

there are points to ponder and applied to answer situation. This important and inspiring book is a conversation between the author and the reader, but also a conversation of the reader with him or herself. One is left in no doubt of the importance of embracing universal, positive values that transcend specific cultures and are ultimately a contribution that each of us can make. It is a simple but powerful message.

Taken together, these books highlight the importance of developing character in terms of both performance and moral virtues alongside cognitive capacity. Indeed, recent research indicates that schools where character is emphasised are also those where academic attainment is highest. This should not be surprising given the personal qualities required for any outstanding achievement, which is why my own programme focuses on the translation of inspiration into aspiration.

### Feeling more Alive

David Lorimer

### THE CHARGE

Brendon Burchard

Free Press, 2013, 254 pp., \$26, h/b – ISBN 978-1-4516-6753-0

Brendon Burchard is the founder of the High Performance Academy and one of the top performance trainers in the world. He gives away an enormous amount of great free material, and even sent me a copy of this book for postage only. His story is that he was involved in a serious car accident at the age of 19, as a result of which he asked himself three critical questions: Did I live? Did I love? Did I matter? These are similar questions to others undergoing a life-threatening crisis, but in his case they have become the foundation of a multi-million dollar business helping people share their message and become more authentic in their lives. I have also benefited from his book *The Millionaire Messenger*, which is available as an e-book and on CD. This helps people work out what is unique about their life story and what they can usefully share with others.

This inspiring and empowering book, with its accompanying Web resources, is a tremendous resource to help readers define who and what they are, and how best to move forward in their

lives. Each chapter begins with an arresting coaching story illustrating the appropriate theme and showing how powerful the right question can be when posed at the right time. The structure of the book falls into two parts: first, the five baseline drives for control, competence, congruence, caring and connection; then what he calls the five forward drives of change, challenge, creative expression, contribution and consciousness. The charged life is defined as 'a consciously designed existence that feels evenly engaged, energised and enthusiastic.' The emphasis is on conscious design rather than allowing one's life to unfold by default. Once our basic needs have been satisfied, we need novelty, challenge, connection and expression in order to feel more alive. The three recognisable lives are categorised as the caged life, the comfortable life and finally the charged life as defined above. Too many of us are stuck in the first two categories, and this book shows how we can emerge into the third by making more demands on ourselves.

For instance, the first chapter on control shows how we can choose our outlook and how we react to the things that happen. We can all control the quality of person that we are an everyday basis and focus on being the greatest person we can be given our

special qualities. This is a conscious process and one that thrives on novelty and challenge. Brendon suggests ways of introducing novelty into our lives on a regular basis, which just requires a bit of forward planning. Controlling our workflow is key, and for many of us this means controlling email flow; he defines the inbox as a convenient way of organising other people's agenda, and warns against being taken over by this at the expense of working more strategically. Today, I am prioritising book reviews, and will not be checking my email until much later in the day. This will help keep me on track. Brendon challenges us to undertake reflective exercises as we go along, which can then be applied in everyday situations. Competence includes stretching ourselves and setting new goals, but also reviewing past success.

Congruence is about self-image and self-definition, living into the future and maintaining a positive mood; again Brendon gives the reader tips on how to achieve this. Care includes self-care, feeling safe, worthy and loved, and also maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Connection embraces family and friends, and there is an incredibly useful section

on what Brendon calls growth friends, which enables readers to review the types of friendships they already have and work more consciously to develop these and support our existing friends. I know from my own work with young people that friendship is a top priority, as it also remains throughout life.

The forward drives are about shakeup, the future and being bold; they stretch our limits, encouraging us to learn and grow. One client was able to manage change successfully in his organisation, but not in his personal life. Brendon goes to the edge with his clients, prodding them where it is most uncomfortable but also setting up a constructive relationship that takes them both forward. He encourages us to regard change in terms of gains and also to be very clear and practical about our choices, plans and intentions. Challenges stretch our efforts and abilities, and are fundamentally about the journey rather than the destination. As Jim Rohn says, the importance of goals is the person we become as a result of achieving them. He quotes a speech by Theodore Roosevelt about action and daring greatly. He himself has been setting thirty-day challenges in various areas of his life for the last 15 years.

Stephen Covey writes about the importance of legacy, treated here as contribution. We can both give of ourselves and to others. Brendon's model is investing in and serving people, and he has come to find that much of his giving is what he calls fate funding, depending on the people who cross his path. He also enables people to realise more fully what contribution they are already making, and illustrates this with an inspiring story about an extraordinary bank manager. Finally, there is the drive for consciousness, the area perhaps most familiar to readers of this Review. This is about being conscious of our thoughts, energy, feelings, presence, openness to coincidence, to love, to wonder. By genuinely working through the contents of this highly engaging book, every reader can become more than they already are, enjoying the feeling of being more energised, engaged and enthusiastic; however, this does require commitment, which is the real test. It is all too easy to fall back into our existing patterns.



## books in brief

David Lorimer

Note: many of these books are now available in downloadable electronic form

### SCIENCE/PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

#### Brain Bugs

by Dean Buonomano

John Wiley & Sons Ltd 2012, 310 pp., £10.99, p/b.

An authoritative overview of how brain flaws shape our lives by a professor of neurobiology and psychology at UCLA. Much of the vocabulary is technological, hence the reference to the brain as a device or piece of technology when it is in fact an organ – our metaphors are mechanical. The book is highly readable and covers a wide range of phenomena including memory, temporal distortions, fear, and unreasonable reasoning where our opinions are influenced by arbitrary factors. A useful and key phrase is that of associative architecture used by advertisers to create fabricated associations within the brain allied to desirable qualities. As well as being essential for memory, it mediates our susceptibility to psychological manipulation. The distorted sense of time can have a dramatic effect on our financial, health and environmental policies, while fear can cloud our judgement and influence our behaviour in many ways. The situation is made more challenging by the fact that the brain itself acts as an editor and censor in relation to the conscious mind – the author gives a neat demonstration of this by inserting an extra 'the' into a sentence and then pointing it out in the next one! Unreasonable reasoning includes cognitive biases, which the author himself unwittingly demonstrates in his chapter on supernatural bugs. He is quite right that many beliefs are irrational and in the case of Christian Science can lead to unnecessary deaths, but then he lumps together animistic beliefs with telepathy, ghosts and clairvoyance. These arguments should be evidence-based and subject to reason. The last chapter discusses debugging techniques, enabling readers to be more aware of unconscious biases so that we can more easily compensate for our brain bugs. He quotes a Spanish neuroscientist as saying 'as long as the brain is a mystery, the universe – a reflection of the structure of the brain – will also be a mystery.'

#### The Sense of Being Stared At

by Rupert Sheldrake (SMN)

Park Street Press 2013, 386 pp., \$18.95, p/b.

This is a revised and updated edition of a ground-breaking book published 10 years ago and covering many aspects of what Rupert calls the extended mind. The chapter headings in the book have been reorganised so that the section on the power of attention now comes first, followed by sections on telepathy and remote viewing. The book summarises more than 25 years of scientific research including the recent work that he has been able to carry out as director of the Perrott-Warwick project. This means that he is able to draw on more than 5,000 case histories and 4,000 questionnaire responses involving more than 20,000 people. His thesis is that these powers are in fact a part of our biological nature, and some like telepathy can be proved in animals as well. He puts the whole range of topics within an evolutionary framework, showing persuasively that we need a hypothesis of mind extended beyond the brain and that many subtle communications are mediated by the invisible connections represented by what he calls morphic fields. The result is an authoritative and up-to-date description of research across a wide range of areas. Essential reading for those who missed the first edition, and for those who did read it at the time, much new research is reported, including recent experiments with phone and text telepathy.

### Scientism

by John Cowburn SJ

Alban Books Ltd 2013, 162 pp., £16.99, p/b.

This is a comprehensive introduction to scientism, from both a historical and philosophical point of view. The author, a Jesuit philosopher, defines scientism as 'the belief that science can explain and do everything and that nothing else can explain or do anything: it is the belief that science and reason, or scientific and rational, are co-extensive terms.' More concisely, it is the belief that only scientific knowledge is valid. Physics is given pride of place and the world is thought to be value free. This work explains the origin of the term and the influence of scientism in various fields before moving on to a philosophical history. In modern times, E.O. Wilson has been a central proponent of the scientific view with his book *Consilience*. Various chapters explore determinism and responsibility, values and morality, criminal justice and the history of scientific psychology. There is also a long chapter on eugenics and on the scientism and religion. The author makes it clear that he is not anti-science, but is questioning the adequacy of a scientific approach to reality. In the final chapter, he describes levels of reality and the nature of scientific reduction, including that science is indeed not the only valid or rational kind of human knowledge and that great scientists are not necessarily paragons of wisdom. He also observes that determinism and the argument that the world is value free are in fact circular propositions that advocates do not seriously ascribe to themselves. This is a thorough coverage of a significant field.

### MEDICINE/HEALTH

#### Inside an Autistic World

by Wolfgang Weirauch

Temple Lodge Publishing 2013, 204 pp., £12.99, p/b.

Subtitled 'spiritual experiences of people with autism', this extraordinary book recounts the development and memories of three autistic individuals through a technique called Facilitated Communication. Two of the individuals – Erik and Andreas – are twins and the conversation takes place with their mother, Hilke. If one is to believe Erik's account, he was an anthroposophist in his previous 20th century incarnation and died at Bergen-Belsen as a result of torture for having hidden Jewish friends. This experience apparently made him extremely reluctant to incarnate and goes a long way to explaining his present condition when he did not initially wish to speak. The descriptions of his experiences are graphic and disturbing, but they are redeemed by his perception and understanding of Christ, who apparently persuaded him to incarnate and continue the process of human evolution. He describes the Nazi period as one of the darkest and explains that the guards and torturers would have had to experience what it is like to be on the receiving end of their treatment in their life review. This scarcely bears thinking about, especially as these same guards were driven by fear that they themselves would be killed if they failed to follow orders. It turns out that the third character, Martin, remembers being a guard at Dachau and being compelled to carry out appalling orders. All this is explained within the framework of Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of evil involving Ahirman. The reader gains a further important insight into the inner condition of autistic people and realises that they have in many cases an exquisite sensitivity and concern with spiritual development; they may also have clairvoyant abilities and the capacity to communicate with nature spirits. It seems that the distinction normally drawn between inner and outer is different for these individuals. This is certainly an eye-opening book.

## Autism - A Holistic Approach

by Dr Marga Hogenboom and Bob Woodward

Floris Books 2000, 312 pp., £20.00, p/b.

