

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PEACE STUDIES AND GLOBAL PHILOSOPHY

Midwinter Newsletter 2008/2009

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JANUARY 2009 IIPSGP WINTER NEWSLETTER

This newsletter hopefully arrives at a time in your life when there is indeed light returning after a period of darkness, as the Winter solstice has passed, and the Christmas and New Year season, and we await the long slow ascent back to Spring.

As ever, it also gives an opportunity to reflect back on one's actions and achievements in the past 12 months, so I would like to share something of what I have been undertaking on behalf of the International Institute of Peace Studies and Global Philosophy, and the wider community of engaged scholars working to achieve peace and reconciliation on the planet, rather than continuing with our tragic collective cycle of hatred, violence, fear, ignorance and terror. As ever, this past year, I have been musing about how we can replace this negative conflict cycle with one based on insight, empathy, compassion, wisdom, love and enlightenment – for such is the core essence of my work as a philosopher of peace.

At New Year last year (2007/2008) I had just returned from my trip to Rajasthan where I had taken part in a conference on peace and nonviolence organised by the Jain community in Rajasamand, Rajasthan. This had been an immensely interesting experience, and I had been fortunate to be accompanied by the IIPSGP International Secretary, Ruth Kempe, who had come from Bermuda especially to join us. Returning to the UK by January 1st, just in time for New Year, I recommenced my teaching work as head of religious studies philosophy and citizenship and personal, social and health education at Poole Grammar School in Dorset. At Poole I continued to run the Philosophy Club and to teach several boys A level philosophy, one of whom eventually achieved one of the highest scores nationally in religious studies and went on to study philosophy and theology at Oxford University, and another went on to read religious studies at Bath Spa University.

It snowed heavily in January 2008 and one journey back from Poole nearly ended in disaster with my car careering down the hill at Dursley off the Cotswold

escarpment. Teaching in Poole and living in Llanerfyl in Powys, has meant a very considerable amount of driving this past year, which is the main reason I eventually gave my notice in to leave Poole, having served two academic years there in total. In January I also heard from IIPSGP member Farah Karimi who lives currently in Shiraz in Iran, and with whom discussions about organising a peace symposium on the poetry of Hafiz (from Shiraz) were again postponed since she felt the situation in Iran was not as yet stable enough to enable such an event to go ahead. At the end of the previous year, another IIPSGP colleague, a Zoroastrian friend from London, had also managed to return from Iran after being mistakenly held as a spy by the Iranian government and having had his passport confiscated ! This was the year in which the threat of possible military action by the USA against Iran was looming in the early months, a prospect which I feel would be an utter disaster for the world's stability and well being. We should rather be doing poetry symposia for peace and philosophy discussions – Iran has some of the greatest philosophers of history such as Mulla Sadra in their cultural lineage after all ! 2008 was also the year in which another IIPSGP colleague, Moeen Yaseen, was interviewed on Iranian television about his views on the prospects for peace. 2008 was also the year in which the Iranian President, Ahmadinejad, gave the alternative Christmas Address in the UK on Channel 4 television and made some interesting statements about interfaith peace and reconciliation – even if he left out some uncomfortable issues. The Queen's own Christmas message was excellent and made the point that those of us who give most to the community and are outgoing in our charitable works, tend to be the happiest, based on her long empirical observation of people in all walks of life.

In January I was also in touch with Chris Coverdale of Lawyers against War, who sent me details of their work to have former Prime Minister Blair and Former Attorney General Lord Goldsmith prosecuted for war crimes under the treaty of Rome. Chris felt that the sufferings of the people of Iraq, attacked without international legal justification or excuse, were of such a magnitude, and the numbers of innocent civilian casualties so high, that their planning and prosecution constituted a war crime of genocide under the Treaty of Rome. Chris organised a press briefing in the House of Lords, which was attended by IIPSGP London member Alberto Cruz, who obtained an audio CD of the proceedings, which make for very interesting listening indeed. At that time the case was before the Metropolitan police, and being taken extremely seriously. Meanwhile, Tony Blair himself has gone on to set up the Faiths Foundation and been teaching at Yale University on Global Ethics and Spirituality. He said of his teaching that *"The experience has strengthened my belief that religious faith and economic and social globalisation are partners - globalisation needs values to succeed. In pushing people together, globalisation has made multicultural and multi-religious societies, and it is necessary now for human capital and spiritual capital to link. This, combined with an increased need for multi-faith dialogue and action, will in time be seen as a defining question, and perhaps the leading question of the 21st century."* As a neutral academic forum for philosophical debate IIPSGP would be interested to debate with Tony Blair and examine with him the core

ethical issues of why he participated in the war against Iraq in 2003, what his thinking was, not so much from the legal perspective, but rather from the moral perspective. We wonder whether his subsequent deepening of his Christian faith might in retrospect causes him to regret some of the decisions of his time in office, given the chaos it has helped unleash in Iraq, the insecurity and loss of life, indeed the devastation of life for many Iraqis not least those who had to flee the country, and the exodus of Christians who had hitherto lived happily alongside their faith neighbours. There are profound philosophical and moral issues posed for civilisation arising out the decision to invade Iraq, not least the extent to which it has opened a green light for future unilateral military responses to complex political and religious and military dilemmas (e.g. Gaza). In his new post as peace envoy for the Middle East Quartet, Blair also seems to be having difficulty brokering any kind of ceasefire let alone a long term solution to the Israel Palestine situation. IIPSGP's own project of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Middle East* would like to invite both Tony Blair and former President George W. Bush to attend its next sessions, scheduled for 2009, in order to review, in hindsight, whether they think their military intervention in Iraq helped or hindered the long term peace, stability and prosperity of the region. We should also bear in mind that 2009 is the International Year of Reconciliation for the United Nations, whose own efforts to help the Palestinians of Gaza have been devastated by attacks and deaths on their own staff and the destruction of their schools. As someone who has worked with the UN in various guises for many years, and most closely perhaps with UNESCO, this is truly devastating and demoralizing to all those who seek to see a neutral and intelligent voice for peace speaking forth in the world.

In the Spring term in Poole I was also busy teaching an adult education course on the Cultural Achievements of Ancient Greek Civilisation, each week covering a different aspect of the work of the 9 Muses in sequence, so considering in turn Greek contributions towards medicine, philosophy, history, geography, logic, psychology, the fine arts, politics, mathematics, theology etc.

