



Meditation News

Newsletter of The World Community for
Christian Meditation in the UK

AUTUMN 2015

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National Coordinator's Note

Dear Fellow Meditators

Welcome to Autumn, the time when we reap the benefits of summer in the harvest but are required to let go of the summer sun – with no 'ifs and buts' as they say, just a natural transition and passage along life's path. I wish you a smooth transition towards winter.

In the newsletter this month Bridget Hewitt shares with us her thoughts on both Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk, and Brother Roger, the founder of the Community at Taizé, as we celebrate the centenary year of their births. She asks, "How might we think of their message and their legacy?" In answer, Merton, Bridget says, asks us "to shed our masks, to be vulnerable, to be human" whilst Brother Roger, she adds, offered a space where some could do and be just that.

For many of us, our own legacy may seem insignificant in the scheme of life's bigger events, but each of us passes on something to those around us which is remembered and recalled, even when we are no longer on this earth. This edition carries obituaries of three members of our community who will be remembered with love and gratitude for what they offered to others whilst with us and I would like to say "Thank you" to those who wrote to recognize their contribution.

Also included in this edition is a report from Roger Layet on the 2014 finances. As this is his last formal duty as Chair of the Trustees, having served for four years in the role, I would like to thank Roger on the community's behalf for the big part he has played in the governance of the UK community in a low profile yet significant role. And a welcome to Andrew Cresswell who has succeeded him.

In September Amanda Croucher, Office Coordinator, moved to a full time position closer to her home. We were sad to lose her but wish her every happiness in her new role. Amanda has written, thanking the community for the gift we sent, saying also "I have really valued my time within the UK community and it will feel lovely to be 'held' by you all as I continue on." I am also able to report, however and with pleasure,

that Roisin Williamson has accepted the post and I am sure you will join with me in wishing her well too.

And three more warm welcomes. Firstly to Carolina Ghiuzan, one of the speakers at the National Gathering and a member of the L'Arche community, who has agreed to be special interest coordinator for those with learning difficulties. Also to two new regional coordinators: Malcolm Nobbs who has taken over from Paul Hayward in Herts and Beds, and Linda Richardson who has taken over from Caroline Shepherd in Cambridgeshire. We give a big thank you to Paul and Caroline for their service to the regions.

Finally, two other contributions this month are firstly from our editor, Margaret Comerford, who has written a review of Anne McDonnell's new booklet called *Meditation and Dying*. Secondly, Sue Purkis updates us on meditation with children.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and I look forward to meeting many of you during the autumn season.

With lots of love as always,

Roz

In This Issue

Community News	2-5
Outreach	6-7
Meditation Readings and Music	8-9
Two Centenaries	10
Book Review: Meditation and Dying	12
Monastics in the World	13
Events	14-15
Contacts	16

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uknewsletter@wccm.org:

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**Deadline for the Winter (January 2016) issue:
1 December 2015**

Community News

The Christian Meditation Trust (UK)

CMT (UK) is the registered charity set up by the UK community of WCCM meditators. This article is the annual report to UK meditators of the Trust's financial position.

I am pleased to report a much-improved situation in 2014, which we hope will continue into 2015 and beyond. In 2014 income increased and costs reduced, so that our levels of reserves, which had been causing concern, have now regained a satisfactory level (which the trustees regard as at least nine months worth of costs). The trustees are especially grateful to the efforts of Roz as national coordinator, Ray Lamb our treasurer, and Charles Posnett who facilitated the newsletter printing savings.

For 2014, net of event fees and appeal costs, our income increased, thanks to your generous donations, including initial contributions from the "loose change" programme of donations from groups. Gift Aid reclaims remain strong (please do gift aid donations when you can). A modest surplus was incurred on national events, mostly the 2014 conference.

Thanks to extensive attention our costs reduced. The main costs were the publication of the newsletter, and office functions, which have included updating the database of meditators and groups, mailing out CDs, sending out starter packs to new groups, developing our website, fielding enquiries from inside the community and outside it, and providing support to the national coordinator. There are also the necessary expenses incurred by the national coordinator and the annual meeting of all coordinators. All of which support the Christian meditation community in the UK.

Regrettably, during 2014 no donation could be made to the world-wide work of WCCM. However, as result of your contributions and the attention to costs, reserves

have now been restored and the Trustees have been delighted to resume donating to the work of WCCM worldwide. Thus far in 2015 we have given over £5,000 and have put in place a policy guideline for donations to be made of at least 10% of prior year income in future, reserves permitting. We also now envisage being able to sanction some costs to renew our leaflets and improve our database. Consequently, our budget for 2015 envisages income and expenditure in balance.

The Charity Commission publishes financial information on all UK charities on its website – so you can see more detail there. We are charity number 1101900. Or if you have questions or comments, please email me on roger.layet@btinternet.com

This is my last report to you as chair of trustees, as my term finished in June of this year when I was pleased to hand over to Andrew Cresswell. Judith Denny, our longest serving trustee, also stepped down this June. Your trustees now are Andrew Cresswell (Wales), Sarah Kirkup (Cumbria), Ray Lamb (Surrey), John Roberts (Somerset), Caroline Shepherd (Cambridgeshire) and Roz Stockley (national coordinator)

Roger Layet

Anne Skiffington, leader of the Paisley Group.

Anne became leader of the Paisley Meditation Group in 2007 having been a member of the group for several years beforehand, during the time of Peter Broadhurst's ministry in Scotland. She had very fond memories of Peter, who visited the Group on several occasions, and spoke of the wisdom, support and encouragement which he offered.



Anne was very faithful to her twice-daily meditation and would switch off her phone, at these times, so as not to be disturbed; she often shared about how the practice of Meditation helped her in times of difficulty and in dealing patiently with difficult people. When she realised that she did not have much longer to live, she was able to accept this with serenity and peace. She is sorely missed by the group where she was a gentle, kind and supportive presence.

Sheila Curran



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Patricia Clare Posnett: 21st January 1943 – 14th June 2015

Patty came from the Isle of Man. She was born in Douglas where her father ran the local chemist shop, making handmade creams and ointments.

As a young girl, Patty enjoyed picnics on the beach & cycling round the island with her elder brother Frank. She had a deep love of the island's natural beauty and in recent years Patty & I spent many fun holidays there, exploring the coastal paths and revisiting old haunts. Patty has now returned to be buried on the island at a small cemetery overlooking the sea.