This is the third edition of a book explaining the Anthroposophical approach to autism, as practised at the Camphill medical practice. The book challenges the assumption that the inner development of these children cannot be achieved by exploring case studies based on the experiences of the authors. It also explores other findings and updates readers on new diagnostic methods and approaches to treatment. There is a special section of material from the pioneer Hans Muller-Wiederman. This study will be invaluable for those involved in the field either as parents or carers.

## Avicenna's Medicine

by Mones Abu-Asab, Hakima Amri & Marc S Micozzi

Deep Books 2013, 462 pp., £30, h/b.

Avicenna (980-1037) was one of the greatest physicians and philosophers of his time. This book presents a new translation of his Canon of Medicine known as the Qanun, which is one of the most influential books in the history of medicine with respect to our modern understanding of human health and disease. The diagnostic system of humours is still used in Unani and Ayurvedic medicines in India. This new translation directly from of the Arabic is accompanied with scholarly commentary on the various sections and argues that Avicenna's understanding of humours actually corresponds with the biomedical definition of proteins and lipids as the nutrient building blocks of our blood and body. The four parts introduce Avicenna's definitions, his analysis of diseases and symptoms and his advice on health practices and treatments, with special reference to children and the elderly. At the end, the editors comment that this energy-based system is consistent with an evolutionary framework, which they feel is missing in modern biomedicine. Avicenna even gives advice on what kind of wine to drink, and recommends old wine for old people!

## Holistic Therapy

by Emma Mary Gathergood

Aspect Design 2010, 151 pp., £9.99, p/b.

Written by an experienced occupational therapist who has studied many different approaches, this self-help book provides useful advice for those who would like to know what the options are for overcoming depression and anxiety naturally. The first part introduces a variety of holistic therapies, while the other parts deal with developing assertiveness and managing anger, specifically overcoming depression and anxiety, and reaching an awareness of our true nature, including the importance of forgiveness. There are useful exercises at the end of each chapter, along with references. Wayne Dyer he is quoted as saying: 'when you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.' Emma discusses the three faces of self, namely the mask self, the shadow self and the true self, suggesting exercises so that we can realise that we are more than our emotions. She has some useful suggestions for changing limiting beliefs and their associated feelings. It is also important to develop an integrated body mind awareness. Another chapter deals with CBT and coping strategies, which is followed by an explanation of mindfulness techniques. All in all, this is clearly written and very helpful guide.

## Our Return to The Light

by Barbara Wren

Hay House Publishers 2013, 234 pp., £12.99, p/b.

Written by a naturopath and healer, this book combines therapeutic and spiritual perspectives. The first part explains our body as a manifestation of light, while the second presents a new energetic paradigm of light, resonance and disease. Light is understood to connect us in a general sense, but also the cells in our body – we are surrounded and suffused by light, we can receive and transmit it. Stress and fear interfere with this process and maybe be precursor to disease by affecting the body initially at a cellular level. The book runs through human development and proposes a participatory model of healing. Wren develops her understanding through Béchamp rather than the more mechanistic approach of Pasteur espoused

by modern medicine and which does not take account of the hierarchy of symptoms in a person's story. She sheds new light on what she calls the tubercular pandemic represented by the inability to keep calcium in the correct place. This manifests in a number of different ways affecting the blood brain barrier and using a model of the body as an energetic blueprint holding a specific resonance. Cellular health is especially important in terms of levels of hydration, alkalinity and maximum oxygen availability. She asks if we are all going mouldy, becoming more sluggish, stagnant and lowering our resonance. The most important factors are stress, dehydration, congestion and stagnation, inflammation, encapsulation and isolation. The appendix contains a wide range of therapeutic techniques. A useful book for practitioners and patients working towards new models of health.

## PHILOSOPHY/RELIGION

### Zen and the Spiritual Exercises

Ruben L.F. Habito

Orbis, 2013, 237 pp., \$25, p/b.

This remarkable book is the outcome of 50 years of practice and research both within Zen and the spiritual exercises of Loyola. Serious practice is often the outcome of deep reflection on metaphysical and existential questions about the purpose of life, how to find inner peace and face death with equanimity. These very questions confronted 30-year-old Loyola in 1521. Each path is one of awakening and transformation but arising in very different time periods and cultural contexts, although they broadly follow a similar path in terms of preparation, purification, illumination and union. In the Christian context this includes death and resurrection, while the Zen fruits are expressed in terms of deepening the power of concentration, realisation (*kensho*) and 'the embodiment of the peerless way.' The author helps to present both paths within a modern understanding, explaining the importance of posture, breathing and bringing the mind to stillness as well as of trust and resolve in the process. The reader understands what to expect and becomes more aware of the dysfunctional state of both individuals and society, which both traditions address. The central practice is meditation on death, asking oneself if there is anything in one's current way of living that one might regret and would have done differently from the vantage point of the day when one is about to die. The endpoint of serious practice is that 'you may open your eyes at some point along the Way and, filled with gratitude, find yourself awakened and transformed by Love.' Reading the book can become a part of spiritual practice itself.

### The Oral Gospel Tradition

James D.G. Dunn

Eerdmans, 2013, 389 pp., \$25, p/b.

The quest for the historical Jesus goes back more than 150 years and has given rise to a great deal of debate about the differences between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. As the title suggests, this book is about the oral gospel tradition, reminding readers of the obvious fact that the vast majority of people living at the time of Jesus were illiterate, and that stories were passed on orally rather than in writing. This quest has been a lifelong one for Professor Dunn as he has sought to question the default assumption that a literary approach is more important. This book provides an overview of his thesis with considerable textual commentary as well as some responses to critics. Early Christians were concerned to remember Jesus and his sayings and to pass this on in an oral tradition. Some writers have argued that the diverging traditions can be explained entirely in literary terms, since the Gospels are in writing, but this fails to account for all the divergences and variations within the synoptic Gospels, which are 'the same but different.' Dunn starts from the point that Jesus made a strong impact on people who met him, which created faith and the wish to share and communicate stories. This in turn creates a living tradition. He is very interesting on the contrast between the synoptic gospels and that of John, which 'provides the basis for full and deeper reflection on what Jesus stood for and achieved.' John 'wove his much more refined fabric from the same stuff as the Synoptics.' This treatment helps bring together the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith by showing a process of gradual evolution.

## There is a God

Antony Flew

HarperOne 2010, 222 pp., \$24.95/ h/b

I met Anthony Flew at a number of conferences in the late 1980s and always enjoyed his rigorous approach to any issue under examination. I have a number of his previous books, and until 2004 his reputation was that of the most articulate and thorough atheist of his time. In this book, he explains how he changed his mind. One of his first important publications was *Theology and Falsification*, a paper presented at a meeting of Oxford University's Socratic Club chaired by CS Lewis. The editor, Roy Abraham Varghese, explains Flew's significance in the history of atheism as quite central - it was both systematic and comprehensive, based on his interpretation of relevant evidence at the time. It is important to note that he still denies the existence of an afterlife, but arrived at a view not dissimilar to Einstein. One of the stages on the way was his agreement that the 'monkey theorem' - that a monkey would eventually be able to write a Shakespearean sonnet - was a load of rubbish. He comes round to the position, shared by many influential scientists, that a rational universe springs from a divine Mind. He also accepts the argument for fine tuning and the origin of the laws of nature in the divine Mind. All this is carefully argued, as one would expect, and in the appendix he considers NT Wright's understanding of Jesus and the origins of Christianity. In this book, one sees none of the vitriol of the new atheists but rather a careful consideration of competing arguments.

## Living Jainism

by Kanti V. Mardia and Aidan D. Rankin (SMN)

Mantra Books Ltd 2013, 214 pp., £12.99, p/b.

A remarkably comprehensive explanation of the Jain philosophy of the interconnectedness of being and its significance for our approach to the environment drawing on the principles of interdependence and reverence for life. Truth is presented as one but also many-sided, opening up interfaith dialogue and an attitude of non-violence relevant to the modern human predicament. The book encourages us to develop relationships based on co-operation, compassion and trust. Jainism is presented as a philosophy to rein in the materialistic and exploitative trends of modern life and overcome our sense of separation from Nature and each other. The book is also hopeful of human possibilities and presents an expanded view of perception and logic. Essential reading for anyone interested in the philosophy and implications of Jainism for our time.

## I Believe

by Eldon Taylor

Hay House Publishers 2013, 205 pp., £10.99, p/b.

Widely endorsed by many leading authors, this is a book centred around different aspects of the importance of belief, and more specifically belief in oneself. It is a powerful book full of illuminating and memorable stories to illustrate the points being made. A striking one concerned the painter Albrecht Dürer, whose father was not well enough off to educate both his sons as artists. So they tossed a coin, and Albrecht went off to art school for four years, where he developed an outstanding reputation while his brother supported him by working in the mines. Coming home after this period, he toasted his brother at a special dinner and said that it was his turn to go and study and that he would support him in his turn. Unfortunately, the hard work in the mine had so deformed his hands that he was unable to pursue an artistic career. It is rumoured that the praying hands by Dürer are in fact those of his brother. The influence of belief is very widespread and determines our attitude to such areas as healing and parapsychology, not to mention the outcome of our life experience. The short chapters cover themes like integrity, identity, suffering, detachment, enlightenment, goals, intuition, balance, peace and mortality. At the end of each chapter is a short section for personal reflection and there are some excellent quotations at the beginning. This is a book to use over a period of time and is worth purchasing for the stories alone.

## The Sovereignty of Good

by Iris Murdoch

Routledge 1970, 105 pp., £11.99, p/b.

This new edition contains an introduction by Mary Midgley, who was an exact contemporary of Iris Murdoch at Oxford during the war. She likens the text to CS Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*, which is also a debunking of the reductive ideas of mainstream culture that one also finds reflected in the personalities of heroes in contemporary novels. There are three essays on Perfection, God and Good, and the sovereignty of Good over other ethical concepts. They are lucid and erudite disquisitions accessible to the more informed general reader. Murdoch transcended the usual restrictions of Oxford philosophy by including existentialism. At the beginning of her third essay, she makes the interesting remark that the development of consciousness in human beings is inseparably connected with the use of metaphors, especially space, movement and vision. As Mary observes, defence of the good is unfashionable, but it is well worth revisiting and more satisfactory than many of the substitutes proposed since then.

## Ripening Time

by Sherry Ruth Anderson

Changemaker Books 2013, 162 pp., £8.99, p/b.

