



Welcome to this twice-termly newsletter,

Welcome to issue no. 3. We're visiting the Schools in Australia and New Zealand at the moment, so you can expect an article from here in the next issue. Meanwhile, three more articles by students in the School:

- Meditation - a personal account
- Homeopathy in Malta
- A Philosophical Garden

If you're having any trouble viewing, click on View Web Version above. Don't miss Top Tips – more great items here recommended by readers.

With very best wishes, Christine Lambie

A senior student writes about his experience over 50 years

Meditation

Bernard Saunders, London

My life has been, from the age of five, a series of forced changes. During the war, at five years old, I was evacuated, which meant leaving my parents and being sent to a farm in Derbyshire. Then because of circumstances, after a few months I was moved to another house with different people.

There were several more moves like this, sometimes with my brother and sometimes without him. My mother died when I was 12 and my father died 4 years later.

The effect on my psychology was that I did not expect anything to last long; or any relationship to last, and I realise that throughout my life this has been a constant factor - not believing that anything can last or that any relationship will survive.

How is this relevant ? In this way:

Having come across the School, and a tutor who had an extremely clear mind, which I had never come across until then, I became devoted. The teaching as it was presented was an inspirational revelation which inspired great trust.

I had the good fortune when being initiated into meditation of entering a transcendent state. I have never forgotten this and can recall in detail the whole event. From that moment the meditation became the most important practice.

That experience did not mean that from then on everything was an open and smooth road. There were innumerable problems and difficulties which had to be overcome, and the experiences varied very greatly, but one never lost faith or the love of the meditation practice.

In the School we were introduced to the wonderful teaching of Shri Shantananda Saraswati. There again, through the practice and study of his directions, one developed total trust and love for that teaching and teacher which, so far, has never diminished. Closely associated with this, in fact intimately related, is the practice of meditation and its science.

More and more is being discovered about this wonderful practice, and about how to overcome difficulties for everybody, as far as possible. These are variable and are only overcome through good company and the personal dedication of each individual.

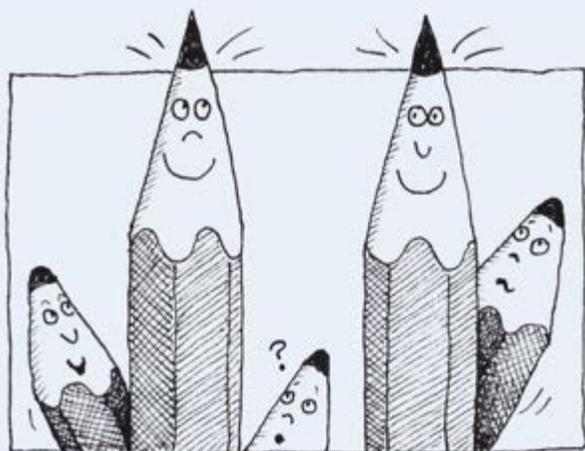
An obstacle which is not uncommon is sleep. I certainly found a phase of this which lasted some two and a half years before I finally found that I rarely experienced sleep during meditation, except in states of extreme tiredness.

There are still obstacles to be met. One cannot say that states of agitation have been eliminated from my practice. This needs constant work and luckily it is not there all the time.

I would like to finish by mentioning one personal experience. While undergoing surgery for cancer, in the nights while recovering from the operation, I found myself resorting to different aspects of the philosophy teaching. I was not able to sit up, and not in any great pain, but I was utterly alone.

I found that whatever else was practised during these periods, the total support given by the repetition of the mantra rose more strongly than anything else. In fact, there were periods when all else disappeared, but the mantra never, never failed.

Meditation has stabilised and centred my life. It has supplied renewed energy beyond any expectation. And to be able to reach total stillness is irreplaceable. This practice and the mantra is the greatest gift that I have ever been given.



Top Tips

Items recommended by readers

1. **Khan academy on TED** Salman Khan talks about how and why he created the remarkable Khan Academy, a carefully structured series of educational videos offering complete curricula in math and, now, other subjects. Watch the lecture on [TEDKhan](#). This is a different method of learning.
2. **Thought for the day** Why not get a useful reminder for the day (or week) straight into your inbox, by subscribing on the Auckland School's website. Go to [Auckland SoP](#) for this popular service.
3. **In Search of Truth** by Brian Hodgkinson. This book is an account of the development of the School since its inception in the 1930s to the present day.

4. **Platonic Tradition** David Beardsley, a student in New York, has created a web site with many articles on the Platonic tradition in the western world. Episode 1 is an overview of the whole tradition. Go to [idealinthewest](#)

This student writes of her profession, reflecting the tradition of medicine of this beautiful island in the Mediterranean.

Homeopathy in Malta

Angela Sapienza, Malta

Malta, with a population of 410,000, has a strong history of medicine with the Knights Hospitallers of St. John, who arrived there in 1530. The Knights' Sacred Infirmary was one of the most famous medical institutions in the world.

For me, the interest in homeopathy, both an art and science, started when my son, now 32, was a little child and was given antibiotics repeatedly for throat and ear infections. Realizing that this method was not curing him but making him weaker, I went to the UK and met a medical doctor who used homeopathic remedies. I tried them on the child. They were simple to use, gentle to his system and they worked well. I never looked back since. . .

The Knights used to value a plant called *Cynomorium Coccineum*, known as the treasure of drugs. In Malta this plant was found only on Fungus Rock - the rock and the area around it were closely guarded.

There are now 6 homeopaths in Malta with a licentiate from the UK; 4 of us are members of the School.

The six of us (along with a few others) took part in the first proving (testing the homeopathic value) of *Cynomorium*. All needed to be in good health and not drink alcohol or coffee during the 5 weeks of the proving and lead a normally balanced life.