After school, Patty went to Guys Hospital in London where her calm, caring nature help made her an excellent nurse and saw her progress quickly to Ward Sister. Later on Patty was a district nurse & mid-wife in Stratford and made her rounds by bike, visiting patients & helping to deliver babies in peoples own homes. She was always calm under pressure and enjoyed putting patients and mothers-to-be at their ease.

I met Patty while I was at university at Cambridge, but didn't really get to know her until we went on holiday to her parents' house in the Isle of Man – where I fell in love with her and her island. After a short engagement we got married and soon had four sons : Tony, Tim, Mark and John. Three of those sons are now married. We have seven grandchildren.

Patty was always at the centre of our home-life. She was the great provider. No matter what else was going on, there seemed an endless stream of cakes, pies, meringues, jams and other fabulous fare coming from the kitchen. Great thought always went into the menu and it always had a very personal touch.

Patty was always happiest when she was doing things for other people, rather than the other way round - serving others and serving God are themes that ran throughout her life.

Patty took pleasure in the simple things in life. The songs of birds, long walks, a clifftop view, playing boules, playing tennis, gardening in the sunshine or fishing for

crabs in rock-pools on the beach. She always had a great sense of fun.

She retained a capacity to appreciate the simple awe and wonder in our lives.



Perhaps that is why we took so easily to Christian Meditation when we were introduced to the practice over twenty-five years ago by our local Catholic priest – an Irishman with a great sense of humour. We soon found ourselves running a local meditation group, but it wasn't until we went to Monte Oliveto some years later that we decided to become oblates, which we did in Dublin in 2011.

Our faith was always a strong and consistent part of our lives and we really enjoyed the work we did sharing Christian Meditation with children in schools and local churches. Patty often quoted the teachings of John Main who wrote:

'... Our challenge as Christians is not to try to convert people around us to our way of belief but to love them, to be ourselves living incarnations of what we believe, to live what we believe and to love what we believe.'

Patty never liked being the centre of attention but as part of this vocation of service as an oblate, found herself presenting to hundreds of people, and meeting and teaching thousands of school children at hundreds of schools. She also made new friends all over the world.



Messages from around the world from family and friends bear witness to how many people she touched and served, and how many of those people valued her friendship. The email messages and cards shared a common view of Patty:

*Loving ... Generous ...
Welcoming ... Thoughtful ...
Gentle ... Caring ... A Happy,
Lively Person ... A Good
Listener ... Full of Life ... A*

Special Saint ... A Lovely Lady...

Patty recently said – "I am now doing the very thing I feel I was meant to do. I feel really happy and fulfilled".

Charles Posnett

A Day To Be Still



Our visit to the 'Quiet Garden' at Walford Grange in South Shropshire started with a delightful car journey through the green and pleasant countryside en route to our destination. Sharing the car journey was also a time to get to know one of my fellow travellers and that too was a delight. Six of us in total arrived at the beautiful country house to be greeted by our welcoming hostess Carole Dixon. Before I sing the praises of her wonderful garden, I should also point out what a great baker she is too. The cakes and refreshments that awaited us were too tempting by half! Especially the chocolate brownies – the best I have ever tasted. After quenching our thirst and any tummy rumbles our day was outlined and we met for an opening prayer in the comfortable lounge.

We had the whole of the ground floor and outdoor space available to us to use as we wished. The garden had lots of different places and seating for us to sit and meditate, read or simply just "be". I enjoyed roaming around initially; the formal garden had two water features and I loved sitting by the elephant head as it poured water into the raised pond. The sound of running water I always find restorative. There is also an area left to wild grasses with a path to wander through



and watch the grasses respond to the breeze creating wonderful waves of different shades of green. The spaciousness of it all meant that no one intruded on your particular space.

On a personal level I spent some of my time reading Father Gregory Fruehwirth's book, 'Words of Silence' acquired at the recent Annual Gathering. Walford Grange's Quiet Garden was the perfect spot to open up and contemplate on the inspirational meditations provided within the book. At midday we met together for a time of silence to honour those killed in Tunisia at the end of June, this was followed by meditation. We had all brought lunch and sat in the garden enjoying the warmth of the sunshine and the tranquility of our surroundings. We had a further quiet time in the gardens and just before 3pm met for a final prayer and our goodbyes.

What did I take away with me from this day of quiet? Well, it was a recognition that I need to build in similar times away where I can just give myself to spending time with God and learning to "be". The other learning was not to check my phone at lunchtime! A minor problem disturbed my peace of mind and I realised that I must learn to not always react to problems but take more time to pray, pause and present the problem to God



(wise words from my travel companion Sarah). My reading time also reconfirmed the need to simply be more in the present and meet with God in all things. I cannot wait for the next time to visit Walford Grange which is open the first Friday of every month from 10am to 3pm. You can simply turn up or ring Carole to let her know you will be coming. The address and contact details are as follows:

Carole Dixon,
Walford Grange, Walford, Nr Leintwardine,
Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 0JT
Tel: 01547 540683 / carole@caroledixon.me.uk

Finally thank you Carole for providing such a wonderful quiet space and place for others to come and find God.

Diane Cuff, Wellington Meditation Group, Shropshire.

Outreach

Meditating with Children - Sharing the Gift



Time as always seems to fly by and it is difficult to believe that nearly a year has passed since I took on the role of Special Interest Coordinator for Meditation with Children. It has been a busy and fulfilling time and we have seen the work of the Community build slowly yet steadily. As Roz has reported

in her National Coordinator letters, she has taken the opportunity when meeting with groups around the country to discuss meditation with children, and this has resulted in meditators stepping forward to lead the work in various parts of the country. And as always the Holy Spirit continues to work in mysterious ways, as no sooner had Heather Kearon indicated her interest in leading in Sussex than we had a flurry of interest from the region. Heather and Roz led a Deanery day for five schools and fifty teachers in June and Heather now has four training events in the pipeline for the coming months.