Some readers may remember Sherry Anderson as the co-author of *The Cultural Creatives* with Paul Ray. Here she writes reflectively on the process of ageing with grace as she looks back on her own life in her early 70s and forwards to the harvest implied. She weaves her own story and those of others into an engaging narrative that includes some of her travels and conferences. The structure of the book reflects the process of life and maturation itself. We need to clear obstacles, cultivate certain qualities, become ripe and reap the harvest. As Rilke suggests, the important thing is to live the questions, especially relating to being shaped and transformed by our own experience. Although written mainly from a feminine perspective, her husband Paul makes frequent appearances in the narrative. Life unfurls as an adventure at any age and it is important to question traditional beliefs about ageing in the process. Being becomes more important than doing and having, and one of the tasks of the elder is to become a healing and loving presence. I have met very few sweet and ripe individuals in my time, but their very presence is a blessing and a precious gift. One very good piece of advice comes from an 80-year-old woman who said that it is important to contact the depth in ourselves and find our connection with the universal ground. The result of all this can be what she calls a wholehearted humanness. The book provides many insightful pointers towards this state.

## A Seeker's Guide To a Life Worth Living

by Jili Hamilton

O Books 2013, 208 pp., £12.99, p/b.

This is a series of accessible articles on spiritual topics in five sections: abundance, positive mindset, a matter of choice, roots and belief. The contents give a very good idea of what to expect and the book provides practical wisdom and encouragement derived from extensive life experience. One of the author's friends said to her that if when she died she had given back more in life than she had taken, then she would have lived a good life. Some sections are underpinned by patterns like the law of attraction and synchronicity based on energy while others reflect insights that the author has come to realise to be true, for instance 'this too will pass.' There are many engaging stories and the format makes the book suitable for dipping in and out of.

## Meditation with Children

by Laurence Freeman

Alban Books Ltd 2013, 68 pp., £9.99, p/b.

This small book by Laurence Freeman and associates introduces the teaching on meditation to children, whom they have found can be naturally present in the moment and thus capable of the prayer of the heart. In our extroverted society,

this kind of practice can enable the recovery of spiritual balance, in this case within the Christian tradition and in the context of a community. It provides a way of growing our humanity and learning to be as well as to do. It has the great advantage of simplicity and can be practised anywhere. A valuable reminder of the importance of meditation and its potential for engendering inner transformation.

**The Metaphysics of Ping Pong**

**by Guido Mina Di Sospiro**

*Yellow Jersey Press 2013, 231 pp., £12.99, p/b.*

This brilliant and highly entertaining book is ping pong's answer to *Zen and the Art of Motor Cycle Maintenance* which I read in the 1970s and which may be familiar some readers. It turns out in the prelude that the author is a friend of Rupert Sheldrake, whom I discovered from the book is a keen player himself! I can just imagine their metaphysical conversations about non-Euclidean geometry reflected in the subtitle of 'table tennis as a journey of self-discovery and the spinning ball as our planet Earth.' The lively narrative of matches with all kinds of surprising characters is interspersed with metaphysical reflection drawing from Plato and Aristotle, the I Ching and Sun Tzu's war tactics (very necessary in some of the more challenging encounters) and Jung's shadow. There is also some fascinating background about the history of the game and the rise of Oriental players with the advent of a new kind of bat in the 1950s. Other themes include initiation, the role of the teacher and the parallels between the game and life. The final chapter describes an epic match only just won in the final game. The game's greatest experiments are invariably practitioners of the Way, trying to keep themselves in the flow at all times. Enthusiastic players of the game will find a treasure trove of insights here.

**Myth and Meaning**

**by Claude Levi-Strauss**

*Routledge 1978, 48 pp., £11.99, p/b.*

Reissued under the Great Minds series, this book constitutes the 1977 Massey Lectures and gives a useful overview of Lévi-Strauss's thought also based on a number of interview questions explained in this edition. They deal with questions of the nature of thought and explain the background and development of his structuralism. He characterises the nature of 'primitive' thought by a heightened sensual awareness of sounds, textures, tastes and smells in the natural environment; also by an attempt to formulate a total understanding of the world. Science has rejected the senses and based its knowledge on quantification, mathematics and experimentation - its methods are reductionist or structuralist. He does not believe it is possible to conceive of meaning without order. The final lecture explains his views on myth and music, and the reader discovers that he had originally wanted to be a composer.

**The Undiscovered Self**

**by Carl Gustav Jung**

*Routledge 1957, 79 pp., £11.99, p/b.*

The foreword to this edition is written by the editor of *The Red Book* and places this work in the context of Jung's thought. It is one of his most important essays and still well worth reading 50 years on. It discusses the plight of the individual in modern society, religion as a counterbalance to mass mindedness, self-knowledge and its meaning. The individual is a repository of consciousness and deeper understanding unavailable to the collective. This is especially important in such an extroverted society where we are distracted from distraction by distraction. Jung's interest is in the inner man, who has to be well organised in his individuality to withstand social and ideological pressures. Moreover, it is crucial to understand the hidden dimensions of the psyche in terms of the shadow and the feminine. The individual human being 'is that infinitesimal unit on whom the world depends, and in whom, if we read the meaning of the Christian message aright, even God seeks his goal.'

**On Dialogue**

**by David Bohm**

*Routledge 1996, 114 pp., £11.99, p/b.*

This is perhaps surprising but very welcome choice in the Great Minds series - many readers of Bohm will be familiar with this concept and may even have read the book and participated in the process. Members can consult the tapes of the meeting with him dating back to the late 1980s. The introduction by Dean Rickles of the University of Sydney explains how this was fascinated by Bohm's insistence on the importance of these philosophical foundations of physics, a question that applied particularly to the interpretation of quantum mechanics. Bohm's approach does justice to both the physics and the philosophy, and has been unjustifiably neglected by the physics community on the recommendation of Robert Oppenheimer. Bohm was interested in the nature and process of thought, unpacking hidden assumptions. Themes explored include communication, dialogue, collective thought, paradox, the observer and the observed and the nature of participatory thought. Adoption of some of these principles would revolutionise international negotiations between fixed positions.

**The Art of Communicating**

**by Thich Nhat Hanh**

*Rider 2013, 166 pp., £10.99, p/b.*

I love the work of Thich Nhat Hanh, a Zen Buddhist monk now in his 80s. He writes with simplicity and directness, applying simple and timeless insights to our current situation. His fundamental message is one of mindfulness, especially mindful breathing that can be practised anywhere and everywhere. The challenge, as practitioners will recognise, is maintaining this sense of awareness for more than a few moments as I was attempting in my walk with the dogs only this afternoon. The book begins with chapter on communicating with oneself, then with others. The author offers six mantras of loving speech, advice on difficulties, the use of mindful communication at work and practices for compassionate communication. In practising compassion, we can lessen the sufferings of others, whether close or distant. The message of mindfulness is particularly important in an age of disembodied digital communication when we can be constantly distracted. It does not take long to become present and listen more deeply. He points out that as we connect with ourselves, we can begin connecting more deeply with other people. Truly understanding ourselves and others and communicating our thoughts and feelings compassionately could not be more important, and this book can be highly recommended as part of your contemplative reading for 2014.

**The Karma of Everyday Life**

**by David Lacey**

*Iff Books 2013, 146 pp., £9.99, p/b.*

Written by an oil engineer with an interest in Western and Eastern philosophy, this book explores karma through an exchange of letters with an Indian doctor, whom the author had met as a result of an accident while visiting the country. He begins by outlining a recognisable 'standard model' of karma and uses the rest of the book to explore aspects of this picture in more detail, bringing in the research of Ian Stevenson, Raymond Moody and Brian Weiss as a way of interfacing between science and spiritual philosophy. Dr Ramana came from a Brahmin family and is deeply versed in Indian philosophy, which means that he is able to give a standard response to the various questions raised by the author. The fact that Western philosophy has no contemplative tradition is seen as a fatal flaw since these thinkers look to the outside for all their solutions. His writing is wonderfully idiomatic and some of his sentences go on for a whole paragraph.

During the course of their exchange, the author takes up meditation and notices a gradual change in his state of mind. The Indian understanding tends to be more impersonal than the Western, and there are circumstances when karmic explanations can seem rather ad hoc, especially in the case of suffering children and the author's cousin Mark, who was killed in action in the Iraq war. This leads to more general reflections on human nature in relation to war. He comes round to the view

that, in a general sense, we create our reality both individually and collectively, although the mystery still remains. The last chapter describes his visit to India, hoping to meet up again with Dr Ramana after their years of correspondence. Suddenly he encounters him and receives the wonderful advice 'that everything is so simple: just be kind to people. That is all. That is everything. Be kind.' He then disappeared into the crowd and the author cannot find him. Later, he visits the hospital where he had worked, and finds that that doctor had died the week before. Nevertheless, he was there to greet his friend, albeit at the intersection with another dimension. This makes a fitting postscript to an engaging cross-cultural dialogue.

**Leap to Freedom**

**by Devrah Laval**

*O Books 2013, 179 pp., £11.99, p/b.*

This interesting book would have been better without including in the subtitle the word quantum referring to 'quantum guilt' based on vague analogy with quantum physics - there is also 'quantum forgiveness' and the more common quantum leap, a more legitimate phrase. The author is quite right that many of us are trapped to some degree with guilt, embedded as it is in Christian theology where it is allied to punishment. Her psychological analysis is spot on as is her emphasis on a sense of separation from our source as the fundamental factor, which she describes in terms of metaphysical guilt. It is not actually possible to split off entirely from God even if we remain unaware the fact. This leads to a duality of self and other as well as body and soul. Ramakrishna gives the very good advice that 'the more you focus on sin, the more you become a sinner. The more you focus on God, then you become one with That.'

The basic argument is the Platonic and Hindu view that we are divine sparks imprisoned in a tunic of flesh and that the part of us that is one with God has no sin. However, from a sensory point of view, it looks like only the physical world is real, which is, spiritually speaking, an illusion (*maya*). There are quite a few references to the non-dual literature in terms of the doer of action being unreal but at some points this seems to be confused with a deterministic outlook that the whole of existence is already scripted and is being played out within the illusion of time; this view has been overtaken by quantum physics and complexity theory. In non-dual awareness, the divine is the doer, there is no separate self, and everything is mutually arising. At one level there is a return to oneness, but at another we are not separate in the first place and we can surrender to our true identity at any moment.

**Saint Columba**

**by Brian Lacey**

*The Columba Press 2013, 224 pp., £5.99, p/b.*

For anyone looking for a comprehensive account of the life of St Columba, this must be it, disentangling as it does fact from legend insofar as this is possible. The author's doctorate was on the heritage of St Columba (Colum Cille), who is also one of the three patron saints of Ireland. He describes his early life, the founding of the monastery on Iona and gives an interesting description of everyday life. He then moves on to the history of the Abbey, the first lives of the saint and the spread of other Columba and monasteries as well as the cult of St Columba in Europe and the Monastery of the Kells. It is a scholarly but readable work that also corrects the date of his death from 597 to 593, a finding by Dr Daniel McCarthy that he tactfully refrained from publishing until after the centenary celebrations in 1997.

