, pray and let the mysterious dark night do the rest. We are all connected as ONE and joined on this transformative journey together. None of us is alone. I am sure that we would all want to arrive at Enlightenment together as ONE.

**Love and Light,
Rosemary Perry, National Chair**

UK WEBSITE: www.srisathyasai.org.uk

SSSSO UK

National Conference 2008 'Stepping Out into Action, Walking Forward in Practice' 2nd February 2008

The annual National Conference for 2008 saw a number of distinct changes in the approach to this event. The biggest of which has to be the transformation from a 'National Office Bearer Conference', to a 'National Conference'. The former being restricted to Office Bearers only, whereas this year the conference was opened up to all members of the UK Sai Organisation from the onset. Other changes saw effective use of costs, efficient use of resources and a greener environmentally friendly mindset being conscious of waste. All this amounted to the Planning Group being completely transparent on costs, finances and savings. Through these efficiencies the very respectable savings were, at the close of the conference, agreed by an overwhelming decision by the delegates, to be donated to the very worthy Sathya Sai School in Leicester. This conference was one of only two events in the past twelve months where a financial contribution was requested (the other was the National Sathya Sai Education Day in September).

Saturday the 2nd February turned out to be a bright, crisp wintry day which saw 320 eager participants and about 30 volunteers arrive at the venue – a Secondary School in Stanmore on the outskirts of North London - from all over the country – except for a few souls in the North of England who woke up to find themselves snowed in and unable to travel.

The theme of the conference 'Stepping out into Action, Walking forward in Practice', was pivotal to it, central to the speakers' themes and demonstrated to underpin the future direction of the UK Sai Organisation.

The first speaker Rosemary Perry - UK National Chair - was introduced to offer the welcoming speech, the conference was enchanted by her edification of the conference, the UK Sai Organisation's achievements and her vision for the future. She emphasised the maturity of the Organisation itself reminding us that the SSSSO UK is over 40 years old now. This

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maturity, she said, is also reflected as a real spiritual maturity on the part of the vast majority of devotees who attend our 108 Centres and Groups. The emphasis should always be on HOW we do an activity and every activity undertaken should be realistically evaluated against the Human Values and the resources available. She urged the devotees to find simple ways to span the gulf between high, altruistic world-changing goals and more attainable ones. Rosemary also offered a heartfelt thank you to four retiring members of the UK Central Council for their hard work and dedication. They were: Sharmila Parikh the National SSE Co-ordinator for four years; Ram Konar the Regional Chair for R8; Jey Sivaloganthan Region 7 Chair and Yogesh Solanki Region 5 Chair. A small token gesture of a beautiful glass plaque was presented to each departing member. This was followed by a warm welcome to the new incoming Council members: Lakshmi Puvanendran the new National SSE Co-ordinator, Som Bahanda Chair R8 and Ram Thiagarajah Chair of R7.

To conclude her talk, Rosemary introduced a 30-minute film containing extracts of highlights from the national activities and achievements of 2007. These were awe-inspiring recollections of how much members of the UK Sai Organisation actually achieved last year. Individually they were seen as a success, but when presented collectively it was nothing less than a miracle. Also as a part of this film, each of the Regional Chairs had recorded a two-minute interview of 2007 achievements in their respective Regions. To complement the Regional Chairs' summations, also included were interviews with Ishver Patel our Central Coordinator and Prabodh Mistry the Sathya Sai Schools representative on the Council. This method brought the various Council Members to life to the audience in a way that simply standing on the stage could not.

Another innovative touch this year was to include talks from past UK National Chairs. Therefore the next speaker introduced was Bala Balaraman (former UK National Chair), who spoke on his passionate subject of developing Inter-faith dialogue and understanding. Bala provided an insight to the Inter-faith activities undertaken by the UK Sai Organisation and on some of the relationships we have built with the faiths. He encouraged everyone to think outside of the comfort zone of our own Centres and Groups and to actively participate in Inter-faith initiatives. He pointed out that relationships are founded on common

interests not necessarily our spiritual beliefs and he described how he had shared many conversations with a member of the Catholic Church on their joint passion – cricket! This interest cemented a friendship that eventually caused Bala to be invited into the Catholic Church to speak upon Jesus Christ from an Eastern perspective.

