

Reports from Local Groups

Friends of the SMN, Auckland – Leo Hobbis +64 9 478 7809

LEO HOBBS writes: In our March and April meetings we adopted the participatory mode of group enquiry advocated by members MAURICE MILES and DOUGLAS KINGSFORD to investigate the nature of sensation and perception. We attempted to follow the methodology whereby members' statements are mirrored to ensure their intended meaning was correctly understood before any new information or comments were expressed. Members provided written accounts of their inputs for collation by a recorder. It is hoped that significant insights could be obtained by tapping the diverse backgrounds and experience of members. The prime question considered was whether a robot or computer might be able to tell us it sees green or recognises something as a flower, and that being so, whether it is actually conscious. Many felt that human behaviour has too many aspects which are beyond a computer, mainly in the areas of creativity, feeling and self-awareness, but also in the degree of complexity achieved over aeons of evolution. Are there special laws of physics for human beings as distinct from machines? The possibility of present physics being incomplete was advanced. Such incompleteness might be expected to relate to the mystery of life. The parapsychological phenomena would be relevant here. Unsurprisingly, it was apparent that we had much to learn in a field where huge research effort is going on.

Our May meeting was devoted to general planning of the remaining programme for the rest of 1999, with a consensus in favour of combining the group enquiry approach with the more familiar style of presentation and discussion, extending the topic to a second meeting where appropriate.

'Healing and Curing-A Compatible Marriage?' was the subject presented by Dr ROBIN KELLY for our June and July meetings. Robin is a past president of the Medical Acupuncture Society (NZ), and combines Eastern, Western and mind-body approaches in his practice. He is currently researching the application of information theory to healing practices. He illustrated various aspects of healing by reference to Larry Dossey's three eras of medicine. During a consultation Robin aims to form a firm bond with a patient. This must not be fudged. He listens to their story no matter how long it takes. This listening achieves 60% of the task. His aim is to discover and stimulate that spark within which can enable self-healing. Acupuncture seems to be most helpful in chronic conditions not responsive to Era 1 (allopathic) medicine, where the disease may have some deeper or more complex origin than suggested by conventional wisdom. Robin has simplified his technique over several years' experience. He tends to regard the needles as a means of communicating with the patient, sometimes relying on touch alone. Acupuncture is not elitist, just a simple technique and less effective than a mother with a baby. It can produce a relaxed state, conducive to healing. Changes in body chemistry are known to occur but other processes seem likely to be present. During a demonstration session at the meeting the subject felt the sensation of being relaxed while a nearby observer, just watching, became aware of series of sensations along a line near his heart. That observer considered himself to be in a very sensitive state having just completed a 10 day course of Vipassana meditation; he also felt strong sensations in the soles of his feet when Robin held a hand over the forearm. This led us to discuss the role of meridians and chakras in the context of acupuncture.

Dutch Group - HERBERT VAN ERKELENS + 31 23 533 1088

HERBERT VAN ERKELENS writes: The Jungian analyst Desiree Calot Jurriëns gave us a glimpse of her inner experiences. During an imagination she was led to her higher Self and to manuscripts that contained the wisdom needed for the coming transition towards the Age of Light. It was so fascinating what she told us that we will investigate further the issue of the Age of Light. According to 'The Pleiadian Agenda' by Barbara Hand Clow our time needs a new cosmology that reminds us of what we already know deep in ourselves.

Swiss Group – KURT DRESSLER +41 1 980 0886

KURT DRESSLER and PETER BINZ write: Our last report contained three unfortunate errors: the co-ordinator's phone number was listed incorrectly, BRUNO RIEK should have been acknowledged as author of the report, and BERTRAND WEISSENBACH should have been quoted "having NO problem accepting phenomena which cannot be placed within the scientific framework ..." instead of "NOW having problem accepting ..."

On May 3rd the Swiss local group luckily had the opportunity to host a seminar with DOROTHY MacLEAN, Co-Founder of the Findhorn Community (www.findhorn.org). The event had been set up by a scientist of the Swiss Institute for Forest, Snow, and Landscape Research to motivate his colleagues to take a new and different view of nature. The Institute paid all expenses but withdrew, at the last minute, permission for the event to take place on its campus. Swiss SMN quickly offered another venue and thus profited from Dorothy's presentation on "Another Approach to Nature," based on her attunement to the essence of the forces of nature and about the importance of big trees. She builds a bridge between the single tree as a part of the forest and its energies for the whole landscape. She shared facts of her life to show how mental openness and awareness helped her to do tasks better. Her experiences helped the audience to recognise an approach to nature by opening a holistic communication link with phenomena of the world. Inspiration thus may become a source for researchers to create useful hypotheses.

On June 20th the Swiss group met with IRMGARD FEDERER MD in order to practice and learn ourselves the methods she had impressively described at our March meeting, reported in the April Review. Trained in inner medicine and psychiatry Irmgard explained how a brain state of fight or flight is expressed in terms of body symptoms. These symptoms, expressed for example in changes in the muscle and skeletal system, have been exactly described by Dr. C. Ferreri, a chiropractor in New York. According to Irmgard these changes synchronize spontaneously if the client involved gets help in thinking adequately. From deprivation research it is well known that development and maturation is possible only if stress signals in mother and child disappear. By giving birth to her second child with Down's syndrome Irmgard begun learning more and more to recognise non-verbal stress signals as such and to find (invent) interactions to dissolve them. She has been practising now for 13 years and developed the following main focuses: searching for personal and collective structures of thinking and the corresponding changes in the muscle system and the metabolic system; the development of interactions for causing the stress symptoms to disappear. Irmgard demonstrated with two spontaneous volunteers how she helps clients to distinguish between patterns of thinking to which the body responds (a) with stress signals or (b) with harmonious feelings, and how awareness of these body responses can guide decision making towards resolution of difficult stress-filled situations like, e.g., in divorce mediation, or in confrontation with grossly unethical behaviour of professional (ex-)colleagues. The session was obviously personally memorable for the two 'volunteers', as well as impressive and helpful for the rest of us. The next meeting is set for second half of Sept or Oct, with

short reports by members on the topics of Jamaica, of the AGM, and of related members' interests.