**Letter to a Priest**

**by Simone Weil**

*Routledge 1951, 90 pp., £11.99, p/b.*

Simone Weil was one of the greatest thinkers of the 20th century, but her work is not widely known in English. This edition brings together not only the essay of the title, but also Human Personality. The essay discusses Catholic doctrine and the second her philosophy of affliction. *Letter to a Priest* contains a great deal of original reflection, especially on the relationship between Christianity and Greek philosophy, in which she was deeply versed. She puts forward the interesting

argument that the proof that the content of Christianity existed before Christ is that there has been no noticeable change in human behaviour since that time. Christ wanted his disciples to proclaim the good news and glad tidings rather than theology. The Church cannot be infallible since it is always evolving. The relationship between Christianity and the Empire is deeply problematic in political terms. The thesis of the second essay is that everything impersonal in man is sacred, and nothing else. Impersonality is reached by the practice of a rare form of attention only possible in solitude. Weil thinks at the level of principles rather than personality and insists on the essential importance of supernatural good. One further quote: 'Everything which originates from pure love is lit with the radiance of beauty.'

**Light the Flame**

**by Andrew Harvey**

*Hay House Publishers 2013, 401 pp., £9.99, p/b.*

This is an inspiring collection of 365 short prayers from around the world, one for each day. The greatest sages are included along with some lesser known names and even surprising choices like Voltaire, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky and the little-known French poet Francis Jammes. Andrew himself contributes quite a number of entries, including many inspired by the words of others. Today (December 9) there is Brother Lawrence of the Resurrection with a very short prayer, 'May it not be Your gifts I look for Lord but Yourself, so I can be content with nothing less.' Over the next few days there is Psalm 17, St Bernard, Shantideva and Ramakrishna. Because the prayers are short, they can be memorised. I would have valued and index of names, and it might also have been good to put people's dates where appropriate.

**Food for the Soul**

**by Brian D'Arcy**

*The Columba Press 2013, 253 pp., £12.50, p/b.*

Brian D'Arcy is well-known as a Catholic priest for his newspaper columns and radio broadcasts. This collection is a real gem, full of wisdom and humour. Only this morning, I was recounting one of his stories about an Irish group in Rome, much to the amusement of my Pilates class. It is evident that Pope Francis is a real breath of fresh air and is saying many of the same things that Father Brian was castigated for as recently as 2010. He jokes that the Pope might himself be silenced by the Vatican if he is not careful. There are two or three articles on him, including a commentary by Hans Küng, who has himself been silenced on a previous occasion. Many of the pieces are very short so the book is ideal for dipping into. I was struck by his pieces on Franz Liszt, Oscar Romero, Cardinal Martini and Rabindranath Tagore. He also writes movingly about the late lamented John O'Donohue, surely the most lyrical voice to emerge from Ireland in the last 50 years. Father Brian's writing style is simple and direct, a great deal of pastoral advice as well as spiritual insight. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

**Forgiveness**

**by Iyanla Vanzant**

*Hay House Publishers 2013, 322 pp., £10.99, p/b.*

We all know that forgiveness is important, but how seriously do we take it? This book argues that it is the most important inner work we can do and is a gateway to clarity, vitality and freedom. The author begins by explaining why she thinks forgiveness is critical if we are to release the past and lived fully in the present. It addresses how we think and feel about ourselves and others. She gives a long list of emotional trigger words before explaining the practice, starting from issues of judgement. She herself lost her daughter and it left her emotionally and spiritually depleted as well as stuck in sorrow, grief and rage. In addition to the spiritual work outlined in a process, with prayers and forgiveness statements to fill in, she adds emotional freedom technique tapping instructions. There is an accompanying CD with various meditations, including for stillness and gratitude. The 21 days begin with forgiving oneself, but also deal with forgiving parents, feelings, weaknesses and failures, partners and siblings. It is a transformative book for those who follow it through.

books in brief

books in brief

Beyond the Here and Now

by Lucy O’Hagan

O Books 2013, 193 pp., £11.99, p/b.

This is a book about thriving in an age of change by a psychologist who is also qualified in complementary medicine. The focus is the gap between our existing belief systems and those we need to adopt if we are to become fully co-creative participators in the evolutionary process. She has a vibrational understanding of the human body and human connectedness and a profound understanding of the inner dynamics of life. She discusses the relationship between mind and heart, then, more specifically, the power of thought, emotions, intentions and faith; then the role of grace, intuition, trust and forgiveness in our lives. Each chapter contains some practical guidance and questions relating to the various themes. Her metaphysical framework relates to the existence of a Divine Creative Force operating through life, and she gives readers a clear idea of how we arrived at our present state and where we are going towards living as fully conscious beings, much more aware of our interconnectedness than we have been and aligned with our true creative possibilities. The book has no references and is very much written from the author’s own understanding and insight. As such, it adds to our understanding of the inner aspects of conscious evolution.

Returning to the Lakota Way

by Joseph M. Marshall III

Hay House Publishers 2013, 278 pp., £12.99, p/b.

There is a good deal of interest in indigenous spirituality and what we can learn from native traditions. The subtitle of this book - old values to save a modern world - indicates its content, which is relayed by means of traditional stories applied to contemporary life. The first of these relates to silence through the life story of Slow and especially his relationship with his grandmother Grey Grass. She teaches him that the place of inner silence is an important refuge and can be a key to understanding death and darkness, which modern people also want to avoid. This is not a place to hide from the reality of life but rather a refuge where one faces oneself honestly. Other chapters consider tolerance, faith, patience and wisdom. Towards the end of the book, there is a quotation from a headstone: ‘wisdom travels many roads and knows no boundaries. It is a fleeting gift. Grasp it while you can, for it is not yours to keep, but to use and pass on.’ Reading this book slows one to a different pace and is a reminder of how all our lives are embedded in stories of one kind or another.

Entangled in Darkness - Seeking the Light

by Deborah King

Hay House Publishers 2013, 173 pp., £12.99, h/b.

Like many books of this kind, this one has its origin in the life experience of the author, as she explains in her introduction where she describes an extraordinary mountaineering trip. The intent of the book is to help readers recognise and untangle their personal darkness and therefore increase their ability to live in the light and raise their consciousness as we journey towards the ultimate initiation of death. The process involves bringing hidden feelings into awareness and becoming conscious of our patterns. There is guidance about connecting with the light of the higher self within and a reminder that the need for inner work is constant. Along with other teachers, Deborah stresses the importance of self-forgiveness - we are often simply too hard on ourselves. The book ends with some key advice about living in the light: follow your bliss, don’t give in to fear, keep a gratitude journal, focus on service and find your life purpose, stay connected to Source and your tribe, use reminders and our unique gifts. Good advice in any context.

The Song of Light – Meditations on Lumenarchy

by Henryk Skolimowski (SMN)

H & J Skolimowski 2013, 65 pp., p/b.

Only readers of my review of Henryk’s last book will recognise the term lumenarchy – the rule of light – which will be the topic of a conference in India in November next year. The short format makes for some powerful statements on life and light:

‘All knowledge and all skills

Are forms of seeing,

Including the mystic vision.’

We need to recover our sense of the sacred, we need not only to feel peace but also greatness, tuning into our creative transcendence in an ever restless universe. If we seek for our identity we have not arrived, because, paradoxically, we already ARE what we always wanted to be and yet we are continuously unfolding. We strive to have the vision of eagles rather than moles and to fill ourselves with gratitude. Now in his 80s, Henryk continues to be a wellspring of inspiration and vision, as this small book demonstrates.

Sacred Paths

by Adrian Gibb

Christian Alternative 2013, 150 pp., £9.99, p/b.

This book embodies a novel approach to the subject by bringing together contributors from a variety of spiritual traditions and asking them the same questions about the nature of God, Faith, evil, contemplation and what happens when we die. These traditions include two forms of both Christianity and Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Baha’i and paganism - there is no representative from Hinduism. Interestingly, a good many of the representatives are converts. The intent of the book is to engage fully with each tradition, and celebrate differences as well as similarities. Each contributor proposes and explains the symbol, which is subsequently used to identify their contributions. Sometimes words like faith are not used in all traditions or are understood very differently. I liked the definition that faith is a state of mind and soul that enables you to put your trust in something bigger than yourself. As one might expect, there are various perspectives on evil, not all of which try to reconcile the beneficence of God in classical theodicy. One approach is through the concept of karma. The section on contemplation brings in the experiential aspect, while the last chapter on eschatology shows up considerable contrasts although many contributors take a cyclical view. Given the origin of the book, there is considerable representation from Australia.

PSYCHOLOGY/PARAPSYCHOLOGY

Irreducible Mind

by Edward F Kelly, Emily Williams Kelly, Adam Crabtree, Alan Gauld, Michael Grosso and Bruce Greyson

Rowman & Littlefield, 2010, 800 pp., \$40, p/b.

We reviewed the hardback edition of this book about five years ago. It is one of the most important publications in the field over the last 30 years, and ranks alongside the work of Ian Stevenson in terms of scientific and philosophical rigour. As readers know only too well, current mainstream scientific opinion insists that ‘all aspects of human mind and consciousness are generated by physical processes occurring in brains.’ This volume claims to demonstrate empirically that reductive materialism is not only incomplete but false. They cover current debates in consciousness studies, the seminal work of Myers, psychophysiological influences, memory, NDEs, genius and mystical experience. As a result of these studies, they propose that the range of phenomena is better explained by a ‘transmission’ or ‘filter’ theory as proposed by William James, FCS Schiller, and Henri Bergson at the end of the 19th century. A comprehensive psychology for the 21st-century will have to take these phenomena into account.

Natural and Supernatural

by Brian Inglis (late SMN)

White Crow Books, 1977/2012, 501 pp., £15.99, p/b.

This history of the paranormal from earliest times to 1914 was very well received when it first came out, including by Bernard Levin and his friend Arthur Koestler, who described it as scholarly and readable. In the introduction, his son points out that his writings indirectly gave rise to the modern sceptical movement including CSICOP in 1976, and he had a vigorous correspondence with many sceptics. Brian surveys tribal communities, early civilisations including Greece and Rome, Christianity, alchemy and witchcraft, second sight, Mesmerism and its history, spiritualism in the late 19th century, including an excellent chapter on Daniel Dunglas Hume. Early psychical research is thoroughly covered, especially with reference to Sir William Crookes, Andrew Lang and Alfred Russel Wallace; also investigations into mediums like Mrs Piper and Eusapia Paladino. In commenting on the relationship between Swedenborg and Kant, he cites a remark from Kant to the effect that he doubts individual cases while still having a certain faith in the whole of them taken together. His reflections around 1900 are of particular interest in that he argues that psychical research as a scientific discipline had somewhat lost its way, spiritualism was discredited in the eyes of scientists and psychologists apart from William James were not that interested. In the last chapter, Inglis considers sceptical reactions more generally, including generalised fraud and hallucination, which have become a stock in trade - the phenomenal accumulation of facts was not and still is not sufficient to convince those whose minds are already made up.