In January I also celebrated my middle daughter's 21st birthday (Sophia) at a special party on Bredon Hill, Worcestershire along with Shanti-Grace and Helen also being present. Later that same weekend, of Imbolc, on February 2, I had been asked to help celebrate the Druid handfasting and wedding celebrations of Rachel Webb and John Pittaway, which ceremony we duly celebrated in a wonderful grove in the Shropshire hills near Ludlow on a cold but bright Imbolc. Mary Napper also came and helped officiate, and my two eldest daughters, Helen and Sophie, also came to observe and take part. This was especially moving for my eldest Helen as she had just discovered she was pregnant ! Imbolc means literally "in the belly" and represents the time of year when the Winter becomes pregnant with Summer's new born light. It is the time of Candlemas, which is sometimes also known as The Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple which celebrates an early episode in the life of Jesus, and falls on or around 2 February. In the Roman Catholic Church, the Presentation is

the fourth Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, it is one of the twelve Great Feasts, and is sometimes called *Hypapante* (lit., 'Meeting'). Other traditional names include the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, and the Meeting of the Lord. The Feast is also celebrated in the Anglican church as an important event. St Bridget's Day also falls about this time, on February 1st, the day of the death of this most famous of Irish female Saints. Rachel had chosen this date for her marriage partly because of a close affinity with St Bridget, who traditionally is the patron of scholars, teachers and Druids in Ireland and the Celtic Christian world. Bridget is interesting because she crosses between pagan and Christian worlds in early Irish history, Born the daughter of a pagan Irish chieftain as early as 453 AD Saint Bridgid became a nun whose desire was to relieve the misery and hardship of the poor. Her feast day, the date of her death is February 1st. The popular tradition of the woven St Bridgid cross is believed to have begun during a visit by Bridgid to a dying pagan chieftan. To illustrate the significance of the Christian faith she quickly wove a simple cross from the rushes strewn on the floor covering of the time. Interestingly, Brigid was given the same name as one of the most powerful goddesses of the pagan religion which her father Dubhthach practiced; Brigid was the goddess of fire, whose manifestations were song, craftsmanship, and poetry, which the Irish considered the flame of knowledge. Since IIPSGP Director is part Irish, it could be said that St Bridgid is also in some way a special protector of our educational and peace work.

From February onwards I was also enjoying attending the Spiritualist church in Bournemouth with IIPSGP member Arabella Gilleney, each week hearing different speakers discoursing on some aspect of spiritual philosophy or teachings. I had started attending because of my ongoing researches into the life and teachings of Alfred Russel Wallace, Victorian naturalist and scientist, and co-discovered with Darwin the principal of evolution by natural selection, having launched the Wallace Memorial Lectures in Poole, where he retired to at the end of his life, and where he is buried (in Broadstone cemetery). I got to know the members of the congregation quite well, including the twins who were respectively the President and Chair of the church, and who later were to give the Wallace Memorial lecture at Poole Grammar School later in the year. I was also at this time discussing setting up a Peace Studies Society in Bournemouth University to hold monthly meetings with Hannah Hawker, a student doing a degree in Community Development at the University, and who also attended my own adult classes. On February 16 Kosovo declared de facto independence as a state, a situation which was not however recognised by the Russian Federation or by Serbia. Later in the year, I would be in Budapest learning from a feminist Serbian sociologist who had studied deeply the problems of Kosovo over the years, and learning that persecution had cut both ways for many decades and that the intervention of NATO on the side of the Kosovan Muslims through aerial bombardment had been a somewhat blunt instrument with which to effect justice, if that had been indeed the intention. Also in February I published my book *Wisdom Affairs; Towards a Cartography of Enlightenment, Enlovement and*

Joyism for Wisdom Lovers on www.lulu.com. Towards the end of February the co-International Secretary of IIPSGP, Sheena Mcdonagh also managed to come and visit on retreat to Llanerfyl and we did some useful work for the Institute, especially it's Muses Journal. (Due out Spring 2009 finally).

In March I drove down to Dartmoor to attend the Council of British Druid Order meetings at Merrivale with Felicity Redman of Lulworth Cove, who has been helping IIPSGP and the work of the Druid Peace Order considerably this past year. This was a lively meeting as usual and we were able to celebrate a ritual for peace with fellow Druids amidst the ancient stone rows of Merrivale, and included a presentation by Merlin about some of the details of the ancient Druid calendar.

Internationally, the conflicts between Israel and Palestine were simmering away at this time, and the troubles in Tibet were starting to leap into the headlines with the looming Beijing Olympics. My response was to plan the details of the forthcoming *Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Middle East*, being focalized by IIPSGP. It was also at this time that mortgages started to crash in the USA housing market leading eventually to a worldwide financial crash of huge proportions whose implications are still only unravelling. In Bournemouth I attended several meetings concerning the Bournemouth Mediation Service, to which I have served as a trustee, with IIPSGP member Anabelle Lazenby. I enjoyed exploring Bournemouth knowing my time in the town was coming to an end, and got to know the amazing Russel Coates Museum, full of fascinating pre-Raphaelite art. I celebrated the equinox on March 21st at Mitchell's Fold on the Shropshire-Welsh border, saying prayers for peace with fellow Druidess Mary Napper as the moon arose in the clear evening sky and the sun sank in the West leaving a long pink glow. I also attended in March a Palestinian solidarity group near Old Church Stoke in a remote farmhouse, where I was shown the DVD *Occupation 101* about the Palestinian predicament, and which led to some interesting discussions about the forthcoming TRCME event in August. In March Krystyna Stevenson, IIPSGP Global Ambassador, returned from a visit to Nepal where she had toured many sacred sites, and brought back some Tibetan prayer flags to Llanerfyl to adorn the main room dedicated to the Muse Polyhymnia.

In April, I was fortunate enough to visit two art exhibitions at the Royal Academy in London, one on Russian Impressionism consisting of works specially brought from the Hermitage in St Petersburg, showing the close connections between French impressionist art and Russian art at the end of the 19th century, including paintings by Roerich, Chagall, Kandinsky, I also visited the Cranach exhibition at the same time, focusing on the work of the famous German painter who worked as an artist for both Catholic and Lutheran patrons, especially famous for his imaginative paintings of Venus as envisioned in mythology. The film *10,000 BC* came out which was an imaginative reconstruction of the religious life of mankind in prehistoric ages, even if it took considerable liberties with chronology and geography to end up essentially as a fantasy movie !

In April I also started teaching a new adult education class at Poole called Towards a Periodic Table of the World's Religions, which was an analytical and critical overview of the diverse religious and philosophical traditions known to mankind in the totality of recorded history, presented in a way similarly to Mendeleev's famous Periodic Table of the Chemical Elements. What I argued is that we can likewise think of the world's faith traditions as the equivalent to these fundamental elements, and that knowledge about the whole structure, with its differences and groupings and common themes, is as important to spiritual and religious literacy as is knowledge about the periodic table essential to scientific literacy. A book based on this course is in the process of being published.

