

# Love and Light

SSSSO (UK) - monthly update



9<sup>th</sup> September 2005

## Greetings from Savoy Place, WC1!

Dear friends,

Sai Ram and welcome to the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of 'Love and Light'! Well, August has been an enlightening month of activities meeting Robert and Rita Bruce who joined the Sai Weekend in Stourbridge - and what a weekend that was - you can read more about it further on. Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September, Savoy Place in Central London witnessed History in the making for the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation UK and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (see the Special Feature). Those who were fortunate enough to attend left with a feeling of excitement and a new beginning. I look forward to seeing you at the Isle of Wight Satsang on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September - I hear, sadly, that this maybe the last one in a long successful history.

Love and Light

Shobhna Patel, UK Chair

## National SSEHV Day 2005

This year's National SSEHV Day is taking place on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2005 from 10.00am to 3.30pm at Bentley Wood High School, Clamp Hill/Bridges Road, Stanmore, Middlesex HA7. It will be an interactive day with expert speakers including international education advisor, Neil Hawkes, and Allan Foster, Curriculum Advisor for Citizenship, PSHE and RE for Kent - as well as music and exhibitions.

Please contact **Pamela Nash** on **01784 244494** or [pamelanash@waitrose.com](mailto:pamelanash@waitrose.com) to register your place.

## Isle of Wight Satsang 2005

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2005, Ryde Town Hall,

Lind St, Isle of Wight. (Portsmouth Ferry)

Open from 11.00am, Prog: 1pm until 5pm

Speakers, devotional singing and musical presentation.

Refreshments/snacks will be provided

but please bring your own packed lunch.

## Free Walk-in Health Awareness and Bone Marrow Clinic (Region 3)

24<sup>th</sup> September 2005 - (10am to 2pm)

The Trinity Centre, East Avenue, London E12 6SG.

This clinic has been organised with the support of Newham Hospital NHS Trust and 'Supporting People with Chronic Illness'. The NHS Trust has printed and distributed some 8,000 flyers to GPs, Dentists, and

via a free PCT magazine delivered to homes in the Newham area. Other clinics have been arranged - see Diary Dates.

**Bharat Handa, National Service Coordinator**

## National SSE Teacher Training and Refresher Course

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Hosted by Region 4, Coventry

Our beloved Swami says, "Carry out your duties as teachers in the spirit of dedication, love and service, and stand forth as bright examples to the country and the world." Swami has entrusted us with this divine role of moulding His children and cultivating their inherent divinity. As teachers, we must ensure that we are imparting His teachings in the best way we can. Life is a journey of continuous learning and self-assessment and we will be fulfilling our duty if we continually develop ourselves as Sai Spiritual Education teachers.

In the spirit of working together in harmony within the UK and to comply with the requirements from our National SSE Wing plan 2005, the National SSE Coordinating Committee invites you to attend this SSE Training and Refresher Course on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2005 from 9am-5pm kindly hosted by Region 4, Coventry. There will be something interesting, exciting, worthwhile and dynamic for every single teacher/person. There are 18 workshops to choose from.

Please register by the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2005 with **Sharmila Parikh, National SSE Coordinator**, on [c.parikh@tesco.net](mailto:c.parikh@tesco.net) or via your Regional SSE Coordinator.

## Region 1 and 6 Spiritual Symposium 'Walking with Sai'

A joint Spiritual symposium was held at East Horsley Community Village Hall (R6) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

The theme was "Walking with Sai". The symposium started with Vedic chanting. Dr. Kiran Patel, National Spiritual Coordinator, opened the event. This was followed by three inspiring guest speakers and two panel discussions. The discussion topics were:

- Self-confidence
- Human Effort/Divine Will

A DVD showing early footage of Sai and the early construction of Prashanti Nilayam provided an interlude. Everyone enjoyed the day.