Other ways in which meditation has been introduced is by training the children themselves to lead meditation

groups. Angela Gregson has worked with pupil lay chaplains in two schools in Lancashire who will lead children in meditation in lunch and break-time meditation clubs. Children teaching children is an inspired and inspiring approach to introducing meditation within schools. Sister Anna Pat, who has been instrumental in bringing meditation to schools in Leicestershire, recently sent us testimonials written by pupils she has taught to lead lunchtime meditation groups. They wrote to Fr Laurence to thank him for introducing meditation to schools and for having coordinators to help them be leaders. They told Fr Laurence how the practice "literally changed our lives". These children have now moved to a non-Catholic secondary school but say they are determined to carry on the practice. Maybe all of us can think about sharing the gift with the children in our lives as we now know that they are not too young to understand.

As a consequence of the growth of our MWC team we are holding a day on 9th November, in London, to share ideas and experiences with each other. If anyone feels the call to lead in their region please do get in touch, we'd love you to join us.

Sue Purkis

ukmeditationwithchildren@wccm.org

A Journey Towards Christian Meditation

I was greatly surprised to recently receive an e-mail from Roz Stockley, in which she invited me to consider the new position of the UK Special Interest Coordinator for People with Learning Disabilities. I feel honoured to have been considered for it, and to strengthen in this way my connection with the WCCM community.

And there are good reasons to believe that the last year has been for me a personal journey towards Christian Meditation.

It was in April 2014 that I first heard of Christian Meditation in the John Main tradition, when Roz visited L'Arche Bognor Regis, the community I have been part of for about 3 years. L'Arche is a worldwide Christian community where people with and without learning disabilities live, work, pray and celebrate life together. L'Arche was first started in France in 1964 by Jean Vanier, and has now about 150 communities all over the world.

Meeting Roz encouraged us to start the practice of Christian Meditation in our community, and now each Monday afternoon we stop our work for half an hour

and we meditate in 2 different groups of about 8-10 people each.

I had not really 'tasted' meditation when I first started it. The real turning point for me was attending the retreat 'Entering into Silent Prayer', lead by Jean Vanier and Fr Laurence Freeman in Trosly - France, between 3-7th of June this year. The retreat helped me discover meditation as my own way of prayer. I had been meditating with the core-members (that is how we refer to the people with learning disabilities) in our community weekly for a year at that point.

Before the retreat I was doing meditation as an intellectual exercise, and I was practising it only in the community, leading the weekly meditation 'for' the core-members. During the retreat I discovered meditation 'for myself' as a regular daily practice 'in the



continued on page 7

context of prayer' as Fr. Laurence described it, and I consider my daily meditation as being a lifelong gift.

It was a treat to meet Jean Vanier in person and to talk to him in private about what he calls 'the silent prayer'. When I mentioned to him we were meditating weekly with 2 groups of core-members and assistants in our L'Arche community, I could read happiness in his eyes when he said : 'That's good. Very good. Do continue with it!'

Being part of the retreat helped me hugely in organizing my thoughts for the WCCM UK Community Gathering 2015 in which I was invited together with Kathy Kramers, a core-member with Down syndrome, to talk about our meditation group at L'Arche. The gathering took place in Swanwick, Derbyshire, just one week after the retreat!

Both Kathy and I felt so welcomed by the WCCM members. We keep alive in our hearts all the great people we met there, all the hugs we received after our talk and many of the warm words. I have forgotten some of the thoughts people had shared with us, but I'll never forget their honest tears, their warm hugs... It

definitely felt that the two communities, WCCM and L'Arche were one family!

I hope with time more people will discover Christian meditation as their own way of prayer, of sharing communion and community through silent prayer, and discover the words of John Main (The Way of Unknowing):

'Being the person we are means enjoying the gift of our own creation before and beyond all desire, all expectations, all demands. Being one is being whole. The experience of meditation is therefore the experience of simplification, learning to become ever more and utterly simple. This is the secret of all happiness: to enjoy what is. Being is the primal experience of us all. Prior to all having, prior to all doing, being is enduring. It is the eternal in each one of us.'

Meditating in a group with people with learning disabilities offers a special experience, not encountered by me anywhere else than in prayer. It gives the feeling of being totally 'naked' of our assumed gifts of intelligence, of false beauty, of power... Being still in silence brings us all equal before God who created ALL of us perfect, and helps us see this clear, in the true light of creation.

Carolina Ghiuzan

Meditation Companions



**Do you have questions about your meditation practice?
Or about your spiritual life generally?**

Meditation Companions are experienced WCCM meditators who are there for you to talk to immediately.

**Contact Anne McDonnell
01603 810646
anne.mcdonnell@talk21.com**

Donations



If you would like to make a donation to support the work of WCCM in the UK please send cheques to:

**The Christian Meditation Trust (UK)
32 Hamilton Road, London W5 2EH**

Please include your name and address and make cheques payable to: CMT(UK)

Gift Aid

If you are a UK taxpayer you can Gift Aid your donation, which increases the amount we receive at no extra cost to you.



If you would like to Gift Aid your donation please include and sign the following declaration.

Declaration: I wish the Christian Meditation Trust (UK) to treat this gift and any donations made by me in the previous four years and any donations made by me in the future as Gift Aid donations. I am resident in the United Kingdom. I have paid/will pay basic rate income tax on the gross amount given.

If you have any queries or would like to set up a standing order or electronic transfer, please contact the UK Office Tel. 020 8280 0049 uk@wccm.org

Community Gathering Meditation Readings and Music

These are the readings and music used by Andrew Cresswell during the meditation sessions at this year's Community Gathering.

Friday evening

Reading

Psalm 40, v.1

I waited patiently for the Lord;
He inclined unto me
and heard my calling.

Lord, I am waiting for you in the darkness and the great silence. Your brightness is my darkness. I know nothing of you and, by myself, I cannot even imagine how to go about knowing you. If I imagine you, I am mistaken. If I understand you, I am deluded. If I am conscious and certain I know you, I am crazy. The darkness is enough.

Thomas Merton – Bridges to Contemplative Living

Music

Monteverdi Vespers - Magnificat, Movement 1

Post-meditation Reading

Contemplative prayer is, in a way, simply the preference for the desert, for emptiness, for poverty. One has begun to know the meaning of contemplation when one intuitively and spontaneously seeks the dark and unknown path of aridity in preference to every other way. The contemplative is one who would rather not know than know. Rather not enjoy than enjoy. Rather not have proof that God loves him. He accepts the love of God on faith, in defiance of all apparent evidence. This is the necessary condition, and a very paradoxical condition, for the mystical experience of the reality of God's presence and of his love for us. Only when we are able to let go of everything within us, all desire to see, to know, to taste and to experience the presence of God, do we truly become able to experience that presence with the overwhelming conviction and reality that revolutionise our entire inner life.