In April I also attended the Stars and Stones Forum in Rougham, Suffolk with John Agnew and Edmund Marriage, and gave a presentation on the *Council of Monarchs* project of IIPSGP, which at this point went public. In early 2008 myself and Elizabeth Kempe, IIPSGP International Co-Secretary, had mailed a protocol document calling the world's 33 reigning monarchs to consider working towards establishing a Council of Monarchs in which they could discuss collectively matters of common concern, such as education, peace, justice, mediation, environment, economics etc. I now gave a televised lecture on the reasons behind this proposal, setting it in its wider philosophical context (this talk can be viewed at www.holisticchannel.org.uk). IIPSGP was also delighted to see that two of the Monarchs so mailed, the King of Saudi Arabia and the King of Spain, bilaterally organized an important special session of the UN in 2008 which addressed the question of the cultures and civilizations and religions of the world living in peace together. Although not formally connected to the Council of Monarchs project, this initiative was perhaps in some way stimulated by the proposal, one would like to think, or it could just be further evidence of the law of synchronicity in action.

Other speakers at this event included Dr. Hugh Montgomery, a descendant of Roger de Montgomery, founder of Shrewsbury, and who lies buried in the ancient Abbey there (which he founded) and who gave his name to Montgomeryshire, where I reside (part of Powys) and who spoke about the fact that many of the ancient aristocratic houses of Europe were descended from the bloodline of Christ and Mary Magdalene, and argued that there was genealogical information in his possession to prove this. Hugh had previously served as Professor at a University in Belgrade. Dirk Campbell also gave a musical performance and talk about ancient Middle Eastern musical systems and instruments, and on Saturday night gave a joint musical and poetry performance which I greatly enjoyed, and which was also filmed and can be seen on www.holisticchannel.org.uk. Dirk contributed some of the music for the Harry Potter films, as well as the sound track to a film about the work of the famous Islamic philosopher Al Ghazzali (see <http://www.dirkcampbell.co.uk>) Dirk's music is haunting, visionary and powerful, and made an excellent complement to the readings of my own poems (in a sequence of 9, representing one from each

Muse). Gary Biltcliffe also shared something of his researches about ancient Etruscan links to the British isles with a story of amazing Etruscan type funerary monuments having been discovered on the Isle of Portland by antiquarians in the 18th century. Gary speculated that below the Etruscan levels of Northern Italian towns were to be found Pelasgian remains, characterized by huge stone walls of cyclopean masonry. Edmund Marriage likened these to the great blocks at Baalbeck in Lebanon, at the temple to Baal, who may well have connections to the Ancient Celtic Deity Bel. On the way home from this conference (with Felicity Redman, back to Lulworth) I managed to call in and visit with Caroline Comberti, who was planning a walk from Cornwall to Norfolk along the famous Michael and Mary line around Midsummer and to discuss the *Perpetual Choirs of Albion* project which my Druid Peace Order wants to develop (i.e. a choir somewhere in Britain and Ireland will be singing for peace every day of the year in an agreed cycle of performances).

May saw a wonderful flowering of nature as the first day of Summer arrived at Beltane, and I held a birthday party in Bournemouth in an alternative wine bar with dancing, feasting and discussions ranging into the night, attended by friends from far and near, including Brian Visiondance who came from Glastonbury, Edmund Marriage, Anabelle Lazenby, students from my course in Poole, all hosted by Hannah Hawker at her amazing wine bar in Boscombe in Bournemouth (the place where they are now building an artificial reef off shore to create the largest surfers paradise in Britain !) Soon after my birthday (May 8) I co-chaired the ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE MEMORIAL LECTURE at Poole Grammar School. This annual event has been founded by the IIPSGP Director to commemorate the life and teachings of A.R. Wallace, a co-founder of the theory of evolution by natural selection along with Charles Darwin. The 2008 lecture was given by the twin Potts brothers who jointly direct the work of the Bournemouth Spiritualist Church, at which A.R. Wallace had been a patron in the early 1900's before his death in 1913, just before World War One. Given that 2009 is the Bicentenary of Darwin's birth, it would be nice for IIPSGP to organize some kind of commemorative event for Darwin and his creative differences with Wallace again, as we previously organized in Shrewsbury several years back at the time of the Darwin Festival.

Also in May, Sarah Shambler came on retreat to Llanerfyl and gave great help in putting together the next issue of the Muses Journal, and shared stories about her mother's life in Mauritius, an island where telepathy and clairvoyance were taken as normal, and where the whole village used to be visited by the dead the night after someone had died, and they would gather and share their dreams excitedly, and learn from them. All this was declared "occult" after the Christian missionaries arrived, but it still carried on underground. This month also saw my organising a mediation in Bristol with Prof Ron Hutton for various Druid personalities who had clashed, sadly, and we reached a successful outcome. Ron also published his new book on Druidry this year, but explained that the full academic version of the book was still being held up by the American University

press that was supposed to publish over an argument about the length of the manuscript. He had signed a contract that specified so many words, but had delivered a book that was longer, and they insisted he cut it down. This further reinforced my own decision to publish my work for the time being at least on www.lulu.com/iipsgp only, at least until such time as a major publisher might take on the publishing thereof without insisting on editorial cuts. Later in May I had another birthday party in Llanerfyl for local friends, and Mary Napper, Rob Chapman and Wendy Shrubsall, and Judith Aldridge and others. We had a great time catching up with news from far and wide ! Also in May I had a visit from Shamanka, a mystic musician from Ibiza who regularly worships and meditates in a cave to the Goddess Tanith at the centre of Ibiza, whose continuous worship goes back to ancient Phoenician times. She was interested to see the Order of Peace Druids have a presence on her magical Island, which attracts young people in love with music and life from all over Europe and the world. Also in May I attended the Council of British Druid Order's meeting at Avebury, at the delightful thatched cottage home of Terry Dobney, Archdruid of Avebury, which was well attended and led to some interesting discussions about the best way forward in Druid circles – formal or informal, written or spoken agreements ? Speaking personally, and as Peace Officer to the Council, I believe that Druidry is a living oral mystical tradition that predates writing, and as such should be based on oral lore and oral law, and avoid complicated so called legal constitutions, and endless haggling over clauses and contracts and so on. Lawyers have already ruined much of our beautiful world with their necessity to reduce all the complex multifaceted aspects of human existence to legal contracts – whereas life itself is a spiritual reality, a giving in love, an inner tripartite covenant between all Selves and the Universe and the Divine, in which an inner sense of honour, truth, loyalty and love should guide us all. Not that we don't need written laws for some things, but they should be minimized, that is the common sense way. And we should remember that law is not the same as justice, and that justice should have priority in all matters.