**Keith Sithsabesan - Region 1 Chair**

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

## Sathya Sai Retreat 2005, Stourbridge

I came to the Retreat feeling thoroughly exhausted and depleted on every level. Having been to five or six previous Sai Retreats, I knew it was going to be great – just what the doctor ordered (although the patient was rather recalcitrant and stroppy, feeling she didn't have time to take an afternoon off work and spend two and half days away from her computer.)

Five hours of driving, commencing with two hours of frontline combat with London traffic did not help to enhance my state of mind, and my love energy was flowing about as freely as the M40 – i.e. not very!

We arrived just in time to shovel a biscuit and cup of tea down our necks before entering the peace and sanctuary of the Prayer Hall. It was just as I remembered it from previous years, the altar arranged so beautifully with so much love and skill, Swami's welcoming, loving gaze emanating from two exquisite pictures – and that window! The afternoon sun illuminated the striking stained glass frieze of a woman giving an apple to a small child with so much love and compassion. I thanked Swami for bringing me back to this beautiful place.

The first prayers of the Retreat began with Omkar followed by the first song, "Let the Love we're sharing spread it's wings..." I was taken aback by the strength and speed of my reaction. From the first line I felt a surge of energy and it was as if a physical weight was removed from my being, very suddenly, so that I thought I was going to burst into tears, or alternatively, stand up and start doing all the actions that go with the song, which we do with the children at SSEHV events. (I'm glad I didn't!)

There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that Swami is present at these Retreats. He makes His presence felt in so many ways. As one of the speakers told us, on occasions He's made comments to previous speakers following a Retreat about something they wore or what time they arrived, to prove that He was there. He also talks to us, in the language of the heart, through the speakers themselves who are so inspiring, amusing, uplifting and wise. Furthermore, for the past two years (at least that I've noticed, perhaps at other times too that I didn't see) there has been a large and beautiful butterfly dancing across the altar in the Prayer Hall, and even alighting on His chair. It has to be Him! But more than all of this, His presence is apparent in the pervading feeling of love and peace that envelops all the participants. At the Retreat, petty ego interests, political shenanigans, fears and worries are left outside the gate. We are stripped down to our pure love energy. Not because we necessarily make an effort to do this, but because our negative qualities simply cannot exist within the powerful force field of love that is created by the combination of Swami's

presence and our devotion. I cannot overstate how powerful this energy is, how transforming, how joyful – what a release it is! In fact, I've often pondered on the fact that given the choice between a trip to Puttaparthi or a Sai Retreat, I wouldn't necessarily choose the Darshan option (although, as I write this, I'm hoping Swami's not taking notes!!) The reason is that Sai Retreats are just as powerful – in some ways more powerful – because the focus is 100% on love, transformation, experiencing the five human values, experiencing the Truth of Swami, as opposed to thinking about getting close to His physical form, which is a distraction. Plus, they're not quite as crowded!

There are so many other wonderful aspects to the Retreats; the workshops (you always seem to end up in the one that tells you what you need to know), the good company, the beautiful music, the great food and the lovely catering staff, the peace of the surroundings, the book shop spending spree... it's like a spiritual holiday camp!

As in previous years, I was humbled, awed and inspired by the amount of work and dedication that had gone into putting the whole thing together. So much attention to detail, so much perfection and love.

I think the real knack is not to pick up one's baggage again as one passes through the gate on the way home at the end. Although I do get better every year, I still have yet to master this. The last song in our final prayer session on Sunday was the same as the opening song two days before – 'Let the Love we're sharing spread it's wings...' It was the perfect choice. As the final bars sounded, I prayed with feeling that I would be able to take the peace and love that I was experiencing home with me. The second the song ended, the thought came into my head, "You forgot to pay the congestion charge on Friday evening." My stomach lurched, and in that instant, I knew for sure the Sai Retreat was over for another year.