Thomas Merton – Bridges to Contemplative Living

Saturday morning

Reading

Psalm 67: v.s 1 & 2

May God be merciful unto us, and bless us; and show us the light of his countenance.

That his ways may be known upon earth: his salvation among all nations.

At the same time, our Lord showed me a spiritual vision of his familiar love. In this vision he also showed a little thing, the size of a hazelnut, in the palm of my hand, and it was as round as a ball. I looked at it with my mind's eye and thought, 'What can this be?' And the answer came to me, 'It is all that is made.' I wondered how it could last, for it was so small I thought it might suddenly have disappeared. And the answer in my mind was, 'It lasts and will last forever because God loves it; and everything exists in the same way by the love of God.' In this little thing I saw three properties: the first is that God made it, the second is that God loves it, the third is that God cares for it. But what the maker, the carer, the lover really is to me, I cannot tell; for until I become one substance with him, I can never have complete rest or true happiness; that is to say, until I am so bound to him that there is no created thing between my God and me.

Music

Monteverdi Vespers - Magnificat, Movement 5 'et misericordia'

Post-meditation Reading

We need to know the littleness of all created beings and to set at nothing everything that is made in order to love and possess God who is unmade. This is the reason why we do not feel complete ease in our hearts and souls: we look here for satisfaction in things which are so trivial, where there is no rest to be found, and do not know our God who is almighty, all wise, all good; he is rest itself. God wishes to be known, and is pleased that we should rest in him; for all that is below him does nothing to satisfy us; and this is why, until all that is made seems as nothing, no soul can be at rest. When a soul sets all at nothing for love, to have him who is everything, then he is able to receive spiritual rest.

Julian of Norwich

Saturday noon

Reading

Psalm 62: v.s 1 & 2

My soul truly waiteth still upon God: for from him cometh my salvation.

He verily is my strength and my salvation: he is my defence, so that I shall not greatly fall.

A man may know completely and ponder thoroughly every created thing and its works, yes, and God's works too, but not God himself. Thought cannot comprehend God. And so prefer to abandon all that can be known, choosing rather to love him who cannot be known. By

Meditation News - Autumn 2015

love he may be touched and embraced, never by thought. In the real contemplative work set all thought aside and cover it over with a cloud of forgetting. Then lovingly reach out to pierce the darkness.

The Cloud of Unknowing

Music

Monteverdi Vespers - Magnificat, Movement 7 'Deposuit potentes'

Post-meditation Reading

When St. John says that God is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit, he means that the mind must be cleared of all images. When you pray, shut the door of the senses against all fantasies and thoughts. Nothing pleases God more than a mind free from distractions. Such a mind is transformed into God, because it can think of nothing, understand nothing, love nothing, except God; seeing other creatures and itself only in God.

Albertus Magnus

Saturday evening**Reading**

Psalm 130 v.s 1, 5 & 6

Out of the deep I cry to you, O Lord

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the morning,
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

It is inevitable that ideas will arise in your mind and try to distract you. Don't be surprised if your thoughts seem holy and valuable for prayer. If you pay attention to these noble ideas they will go on chattering until they divert you even more. Soon you may be thinking about your sinful life and perhaps you may recall some place you lived in the past, until suddenly, before you know it, your mind is completely scattered.

And yet they were not bad thoughts. But a person who has pondered these things must leave them behind beneath a cloud of forgetting if he hopes to pierce the cloud of unknowing that lies between him and his God.

You may gather all your desire into one simple and meaningful word; fix it in your mind so that it will remain there come what may. This word will be your defence in conflict and in peace. Use it to beat upon the cloud of darkness above you and to subdue all distractions, consigning them to the cloud of forgetting beneath you.

The Cloud of Unknowing

Music

Monteverdi Vespers - Magnificat, Movement 8 'Esurientes'

Post-meditation Reading

Deafened by the voice of desire
you are unaware that the beloved
lives in the core of your heart.

Stop the noise, and you will hear His voice
in the silence.

Rumi

Sunday morning**Reading**

Psalm 141 v.s 1 & 2

O Lord, I call to you; come quickly to me.
Hear my voice when I call to you.

May my prayer be set before you like incense;
May the lifting up of my hands be like the evening
sacrifice.

And then our Lord opened my spiritual eyes and showed me my soul in the middle of my heart. I saw the soul as large as if it were an endless world and as if it were a holy kingdom; and from the properties I saw in it I understood that it is a glorious city. In the centre of that city sits our Lord Jesus, God and man, a handsome person and of great stature, the highest bishop, the most imposing king, the most glorious Lord; and I saw him dressed imposingly and gloriously. He sits in the soul, in the very centre, in peace and rest. And the Godhead rules and protects heaven and earth and all that is: supreme power, supreme wisdom and supreme goodness.

Julian of Norwich

Music

Monteverdi Vespers - Magnificat, Movement 11, 'Gloria Patri'

Post-meditation Reading

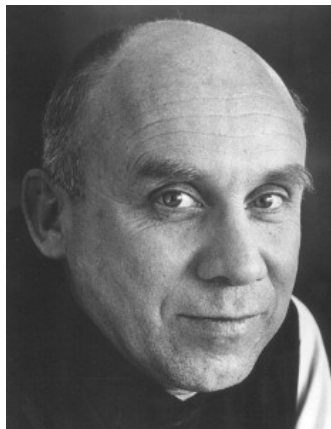
And God showed me all this most gloriously, with this meaning, 'See that I am God. See that I am in everything. See that I have never stopped ordering my works, nor ever shall, eternally. See that I lead everything on to the conclusion I ordained for it before time began, by the same power, wisdom and love with which I made it. How can anything be amiss?'

Julian of Norwich

Thomas Merton and Brother Roger: Two Centenaries

This year has seen the centenary of the births of two men who, in very different ways, have influenced the contemplative landscape of Christianity as we know it today. The Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, was born in January 1915 (in France), Brother Roger, founder of the Taizé community, in May 1915 (in Switzerland). How might we think of their message and their legacy?