June brought the full flowering of Summer, and the all night celebrations at Stonehenge, on the eve of the Midsummer Solstice, which I attended again as a Peace Steward. On June 21st there took place the Stonehenge Eisteddfod, held in the George Hotel in Amesbury, which I organised as a way of celebrating the lives and work of creative artists throughout the UK. Several contestants were awarded with prizes, including Brian Visiondance, who won the Holy Grail Award for 2008, Gerald Killingworth won the award for creative fiction for his novel The Silver Branch; Geraldine Lambert won the visual arts prize for her painting on the theme of peace, and www.holisticchannel.org.uk won the media prize (they also filmed the event). Others attending included Di Stubbs and Shanti-Grace Daffern, Edmund Marriage and Felicity Redman and Arabella Gilleney. In the category of social activism the prize went to a project based in London to turn Alexandra Palace into a community centre. After this event I went down to the beautiful Dorset village of Abbotsbury for a midsummer festival, which included a drama production by the Thomas Hardy Players, which included in their number a

woman of 102 years of age who had known Thomas Hardy himself and had acted in the original Thomas Hardy plays which he had directed back in the 1920's. I also met the local author and Druid scholar John Hodgson who had written a book about Hyperborean Apollo, and the links between ancient Greek and Celtic spiritual traditions.

In July I attended a lecture on A.R. Wallace at the Bournemouth Natural Science Society, and also invited John Hodgson to speak to the Poole Grammar Philosophy Club about his researches into the meaning of philosophy. Before leaving Poole Grammar I had numerous boys come up and thank me for my teaching work over two years, and for opening their eyes to the interesting nature of religious and philosophical concerns. I had also run a reading club for the school which has also interested the pupils in reading, something that boys are all too often loathe to do.

Later in July Sue Clayton, a TV producer from London came to Llanerfyl on retreat to write up the script of a film she had been working on. Coincidentally, Sue is a lecturer at Royal Holloway and Bedford New College at the University of London in teaching people how to write film scripts, and we discussed several film and TV ideas that IIPSGP might pursue in future.

August came in a blazing of light on Lughnasadh, and my first grandson came into the world - baby Lowen, born to daughter Helen and her partner John O'Leary in Brighton, and a few hours later I flew out of Manchester airport on a mission to go to Israel and Palestine to launch the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Middle East*. Little did I realise that at the very end of 2008 a further major conflict would break out with Israel and Hamas clashing and escalating the conflict to fever pitch leading to the death and destruction of so much, so many lives, and so many hopes. In August, however, this was all in the future.

I had arranged to stay with the IIPSGP coordinator in Israel, Gila Haron, who lives in Herzliya, just north of Tel Aviv. A few minutes walk from the Mediterranean sea, this provided a perfect base from which to undertake our work. I was accompanied by Nicola Hague, a television producer with the Holistic Channel, and the new head of IIPSGP Media Department, and the plan was to travel about in both Israel and Palestine and interview a series of thinkers and activists for their views on peace and reconciliation. We travelled in Israel to Tel Aviv, to Rishat le Zion, to Safed, to Tiberias, to Jerusalem, and recorded interviews with a number of artists, singers, mystics, healers, spiritual leaders. Then we travelled to Palestine, to Bethlehem and East Jerusalem, and interviewed several Christian theologians working for peace, as well as Muslims working with human rights issues and reconciliation. We visited the Palestinian Centre for Conflict Resolution in Bethlehem and interviewed the Director, Dr Zoughbi al Zoughbi, as well as several of his colleagues. We also visited one of the largest Palestinian refugee camps and interviewed several key activists

there, and learned about the history of the Palestinian diaspora and exodus effected after the establishment of Israel in 1948. The purpose of the visits was to see both sides of the problem, or rather, manifold perspectives, since in a clash of cultures and value systems so complex, there are no single narratives, no monopolar truths, but rather a complex plethora of interpretations and stories and narratives. Back in Israel, we were told about the ceaseless firing of rockets from Gaza, and sensed that eventually Israel's patience would indeed wear thin. On the other hand, the blockading of Gaza, from a human rights perspective, seemed to us immoral and also counter-productive. We crossed back and forth through the wall zone and wondered at the arguments on both sides for and against the construction of the wall by Israel, supposedly for their security – and wondered whether true security cannot rather be built with justice and learning and listening to each other's pain. We interviewed a fiery Islamic Sufi in his mosque in upper Galilee who spoke disparagingly against the West and at first refused to be interviewed properly, until he learned that I was a Druid and not an intelligence agent with a political agenda, and he relaxed, and offered to accompany me to Gaza to help free the Israeli soldier held captive there for several months (with hindsight I wish we had been able to go).

After the work in Israel and Palestine ended, I flew to Athens, where I had arranged to stay in a flat belonging to IIPSGP Chairperson Eleni Stamiris, who used to run the Commonwealth Women and Youth Desk from London, and I spent 7 happy days finishing off a novel I had been working on for several years. I also visited some amazing places in and around Athens, including Cape Sounion and the Temple of Poseidon, Epidavros (for a performance of Medea), Mycenae (which I found astounding and awe inspiring), the Acropolis (where I felt I had come home to my primary Deity, Athena, protectress of all philosophers throughout history, wherever they are scattered). I was honoured in my visit by the kindness of IIPSGP member Dr Katerina Balali, an anesthetist in Athens, who helped make my stay in Athens so memorable. What I did not foresee was that Athens would itself erupt in angry energy later in the year and a kind of street revolution of youth against age would be enacted before eyes of the world's press. Even the citizens of Baghdad, apparently, expressed their perplexity as to why Athenians would take to the streets in this manner – aren't they civilised people, they wondered? The ironies of history seem to revolve around memory, time and perception, I seem to hear the ghost of Socrates saying....

After my time in Athens sadly came to an end, I travelled by train to Thessalonika and on through to Macedonia. I had hoped to visit with IIPSGP Balkan Secretary, Gordana Netkovska, but the train was many hours late, so I went on straight through to Belgrade. From there I transferred to a fast train to Ljubljana, and arrived there the following day. Here I was met by IIPSGP member Dr Eva Zerovnik, who had arranged a flat for me to stay in downtown for several days to write and reflect on my recent travels, before flying home. Visiting Ljubljana and Slovenia was a delight – the churches, the cathedrals, the river, the castles, the forests, the mountains.. We also visited Lake Bohin, which lies at the source of