Coincidence

by Brian Inglis

White Crow Books 1990/2012, 229 pp., £11.99, p/b.

The key question here is expressed in the subtitle - a matter of chance or synchronicity? The book follows up the earlier work of Arthur Koestler and contains a great many case histories as well as analysis and explanations of various types of coincidence. One of the earliest is Lord Brougham, who is travelling through Sweden in 1799. On arriving at an inn he saw an old student friend of his sitting on the chair on which he had put his clothes while enjoying a bath. He got the distinct impression that his friend had died, and remembered that they had made a pact as students to the effect that whichever of them died first would appear to the other. When he returned to Edinburgh, he found that his friend had indeed died on the date of his appearance. Brougham himself decided that it must have been a dream and a simple coincidence. This illustrates the role of interpretation – in my view, deathbed apparitions, extensively documented since the 1880s, cannot be written off as a chance occurrence like many more trivial instances. Statistics are now invoked to explain how coincidences can be put down to chance, and in some cases this is indeed likely. However, there is a core of cases that make much more sense in terms of an agency of some kind. Readers will have to make up their own mind, but there is plenty of material as a basis for an informed view in this book.

Things You Can Do When You’re Dead

by Tricia J. Robertson

White Crow Books 2013, 147 pp., £11.99, p/b.

Trish Robertson worked for many years with Prof Archie Roy and is a former President of the Scottish Society for Psychical Research. She has a scientific background and is very experienced as a field investigator, from which most of the material in this book is drawn. Investigations are designed to ascertain the facts and integrity of those involved. Once this has been done, interpretation of the implications of the case can be made. The book covers apparitions, poltergeist activity, hybrid cases involving both of these phenomena, drop-in communicators, mediumship, reincarnation and paranormal healing - in other words a very good range of original case material. One of the apparitions involved an airline pilot meeting and talking to a former colleague at Glasgow airport and remarking that he seemed to have lost a lot of weight. He had died a few days before, and, as it happened, his coffin was

passing through the airport at just that time. Similar cases have been documented for over 100 years. There is also a very interesting reincarnation case involving a boy insisting that he had a family in Barra and who recognised the house when he was eventually taken there. At the end of the book, she cautiously sums up the evidence and implications, concluding that we should ask how we can progress our understanding of these matters if they indeed cannot be explained ‘normally.’ This is a very down to earth and readable book, especially for those new to the subject, but experienced investigators will be fascinated by the new material presented.

The Writings of Ivor Browne (SMN)

by Ivor Browne

Atrium 2013, 570pp., £20, h/b.

Dr Julian Candy writes: The collected publications and talks of an eminent Irish psychiatrist might be expected to confine its appeal to fellow professionals. The sub-title to this weighty volume provides a hint that it may speak to a wider audience: *Steps Along the Road: the Evolution of a Slow Learner*. It reflects the life work of an independent, discriminating, at times rebellious yet humble mind. Forty-one papers and talks are each briefly introduced by their common author. Topics range from detailed technical guidance, (*The Management of the Acute Withdrawal Phase in Alcoholism*) through thoughtful discussion of the role of psychiatry within society (*Guided Evolution of a Community Mental Health Service*) to philosophy and spirituality (*Suffering and the Growth of Love*). Along the way we encounter pieces on ECT, on psychotherapy, on the closure of the large mental hospitals, on the family, on farming, on group therapy. And on page 403 we find *Breaking the Mould: Spirituality and New Developments in Science and the Psychology of Consciousness*, a remarkably succinct and up-to-date treatment of this key topic which contains references to contributions at SMN conferences. Overall an excellent celebration of an intensely humane and productive professional life.

Self Power

by Deepak Chopra

Rider 2013, 203 pp., £7.99, p/b.

This relatively short book is about spiritual solutions to life’s greatest challenges covering the broad areas of relationships, health and wellbeing, success and personal growth. It is exceptionally well organised in terms of contents, subdivisions and summaries at the end of each chapter. A spiritual solution involves the expansion of awareness and understanding and more especially our perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, expectations and feelings. In each of the four areas considered in detail, Deepak analyses the factors involved and makes broad recommendations about the kind of attitudes and actions that can be taken. The middle section of the book consists of answers to individual letters sent to him, in which readers will recognise their own issues. The last part is about creating your own solutions based on an understanding of these workings of consciousness with its intrinsic creative and balancing capacities. There is guidance about how to awaken your deep awareness and indications of seven levels of illusion with their corresponding problems. At one end one has problems associated with conformity and at the other with being a visionary. One of the most important points is aligning oneself with one’s true purpose on the journey towards unity consciousness. The book is full of deep practical wisdom derived from a lifetime of experience and reflection.

Changing Course

by Neil Francis

Hay House Publishers 2013, 221 pp., £12.99, p/b.

This wonderful book tells the inspiring story of the author, who until 2006 was the CEO of a successful Internet company. He had a deep vein thrombosis in his leg and subsequently a stroke while on holiday in Arran. This brought his business career to an abrupt halt and he spent the next period gradually recovering his faculties. His wife suggested that he try caddying at his local golf club in North Berwick, and this proved a fascinating introduction to many wealthy people for

books in brief

books in brief



whom he carried bags around the course. Naturally, Neil was not your average caddie in terms of his business experience, so fellow players opened up to him and shared insights about their own success. The result is an inspirational book, and not only for golfers, although I have just shared this information in an email with golfing friends, recommending them buy themselves the book for Christmas.

The 25 chapters are divided into a number of sections discussing the foundations, mindset, traps, discoveries and lifestyle. Each draws on the story of a particular visitor and generalises this to benefit the reader. For instance, does your work make you want to jump out of bed in the morning? Are you really excited and passionate about it? One striking story concerned Jake, who, in the middle of the round, went over to three green keepers and spontaneously gave them £30 as a token of appreciation for their fantastic work. You can imagine how surprised they were at this gesture. Another golfer called Scott was a scratch player who was a surgeon in a New York hospital and on the board of the leading art organisation, which meant he was combining his golf trip with a visit to the Edinburgh Festival - his insight was that there are in fact 24 hours in a day rather than 7.5 and that efficient time management can enable you to achieve a great deal. Whether you are a golfer or not, I urge you to read this inspirational and hugely enjoyable book.

Multidimensional Evolution

by Kim McCaul

6th Books 2013, 204 pp., £12.99, p/b.

This book is a personal exploration of the nature of consciousness, reminding readers that we are all in fact multidimensional beings and that life is a multidimensional experience. The author recounts a good deal of intense spiritual and psychic experience and the lessons learned from his three teachers, an Indonesian who ran a meditation centre, the Brazilian Waldo Vieira (whose work on out of body experiences may be familiar) and, most extraordinarily, Leia, a ‘walk-in’ who took over the body of another young woman. This may sound incredible, but the rationale behind it was apparently to demonstrate an experience of someone without karma - a fresh consciousness - with direct access to universal consciousness and the Akashic record. She is apparently guided by a group of highly evolved beings. She sees people as moving bodies of energy and has simultaneous perception of nonphysical entities. She had a healing presence such that people would feel a stream of love. One development session involved a collective movement of energy around a group in which people gradually lost the sense of separate identity. She lived at the interface between creative and destructive forces and regarded humanity as an experiment gone rather wrong. Later on, she explains how we all have invisible helpers who try to keep us on track with our individual existential programmes. This is a mind-stretching book offering many insights on the spiritual journey.

Beyond Happiness

by Dr Frank J. Kinslow

Hay House Publishers 2012, 297 pp., £10.99, p/b.

What is beyond happiness? The author's answer is inner peace, which can be attained by reaching pure awareness - observing without interfering - beyond the normal activity of the mind. This is what spiritual traditions call the Self, the I Am. In order to shift perception and remove suffering we need to realise that life is harmony and the world is not as we see it. There is universality beyond individuality and the attempt to control life. Our circumstances are not the same as our problems, which are inherently mental and emotional - humans create problems, but the basic problem is the mind itself. The author draws inspiration from David Bohm, who realised that our problems arise from the nature of thought itself and tried to tackle things at their root through a process of dialogue. It is interesting that author, like Devrah Laval above, also ends up equating non-duality with genetic and environmental determinism – surely the pure awareness of witness is beyond this philosophical category. Having said this, the book contains a great deal of wise practical guidance.

The Book of Affirmations

by Noah St. John

Hay House Publishers 2013, 223 pp., £12.99, p/b.

I am sure you won't have heard of the word ‘affirmation’, but it is a very useful invention. This book goes back to an experience by the author in 1997 when he suddenly realised why all the affirmations he had been using until that point were not working: this was because there was a belief gap between the affirmation and his current perceived reality. His critical insight was that we can use the intrinsic problem-solving orientation of the brain by posing questions in an empowering way that immediately sets the brain off in a positive direction. Disempowering questions have the opposite effect and keep people in the present situation. The four steps of the process are asking, affirming, accepting and acting. The method can be applied to all important areas of life, which the author does in the third part where he lists proposed affirmations for areas such as health, self-confidence, money, relationships, family, habits and spirituality. Once we have clarified exactly what we want in these different areas, we can tailor the affirmations accordingly. The book is peppered with success stories from people who have used the method and who were struggling before and this work has been endorsed by the likes of Jack Canfield, John Gray and Stephen Covey. Well worth working with.

FUTURE STUDIES/ECONOMICS/ ECOLOGY

In Defence of Life

by Julian Day Rose

Earth Books 2013, 161 pp., £11.95, p/b.

Subtitled ‘Essays on a Radical Reworking of Green Wisdom’ this passionate and informative book is the fruit of 40 years of research and practice as a farmer. Interestingly, Sir Julian also trained as an actor, which gives him a special insight into how best to convey important messages. He writes that many pieces originated in his response to blocks in the road, commenting that ‘we live in a compartmentalised culture that stifles holistic awareness and represses the true spirit of humanity.’ This reflects an equally impoverished monoculture than damages both the landscape and the health of the planet, including ourselves. There is an intrinsic connection between food, landscape and culture, which we need to rediscover. Julian has been inspired by EF Schumacher and one of his important ideas is the Proximity Principle (he converted his family farm to organic in 1975), which we are now seeing in the proliferation of local farm shops. He is politically astute in understanding the machinations of food and agriculture multinationals and the system that they are trying to impose on humanity for their own profit. For personal reasons, he was specifically involved in the battle to save local farming in Poland, and has some revealing insights into EU agriculture policy. In a country of high unemployment, it is a crime to scale up agriculture and move 1 million people into the cities where there is already not enough to do. He urges us to break the cult of passivity and wonders why the revolution of consciousness has not already happened. Too many of us have swallowed the standard propaganda-fed status quo recipe for life, but this is increasingly being called into question. Recent events like the GMO Summit organised by the Food Revolution Network will help galvanise awareness and lead us in the direction recommended by this powerful book.

