

# Love and Light!

SSSSO (UK) - monthly update



9<sup>th</sup> February 2009

## Pilgrims Together!

Dear Readers, Sai Ram!

Thank you so much for coming out in force to attend our National Conference 2009 on the 31<sup>st</sup> January! Feedback, so far, indicates that you really enjoyed the environment of the venue, the content of the day and the way it was run! It was wonderful to see so many happy faces! My thanks go too, to Sam and Sharon Sandweiss our special guests whose very presence brought us heart-opening love and the wonderful telling of personal and enlightening stories and the showing of some very moving film clips.

Rarely have I, in recent times, heard of so many people being moved to tears as they were on our Conference Day. I felt that Swami's love pervaded the proceedings right through from the opening chanting to the pure sweet voices of the children and the teenagers, leading us both vocally and instrumentally in Devotional songs and through Arathi at the end.

Another working year faces us again and there is much work for the UKCC in the months ahead, in terms of finishing off some of our already-started projects, looking into new required areas of action and addressing new themes for the future. We shall be personally taking information out to the Regions and making ourselves available to support you and help empower you in all that you aspire to do in Swami's name.

The economic downturn sees us immediately responding by us coming to you rather than expecting you all to come to a 'central' place. We want to be available to as many of you as we can.

There may be other changes that we need to make in our approach over time, new ways for our Organisation to gather together that accord with 'Ceiling on Desires', the four sacred elements: Time, Money, Food and Energy, and the basic principles of Right Action.

You keep telling us what you need as support from us and we'll keep responding in the best way we can.

NB New position on the UKCC 2009 is Kavita Trivedi as Region 2 Chair – welcome Kavita!

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

## National Conference 2009

### *"The Pilgrim, the Path and the Goal."*

**Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009**

400 delegates all gathered on a cold Saturday morning at a brand new venue for the National Conference (NC). The conference started with Vedam chanting and the inaugural lighting of the lamp by our special guests Dr Samuel and Mrs Sharon Sandweiss, followed by multifaith prayers. Irrespective of the particular faith, (there were several included), the feeling of devotion and sacred connection was the same from each prayer. We were then bathed and purified in a guided Meditation on Light (Jyoti).

Rosemary Perry, UK National Chair, setting the scene, explained how the UK Central Council (UKCC) of the Sai Organisation has been listening to our feedback and is gradually implementing changes in response to this including:

1) The recent 'Handbook for Office Bearers' that answers most of the typical questions we have about organisation matters and came out last autumn with much input from the centres and Groups.

2) Moving to a new venue for the NC to try and reduce the cost for families attending whilst also opening the NC out for all members of the organisation and not just 'office bearers'.

3) The programme now has more of a satsang feel rather than the workplan / workshops of the past – again, as a result of listening to feedback.

She also threaded through her talk aspects about her own path, its unfolding and the growing recognition that the only true journey leads within.

We saw the humanness of our UKCC members when we watched a video of interviews (and some hilarious outtakes!) of National Wing Coordinators and Regional Chairs sharing 2008 highlights and their plans for 2009. It was an opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of UKCC members, to thank members stepping down as well as to welcome new members. The UKCC members leaving were each presented with a signed copy of one of Dr Sandweiss' books by him.

Ishver Patel, our Central Coordinator, spoke about what is happening internationally within the Sai Organisation, explaining that there is a drive to consolidate and have a coherent strategy. He mentioned how much international information is available on <http://www.sathyasai.org>

Ishver also talked about developments at the Sathya Sai School in Leicester and showed us pictures of the building that is being currently considered as a possible new home for it.

He then updated delegates on the 'National Archive' project. [See article on Page 4 of this issue of 'Love and Light'. - Ed.]

Both Rosemary and Ishver highlighted that there is no need to 'take Swami's message out' - rather our role is to BE Swami's message in the world. We were all given a challenge by Ishver to stop living on 'Sai Island' and to get 'out there' and help address needs with our immediate families, neighbours and communities. "What difference are we making by our existence?" he asked. "What use is it if we don't put any of Sai Baba's teachings into practice? We have secured this journey, this opportunity to be alive while God walks on earth, but have we made any attempt to understand the path we're treading? What is the goal? Is the goal the end? We find that in fact, the path becomes the goal and we merge with the path."