the River Sava, one of the great rivers of Europe, and which finally flows into the Danube at Belgrade, and over which I had already crossed by train. I was struck by the power of the rivers of the Balkans, and learned that they had Celtic names originally, and that Sava, Drava and Danube were all Celtic rivers to begin with, and the cities of Ljubljana, Belgrade and Zagreb, Budapest and Vienna were all originally Celtic foundations in the pre Roman period. I imagined the original Druids who oversaw the spiritual well being of these towns and organised the worship along these majestic river banks as being somewhat pleased to welcome a visiting peace Druid from distant Albion to their lands ! Leaving Slovenia by train I travelled on to Venice, and here was entranced and delighted by touring the extraordinary Doge's Palace in St Mark's square. There is a famous apartment in the upper floors of the palace which has a series of huge maps of the world as known to the Venetians, and which includes great details of the Americas, Asia, Africa, Europe etc. I reflected on the political complexity of the Venetian system of government, and lamented its casual destruction and silencing by the imperial ambitions of Napoleon, who also destroyed the ancient Holy Roman Empire which had endured for over a thousand years. It was all during this time that the conflict between Russia and Georgia had broken out over South Ossetia, and as I wandered in the Doge's Palace I mused that surely European civilisation, which had reached such an apogee of cultural and artistic maturity as to produce centres like Venice, and which had now founded the European Union, could do more to help solve conflicts in different parts of its neighbouring regions and borderlands. Is it in Europe's interest to see wars raging yet again in the Balkans ? Or in the Caucuses ? Is it in Europe's interest to sit back and do nothing as wars break out in the Middle East, between Israel and Palestine ? My travels through Greece and the Balkans, following my visit to Israel and Palestine, had given me much space for thought, and this had led me to conceive of the idea of the European Union Mediation Service (EUMS). The idea, in a nutshell was *That a professional and politically supported international mediation service should be created under the auspices of the European Union, comprising recognised experts in mediation and conflict prevention, ready instantly to offer mediation expertise in cases of conflicts involving European Union member states, their neighboring states, and any European or Mediterranean state that wishes to join the mediation service as Associate members. Only full members of the European Union are eligible for full membership of the EU Mediation Service. The EUMS would be brought into being by special treaty of member nations of the EU. It would be staffed by a secretariat based in Brussels, and financed by a sufficient budget made available through the EU.* This text is taken from the Founding document of the proposal, which I wrote on my return to the UK at the end of the month. I sent the text to President Barroso of the European Commission and President Sarkozy, leader of the European Union at the time, and received friendly and encouraging replies from both their offices.

In September, on my return to the UK, IIPSGP member Hannah Hawker came on retreat to Llanerfyl and helped with Institute work, and also joined the Druid Peace Order in a splendid ceremony at Mitchell's Fold amidst a glorious sunset

display of colours fading slowly in the West. Nicola Hague also visited to work on the film editing of the footage shot in Israel and Palestine and we discovered we had over 20 hours of tape to sort out and process, work which is still ongoing at the current time. Nicola did however put together a DVD based on excerpts from the filming overall, and which can be purchased direct from www.holisticchannel.org.uk. Mary Napper, IIPSGP Secretary General, also returned from a three week trip to Italy at this time, where she had been exploring some of the old Franciscan pilgrimage routes around Assisi. Also in September I met some IIPSGP friends in the British Museum and shared news about the peace work recently undertaken in the Middle East over a glass of wine. The Hadrian Exhibition was just finishing and had focused on Empire and Conflict which seemed an appropriate setting to report back on the work of the TRCME, not least because it had been Hadrian who had finally destroyed Jerusalem and launched the long exile of the Jewish people in 135 AD. After Hadrian conquered the Jewish revolt led by Bar Kochba, he had Jerusalem ploughed with a yoke of oxen and its Jewish inhabitants were sold into slavery and many transported to Egypt. Judean settlements were not rebuilt and Jerusalem itself was turned into a pagan city called Aelia Capitolina in which the Jews were forbidden to live. They were permitted to enter only on the 9th of Av to mourn their losses in the revolt. Hadrian also changed the country's name from Judea to Syria Palestina – which is highly significant in view of the current identity and cultural struggle between Israel and Palestine – the study of the history of names and their etymologies is a deep *sina qua non* for transpersonal peacemaking. Ironically, the name Palestine itself comes from the Philistines, who may well have been Mycenaean Greek settlers along the Mediterranean coastlines. Having visited both Mycenae, Israel and Palestine this year, and seen for myself the rock where Perseus, founder of Mycenae apparently rescued Andromeda just off the harbour at Jaffa, I can vouch that in all probability these ancient cultural attested links, now confirmed by archaeology, are actually true ! This means that to resolve the conflict in Palestine and Israel successfully, we need to involve Europe as mediators and peacemakers – hence the EUMS proposal launched this year. Some Palestinians are in fact the long lost descendents of Ancient Mycenaean settlers and should be honoured and allowed to live in peace at long last, so long as they themselves stop firing rockets at Israel – a matter that was brought to our attention during our visit. How long these wars have lasted – can we not finally make peace now ? Religious sects look forward to a millennium of coming peace – how about starting that soon please ?

Later in September I attended the Autumn meeting of the Council of British Druid orders in Portland, Dorset, and attended with my daughter Sophia, who found her first meeting with a group of Druids a fascinating experience. John Hodgson and Edmund Marriage both attended and together we launched a new Druid Education Committee to work in association with COBDO henceforth.

All this while I had been advising IIPSGP member Judith Aldridge of Montgomery in a legal case, and was flabbergasted when the Crown Prosecution Service failed to secure a conviction against the obvious criminal through mishandling the

case. I helped Judith to appeal against the verdict, which resulted in the loss of considerable amounts of furniture, but we both realised how ineffective the CPS is in actually catching criminals or stopping crime. I therefore launched in 2008 a new project for IIPSGP called **Just Justice**, which is an adjunct to the existing Multifaith and Multicultural Mediation Service (which offers mediation in situations of religious or cultural conflict) and which aims to assist genuine victims who are suffering from miscarriages of justice as a support and advice service.

At the end of September there took place a marvellous event in Montgomery, a weekend of seminars and discussion in honour of the famous poet George Herbert, child of Magdalen and Sir John Herbert of Montgomery, and brother to Lord Edward Herbert of Chirbury, the philosopher. IIPSGP had organised a symposium at Brithdir Hall in Powys on Edward Herbert in 2006, so it was with pleasure that I attended the service in honour of brother George. The sermon was preached (most movingly) by a visiting scholar and divine from the University of Glasgow, called Revd. Prof David Jasper, who is a specialist in religions, spirituality and literature. A visiting scholar from the Balkans was staying in Llanerfyl on retreat also at this time, Prof Marina Blagojevic, a specialist in feminist epistemology and the sociology of knowledge, for discussions including the possibility of advancing the work of the European Union Mediation Service. Prof Blagojevic kindly agreed to help coordinate IIPSGP's work in Europe as a whole during this visit perhaps especially in regard to the work of the EUMS.

October brought with it a historic event in my life which I have been awaiting for many years, namely the Viva Voce exam for my PhD at the University of London. I travelled to London to be interviewed by two professors, one a leading historian specialising in the history of war and security issues as well as general cultural and intellectual history, and the other a specialist in peace and conflict studies. I had spent some months preparing for my Viva, which had initially been set for April and then postponed, so when it finally came I was well prepared, and genuinely feel that my PhD thesis essentially defends itself for anyone who cares to read it. *Towards a Transpersonal History of the Search for Peace in the Post War World 1945-2001* presents a core argument as follows:

This thesis contributes to the intellectual history of the period from 1945-2001 in the specific regard of the search for peace, among selected groups of intellectuals, academics and thinkers, during the cold war epoch. It concerns itself both with the quest for peace in relation to that complex, global, bipolar conflict, and also more generally. It examines this search in 4 specific fields of knowledge, namely historiography, philosophy, religious studies and theology, and psychology. It constructs a chronological narrative in each separate knowledge field, covering the main events and publications and thought movements.. Developing from the dialectical relationships between the history of ideas, intellectual history, the history of philosophy, the philosophy of history, the history of psychology, the history of religions, the theology of history, and the

search for an intellectual history of peace theory – it was felt that a new meta-historical discipline, transpersonal history, might assist the work of trying to make sense of our epoch and, particularly, provide a useful historical special sub-discipline, which might hopefully help shed light on the causes of religious and inter-cultural conflicts, and their possible resolutions, in the post 9/11 world.