10 Billion

Stephen Emmott

Penguin 2013, 196 pp., £6.99, p/b

This authoritative but controversial book about the future relationship between humans and the Earth created quite a stir when it came out in the summer. Part of the reason is the prestige and credentials of the author who is Head of Computational Science at Microsoft Research. The tone of the book is direct and uncompromising as he leads the reader through to a series of trends relating to population, agriculture, transport, water, biodiversity, species extinction, fisheries and more. He highlights meat production as a particular concern

intensifying pressure on food production and land use, especially when demand is likely to double by 2050. Even now, 1 billion people are living in conditions of extreme water shortage, and some of this water is being unsustainably drawn from aquifers. Moreover, climate change, soil degradation and water stress will all tend to drive down production. The author sees two possible future options: technologising our way out of the situation and radical behaviour change. In the first place he sees five possibilities, namely green energy, nuclear power, desalination, geo-engineering and a second Green Revolution. He discusses each of these in turn but does not see the requisite action taking place, although he seems unaware that some geo-engineering is already being attempted. As for the Green Revolution, he sees it as a way of buying extra food through energy and chemicals. Voluntary behaviour change in terms of radically reducing consumption seems equally unlikely given our existing short-term economic and political systems. Most major global initiatives have failed and the pressure for business as usual is immense. His conclusion is that we are in a situation of unprecedented emergency, but we are not prepared collectively to do anything radical about it - hence the pessimistic view that ‘we’re fucked.’ It is true that the momentum and scale of the main drivers is enormous, but there is equally a trend towards localisation and small-scale and cultural movements like Thrive – the film has been seen by over 20 million people in the last two years. If we are to change, pressure will need to come from below but we may be too complacent to move out of our comfort zones - I readily to admit that the same applies to me. We in Europe are not yet on the front line, but we may be one day.

Mankind's Last Chance

by Richard Poole

O Books 2013, 195 pp., £12.99, p/b.

The author brings his unusual experience as a humanitarian worker to the discussion of the current state of western civilisation, arguing for a moral reawakening and renewed commitment to the common good through a spiritual transformation prompted by the universal truths of religion. He asks where we have gone wrong, what we are dealing with and where we are now before proposing a solution based on the transformative power of religion, specifically the Baha’i faith, which only becomes fully apparent at the end of the book. One interesting aspect is the very different attitude of children in Africa who have a very distinctive and rooted sense of identity. Another important feature of the book is the author's own mystical experience dating back some years. He sees religious leaders and prophets as major drivers of social change and highlights some characteristics of social decline in our society, extremes of which he has witnessed in his work. He overstates his case in arguing that all progress originates in religion, which can be as regressive as it is progressive, and there are certainly other universal approaches than the Baha’i, whose teaching is explained in some detail.

The No-Growth Imperative

by Gabor Zovanyi

Earthscan Ltd 2013, 231 pp., £22.99, p/b.

This is one of the most radical books to come out of the new economics. It is about creating sustainable communities under ecological limits to growth and faces our situation in an uncompromising manner. Growth is so endemic in our political and economic discourse that it is almost unthinkable to propose a steady state economy. The overall human impact on the planet has been exponential in terms of numbers and consumption, and the author argues that eco-efficiency and smart growth are also unsustainable; the book also draws on the model of local communities as a driver of transformation. The object is to bring the human enterprise back into balance with the ecological capabilities of the planet's ecosystems. This means thinking more in terms of cycles than linear progression. At the end, as a counterpoint to much ecological writing, the author proposes 10 difficult personal actions needed to save the world, including ecologically responsible childbearing, shifting from private to public transport, eating much lower on the food chain and becoming (a new word for me) a locavore. This will not make popular reading, but it is a bracing reminder of the need for a radical approach.

Bleating Hearts

by Mark Hawthorne

Changemaker Books 2013, 624 pp., £18.99, p/b.

Subtitled ‘the hidden world of animal suffering’, this is a book of immense scope, as comprehensive as it is hard-hitting and disturbing. It is the sequel to the author's previous practical guide to animal activism and raises profound ethical issues about the relationship between humans and animals. As one might expect, it has been widely and unstintingly praised by other writers in the field and is a ‘must read for anyone who cares about animals, humanity or justice.’ Although the book begins with animals used for food, it covers a vast range of issues including fashion, animal testing, the persecution of wild animals, animals used in sport and entertainment, animals used as sacrificial victims and in art, working animals and sexual assault on animals. Each chapter contains a wealth of detail and a resource section at the end telling people what they can do if they wanted to take action. Readers will be amazed at the diversity of initiatives flagged up. Some issues like the illicit trade in ivory have been exacerbated by extinctions and consequent rising prices. In the late 1960s, ivory was \$5.50 a kilo, rising to \$300 20 years later. Animal testing is a highly contentious issue and the current tally of animals used in one year is over 115 million. The final chapter brings together six activist authors to engage with some profound questions relating to animal suffering and the lack of concern then the public at large. Most of the experts think that things are getting better, but there is a long way to go and books like this can help raise awareness. There are 100 pages of notes at the end, and it is to be hoped that the author might consider a shorter version for people with less stamina than himself.

End This Depression Now!

by Paul Krugman

John Wiley & Sons Ltd 2013, 259 pp., £9.99, p/b.

Paul Krugman received the Nobel Prize for economics in 2008, and he is a professor of economics at Princeton. The title of the book implies that he has a way of ending the depression and in this respect he is an unashamed Keynesian, arguing that a serious burst of government spending is the only way to jumpstart the economy. He takes the view that the Obama stimulus was too small, and yet conventional economic thinking concluded that it had not worked even though some \$787 billion was involved. Keynes maintained that the boom, not the slump, is the time for austerity since cutting demand in a recession only causes a further contraction. A central insight is that your spending is my income and my income is your spending, meaning that spending is precisely what creates income elsewhere. Instead of government spending, there has been quantitative easing, which has put money into the banks who have not passed it on, but rather channelled it into the stock market and increased their own reserves. This does not create demand but pushes interest rates down to zero. Because of the housing crash, zero was not low enough and the result is a liquidity trap where there is no cost to holding more cash while overall demand remains too low.

At this point, Krugman brings in the thought of Hyman Minsky who hypothesised that rising leverage in banks eventually leads to financial instability, and the whole house of cards comes down. So far as the behaviour of banks is concerned, deregulation encouraged risk-taking rather than efficiency, leading to a situation of the survival of the most reckless, which was bound to end in disaster. The extensive historical analysis throws a good deal of light on our current situation. This is exacerbated by rising debt levels, much of which is the direct result of the 2008 financial meltdown (although, he argues, not in the case of Greece). An initial stimulus by government may create further debt in the short-term, but will bring the level down in the medium term owing to enhanced economic activity. Cutting spending puts the economy into a liquidity trap in spite of very low interest rates. Although writing primarily from the US standpoint, Krugman devotes some space to Europe, and in particular to the UK, where he uses the term Austerians. He argues that Cameron has engaged in unforced austerity, although George Osborne would respond that he was under pressure from credit rating agencies to act responsibly. Business confidence fell abruptly, along with spending, which is only just beginning to recover,

but unemployment has a long way to go to return to pre-2008 levels. In the short term, Krugman's argument makes a lot of sense, but it does not address the externalities of economic growth and the environmental crisis that it has helped to bring about along with other factors mentioned in my review of 10 Billion above.

### **The Story of the Fly**

by Jason Drew and Justine Joseph

*Cheviot Publishing 2012, 173 pp., £9.99, p/b*

Since 2009, Jason has been developing a new form of protein for animal feed based on fly larvae that also recycles waste nutrients and potentially saves fish becoming fishmeal. We collaborated on his first book, *The Protein Crunch*, to which the development of Magmeal is a practical response. Our thesis was that more people are eating more protein and that sooner or later will lead to severe shortages. Jason describes how innovative ideas can create businesses making a contribution towards sustainability, and the challenges in developing a new industrial process. Most of the book, however, tells the extraordinary story of the fly, which is both a friend and an enemy to humans. We make war on insects, but maggots have historically played an important role in cleaning wounds. There is an entertaining chapter entitled seven wonders of the fly giving details of their anatomy and the extraordinary phenomenon of landing and walking on the ceiling, which Bertrand Russell thought a good argument for the special nature of flies should there be a theological fly thinking about the existence of a Supreme Fly. It turns out that leg rubbing is simply a form of cleaning. The aerodynamics of flies are extraordinary and few people will know that flies have been sent into space. The final chapter explains in more detail the possibility of flies making a substantial contribution to protein meal eaten by monogastric farm animals. As mentioned above, this could potentially replace fishmeal and has already been successfully tested on chickens. No one reading this fascinating book will be able to think about flies in the same way again.

### **Hope for Animals and their World**

by Dame Jane Goodall with Thane Maynard and Gail Hudson

*Icon Books 2010, 392 pp., £17.99, p/b.*

This book delivers on its title by describing efforts all over the world to rescue endangered species and enable their populations to recover. Jane Goodall is famous for her message of hope and travels tirelessly all over the world to support her causes. The current extinction is human induced and has to be reversed equally by human means. Her four reasons for hope are the brilliance of the human mind, the resilience of nature, the energy and commitment of informed young people who are empowered to act, and the indomitable human spirit. Species being brought back from the brink include the red wolf, the California Condor, the American burying beetle, the crested ibis, the Formosan landlocked salmon, the Iberian lynx, the pygmy hog, the short tailed albatross and many others. The section on island birds relates how humans brought other species with them to these islands and how this rapidly changed the existing balance of nature. Sometimes it is therefore necessary to cull these incomers in large numbers in order to preserve indigenous species. At the end of the book, there is a detailed section on what individuals can do with respect to the various species described. You can also support Jane's charities - see [www.janegoodall.org](http://www.janegoodall.org) - as a person, Jane is inspirational in having followed her childhood dreams.