As keynote Speakers we were honoured to have with us Dr Thorbjørn Meyer Chair of Zone 7 and founder of ESSE (European Sathya Sai Institute) and his wife Marianne who also sits on the International Sathya Sai Education Committee.

Thorbjørn spoke for over an hour on the omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence of Sai Baba. When his talk ended nobody wanted it to close and lunch was far from everybody's minds! He spoke about his life's path and wove into this a myriad of fascinating stories that exemplified the attributes of the Sai Avatar. We listened spellbound as he recounted a rich fund of personal encounters with Sai Baba, extraordinary happenings; miracles and "eye-openers" that were utterly fascinating and had taken place over more than 35 years of being a follower of Sai Baba's teachings. The three attributes were explained and delivered in a methodical, chronological and very moving fashion - with an excellent dry humour and gave a real insight into the extraordinary teaching methods of Sai Baba by showing us and sharing with us all that he himself had learned.

Lunch was excellent but quite crushed in the available space and time this is something the conference Planning Group will be considering at their de-brief meeting, along with comments received on the evaluation sheets that each attendee received. The stalwart members of the Sathya Sai Bookshop once again set up a stall at the conference for the benefit of all – a much appreciated opportunity to buy DVDs, books etc.

After lunch Ishver Patel, our Central Co-ordinator, bombarded us with statistics. These thought-provoking and shocking figures demonstrated to us areas of concern within our society. In the light of these figures he powerfully encouraged and challenged us all to become part of the community around our Centre venues and to try and analyse the make-up of our surrounding communities in order to see where we can join with others or initiate projects ourselves to improve situations and offer our pure love.

Dr Phil Heaton, former National Chair and recently appointed member of the Sri Sathya Sai Central trust UK, spoke next about the

Trust. He gave us a full description of the Trust, its members and the work undertaken under grants made by the Trust. The audience were clearly very happy to learn all about the work and workings of this important companion body. The figures quoted that had been received from SSSSO UK members and utilised on humanitarian projects were very impressive.

Marianne Meyer took the stage next and immediately endeared herself to the audience by her style and loving approach to her talk. With a Powerpoint presentation providing a backdrop to her speech she spoke about perceptions of time, stress and crisis. She skilfully wove anecdotes of interviews with Swami, which showed that she has the same wonderful sense of humour as her husband! In a very transparent way she described her personal challenge in life – dealing with her own anger! How the audience resonated with her. We shifted from laughter to tears of empathy and back! The zippy, energetic relationship of this husband/wife duo really created a wonderful dynamic that completely opened our hearts to them both.

The four National Wing Co-ordinators, Lakshmi Puvanendran (SSE), Bharat Handa (Service), Raj Selvakumar (Spiritual) and Mathan Arulvel (Young Adults) made snappy and succinct 5-minute presentations describing the year ahead from their perspective. After tea there was a half-hour 'Question and Answer' session with Dr and Mrs Meyer, the Wing Co-ordinators, Prabodh Mistry (SS Schools), Ishver Patel and Rosemary facilitated. When Rosemary presented Thorbjorn and Marianne with a gift each the audience immediately and spontaneously gave them a standing ovation! The start of the day had begun with Vedam Chanting, the singing of Multi-faith prayers and a wonderful guided meditation on Light by Bahnoon Agnew the R6 Spiritual Co-ordinator (a large candle flame was projected on the screen for this). It ended with vigorous and uplifting Devotional Songs and Aarth performed by Thorbjorn and Marianne. The two MCs for the day, 'Vickneshwaren' and Leela Sivaloganathan-Jones did a splendid job along with all the volunteers. Each departing participant was given a bag with mineral water and snacks for their safe journey home. Unanswered questions from the 'Q & A' session will be answered and circulated – either in the next 'Love and Light' or via your Regional Chairs. All comments on the evaluation papers will be discussed and provide a basis for next year's conference.