The core argument is summarised at the start of the thesis as follows:

THE ARGUMENT

The history of recent historical philosophical, theological and psychological thought and peace research (1945-2001) reveals that:

- 1) Poor philosophical understanding and rival schools of philosophical knowledge being in contention, can help cause wars and violence, or at least can fail to solve and transform them*
- 2) Poor religious understanding, based on narrow, literalist and contradictory exoteric theological hermeneutics, exegesis and practice, can help cause wars and violence through the contending of rival systems of salvation, or at least can fail to solve, transform and prevent them*
- 3) New developments in transpersonal psychology have revealed peace psychology to be an extremely complex and interlocking system premised on deep self-awareness and transpersonal cognition, in which the full dimensions of human spirituality and rationality and unconscious psychological drives can be harmonised and reconciled, and within which various rival schools or philosophy, theology and metaphysics can be mapped, integrated and synthesized.*
- 4) New developments in historiography can embrace the findings of transpersonal psychology and thereby gradually evolve an awareness that historiography can contribute rationally and systematically to the healing of the deep fissures in mankind's soma and psyche, and thereby contribute towards the development of the wider peace sciences, as an educational project of lasting benefit to mankind*

It has been a long journey to research, write up and finally complete and have examined this thesis, which was started way back in 1989 when I first went to see Dr Anthony Polonsky, a lecturer in International History at the LSE and asked if he would be my supervisor, and proposed the general outlines of the thesis as finally presented. Huge changes have happened since then, not only in my own life, but also in the state of the world. When it was begun, the cold war was just reaching its end game, and the Treaty of Paris in 1990 managed effectively to end the cold war in Europe. Since then we have had innumerable other conflicts and wars, in the Balkans, in Africa, in the Middle East. The methodology of conflict analysis and conflict resolution, using history, and above all transpersonal history, can hopefully go on and make a contribution to the resolution of conflict in such conflict cases around the world. As this newsletter letter is being written (Jan 3), Israel has begun a ground offensive against Gaza, and demonstrations took place in London against Israel's bombing campaign against Gaza in which nearly 500 people have died so far, and 1500 been

wounded. My thesis argues that there is another way to bring about peace and justice in the world rather than militarism and violence and terrorism. The more people that read it, and listen to its arguments, the better. I believe I have presented a genuinely innovative and visionary, yet utterly realistic proposal in this thesis, which will be published in www.lulu.com/iipsgp shortly.

In October I also started teaching at a new school, St Mary's, an Anglican school for girls in Calne, near Avebury in Wiltshire, which is one of the best girls private schools in the country, where I am currently teaching religious studies, critical thinking and philosophy. The school is close to Bowood House which I had the pleasure to visit to discover that Jeremy Bentham used to love visiting in the early 19th century at the precise time he was helping set up the University of London. I also found out that Oxygen was discovered by Joseph Priestly while working at Bowood House, and that the process of photosynthesis was also uncovered for the first time at Bowood by the Dutch scientist Jan Ingenhousz (1730-1799). The work of these early scientists was supported by William, 2nd Earl of Shelburne (1737–1805), later 1st Marquess of Lansdowne, who inherited his father's fortune at the age of 24, when he was already following a political career with strongly Whig sympathies. He immediately set about a further programme of improvements to the house and gardens at Bowood and, in 1765, purchased an Adam house in Berkeley Square, London known as Shelburne House and, later, Lansdowne House. Both of his houses were sumptuously decorated in the contemporary style to provide impressive hospitality to guests from the worlds of the arts, literature, sciences and politics. Lord Shelburne's greatest political achievement lay in negotiating peace with America, as Prime Minister (1782–83), at the close of the War of Independence, for which he was created Marquess of Lansdowne in 1784. Perhaps in the aftermath of the diplomatically disastrous war in Iraq, we need a new Lord Lansdowne to negotiate a new treaty with the USA on behalf not just of Britain but all Europe and indeed the whole world. My own suggestion is that all countries should sign a bilateral non-aggression treaty with the USA, thus enabling her own armaments and defence industry to relax and stop feeling afraid that she will herself be attacked by so called rogue states, and also it will allow the rest of the world to breathe freely and not anticipate bombs falling from the sky from American bombers if they fall out of line with the ideological convictions of this or that USA President. Given that America (and the global economy) has been effectively bankrupted by the cost of fighting the Iraq and Afghan wars (*there is a direct and provable ethical and financial link between the current financial crash and the militarism of recent years in the view of IIPSGP – morality and economics are connected, there is no denying this*) and by the war on terror in general, perhaps it is time for her to focus on building a world of peace and justice and love, and so immunise herself and her friends from states of terror and fear. IIPSGP hopes that under the new leadership of President Obama, who was himself trained academically partly at the Harvard Law School, where President John F. Kennedy also served as a law Professor, the USA might indeed present a more morally and intellectually credible face to the global community, and not rely on mere outer power or force, and that ideas like the bilateral non-aggression pacts

outlined above (first proposed by President Roosevelt to prevent World War Two, and rejected by the Nazis and Fascists, might become feasible. Lord Lansdowne would sleep soundly in heaven and be proud of us mortals, if we could organize such a state of affairs ! We simply cannot afford wars any more as a planet, and we CAN solve them through intelligent thinking, deep multidimensional dialogue, discourse and diplomacy. Yes we can !

St Mary's school still retains a connection with the descendents of Lord Lansdowne and has had many famous alumni since it was founded in 1870 by the Vicar of Calne, Rev. John Duncan. The headmistress herself has a doctorate from the University of Exeter on the moral dilemmas facing school leaders, which is something that I have myself seen in my career as a teacher to date again and again, as senior managers sometimes misuse power, in order to window-dress issues to look good to government inspectors, who are like target driven robots often without a clue about the actual spiritual and moral basis of education. Thank heaven there are still pockets of genuine education available in Britain such as St Mary's ! Each day starts with prayers in the chapel, and thus the spiritual basis of learning is laid down from the foundation. Whilst some might cavil against such a religious basis to schooling, in comparison to the wholly secular schools in which I have taught hitherto, in which religious study has been regarded as something only eccentrics or idiots are interested in, it is highly refreshing to work in an authentically Christian school for a change.