### **Beyond Patriotism, From Truman To Obama**

by James R. Flynn

*Imprint Academic 2012, 234 pp., £14.95, p/b.*

As the title suggests, the thesis of this well-researched book is that a large proportion of the American public has moved beyond patriotism to a post-national view of international affairs, putting the good of humanity in first place. The author sees this as a sign of moral maturity and the outcome of a series of disastrous foreign policy initiatives, beginning in the early 1960s with Vietnam and passing through Afghanistan

and Iraq. There is a background chapter on the histories of the Cold War from both sides and a fascinating account of the power of the US president in making decisions relating to the dropping of the atomic bomb, Korea and the Cuban invasion. Flynn describes the debate around the decision to drop the first atomic bomb both in terms of arguments for and against and also considerations of whether to dropped a demonstration bomb in a sparsely populated area and if it would make any difference if the Japanese realised what was coming. In the event, we know the outcome, but there was much debate and discussion behind the scenes. The Middle East receives detailed treatment, but the one omission that in my view would have reinforced his case enormously is the truth about 9/11 as a false flag operation. The administration managed to use it as a way of reinforcing patriotism, when, for those who take the view that it was an inside job, the event gives rise to a deep cynicism about the intentions of government. I understand that the recent video Dirty Wars reinforces this proposition. Having said that, the author sets out the kind of America that could provide constructive global leadership and still be loved. Let's hope that his vision eventually prevails.

### **Water Security**

by Bruce Lankford

*Routledge 2013, 357 pp., £32.99, p/b.*

I have been keeping an eye on the political and economic implications of water for about 15 years. In my joint book with Jason Drew, *The Protein Crunch*, we devoted a chapter to water and its prospects. This textbook based on a master's course on water security addresses all the key themes in an interdisciplinary fashion, highlighting close linkages between water, food and human security: water security has become a foreign policy issue, especially where resources are shared between countries, as is the case with the River Nile. One of the most useful models in the book is a web of sustainable water security including climate security, national security, water resources security, energy security and food security. One can readily appreciate that a dynamic systems approach is required to manage this kind of complexity, and indeed one of the contributions is specifically devoted to water security for ecosystems in terms of optimum allocation. Other key issues include flooding and pollution, and it is interesting to learn that 1 billion people live in conditions of chronic water shortage, which may demand radical changes in water distribution. The concluding chapters provide many useful policy pointers, reminding the reader that 90% of food-water is under the control of farmers and providing the reader with a useful conceptual framework for governance as well as security.

### **The Maria Thun Biodynamic Calendar 2014**

by Matthias Thun

*Floris Books 2013, 64 pp., £6.99, p/b.*

Apart from the calendar itself, this edition contains comments from various practitioners around Europe on their experience of biodynamic farming and winemaking. In addition, there are some short essays describing visits by the founder, Maria Thun, to various projects and also two pieces on anthroposophical medicine. For those unfamiliar with the calendar, the guide shows optimum days for sowing, cleaning and harvesting plants and crops, as well as working with bees. It comes with a wall chart that can be easily extracted from the book.

### **The Biodynamic Orchard Book**

by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer and Michael Maltas

*Floris Books 1957, 104 pp., £9.99, p/b.*

This is quite a specialist book that also has many useful tips for amateurs. The first part deals with cultivation of fruit trees, berries and shrubs, with some specially useful advice on pruning. For instance, one learns that one should always through to a bud underneath the branch because those on top may grow inwards and affect the shape of tree. The second part is on orchard pest management with a long section on formulas, recipes and chemicals. It is also useful to learn that rotten fruit should not be left under the tree, as this is inclined to become diseased.

### **When Wine Tastes Best 2014**

by Maria & Matthias Thun

*Floris Books 2013, 48 pp., £3.99, p/b.*

This companion volume is now in its third year and is based on the same biodynamic principles. It is now also available as an app on I-Tunes. There are four elements at play, namely flower, leaf, fruit, and root. Fruit and flower days are the best for wine drinking, while leaf and root should be avoided. Interestingly, older wine can be drunk on leaf days. Many wine merchants and supermarkets are already familiar with this approach, and pick suitable days for their tastings. On a more mundane level, it may help one plan the best days for dinner parties.

## **GENERAL**

### **Dissident for Life**

by Koenraad De Wolf

*Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co 2010, 301 pp., \$28, h/b.*

With a foreword by Lord Alton, this book tells the extraordinary story of the Russian Christian campaigner for religious freedom, Alexander Ogorodnikov. His story was better known 25 years ago, but deserves to be re-read now, especially after the very recent death of Nelson Mandela. Bill Clinton, Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher were all touched by his extraordinary courage and persistence. In the 1970s, Ogorodnikov organised an underground movement called the Christian Seminar, which drew the attention of the KGB. They offered him safe exile, but he chose nine years in the Gulag instead. Some of his experiences there were indescribably awful and one can only stand in awe at his resilience of spirit. He wanted to change Russia from inside. Not only did he make a seminal contribution to religious freedom, but he also founded the first free school, the first private shelter for orphans and the first soup kitchen. His life is a witness of his belief, and he wrote in the early days that 'great deeds begin with the making of victims' and that it was a privilege to suffer for Jesus Christ. Human systems are often so obtuse that change can only come about through such remarkable personal dedication and sacrifice, as one saw with Mandela and his colleagues.

### **The Awakening Artist**

by Patrick Howe

*O Books 2013, 249 pp., £10.99, p/b.*

Subtitled 'madness and spiritual awakening in art' this is a wide-ranging study of the relationship between creative and spiritual processes in art. By awakening he means a gradual movement from unconsciousness to consciousness, from egoic disharmony to harmony, which opens the artist to the transcendent and adds a new dimension to the work and to the perception of beauty. The principal idea is that of the One Art Movement embracing the entire scope of human artistic activity. The madness of the subtitle is associated with the activity of the ego (turning other humans into objects), and draws on Steve Taylor's *The Fall*, whereby much of what we consider normal is in fact insane, as Erich Fromm also observed. The eras of ancient art are described through this lens as we move from the age of innocence to that of madness. There is a useful chart with two axes: the horizontal is deep sleep compared with hyper perceptual awareness, while the vertical is madness compared with awakened consciousness. What we call normal lies in the middle, but there is always potential for both vertical and horizontal evolution.

Many artists are used to illustrate the thesis. For instance, Vermeer, whose paintings convey a sense of inner peace and stillness as attributes of the awakening artist. Michelangelo is an interesting mixture of ego and transcendent inspiration. Then there are a number of American artists who are much less familiar to European readers, like George Inness (1825-1894), Mark Tobey (1890 – 1976) and Morris Graves (1910 – 2001). The development of modern art from Impressionism is explored in some detail and the author sees us moving from unconscious suffering to conscious innocence. He describes the phases of the creative journey through curiosity and

chaos to clarity and the relationship of universal intelligence to creative expression. Here he could have mentioned the American artist and philosopher Walter Russell (1871 – 1963) whose output is an exact expression of what he refers to. He describes what it is like to be one with the infinite creative source and the state of joy and delight entailed by this. It also means that extraordinary works can be produced out of this creative flow. The book is a thought-provoking reflection on the spiritual nature of art and artists.

### **Leonardo da Vinci**

by Sigmund Freud

*Routledge 1910, 97 pp., £11.99, p/b.*

This controversial book was first published in 1910 as a psychobiography or pathography of Leonardo, which arguably tells one more about Freud and his theories than it does about Leonardo. Moreover, one of the main points is in fact based on a mistranslation of kite into the German vulture, so that a whole chapter rests on a very dubious foundation. It is interesting that Ernest Jones characterises the book as a 'brilliant example of the way in which knowledge based on the detailed psychoanalysis of living persons can be made use of to throw light on the deeper springs of character in those whose mind is not accessible to direct investigation.' He likens this process to archaeological reconstruction – readers will have to make up their own mind about this characterisation. There are discussions of sexuality, dreams and repression as these relate to Leonardo's creative expression. One particular point made by Freud likens the attitude of his father to him with his own attitude towards his works. The overall result is intriguing if not convincing.

### **African Temples of the Annunaki**

by Michael Tellinger

*Inner Traditions 2012, 227 pp., \$25, p/b.*

This fascinating illustrated book makes a strong case for a relatively advanced civilisation in Southern Africa, from which Egyptian and Sumerian culture later emerged. It is backed up by extensive aerial photographs that show large clusters of circular walls and terraces. These walls are geometrically arranged, suggesting deliberate planetary alignments, as with other early civilisations. The author also speculates that their arrangement may have had something to do with the generation of energy from sound and frequency. Some Egyptian symbols are evidently present such as the ankh and arguably the Sphinx. It seems that a devastating flood wiped out the civilisation but remnants migrated elsewhere. Gold also plays an important part in the origins and development of civilisation. Aerial photography enabled the author to map continuous settlements over thousands of square kilometres between South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe with an average of 3.62 ruins per hectare. At the very least, the extensive photographs show that something very interesting was happening in Southern Africa many thousands of years ago that deserves further systematic investigation. See [www.michaeltellinger.com](http://www.michaeltellinger.com)

### **Temenos Academy Review 2013**

*The Temenos Academy 2013, 262 pp., p/b.*

This annual review is always a feast of interesting material centred around such themes as wisdom, civilisation and tradition, and emphasising the vertical dimensional life. It opens with an essay by the founder, Kathleen Raine, on global unity and the arts, calling for the restoration of the centre to our worldview and insisting that our cultural crisis can only be resolved by the change of philosophical premises. The Dalai Lama contributes an essay on compassion, and there are two other pieces connected with Tibetan Buddhism. There is a substantial contribution on Shakespeare and education and another essay on divine love in early Persian prose. David Cadman remembers John Lane, and there is a striking tribute to John Michell, including some of his paintings, which I have not seen before. In the review section, we find a book on the truth of India and a fascinating account of a conversation with S.H. Nasr on his life and thought. As always, there is some beautiful poetry.

**Neo-Nature**

by Jay Ramsay

*Chrysalis Poetry 2013, 40 pp., £5, p/b. (info@stroudprint.co.uk)*

This striking new collection of Love-Nature poems combines these elements skilfully into evocative and sometimes erotic narrative pieces. I liked the sentence at the beginning that 'he who follows Nature is never out of his Way. Jay is a follower of both love and nature, a lover of life in its many expressions. There is woodland, butterflies, Cornish coastline, swallows, Jupiter and blackberries. Here are a few choice lines:

'Only if the seed relinquishes its shell  
does it become all the seed can be.'

'Only the silence is what we need  
to hear the choir of birdsong all around.'

Poetry is a subtle form of nourishment, and this volume makes a good feast.

**Stargazers' Almanac 2014***Floris Books, 2013, £14.99*

This useful and beautifully produced calendar can be put on your wall to orient you through the year. There are instructions in the front with an overview of the constellations. Then each month has a sky facing north and south with further notes on planets and other objects that can be seen. There is a chart of overhead stars and a note about the BAA campaign for dark skies (that is astronomy rather than airports!).