Roll on August 2006!! Jo Pratt, PR Officer, BISSE

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## Region 1 News

### Devotional Singing Workshop

Devotees were inspired by the devotional singing workshop conducted by Ganesh Bal. The lead singers had training over two Saturdays in July and August, on 'sruthi, song selection and style of singing'. Over 28 devotees participated in the workshop.

Keith Sithsabesan – Region 1 Chair

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**"Vital to spiritual life is self-confidence,  
the conviction that one is the Atma."**

Conversations With Sathya Sai Baba P80

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

### The Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation (UK) and the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards



On 9<sup>th</sup> August 2005, the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation (UK) formalised its partnership with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme by signing the much-coveted Operating Licence Agreement. This gives the SSSSO the mandate and authority to run the Award scheme within the structure of the Organisation. **Henceforth, throughout the United Kingdom, every Region, Centre and Sathya Sai School will come under this Licence.** The Duke of Edinburgh's Office first became interested in the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation when the work of the National UK Youth Pilgrimage 2004 was brought to their attention. When I was asked to give an overview on the Organisation, especially its Youth wing, the London Regional Officer of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, Wayne Wreglesworth, unequivocally stated that, *"I have been waiting for an Organisation like this. If I can leave an Organisation like this to the Award Scheme, before I retire, then I will consider myself a very happy man"*.

Today all Boroughs offer the Award in over 50% of secondary schools and there are over 35,000 participants from every background and community supported by over 7,000 volunteers.

**At present, there are 15 independent Operating Authorities and this now includes the Sri Sathya Sai Organisation (UK).**

At the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Ceremony, hosted

by the National Youth Co-ordinating Committee held on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September at Savoy Place in London, 160 Youth from the National UK Youth Pilgrimage 2004 received their Duke of Edinburgh's Award certificates in front of an audience of 450 people. Presiding over the ceremony was the Chief Executive of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme Peter Westgarth and Wayne Wreglesworth. **Both notables were extremely impressed with the Sai Organisation and, in particular, the calibre of its youth.** Peter Westgarth, in his address, stated that they have a lot to learn from this sacred Organisation and that they were looking forward to working very closely together.

Subsequently, our youth have also been asked to act as advisers for the forthcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme in 2006. A huge celebration will take place at the Barbican in the presence of HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.

**We have also been invited to sit on an advisory panel on ethnic minorities within the Award Scheme.** Both these invitations stress the importance and confidence the Award Scheme places on its partnership with the Organisation. This truly is a historic landmark event in the history of the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation in UK and a befitting tribute to our Lord during His 80<sup>th</sup> year of Love in Action.

**Shitu Chudāsama– National Youth Coordinator**

## Diary Dates 2005

**UKCC Meetings:** Quarterly

**National Wing Meetings:** Quarterly

**Interfaith Days:** 10<sup>th</sup> September; 10<sup>th</sup> December– TBA

**National SSEHV Day:** 17<sup>th</sup> September, (see front page)

**Service Wing:**

**Free Walk-in Health Awareness/Bone Marrow Clinics:**

**R8:** 10<sup>th</sup> September, (10am to 5pm) Harlaw Academy, Albyn Place, Aberdeen [Note: Not Bone marrow].

**R3:** 24<sup>th</sup> September (10am to 2pm), The Trinity Centre, East Avenue, London E12 6SG.

**R4:** 9<sup>th</sup> October (11am to 4pm) St. Paul's Church Hall, 346 Foleshill Road, Foleshill, Coventry.

**Isle of Wight Satsang,** 18<sup>th</sup> September, (see front page)

**National SSE Teacher Training and Refresher Course**

Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2005, (Region 4, Coventry)

(see front page)

**BISSE Dates:**

Values Alive Event, 25<sup>th</sup> September Michele White, Leicester Central Centre.

Presentation to teachers in Primary School, 27<sup>th</sup> September Pamela Nash, Dunstable,

Values in Parenting, Lark Beecham, Juliet Bell, Southsea, Hampshire:

27<sup>th</sup> September, 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1<sup>st</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> November.