Kishor Kumar, National Secretary

Opportunities for Service at Sri Sathya Sai Hospitals

With the Divine Blessings of our beloved Bhagavan, overseas medical personnel have been serving at the above hospitals on a regular basis for the past two years. Baba has recently granted permission for Nurses in select fields to engage in teaching, and the physiotherapists to work in his hospitals as necessary.

All personnel are required to work for at least two weeks at a time starting from the 1st to the 15th or 15th to 30th of the month. They must hold a current license to practice independently in their countries. Fluency in English is a requisite, and knowledge of Telugu is an asset. Details from all UK based volunteers are evaluated by me to make sure the criteria as required by the International Medical Committee of the Prashanti Council are met. The system of training and names of posts used in UK are different to those in India, the US and other countries taking part in this project. It is therefore important for us to confirm equivalence of qualifications, training and experience and obtain temporary registration with the Indian Medical Council when necessary before volunteers can be permitted to engage in patient care in Puttaparthi. For this reason a CV pro forma is sent for completion, to every volunteer requesting to serve at Swami's hospitals and once scrutinized details are passed on, with two possible periods of seva suggested by the volunteers, to the main rota organizers, in the US, to proceed. All further exchanges of information can then take place via e-mail and post directly with Drs. Chandra Chari and Hari Conjeevram in USA. They both organize the master rota with the director of this project Dr. Venkat Sadanand who is based in Canada.

Mostly the work is in the out patients department at the General hospital in Puttaparthi, the very busy little hospital close to the Ashram that serves the surrounding villages and the thousands of devotees who flock to Prashanti Nilayam all year round. Swami inaugurated this hospital on the 23rd of November 1954 at the request of his beloved mother Easwaramma, who wished that medical facilities be made available locally for the people living in that area. They need mainly General practitioners, paediatricians and physicians. Specialists in certain fields may also get an opportunity and enquiries from medical, nursing, pharmacy and physiotherapists can be all sent to us and the committee can advise on the availability

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of any opportunity. Occasionally services at the Super Specialty Hospital in Puttapparthi are also required. Overseas volunteers work under the guidance of the permanent staff at these hospitals abiding by the rules and regulations as well as the practice adopted there.

Accommodation within the ashram and seating arrangements during Darshan are taken care of during the two weeks of seva.

In the past year 103 medical volunteers have served through the rota and of this 15 were from UK. Anaesthetists supported the very busy schedules of the in house specialists, ENT surgeons, physicians and paediatricians ran busy clinics and many family practitioners helped in the OPD providing valuable multidisciplinary care. The feed back from the regular hospital staff and volunteers returning after seva have all been very inspiring. We hope that more will come forward and share this experience making good use this golden opportunity Baba has made available.

Will all prospective volunteers please contact their Regional Chairs with their professional details.

Mr.K.Puvana Chandra

Region 2

The Inward Journey

On our spiritual journey to 'self realisation' or 'God realisation' where we encounter a myriad of obstacles and challenges, it is easy to forget our true self and get trapped in this illusory world where most of us experience stress in many ways in our daily lives. Meditation is a wonderful tool to cure many stress-related illnesses, to neutralise negativity and to bring harmony into our busy lives. The beneficial effects of meditation to our physical, mental, psychological and spiritual health are endless.

Region 2 was privileged therefore to host a meditation workshop on the 27th Jan 2008, facilitated by Dr Chun at Whitmore High School in Harrow, the home of Pinner Sai Centre. Over 100 earnest spiritual seekers from all walks of life attended the event, all of them wishing to progress and intensify their spiritual practice.

Dr Chun, a very knowledgeable practitioner of meditation gave an in-depth explanation of meditation and its different techniques and effects. He explained about the inner workings of the subtle body and mind, the varying degrees of consciousness in relation to the seven major energy centres (chakras) in the body that can be felt by deep concentration. These explanations, to an enthralled and captivated audience were

supported by excellent visual representations and practical exercises.

Dr Chun engaged the audience in practising different techniques of meditation such as the 'So Ham' breathing method, which were easy to follow and to do at home. With continuous practice of this technique, So Ham will in due course converge into the primordial sound OM.