**Poems**

by Robert A Charman (SMN)

*Self-Published 2013, 37 pp., p/b.*

This short book of poems is divided into two parts, with one part consisting of poems written in the late 1960s, and the other after 2000. They are written in a very distinctive voice on perennial themes of time, love and death. The more recent ones treat many of the themes of our conferences, at which Bob is a regular attendee. One of my favourites is A Neuroscientist Once Opined all about the relationship between brain and mind and remarking that qualia are left out of the picture. Then there is another one entitled Always a Maybe, Always a Doubt about the big questions of life - an enjoyable read.

**Do Dogs Dream?**

by Stanley Coren

*John Wiley & Sons Ltd 2012, 290 pp., £14.99, h/b.*

Stanley Coren is one of the world's leading dog researchers whose career spans nearly 50 years and includes seven books and countless scientific papers. The six parts focus on perception, feeling, communication, learning, puppies and a few other things that your dog might want you to know. They are hugely well-informed and each section contains many questions and answers, usually only 2 to 3 pages with a great deal of scientific information in the background as well as an extensive bibliography at the end. Among the questions answered are items on hearing, sense of smell, taste, recognition in a mirror, dogs who laugh and dream, the meaning of barks and tail wagging, intelligence and even for the number of dogs in the world, which the author estimates at 525 million - of these, over 73 million are in the US and 43 million in Europe, with the UK at 6.8 million. My only quibble was the section on dogs and ESP where the author has swallowed the Richard Wiseman version of his so-called replication of Rupert Sheldrake's dog telepathy experiments. He makes out that Wiseman took precautions not thought of by Rupert including not leaving or returning at a familiar time or in a familiar vehicle. He also makes out that it was only Wiseman who randomised the time of return when this is also an integral part of Rupert's own experiments. He finishes by attributing Rupert's results to confirmation bias! The facts are that Wiseman only did four replications as against over 130 by Rupert and when Rupert analysed the raw data, he found exactly the same pattern as his own research. This is the politics of knowledge.

As it happens, my Labradors have written a book - Have you looked at my [www.lookafteryourhuman.com](http://www.lookafteryourhuman.com)?

**DEATH AND DYING****Making Sense of Death and Immortality**

by Paul Badham

*Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 2013, 86 pp., £9.99, p/b.*

Paul Badham is the creator of the Death and Immortality MA programme at the University of Wales in Lampeter, and has been actively writing about death and dying for over 25 years. In this excellent short book, he writes from a Christian point of view, bridging theology with the findings of modern NDE research. He begins by analysing how scientific and medical advances have changed our understanding of death, moving on to show how immortality and resurrection of central to Christian doctrine and arguing for a dualistic understanding of the relationship between soul and body. He discusses various areas of the philosophy of religion, with a focus on religious experience - he directed the Alister Hardy Religious Experience Research Centre for a number of years. His view on the Resurrection argues for a spiritual body as outlined by St Paul in 1 Corinthians, a view that is consistent with the findings of psychical research. There is an authoritative chapter on NDEs and their interpretation. He advances moral and religious arguments against a belief in hell and discusses concepts of heaven, concluding that 'a strong, living relationship with God includes trusting in the reality of that fellowship against the forces of death.' For Christians with an interest in immortality and others familiar with NDE research but less so with Christian theology, this is surely the most balanced and comprehensive introduction to the field.

**The End of Death**

by Admir Serrano

*6th Books 2012, 166 pp., £11.99, p/b.*

Boldly subtitled 'how near-death experiences prove the afterlife', this book covers a range of phenomena including OBEs, deathbed visions, after death communication and reincarnation. It does not pull any punches and on the first page the author states that he knows that we are immortal, directly from his own experience, which he introduces early in chapter 2. Like Swedenborg, he states that physical death frees us from the bonds of matter, but does not change our essential nature. She combines a knowledge of the literature and integrates this into her own experiences and those of others. The 10 phases of the NDE will be familiar to many readers, and the overall implication is that we need to revise the traditional neurophysiological theory of consciousness, all the more so on the basis of evidence from NDEs in the blind.

The author draws sobering lessons from NDEs during attempted suicide, again observing that suicide does not change the mental state. The chapter on children sends the same message of continuity. Towards the end of the book, Alfred Russel Wallace makes an appearance as the heretic scientist in contrast to Darwin; Wallace also understood the spiritual side of life along with many other distinguished scientists of his generation. For him, man is a duality, death is the separation of this duality and our path is one of progressive evolution. The take-home message of this and many other books on similar topics is that we need to live our lives on the basis of love, learning and practising forgiveness, doing as much good as we can, being compassionate and peaceful. This could be summed up in a question quoted: 'what have you done with your life to show me?' - our encounter with the being of light.



**BASS**  
British Association  
for the Study of Spirituality

Third International Conference of the  
British Association for the Study of Spirituality

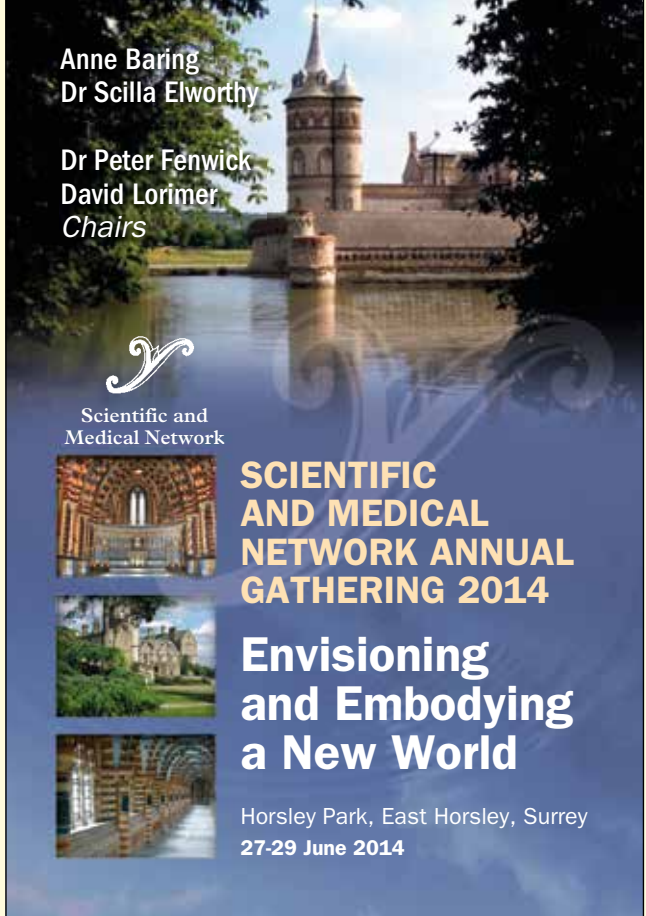
**Spirituality in a Challenging World**  
Monday 19 May–Wednesday 21 May 2014

Ashridge House, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, UK  
(30 minutes from London Euston)

[www.bassspirituality.org.uk](http://www.bassspirituality.org.uk)

**Keynote Speakers**  
Professor Roger Gill (Durham University)  
Professor Carole Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh)  
Professor Margaret Holloway (University of Hull)  
Professor Michael King (University College London)  
Professor John Swinton (University of Aberdeen)

Cost (fully inclusive) £535 (£575 after 15 January 2014)  
To book please go to: <http://www.bassspirituality.org.uk>  
For further information, please contact:  
Georgina Long, BASS Conference Administrator • Email: [georginaatbass@gmail.com](mailto:georginaatbass@gmail.com)



Anne Baring  
Dr Scilla Elworthy

Dr Peter Fenwick  
David Lorimer  
Chairs

Scientific and  
Medical Network

**SCIENTIFIC  
AND MEDICAL  
NETWORK ANNUAL  
GATHERING 2014**

**Envisioning  
and Embodying  
a New World**

Horsley Park, East Horsley, Surrey  
27-29 June 2014



**MYSTICS AND SCIENTISTS 37**

**Consciousness and the  
Experience of Time**

University of Warwick • 4-6 April 2014

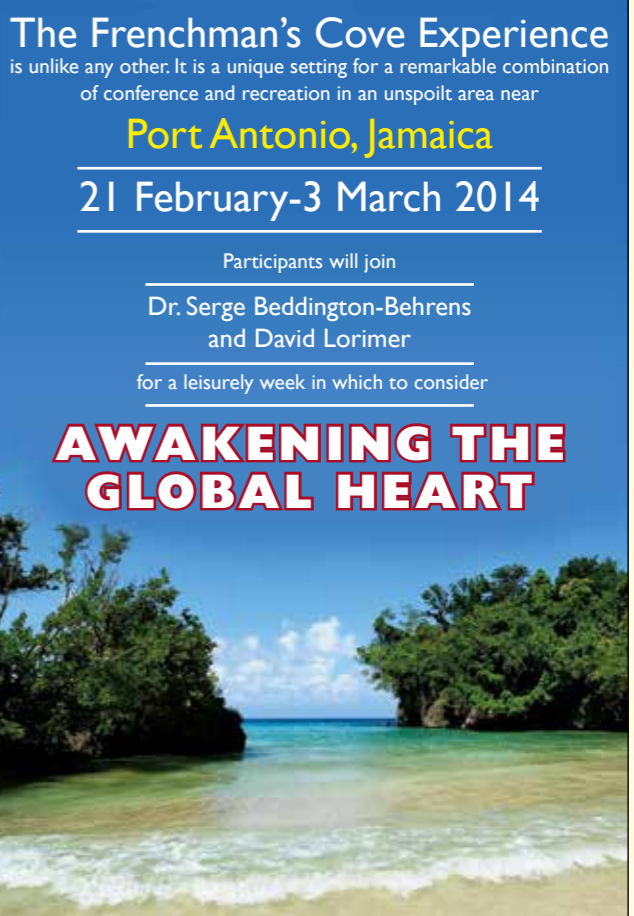
**Speakers:**  
Prof. Jacob Needleman (US)  
Prof. Bernard Carr (France)  
Dr. Natalie Depraz (France)  
Dr. David Luke

**Dr. Barbara Magnani (Italy)**  
Dr. James d'Angelo

**Chairs:**  
Dr. Peter Fenwick  
David Lorimer

Scientific and Medical Network,  
PO Box 11, Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos GL56 0ZF.  
Tel: +44 (0) 1608 652000 Fax: +44 (0) 1608 652001  
Email: [info@scimednet.org](mailto:info@scimednet.org)

[www.scimednet.org](http://www.scimednet.org)



**The Frenchman's Cove Experience**  
is unlike any other. It is a unique setting for a remarkable combination of conference and recreation in an unspoilt area near

**Port Antonio, Jamaica**

**21 February-3 March 2014**

Participants will join  
Dr. Serge Beddington-Behrens  
and David Lorimer  
for a leisure week in which to consider

**AWAKENING THE  
GLOBAL HEART**