Photographs and films from activities at National, Regional, and Centre/Group level across the UK were woven together in a beautiful and moving film running chronologically, month by month, through 2008. The film made the audience laugh, as well as cry (...or was it only me?) [No it moved many people to tears! Ed.] Thank you to everyone involved in contributing and putting the film together. We have some very skilled members in our organisation!

Carole Alderman, Director of BISSE (the British Institute of Sathya Sai Education) gave us an update of SSEHV activities. Did you know that Prashanti Bookshop has sold over 20,000 UK-developed SSEHV manuals and that the work is being translated into many different languages - including Spanish, French, Arabic and Mandarin? SSEHV is Sai Baba's gift to humanity and the vehicle by which human values will blossom in the hearts of the next generation... what an opportunity to get involved!

Sri Kandiah talked about the Sathya Sai Leadership Training Programme (SSLTP). SSLTP focuses 80% on BEING rather than doing, seeing or telling. It is who we are 'being' at any time, in any situation, that is

most important - after all, that's why we are called human beings rather than human doings! Participants from current cohort Project Group 1 then shared some of their research findings with us all. Their project is looking at 'The Office Bearer Role - Spiritual Deterrent or Transformational Tool?' and they have collated feedback from questionnaires that were sent out across the UK to all Centres and Groups. Many similarities between the views of current office bearers as well as non-office bearers were highlighted - this gives much food for thought for the Sai Organisation!

As one of the Group travels from Switzerland to do the SSLTP training, there was comparable research done in some European Sai Organisations as well. The full report will be presented to the UKCC soon. [Please see more on the outcomes of this project in a later issue of 'Love and Light' - Ed.]

Throughout the day, in three 45-minute sessions, our guests from California, Dr Samuel (Sam) and Mrs Sharon Sandweiss entertained, moved and inspired us by sharing their own experiences of travelling along their personal pilgrimage paths. Sam amused us as he talked about the challenges he faced as a young psychiatrist, first returning from being in Sai Baba's presence, explaining to his colleagues that he had come to believe that not only is he himself God - but also everyone else is too!

Sharon told the story of a unique ring that Sai Baba had materialised for her. The ring had a very unusual symbol on it that, it transpired, represented the word 'God' in many different ways depending on how the ring was turned. But it was a complete surprise when Sharon discovered through the reaction of an Islamic supermarket assistant in Michigan that the ring spelled 'Allah' in Arabic script.

Since receiving the ring Sharon and Sam have had close contact with Muslims in the Eastern European countries, where the knowledge that Sai Baba materialised the word of Allah on a ring for a Jewish woman has had a profound effect!

Sharon and Sam also shared many enlightening stories about their children and grandchildren. For example, on the way home from nursery, Sam would chant the Gayatri mantra while his grandson slept in the car. One day, out of the blue, his grandson started saying the Gayatri - word for word! We have no idea about the impact of our actions on others - which is more reason to make sure our actions are based on love and truth and that we surrender the fruits!

Please use your initiative to distribute this monthly newsletter as widely as possible to all devotees and interested parties.

Other key points that Sam and Sharon emphasised: With love, man is God – the title of Sam's most recent book. The mind is the key – turned inward it can liberate - turned outward towards the world, it can bind. We should practice sense control. We should develop a relationship with Sai Baba whereby we see Sai Baba everywhere and talk to Sai constantly. We should bring the atmic Sai within into our community. And we should accept the purification process that we're going through!

Children from Mill Hill and Milton Keynes Centres moved us all with their melodious and sweet voices. They sang a wonderful uplifting mixture of devotional songs before Dr and Mrs Sandweiss offered Aarathi to Sai Baba. During his talk, Sam shared a very moving video interview with Jack Hislop while Jack was in hospital towards the end of his life. Sam asked Jack what the key message was after all his searching for God and research into so many different philosophies and faiths before he came to Sai Baba. Jack replied that, "Devotion to God is the key".

You and I are both God... then the pilgrim is God. Sai Baba says the path is about finding our true selves, i.e. God. Then the path is God. Devotion to God is the key... then the goal is God too! All is one and all is God.