In November, President Elect Obama was voted in by the people of the USA to be their next President. Like many others around the world, I stayed up all night to watch this historic election victory and only hope that the world is not in too much of a mess by the time of his inauguration in January. On November 8th I flew again to India at the invitation of the Jains of Anuvhiva, to attend a historic conference on peace and nonviolence in Jaipur, Rajasthan. I met many leading peace educators from around the planet, including the former president of India, Dr Abdul Kalaam, who launched a book at the conference that he had co-written with Acharya Mahapragya, the leader of the Jains, whom I also had the honour to interview, on the role of ethics, science and spirituality in helping solve global problems. I ran a workshop on the vision underlying the work of IIPSGP, led a peripatetic meditational walk for peace educators in the moonlight, chaired a panel discussion on peace and non-violence research, and gave a plenary address to a large audience of Jains and other peace thinkers. This event came just before the tragic killings in Bombay (Mumbai), and at our conference were several delegates from Bombay itself. I suggested that in view of the ongoing problems of conflict in the Indian subcontinent, that there should be established an *Indian Union Mediation Service*, copying the idea I had for the *European Union Mediation Service*, not realising that with the killings shortly coming in Bombay, the idea would be even more relevant than ever. I was also able to meet up with several old IIPSGP members, friends and colleagues including Dr S.L. Gandhi, organiser of IIPSGP in India, Dr. Rudi Jansma, Dr Carol Bruce, and Dr Gulab Kothari among others. I left India on November 13th to return to my teaching duties in Wiltshire.

In December Ruth Kempe attended the International Association of University Presidents gathering at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on behalf of IIPSGP, which remains a member of their commission on peace and disarmament studies, and she presented a summary of our ongoing activities, including the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Middle East. About this time I also drafted a proposal for an international Peace Prize to be operated by the various national library systems of the world in concert with UNESCO, about which details are available for anyone interested. After a further COBDO meeting in London, and another Stars and Stones Forum in Suffolk, and the end of a busy teaching term in Calne, I was invited to spend some time back in the Balkans to end my year working on a new book, and so I flew back to Slovenia and spent some time working again in Ljubljana on a philosophical text which I have been planning for some time once my thesis was completed and successfully examined. Whilst there I also visited the Josef Stefan Institute, a natural science research institute in the centre of Ljubljana, where I was shown round some of the biology laboratories by IIPSGP member Dr Eva Zerovnik. Her own specialised field is to study the details of the processes of protein folding in cells, which has bearing on medical conditions such as Alzheimer's, but also even the question of how photosynthesis works in plant cells, which still remains a mystery to science. The Josef Stefan Institute is an amazing place with an abundance of scientists working in pioneering research, and has an excellent scientific library where I spent some happy hours studying among other things a wonderful large volume dedicated to the life and works of Nikola Tesla, produced by the Tesla Institute in Belgrade back in the 1950's and which included the full texts (in English) of all the patents he brought out. I then travelled to Budapest via the amazing Slovenian town of Ptuj, which boasts ancient Roman remains of a Mithraeum and an altar to Orpheus. In Budapest I spent some further time working, thanks to the kindness of my host, Prof Marina Blagojevic, on my philosophical treatise, in which for the first time I will be setting forth my own positive philosophical position, rather than mainly commenting on that of others as a transpersonal historian. I also visited the historic downtown area of Budapest and explored the old castle of Buda and the Matthias Church, which has played such a large role in the history of Hungary, as well as visiting the Hungarian Historical Museum. Among other things, I researched the history of the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956, taking place in the year of my own birth, and meditated on the philosophical and political issues revealed by the history of Hungary. Through Prof Blagojevic I learned about the existence of the Institute of Human Sciences at the University of Vienna, which is undertaking a research programme into the life and work of a famous Czech philosopher, Jan Palocka, who worked in the mainstream continental traditions of philosophy and phenomenology stemming from Hegel and Husserl, and who played an intellectual role in the 1968 Prague Spring. When the Soviets clamped down in Czechoslovakia, as they had previously in Hungary, Palocka was arrested and interrogated, and died of apoplexy after 11 hours of continual interrogation. This, to me, was a sobering reminder, at the end of the year, that the struggle at the heart of European and indeed global civilisation at the current time, is the ages-

old conflict between intelligence, wisdom and love, versus authoritarianism, arbitrary power and ignorance. IIPSGP remains a *small attempt to do at least something about a very big problem*. The consequences of doing nothing at all are being all too graphically illustrated by the tragedy unfolding in Gaza as I type these words. What should be our response ? Neutrality ? To take sides ? How about taking both sides simultaneously ? How about standing for enlightenment ? IIPSGP believes in the power of positive peace, a peace based on the metaphysics of love and the right to wisdom, and it is for this reason that we launched the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Middle East* this year in Israel and Palestine. Any help you can offer towards this work would be most gratefully received, either in terms of volunteering time (for volunteer work) and for fundraising. We desperately need funds to support the work of the TRCME this year, since it is our intention to return to both Israel and Palestine and Egypt and before this current fighting broke out, it had been our hope to go to Gaza – but this is now obviously in jeopardy. Is there a light strong enough to dispel the darkness of fear, ignorance, hatred and violence ? IIPSGP is a vehicle to ask such fundamental questions, so please get involved and help !

The first project for IIPSGP's new media department, currently run by Nicola Hague, involved filming in Israel and Palestine the launch of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission for the Middle East in August 2008. This material provides an extraordinary insight into the minds and hearts of the people living in 'the land of the Holy One', as one contributor, the Rt. Rev. Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal, former Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem asserts, it cannot yet be called the 'Holy Land'. In stark contrast to the mass media coverage of the conflict in Palestine, this film about the TRCME gives a voice to those who are 'living under a system of apartheid', whilst acknowledging the traumatic legacy of the Jewish people and their subsequent arrival in Israel, and and reveals the search for a higher path to the solution of the conflict through interfaith reconciliation and philosophical reflection. A trailer for the documentary can be seen at www.holisticchannel.org.uk (human rights and peace) as well as a full-length interview with Dr. Geris Khoury, a Palestinian Christian who is a senior academic at the Al-Liqa' Centre for Religious & Heritage Studies in Bethlehem. Another recent assignment was a filmed interview with Eileen Daffern, the Director's 93 year old mother and long time peace campaigner, which will shortly be available for viewing on www.holisticchannel.org.uk (peace and human rights). Also forthcoming, is a media project based on my book, the "Universal Calendar of Saints and Sages". Films of my past lectures at the Stars and Stones Forums can be seen at www.holisticchannel.org.uk (human rights and peace, and also under ancient history). Another area that Nicola will be helping the Institute with is keeping the website updated.

On a happier note, can I say that I have written a number of poems again this year, and managed to publish volume three of my Selected Poems, which is now available on www.lulu.com/iipsgp. I have been blessed with many wonderful friends, visits, discoveries, insights, journeys and conversations this past year, and would like to thank everyone who has joined me for at least part of the way –

thank you all !