Thomas Merton



Merton did not have a particularly happy or secure childhood. His mother died when he was six, his father ten years later. His youth was spent in France, the USA, and England, and rarely was there anywhere that he could call 'home'. By early adulthood he was a confused and rather lost young man.

However, during the seven years he spent at university in New York his life turned around in an extraordinary way, and at the age of 27 he entered the Trappist monastery of Our Lady of Gethsemane, where he spent the rest of his life. He died accidentally in December 1968, weeks before his 54th birthday.

The writings that came out of his 27 years as a monk are prolific: he was undoubtedly a passionate, artistic and complex character. But the solid rock undergirding and informing all his writing was the way of contemplation. His contemplative message is not easy to summarize, but there are two major strands that seem to provide a sort of container for a multi-faceted message. These are the way of unknowing, or darkness; and what Merton calls '*theoria physike*', (natural contemplation), ie God's presence shining through all things, all events. The unseen – and the seen. The not known – yet known. These two apparently contradictory, but in fact complimentary sides of the coin of contemplation were absolutely crucial in Merton's thought, and they sing their way through his writings in poetic form. He writes, for instance, of contemplation as the response to 'a call from Him who has no voice and yet who speaks in everything that is,' and in another place and another mood, of the beauty of clouds which are 'silent and eloquent'.

Merton's writings reflect his own life, his own journey (and struggles) into authenticity and reality, his refusal to hide behind masks. They reflect too his increasing realisation of the wisdom at the centre of all the great religious traditions of the world, and of the

contemplative core that undergirded them all. He loved all this, and was excited and liberated by it. His was a voice, in the 1960s, which was away ahead of its time.

Some of Merton's writing is not easy; some is convoluted: but the clarion call that comes through it is to listen to our own hearts, to become fully, authentically, human, in touch with our Divine Creator. To try to get our heads around his writing is like trying to put our arms around an elephant that is constantly shooing us somewhere else with its trunk. It becomes an exercise of the head, and ties us in knots. But to allow his writing to seep into hidden recesses of our own hearts is to be awakened, and to feel a surge of life and excitement sail through our beings. We are challenged to shed our masks, to be vulnerable, to be human; to encounter ourselves – and God – at the centre of our own reality.

Brother Roger



In comparison to Merton, Brother Roger's childhood seems to have been secure and happy. The difficult stage of his life was when, as a teenager, he became seriously ill with tuberculosis, and for some time his life was in danger. It was during this time that he felt God's call towards some sort of life-time commitment.

Both his mother and his maternal grandmother were huge influences on him, inspiring him to search for reconciliation, firstly amongst divided Christians, and increasingly amongst the whole human family, extending out to all creation. So it was that, during the Second World War, he set off on a bicycle to find a place where he could begin to work out his calling. The house he found at Taizé very quickly became a place of welcome to refugees, particularly at that time to Jews. After the war ended, the Taizé Community blossomed and grew to become a place of prayer, simplicity, and welcome to all.

Brother Roger wrote much less than Thomas Merton, but what he did write, prayers, prose and regular letters, all reflect the utter simplicity of his life, and the love of God – the belief that God **IS** love – that underpinned his long life. He died ten years ago (murdered in the church) at the age of 91.

Two Centenaries *continued from page 10*

Brother Roger's real legacy, however, is the community that he founded, and all that it continues to stand for. Thousands upon thousands of people, young and no longer so young, are influenced year after year by spending time alongside the Brothers, at the Community. What they experience there is a whole mixture of things: a life of simplicity stripped of many of the trappings of normal life at home, meeting many other young people from all round the world, a rhythm of life dominated by the bells of Taizé which herald the thrice daily prayer times, and perhaps one of the most important aspects, one that people often don't find easy to begin with, yet which draws them back again and again, thrice-daily times of total silence. The immersion in this simple rhythm of life leads to a depth of *encounter* that is rarely experienced in everyday life: encounter with others, with oneself, and for many (but by no means all) ultimately with God. The Community of Taizé, the lasting legacy of Brother Roger, provides, perhaps above all, this invitation to 'come home.' It is a

place where people can be real, can shed masks, can begin to hear their own voice and be accepted as who they are.

Two very different voices, each in their own extraordinary way affecting the contemplative landscape of Christianity. And yet their message is not so dissimilar and one that is so vital for the health and well-being of our spiritually starved world. It is a message that calls people into true humanity, to come into contact with their own souls. For both Thomas Merton and Brother Roger the way to this true humanity was *through* their own vulnerability, and thus to become channels, as indeed they both were in their very different ways and personalities, of self-giving love that transcends all borders. What a call to each of us!

Bridget Hewitt



**Friday April 29th to
Sunday May 1st 2016**
**Meditation in a
Time of Loss:
a Retreat**

**With Liz Watson
and Henriëtte Hollaar**

At the Monastery of Christ our Saviour,
Jack's Lane, Turvey, Bedford MK43 8DH.

Meditation can bring a current of healing to the turbulent emotions of grief. At this weekend retreat we would like to offer a restorative atmosphere. Meditating together will be a central part of the programme as well as the possibility to reflect and engage with others or take some time out for yourself. We can also join the monastic community for Mass on Sunday morning.

Cost: £155.00

For further information and booking please contact:
Henriëtte Hollaar phone: 020 8579 5911
email: henriettehollaar@gmail.com



World Community for Christian Meditation UK

Essential Teaching Weekend
With Janet Robbins

Llangasty, Brecon, Powys

Friday 23 - Sunday 25 October 2015

The Essential Teaching Weekend is a residential experience that helps you understand your own experience in the light of a great tradition as well as through others with whom you share the journey.

The weekend follows a simple format of teachings, regular periods of meditation and prayer, and time for sharing and discussion. Talks will illustrate the place of meditation in the contemplative tradition, the essential aspects of our practice and the psychological aspects of the journey.

Participants share ways to introduce Christian Meditation to individuals or groups. They are also introduced to the resource book "Sharing the Gift" which contains valuable resources compiled from many people's experience of introducing meditation in the Christian tradition. The resources in this book could be used for deepening individual knowledge, nurturing a group, or as inspiration for giving a talk or organising a meditation event. Each participant receives a copy.