**Sanjay Vaja,**  
Region 5 Spiritual Coordinator

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## SSE Carousel Training

### SSE Teacher Training and Refresher Course, Region 4 on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March

This training is available to all teachers, teaching assistants and those considering becoming an SSE teacher. A choice of 9 options for the morning and 9 options for the afternoon will be offered so that teachers, both new and experienced, will have an array of topics to choose from to enhance their teaching skills. Topics offered will include:

- Silence is Golden - How to practice and teach meditation effectively.
- Teaching towards Group 3 Year 2&3 Projects
- Teaching the Unity of Faiths
- Bhaja Govindam in essence (whole day session)
- Bhagawad Gita Slokas in essence (whole day session)
- Effective Lesson Planning
- Curriculum awareness and implementation (whole day session)
- Prayers for Group 1 & 2
- Group Activities for Nursery and Group 1 (Primary)

- Effective use of drama and storytelling in SSE
- Writing songs, music and poetry for Sai
- Group Activities for Group 2 & 3 (Secondary)
- Be creative... (Arts and crafts for Nursery & Group 1 (Primary))
- Be creative... (Arts and crafts for Group 2 & 3 (Secondary))
- Assessment within SSE and Conducting Home Visits and Parent Teacher Consultations

The day will provide a wonderful opportunity for teachers to come together, network, share good practice, access training specific to their individual needs and enable them to develop their skills and knowledge further. Details Book via your Centre SSE coordinator shortly.

**Group 3 Year 2 and Group 3 Year 3 projects:** We welcome title suggestions for group 3 projects for the next academic year. Project 1 titles should be Sai Literature based analysis of a quote by Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. This will enable students to research and deepen their understanding of Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings. Project 2 titles should be a practical topic for students to deepen their understanding of the Wings of the Organisation and how they interact. Email titles to [sathyasaieducation@ssso.org.uk](mailto:sathyasaieducation@ssso.org.uk) or via your centre SSE coordinator.

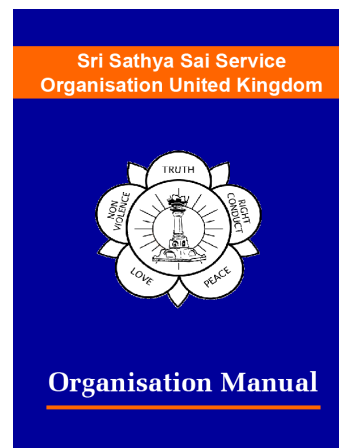
**Lakshmi Puvanendran,**  
National SSE Coordinator

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## 'Organisation Manual'

### New Office Bearers:

Contained on the 'Resource CD' as a part of the 'Handbook for Office Bearers', the Organisation Manual gives information relating to the roles and responsibilities of Office Bearers within the SSSSO UK.



The Bookshop has a small remaining stock of 'Handbook for Office Bearers' left.  
[saibooks@btinternet.com](mailto:saibooks@btinternet.com)

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## Regional 'ROAD' Shows Dates Already Taken:

It is terrific that the UKCC plan to take 'Office Bearer Training Days' to the Regions has been broadened into: 'Regional ROAD Shows' (where 'ROAD' = 'Regional Organisation Awareness Day') and everyone from the Region's Centres and Groups may attend who is interested.

At the end of November 2008, Region 1 held the first of these and it was very successful with a good attendance and a high level of participation both by UKCC members and those attending – it was great fun too! It was as the result of feedback at that day that we changed the name of the event to broaden the availability beyond 'office bearers'.

In the UK Sai Calendar 2009 we now have the following dates for Regional 'ROAD Shows' firmly set:

Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup>: Region 3

Sunday March 1<sup>st</sup>: Region 8

Sunday April 19<sup>th</sup>: Region 7

Your Regional Chair will circulate all the details to your Centre or Group – please know that any member of a Centre or Group can attend. ROAD Shows for Regions 2, 4, 5 and 6 will be arranged in due course.

At all these days the majority of Council members will be present and making presentations, answering your questions and helping to facilitate workshops. We hope that it cuts down travel and cost for you if we come to you rather than you coming to a national day! We really look forward to meeting you all there!

**UKCC**

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## The SSSSO UK National Archive - work in progress – and an opportunity for YOU to contribute!