So in 1998 a pharmacist from the UK came to assist with the preparation of the remedy. Each person or prover was given a dose which was taken 3 times in 24 hours, and its effect on the person was recorded in his or her diary daily for 5 weeks - each person was monitored by a supervisor.

After that, all met together to discuss the changes in their system - eg: with physicals some felt cramping pain in the leg which they never suffered from before - and from each person's symptoms, a picture of the remedy became available.

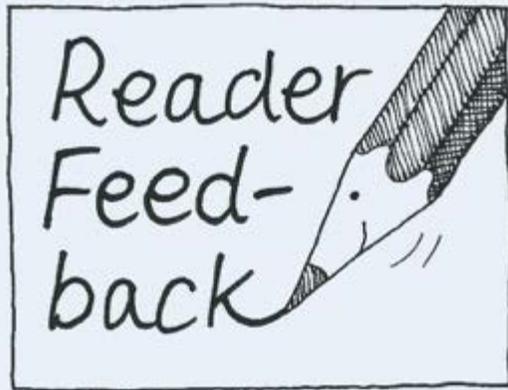
As a result of the proving we now know that *Cynomorium* is helpful for blood and stomach disorders, muscle spasms, pain, lack of energy and other ailments.

Homeopathy is great because it treats a person as a whole, by stimulating the body's natural ability to heal itself. The remedies are made from plant, mineral and animal extracts. When the energy in a person is low, illness may follow. The disturbing elements are identified and the energy is restored with a homeopathic remedy - a tiny, effective package of energy. Shri Shantananda Saraswati said 'For example, in homeopathy, a heavy dose which is the most diluted dose lasts longer and remains effective.'

In my homeopathic practice I have learnt to be patient and to listen carefully to what the patient needs help with, which gives insight into what is best to restore the patient back to health. Also greeting the patient not as a sick person, but one who is no different from myself. It also helps me to recognise that the physical ailment is held by the mental and emotional realms, which are mainly what need to be addressed.

The photo shows Angela Sapienza at Fungus Rock

Reader Feedback



'Thank you so much for emailing insight issue 2. I enjoyed the articles. . . They reminded me of the goodness that is all around and that all things are possible through that goodness. This reminder has been very encouraging especially with regard to the present physical condition I am faced with (broken bone). I look forward to the next issue and love being part of this world wide family.'
Gauteng, South Africa

'Thanks for the latest newsletter which afforded some good reading. I checked out the Eric Whitacre site and we played it to the groups that were here last night.' Wellington, New Zealand

This student describes the transformation of Brinscall Hall gardens

A Philosophic Garden

Avril Cairncross, Manchester, UK

We started developing the 4.25-acre gardens of our School residential property in the North West of England about ten years ago.

I didn't know anything when we started, so I enrolled on a two year Royal Horticultural Society course at a local college – it was really thorough and fantastic. Other members of the team had plenty of hands-on experience and so we all fill in any gaps in knowledge and experience.

Our chief aim was to create a beautiful place for peaceful reflection, which would balance the creative abundance of nature and the human love of order. It has been a journey of discovery, not of mastery.

We built paths and stone steps, put in twenty-one benches and divided up the space into large and small 'outdoor rooms'. We made three ponds, a pergola, a stone terrace, a bog garden, a woodland walk, a sculpture garden and a large box-edged parterre where the double tennis courts had been.

We all find it to be a spiritual experience. Being in touch with the earth and the natural cycles is deeply satisfying. You are always aware that it is the Creator who brings about the work and causes it to prosper and grow, for our part it is just a matter of following and being awake to what is needed.

Four years ago when he visited Brinscall Hall, Mr Lambie suggested we might like to try a vegetable garden. So with the same enthusiasm and vigour the team began to develop the 1.5 acres of land in the walled garden, which already contained a small orchard of apples, pears, damsons, greengages and plum trees. We added fifteen 4ft x 20ft raised vegetable beds, a 50ft raised asparagus bed and nine raised fruit beds, 2 comfrey beds plus 4 fig trees in tubs.

There is much to learn about making the best use of our kitchen garden but nevertheless it does provide a large amount of food for our summer and autumn residents. We use as much of the produce as possible when fresh and freeze whatever is left, and also make lots of jam.

Growing food has brought about a greater respect for all food, whether grown at home or bought from the supermarket. When you have witnessed for yourself the complete cycle of growth, all the care needed for each vegetable to flourish and to make it through all the tricky stages - each one is precious!

Our latest culinary project is the herb garden just outside the main kitchen.

We are very committed to the organic philosophy, avoiding pesticides (even slug-pellets!) or artificial fertilizers, making our own compost and plant food from comfrey (potash) and stinging nettles (nitrogen) plus seaweed extract. I believe that the secret of a beautiful garden is a rich and healthy soil and matching the right plant to the prevailing conditions, working with Mother Nature, not imposing on her.

Nearly all of the work is done by students in the School. We have a dedicated gardening team of 7, meeting for one morning a week during term-time and also during holidays, which looks after the creative projects and the fine maintenance.

And in the future? I am presently researching natural bee-keeping methods and hope to set up some hives in the orchard, to do our bit for our ailing bee population, not for the honey. In past years we have opened the garden for charity under the National Gardens Scheme and may decide to do so again. Watch this space!

The photo shows a few members of the gardening team with the parterre as background; Avril Cairncross is on the right.

See more photos at [NWBrinscall](#)

Thanks for reading

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Please keep that feedback coming. I need all your suggestions of personal stories, insights, links, articles, cartoons, video clips – anything that will be of interest to our philosophy community. Do you know someone in the School who has an interesting story to tell? E-mail me at: editor@seslondon.org. Thanks again for reading, CL

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