The style of the weekend is relaxed and informative and will be hosted by **Llangasty Retreat House**, a well known and popular Christian centre. The house is situated in the Brecon Beacons National Park, and boasts some beautiful views. Accommodation is in single and twin rooms (not ensuite). Two twin ensuite ground floor rooms are available and reserved for disabled use.

Weekend cost per person: £175- £195

To apply email: jacqrussell3@gmail.com or phone
01296 488450 (office hours only please)

Christian Meditation Trust (UK) reg charity no 1101900

The School of Meditation

Book Review

Meditation and Dying: a personal reflection

This is the title of a booklet written by Anne McDonnell, (RC for East Anglia) which has been recently published by Meditatio in association with Medio Media, the publishing arm of WCCM. Anne has previously shared her thoughts on living with a terminal illness in the pages of this newsletter and through an occasional blog on the WCCM website. Her reflection here focuses on the following aspects of her experience over the past three years since her diagnosis of cancer: that of taboo, connection, meditation and eternity.

She has displayed great strength, honesty and openness in sharing her journey and she hopes that her words will help and reassure others who find themselves in similar circumstances as she states 'Becoming familiar with death is a gift that we should not close our eyes to.'

I have personally valued greatly her friendship, and also her attitude and insights that this challenge has brought out in her.

I felt it would be particularly appropriate to share some extracts from the section on meditation:

"I am blessed in having a practice of meditation that goes back over many years... In that still place I know myself accepted beyond any boundary this life may present; a wide-open space where there are intimations of a new identity that moves beyond the limit of disease and death.

To attend fully in meditation requires a certain kind of death in which my restricted definitions of life are left behind, allowing me to sit quietly, open to this present moment that passes even as it is recognised... There is a sense of purification; those things that threaten and diminish recede to a more distant place, giving me room to know myself as a valuable, alive human being with a creative capacity to respond and take my place in the world... In my experience, becoming empty or at least trying to allow my thoughts, feelings and general preoccupations to be put on the back burner for a while, is to give the Holy Spirit room to breathe comfort, energy and renewed vision into my life.

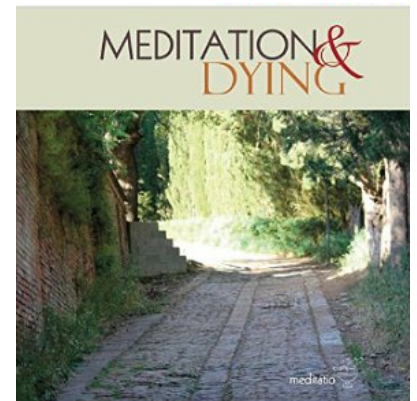
Meditation opens up a time scale that is immeasurable. Sitting with the present moment, noting how it passes from one millisecond to the next places me within time that is endless. It is we who measure and confine it. By learning how to attend to now, rather than looking back or on into the future, a current appreciation and depth can be found that otherwise might be missed... Meditation gives space for our innate awareness to be cultivated.

The rewards are vast and are especially present, I believe, within the confines of severe illness, or even at the time of approaching death. Whether I am walking along a beach, lying on the sofa or talking to a friend, the present slowness of pace

means I hear, see, sense and appreciate in a new way... I mull over the things I have seen and heard. A reflection suddenly appears on the wall opposite me, revealing a light-show of shadow roses, dancing in the wind outside. Life is full of a present gift that can so easily be missed in the rush and busyness of our normal way of being."

Copies are or will soon be available from GoodNews Books.

Margaret Comerford



Christian
books

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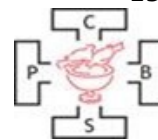
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The Climb in Time

*The journey I am making
At times aware, often not
Is as a mountain I climb in time.
Why?
My soul is stirred, and disturbed
By stillness and silence.
Why should I move from familiar ground
Of green world, surrounded by apparent
riches
Bodies sustaining, temporary existence?
Natural need for food, warmth and love
Hidden by material gain on Earth.
But who is the 'I' who is saying this?
The path to freedom, surrounded by love
Is upwards.
A realisation of the journey unfolding
I take with me provisions:
A map, given to me by Jesus of Nazareth
A backpack, called 'Religion'
(The latter I would soon discard
As burdensome.)
Body and mind left behind for temporal
sustenance
I continue the climb.
Occasionally, I meet other souls on the
journey
Some tread a different path.
We acknowledge our different ways
With acceptance, and wonder.
Others travel with me, for a while,
Souls sustaining and encouraging.
It becomes dark.
It is full of unknowing – and yet
Becomes known, and is light.
Away from the noise, all is silence
There is no-thing here.
But where is here? – It is no-where.
There is no time, just presence.
Love drives me on.
I seem to have entered into the mountain.
There is no sky – no ground - just brilliant
darkness.
The laws of physics don't apply.
Dimensionless, illusion.
Just awareness of transcendence, freedom,
Ineffable love of One-ness
Encompassing all there is.
Truth – pure Being.*

Bob Morley, August 2015

Monastics in the World WCCM Oblate Community



The basic element of the Oblate Community, is the "cell". This word has a long monastic tradition referring originally to the monks cave or room. With us it is used to describe presence not only physical space. The cell meets with regularity, to meditate, to share the Word, to consider their ways of sharing in the work of the wider community and where time allows share a meal together. All on the oblate path and enquirers are very welcome.

Details of WCCM Oblate cell meetings.

Annual UK Oblate Gathering 2015. Saturday 24

October-Sunday 25 October: Venue: Monastery of Christ our Saviour, Jacks Lane, Turvey, Bedfordshire MK43 8DH Tel: 01234 881211. **Contact:** Eileen Dutt eduttobl@christianmeditation.org.uk

Saturday 24 October 10:00-16:00: led by the East Anglian cell on the theme 'Love Unfolding'. Suggested donation £10.00, please bring some food for a shared lunch.

Sunday 25 October 10:00-16:00: Fr Laurence Freeman joins the Oblate community for the day and any meditator is welcome. Suggested donation £15.00, please bring some food for a shared lunch.

Quarterly Oblate Community Day. Saturday 12

December 10:30 - 16:30. Venue: Meditatio House, 32 Hamilton Road, London W5 2EH **Contact:** Gilly Withers gillywithers@btinternet.com. 07896 742047

North London: Meets monthly at Christ the King Church, Cockfosters 19:00-21:15 For details of day of the week and date please contact Rita McKenna on 0208 449 5013.