PUBLICATIONS OF IIPSGP: My publications continue to be available through LULU, an online publishing agency, and can be ordered by members and friends as either downloads (direct to their computer in electronic format) or as published books. Consult the website: www.lulu.com/iipsgp where members will find the required information. I have recently published the following volumes via Lulu which can be found by visiting the website.

Finally, a few things coming up to note for 2009: firstly, there will be the meeting of the TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION FOR BRITAIN AND IRELAND, which was postponed from 2008, and which will take place on the last Saturday of July in 2009 , at the Quaker meeting House in Frederick Street, Belfast, Northern Ireland. It will take place from 11am to 4pm.

It is also hoped to run the 2nd meeting of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Middle East in Israel and Palestine again, in August – the intention had been to again interview leading thinkers on their attitudes to peace in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and this time to go also to Gaza and to Cairo. Obviously the current outbreak of fighting over Gaza and the different interpretations placed on the situation by Israel and by Palestine mean that the possibility of sticking to that plan remains subject to political events on the ground. The current fighting might mean that this might have to be postponed until 2010. We are currently fundraising to make the TRCME even more effective as a project. Please contact us directly for an update of the situation.

Thirdly it is hoped to run the Stonehenge Eisteddfod on June 21st again this year (2009) in Amesbury, Wiltshire, so all artist, poets, bards and creative workers in whichever medium are invited to apply for an application form.

Fourthly, we are hoping that IIPSGP will be able to host the Pagan Academic and Educational Network (PAEN) meeting planned initially for Aberystwyth at the National Library of Wales, and now relocated to Llanerfyl, Powys at the headquarters of IIPSGP, since the Library is no longer opening on Saturdays due to funding cuts ! This will take place on Saturday July 18 from 1 to 6pm. Please send an SAE for details.

Fifthly, I am also teaching an adult education course in Wiltshire, originally intended to run at Llanerfyl, but now relocated to Calne. This course will run from late January through to July, and will focus on outlining a *Periodic Table of the World's Religions and Philosophies*.

This course will run as follows:

PATHWAYS OF THE SPIRIT

ESOTERIC AND METAPHYSICAL ASPECTS OF WORLD RELIGIONS

An Outstanding Course By An International Expert In The Field:

Dr Thomas Daffern Ph.D.

You are welcome to apply for this pioneering course on the esoteric and metaphysical aspects of the world's religious traditions being held near Avebury in Wiltshire. The course is being taught in Calne (7 minutes drive from Avebury)

Academic year 2009

You are welcome to simply come along and enjoy... And, if you wish completion of the course, plus a written dissertation, will lead to the *IIPSGP Diploma in Global Philosophy*.

2009 COURSE OUTLINE

February 2 – Introduction: towards a Periodic Table of the World's Religions and Philosophies - Shamanism and New Religious Traditions

February 9 – Sumerian, Babylonian philosophies and Phoenician (Canaanite) religions

March 2 – Judaism and the Cabbala

March 9 - Greek and Roman philosophical teachings

March 16 - Druidry and Celtic teachings

April 23 - Anglo-Saxon, Germanic and Scandinavian Pagan and ancient spiritual teachings

April 27 - Chinese and Japanese philosophy – Taoism and Confucianism and Shintoism

May 4 – Hinduism and its many deities and schools: Brahma, Siva and Vishnu worship

May 11 – Ancient Egyptian philosophy and African traditional teachings

May 18 - Christianities: Gnostic, Catholic, Protestant, Ecumenical, Orthodox traditions

May 25 - Islam and Sufism – Sunnis, Shias, Ismaelis, Druze, Naqshbandis, Qadiris etc

June 1 - Modern Science and scientific philosophies, quantum theory, humanism and consciousness and Modern Spiritualism, A.R. Wallace, Theosophy, Anthroposophy and New Age Teachings

June 8 – Buddhist and Jain Philosophies

June 15 – Zoroastrian, Bahai and Sikh Philosophies

June 22 – Jungian, post Jungian psychology, and transpersonal history – towards a methodology for studying and comparing the inner achievements of each pathway of the spirit

June 29 – Modern European philosophical traditions, including German, Slavonic, Balkan, French, Spanish, Italian, British etc.

July 6 – Contemporary Global Philosophies: towards a periodic table of the world's religious and philosophical traditions

Course details: This pioneering study course is taking place on Monday evenings at St Mary's School, Calne, Wiltshire, from 6 – 8 p.m. The cost for the entire course is £350 (£150 concessions) Classes can be attended individually for £15 each (£10 concessions). Concessions are for those will be available on a low income or unwaged. Please note, interested pupils and staff at St Mary's can come for free – space allowing ! Refreshments will be provided.

To book a place on the course please send a cheque, payable to IIPSGP, addressed to: *Dr. Thomas Daffern, IIPSGP, Rhos Galt, Llanerfyl, Near Welshpool, Powys, Wales, SY21 0ER. Tel. 01938 820586 or 07951 600959 or email iipsgp@educationaid.net. Details on the website www.educationaid.net*

COURSE AIMS:

The purpose of the course is to advance understanding of different philosophical and spiritual traditions, and to enable students to gain a broad and deep knowledge of different spiritual paths. This will help in the making of informed life choices regarding spiritual journeys, and also with guiding others through the complexities of life. Focusing on the esoteric philosophical core teachings of each tradition, Dr Daffern gradually aims to unveil a transpersonal common denominator underlying all the spiritual paths of humankind and to develop students' understanding of the possibilities for the emergence of peace and interfaith harmony. Attending the course can be regarded as preliminary training in becoming an interfaith mediator and philosophical peace worker. Whatever spiritual path one is drawn to, or practices, the course is premised on the faith that it will bring great benefit to learn about others' practices and beliefs as they will enrich and stimulate one's own.

TUITION: Dr Thomas Daffern Ph.D.

The course is being led by Dr. Thomas Daffern, Director of IIPSGP. He has taught and travelled in over 30 countries worldwide, has twice spoken at the

United Nations Headquarters about peace studies and global spirituality and education, and also many times in the House of Lords (at special meetings on ethics and policy). An educator for many years, he has taught at the Universities of London and Oxford. A British-Canadian Anglican philosopher, historian, theologian, educator, writer, and poet, in the 1980's he launched an organization called Philosophers and Historians for Peace. This grew into the International Institute of Peace Studies and Global Philosophy (www.educationaid.net). In 2008 he founded the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the Middle East while visiting Israel and Palestine (see www.holisticchannel.org.uk) He currently teaches religious studies and philosophy at St Mary's School. See www.lulu.com/ipsqp for details of his philosophical publications.

Yours in peace, and Happy New Year, in spite of everything ... !!!

Dr. Thomas Daffern