Why have a National Archive - service activities are done for our personal transformation, not done for reports and certainly not done for write-ups! However, as an organisation, we need to have records of what we have done so we can, for example, feed into the World Education Conference exhibition in Prashanti, and so we can evaluate the benefit we provide. You may think your Group/Centre only feeds 30 people once a month but when you take into account all the Centres and Groups across the UK, it comes to a total of 45,000 meals served each year by members. Personally, I think this helps unite us in our activities and inspires us to serve more.

Where have we got to so far with archiving? Following pushes to record events around the

UK over the past few years, each Region should have someone nominated to collect photos, any newspaper cuttings, and reports. Perhaps each Centre/Group chairperson has records? What happens to these records? Are they handed over to successors? SITA records most National Events. In addition, we are trying to back fill information. We have scanned the following: old issues of 'Facets', 'Sai Reflections', the 'Hatfield Newsletter', Newsletters from Eire, 'Sai Scotland Newsletters' (Region 8), UK Quarterly Reports; and souvenir brochures from 1985 up to the present day. These have been converted into PDF and Word documents so that the information can be used again and so it can be accessed more easily and by more people than the paper copies. The old SSE manuals have been scanned in as well, and recent photos have been labelled and stored on CDs. The next major task is cataloguing this so that it is easily searchable.

What more do we need? We are looking for reports, photos and newspaper cuttings about service work, spiritual projects, multifaith events etc. Things we do NOT want are old photos of Sai Baba or photos of 'usual' events such as devotional singing unless they are 'special' events e.g. involving many different communities or as part of a service project etc. There are also gaps in records for the above list of publications – if you have paper copies please contact me and ask if I need them to complete the set.

How can you help? Please contact me at [archive@srisathyasai.org.uk](mailto:archive@srisathyasai.org.uk) if you think you have something that may be useful. I will advise what to do with it and where to send it. Things to think about are whether you want the originals returned, whether you can put things on a CD or DVD, and making sure photos are labelled with key information such as date, location, Region or Centre/Group, what the event is and any other key information (e.g. if the mayor or other VIP is present).

Looking forward to hearing from you... I just hope my postman is an understanding soul!

**Sanjay Vaja**

[archive@srisathyasai.org.uk](mailto:archive@srisathyasai.org.uk)

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## Sathya Sai Bookshop

The bookshop has a regularly updated website. Please visit it at:

**[www.srisathyasaibookcentre.org.uk](http://www.srisathyasaibookcentre.org.uk)**

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





**The SSSSO UK National Website**  
is to be found on:  
[www.srisathyasai.org.uk](http://www.srisathyasai.org.uk)



**BISSE**  
**British Institute of Sathya Sai Education**  
Find out more about  
Sathya Sai Education in Human Values:  
[www.BISSE.org.uk](http://www.BISSE.org.uk)

**Save the Date!**

**Saturday, October 3rd 2009**

On which BISSE will be hosting its  
National SSEHV Day  
at Abbey Primary Community School  
Leicester LE4 5HH  
...you're invited!

**'Love and Light'**

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Love and Light SSSSO UK  
Diary Dates 2009

Month	Date	Event
February	14th/15th	Regional Conferences
February	21st	Region 3 'ROAD' Show
February	28th	UKCC 1st Quarter Meeting - Region 8
March	1st	Region 8 'ROAD' Show
March	7th	SSE Carousel Training and Refresher Day
March	8th	NWC Meetings
March	14th/15th	Regional Meetings
March	29th	SSEHV Parenting Day Aberdeen R8
April	4th	Joint Regions' 1,2,3 & 6 Multi-faith Day
April	18th	SSLTP Graduation Ceremony
April	19th	Region 7 'ROAD' Show
April	25th	UKCC Projects Meeting
May	6th	Easwaramma Day
May	9th	Buddha Purnima
May	31st	UKCC 2nd Quarter Meeting
June	7th	NWC Meetings
June	13th/14th	Regional Meetings
July	7th	Guru Purnima
July	11th	UKCC Projects Meeting
August	28th - 30th	National Sai Retreat
September	12th	UKCC 3rd Quarter Meeting
September	13th	NWC Meeting
September	19th	SSE National Teachers' Day
September	26th/27th	Regional Meetings