Oxford: Meetings on **Mondays 5 October, 14 December 2015, 8 February, 11 April, 13 June 2016 12:00-16:00. Contact:** Julia Bee at julia@life-encounter.com or on 07929618004 for details of venue.

Cambridge: For details of meetings please contact Jane Serrurier jemserrurier@googlemail.com or on 07557 476227

Berkshire: Meetings on **Wednesdays 25 November 2015, 24 February, 30 March, 25 May 2016 Venue:** Holy Ghost Church Parish Rooms, 51 New Wokingham Road, Crowthorne RG45 6JG. **Contact:** Angela Greenwood for details of time at angelagreenwood@hotmail.com or on 01344 774254.

Northern Cell (Leeds): Meetings on **Mondays 12 October, 23 November, 14 December 2015 10:30 for 11:00-15:15. Contact:** Angela Gregson for details of venue at rydal2814@yahoo.co.uk or on 01706 563024.

We are currently exploring viability of opening a new cell in Lancashire. Contact Angela Gregson for more details.

Events

Please check the Christian Meditation UK website for changes or additional events: www.christianmeditation.org.uk/whats-on

National

School of Meditation Events: Contact: Jacqueline Russell
jacqrussell3@gmail.com

Friday 23 October to Sunday 25 October: Essential Teaching Weekend. Venue: Llangasty Retreat House, Brecon Beacons, Powys.
See page 11.

Scotland

Saturday 24 October 10:30-15:30. Song of Songs Leader: Graeme Watson
Venue: St Columba's by the Castle, 14 Johnston Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2PW **Contact:** Lynda Stark Lynda.stark@btinternet.com 01573 225567
Cost: £15 (concessions £10)

Southeast England

Saturday 24 October: 10:30-16:00: Roots in the Desert. Leader: Liz Watson **Venue:** Friends' Meeting House, Priory Road, Chichester PO19 1NX **Contact:** Susan Cunningham 01243 775730

Saturday 31 October 10:00-16:00: Deepening Your Meditation. Leader: Liz Watson **Venue:** The House of Prayer 35 Seymour Road, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 0PB **Contact/Bookings:** 020 8942 9069 mda_p@yahoo.co.uk **Cost:** £20 Please bring a packed lunch.

Friday 29 April to Sunday 1 May 2016 Meditation in a time of loss: a retreat **Leaders:** Liz Watson and Henriëtte Hollaar. **Venue:** Monastery of Christ our Saviour, Jack's Lane, Turvey, Bedford MK43 8DH. **Contact:** Henriëtte Hollaar phone: 020 8579 5911 [email: henriettehollaar@gmail.com](mailto:henriettehollaar@gmail.com) **Cost:** £155 See page 11.

Northeast England

Saturday 24 October Christian Meditation and Mindfulness. Leader: Nicholas Buxton - Priest in Charge, St John the Baptist Newcastle **Venue:** St Mary's RC Church Hall Hexham. **Contact:** cmcwccm@fastmail.fm

Northwest England

Tuesday 3 November 2015 10:00 for 10:30 – 15:30: Living with the Mystics Theme: Rilke **Leader:** Margaret Ives **Venue:** Friends Meeting House, Elliot Park, Keswick **Contact:** Bob Morley 016974 72644 rgm1@live.co.uk **Cost:** £5.00 Drinks provided, please bring own lunch.

Friday 6 November 17:00 to Sunday 8 November 14:00: Boarbank Retreat Leader: Liz Watson **Venue:** Boarbank Hall, Allithwaite, Grange over Sands, Cumbria LA11 7NH **Contact:** Richard 01946 862990 cmcwccm@fastmail.fm **Cost:** £125 (residential).

Saturday 21 November 10:30-15:30 Nourishing the soul (last event of a one year course), **Venue:** Rydall Hall, Rydal Ambleside Cumbria LA22 9LX Tel 015394 32050; www.rydallhall.org/ **Cost:** £350 for the whole course, including refreshments and lunch.

West Midlands

Friday 16 October to Sunday 18 October: West Midlands Autumn Retreat: 'The Power of Simple Attention' Leader: Liz Watson and Chris Hurley **Venue:** Noddfa Centre, Conway Old Road, Penmaemawr, Gwynedd LL34 6YF **Cost:** full board £120.00 **Contact:** Margaret Jarvis 01743-240401 westmids@christianmeditation.org.uk

Tuesday, 20 to Friday 23 October: Retreat Theme: Simply Rohr – A spirituality for our times. Leader: by Revd Ian Spencer, Warden of Holland House, www.hollandhouse.org **Venue:** Holland House, Main Street, Cropthorne, Pershore, WR10 3NB **Contact:** email: enquiries@hollandhouse.org, tele: +44 (0)1386 860330; **Cost** £280 includes accommodation, meals and refreshments. Note: Richard Rohr will not be present in person during the retreat.

Saturday 7 November 10:30–15:30: Exploring the gift of 'Quiet' Leaders: Les Glaze and Barbara Jones. **Venue:** Holland House, Main Street, Cropthorne, Worcestershire WR10 3NB **Contact:** Barbara Jones bar_demi@hotmail.co.uk; 01452 855814; **Cost:** £10. Tea/coffee provided, please bring a packed lunch.

Southwest England

Saturday 10 October 10:00-16:00: "The Cloud of Unknowing" Leader: Graeme Watson, organised by Dorset Meditators. **Venue:** The Dorford Centre Dorchester Baptist Church, Bridport Road Dorchester DT1 1RR **Contact:** Anita Finnigan 01305 259032 anitafinnigan@hotmail.co.uk **Cost:** Suggested donation £12. Please bring own lunch. Tea and coffee provided.