Just as meditation is food for the soul, a light healthy lunch was lovingly served to feed the physical body. The second method of meditation was centred on concentrating upon different parts of the physical body while mentally relaxed. Practitioners were asked to visualise their chosen form of God blessing them. This was quite overwhelming for those devotees who totally immersed themselves and were brought to tears. The workshop ended with concluding prayers and Aarti and Region 2 hopes with the blessings of our beloved Lord to hold further spiritual workshops on different topics in future.

'In this peacelessness that is confounding the world, you must seek the higher spiritual peace, in that higher spiritual peace you can visualise Supreme Splendour and in that Supreme Splendour, the all-embracing Light (immanent and transcendent splendour, boundless, benign) is experienced; in that all-embracing Light, the Universal Eternal Absolute is experienced. When the individual meets the Universal, it becomes Universal. I and I become we; we and he become only we'. - BABA

Senthil Kumarathevan

Region 2 Spiritual Coordinator

New Year's Eve

On 31st December 2007, while thousands of people gathered in Trafalgar Square for the New Year and others in Edinburgh for the traditional Hogmanay celebrations, about 150 devotees from Region 2 congregated at Whitmore High School in Harrow to celebrate the end of the old year and the beginning of the New Year in a spiritual atmosphere.

The programme started at 10pm with 3 Aums and Saithree mantras followed by non-stop devotional singing extolling the glory of God until midnight. The arrival of the New Year was discernible by the blowing of a conch, Vedic chanting and a devotional song dedicated to Lord Ganesha who is the remover of all obstacles and who symbolises auspiciousness and wisdom. Concluding prayers and Aarthi followed this.

The New Year is a wonderful time for reflection and resolution giving us a chance to reflect on the past and look forward to the

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year ahead. May we always be focussed on our beloved Swami and may we resolve to deepen our spiritual practices in order that we may experience our innate divinity.

Gayatri Bikoo

Region 2 Service Co-ordinator

Region 3

Saturday 19th January 2008 - Region 3's Ilford Sai Centre celebrated 'Makara Sankranthi' (Harvest Festival) also known as 'Thai Ponggal' in South India. The festivities began with the recitation of Vedam and multi-faith prayers, setting the scene for the unfolding of the programme. The young adults of Ilford then sang bhajans, which included 'Qawalis'. This was then followed by a play performed by the adults of Ilford Centre, entitled 'Living in Harmony with Mother Nature'. This play highlighted the present state of affairs faced by man, caused by the wrath of Mother Earth who could no longer suffer abuse and plundering and consequently the world suffers natural disasters, calamities and catastrophes of all sorts. The moral of the play was that if Mother Earth (Bumi Matha) is treated with love, compassion and respect, then a sense of harmony and peace will prevail over the Earth and man can live happily. It was a treat for the children to watch their parents perform the roles of farmers, Mother Earth, the Five Elements, the celestial Sage Narada and the 'Trimurthis' - namely Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The costumes and make up were breathtaking and heavenly to say the least. The evening concluded with a speech by Vickneshwaren who spoke on the inner significance of this South Indian harvest festival and how it is known and celebrated throughout India. A truly entertaining and educating evening was harvested....

Sunthar Uthayan, Chair Region 3

Sathya Sai Information Technology & Arts: Project 'Divine Designs'...!

We are looking for talented enthusiastic people who can assist with developing Sai Websites. We need people with html, flash and experience - and who would like to express their creative talents for web designs. If you wish to see your creations coming to life then please contact the SITA project team.

Movie UK - Have you go what it takes?

We are forming teams of videographers, photographers, journalists, voiceover people and many more for some exciting videos the Sai Organisation UK is planning for production over the coming spring months. The forthcoming EHV Games video is an example of one such project from which the resulting material will be shown on websites and DVDs around the world. If you would like to take part please contact the SITA project team.

To take part in any of the projects above please email us at: admin@sitaproject.org.uk
We look forward to hear from you

SITA project planning team.

Sathya Sai Bookshop

The bookshop has a regularly updated website.

Please visit it at:

www.srisathyasaibookcentre.org.uk

DVDs are often being compiled and released along with new interesting books.

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.sathyasaiehv.org.uk

Love and Light SSSSO UK
Significant Diary Dates 2008 please ask your
 Centre or Regional Chair for details

Month	Date	Event
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