Saturday 17 October 10:00-15:30: Quiet Day/Half Day for Meditators in Devon. Morning 10.00 - 12.30, Afternoon 1.30 - 3.30 Numbers are limited to a maximum of 7. Places are available on a first come first served basis. **Cost:** £3 to cover costs and to send a donation to the WCCM. Light refreshments provided. Please bring a packed lunch if you wish to stay for the whole day. **Contact:** Rosemary Allan-Willcox 01392 437074 r.allan-willcox@virginmedia.com

Saturday 14 November 9:30-12:30: The Holy Spirit - Life-Giver. Leader: Carmody Grey. **Venue:** Westbury-on-Trym Baptist Church, Reedley Road, Bristol BS9 3T **Contact:** Roger Layet 01275 463727 bristol@christianmeditation.org.uk **Cost:** Suggested donation £7

Saturday 5 December 1:30-5:00: Advent Quiet Afternoon. Leader: Caroline Price. **Venue:** Elsie Briggs House of Prayer, 38, Church Road, Westbury-on-Trym BS9 3EQ **Details and to book :** Caroline Price carolineshalom.price@gmail.com **Cost:** donation



Events

London

Meditatio House 32 Hamilton Road, London W5 2EH Tel: 020 8579 5911
meditationnews@wccm.org

Regular events:

Daily Meditation: at 7:00 (Saturday and Sunday 8:00); 12:00 and 18:30 (Wednesdays 19:00).

Mondays 18:30: Essential Teaching – open to all but especially useful for newcomers. Led by Fr Laurence Freeman or others.

Wednesdays 19:00: Meditation – Young adult meditators.

First Saturday of the Month 14:00–16:00: Quiet afternoon for those on the 12-Step Program.

Second Saturday of the Month 10:30–21:00: Stations of Contemplation: A retreat day with meditation, lectio divina, discussions and sharing meals. Led by and for the young adult meditators of the community.

The Meditatio Centre St Marks, Myddelton Square, London EC1R 1XX Tel: 020 7278 2070 meditatio@wccm.org www.wccmmeditatio.org

Regular events:

Weekday 13.00–13.30: Meditation – All welcome

Mondays 19:00–19:30: Meditation

Mondays 19:30–21:00: Yoga. Cost: £14 drop in; £72 for block of 6 classes; £8 concessions Contact: Lucy 07904 166123
lucybarnes@btinternet.com

Wednesdays 11:00–12:30: Open House – a space to learn about meditation.

Second Wednesday of every month 18:15–19:15: Meditation in a time of loss Contact: lizwatson@blueyonder.co.uk Donation appreciated.

Thursdays 19:00–21:00 (monthly): Living with the Mystics Study Group. Cost: £10. Drinks will be provided.

Special events:

Saturday 10 October 10:30–16:30: 'Touched with Ocean' Leader: The Reverend Canon Mark Oakley Cost: £30 Concessions £20 Please bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee provided.

Wednesdays: 14, 21, 29 (Thursday) October, 11, 18, 25 November 18:30–21:00: Finding the Way. Leader: Liz Watson Contact: lizwatson@blueyonder.co.uk Cost: £15 or £75 for whole course paid in advance Concessions £10 or £50 for whole course paid in advance Light refreshments included.

Saturday 17 October 11:00–16:00: Growing in Love. The London Group Leader's day. Suggested donation no more than £5 toward a simple lunch. Contact: 020 8280 0049 or uk@wccm.org

Thursday 22 October 18:30–21:00: Rudiments of Grace. Leader: Prof Chris Mann Cost: £15 Concessions £10 Light refreshments included.

Saturday 24 October 10:30–16:30: Revolutionary Communion. Leader: Rev Gary Hall Cost: £30 Concessions £20 Please bring packed lunch. Tea and coffee provided.

Wednesday 28 October 18:30–21:00: Zen Practice. Leader: Robert Kennedy SJ Cost: £15 Concessions £10 Light refreshments provided.

Tuesday 3 November 18:30–21:00: Milestones: Talk 4. Leader: Fr Laurence Freeman OSB Cost: £15 Concessions £10 Light refreshments will be served.

Special events continued:

Saturday 7 November 10:30–16:30: 'Strangely Orthodox'. Leader: Rev Graeme Watson Cost: £30 Concessions £20 Please bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee provided.

Saturday 14 November 10:30–16:30: What Is It about November? Leader: Fr Daniel O'Leary Cost: £30 Concessions £20 Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

Thursday 19 November 18:30–21:00: How to Build a Nourishing Ethos in a School. Leader: Charles Posnett and Paul Moss Cost: £15 Concessions £10 Light refreshments provided.

Saturday 21 November 14:00–17:00: Soil, Soul and Society. Leader: Satish Kumar Cost: £15 Concessions £10

Saturday 28 November 10:30–16:30: Movement and Meditation Urban Retreat Day. Facilitator: Giovanni Felicioni and team Cost: £30 Concessions £25

Saturday 5 December 11:00–16:00: Advent Preparation. Leader: Fr Robin Burgess To book: 020 8280 0049 or uk@wccm.org Suggestion donation £10 includes a simple lunch.

Saturday 19 December 10:30–16:30: Preparing for Christmas. Leader: Laurence Freeman OSB Cost: £30 Concessions £20 Please bring a packed lunch. Coffee and tea provided.

Westminster Cathedral

Daily Meditation: 12.30–13:00 Monday to Friday. In the chapel in St Paul's Bookshop. All welcome.

First Wednesday Quiet Days: 12:00–16:30: The first Wednesday of each month is a retreat day held in the Hinsley Room in Morpeth Terrace, next to Westminster Cathedral.

7 October: My house will be called a house of prayer with Sr Agatha Collopy.

4 November: Act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with your God with Jill Benet.

2 December: Stay awake with Michael Moran.

Silence in the City See www.silenceinthecity.org.uk for the programme, or contact info@silenceinthecity.org.uk. 020 7231 6278 or 020 7252 2453. Unless stated otherwise all talks are at: Westminster Cathedral Hall, London SW1P 1QH. Prebooking is necessary.

Publication Dates for Events

Issue	Published	Events Included	Copy Date
Winter	January	Mid January to end April	1 December
Spring	April	Mid April to end July	1 March
Summer	July	Mid July to end October	1 June
Autumn	October	Mid October to end January	1 September

Please send events to the UK office uk@wccm.org to be added to the the UK diary before the copy date.

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London (South-north of Kent or Surrey):

Geoff Waterhouse-020 8392 9917 geoffwaterhouse@f2s.com

Keeping In Touch

If you would like to ...

- Receive Meditation News by email or post
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- Find out about meditation groups in your local area
- Find out about the Lone Meditator Network

Visit: www.christianmeditation.org.uk

Email: uk@wccm.org

Or contact:

WCCM UK Office

32 Hamilton Road, London W5 2EH

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