Guildford Group – DIANA CLIFT 01483 417922

For our May meeting, we were fortunate to have ELIZABETH FENWICK, accompanied by Peter, to talk about the evidence gathered for their latest book *Past Lives*. We had a superb meeting, well attended, a shining example of the Network guidelines in action! Elizabeth described some fascinating case studies suggestive of reincarnation. Particularly interesting were the spontaneous 'memories' of young children, which usually appear among those who are early talkers. One little girl from the age of 18 months recalled a childhood in Victorian England. The details were remarkably accurate e.g. when shown a Victorian bath and asked if her bath had been like that, she commented that hers had had no taps. When Peter and Elizabeth wrote an article for the Daily Mail requesting experiences of past life recall they were swamped with responses. Those emerging from hypnotic regression were not, in the Fenwick's opinion, very good evidence of reincarnation as most were of distinguished lives from well-known cultures (Egyptian pharaohs and the like). Elizabeth commented that, if their survey were representative of the public at large "more people went down with the Titanic than were ever on the ship"! We had an excellent discussion on the possible interpretation of these experiences. Elizabeth herself is not convinced that they are straightforward memories of former lives, partly because of the strong cultural component in the lives recalled. e.g. cultures which believe reincarnation only occurs within the family, only recall lives of relatives etc. A lively and informed discussion ensued in which possible explanations involving spirit possession or accessing the pool of human consciousness were considered.

On July 14th we had hoped to have Professor LISBY MAYER from San Francisco to talk to us but unfortunately she had to cancel her entire trip to Europe for health reasons. Rather than find a replacement speaker at short notice, we decided to have an internal discussion on the subject of Unusual Personal Experiences, as part of a rather more social gathering, starting with a dip in Bronwen Astor's swimming pool for some of us! We had a thoroughly convivial evening with about twenty people, many from outside the Guildford area. Experiences recounted included healings, synchronicities, mystical experience, the power of prayer, dreams and OBEs, so interesting we had difficulty drawing the evening to a close and we realised the value of having some sessions without a formal presentation.

North London Group - RUPERT KINGLAKE TOWER: 0171-435 9730

RUPERT TOWER writes: The North London Group has held three Spring/ Summer meetings which have been both stimulating and enjoyable occasions, and although our numbers have fallen somewhat as members become used to the new calendar in the Network magazine, it has been rewarding to receive some new members into the SMN "family".

On April 8th DAVID LORIMER spoke on "Organ Transplants and the Nature of Memory". Using the books on organ transplants by Claire Sylvia and Paul Pearsall, David raised questions about the nature of memory in relation to cells and organs. It appears that memories and even temperamental characteristics can be transferred via the organ transplant, which makes one wonder how this might come about. A specially interesting case concerned a man who received the heart of another man who himself received a total heart-lung transplant. Thus both donor and recipient were still alive. The circumstantial

evidence is most intriguing, but more systematic research is required if firmer conclusions are to be drawn. As it is, the anecdotes we have do suggest fruitful lines of enquiry.

In late May, Dr. ROGER TAYLOR introduced us to the complex work of Dr. KONSTANTIN KOROTKOV in Kirlian photography, and supported this with some of his own work in this field, as well as collecting some raw data in the form of "gas discharge visualisations" elicited from volunteer individuals' fingertips via computerisation. In theory, energy defects in organ systems of the body can be identified according to the image placement representing that particular organ. However, in practice, as Roger emphasised, such relationships can be equivocal, and interpretation of the results tend to be unclear and usually controversial.

For our July meeting, Dr. CRAIG BROWN, a general practitioner and President of the National Federation of Spiritual Healers, outlined the challenges that he faced in attempting to introduce spiritual healing alongside conventional medical intervention in a busy GP practice. The fundamental conflict, as Craig explained, revolved around the differences in medical paradigm. Conventional medicine seeks to categorise, diagnose, eliminate symptoms, and prolong life, whereas spiritual healing focuses on listening, honouring and giving space to the essence of the patient, being, not doing, non-diagnosis and non-attachment to outcomes. Craig demonstrated that "illness surveys" conducted with those patients who had received spiritual healing in conjunction with mainstream primary care showed that these individuals claimed an increase of purpose, meaning, and connection within their lives. Nevertheless, ongoing difficulties remain, most specifically meeting the demands of the medical paradigm - the need for satisfactory, rigorous outcome measures and sceptic persuasion (proof of efficacy) being primary. Craig's recent publication, "Optimum Healing" (Rider Books, 1998, and reviewed in the April issue), explores the hypothesis that physical illness is often the expression of a deeper emotional and spiritual problem, and maintains that five negative attributes underlie all illness: anger, depression, guilt, attachment and worry.

South East London Group – DAVID INGMAN - 01732 461435

At our last meeting Roger Taylor gave a very interesting demonstration of Kirlian photography and some interesting auragraphs were produced.

Oxford Group – NEIL HANCOX – 01235-524534

NEIL HANCOX writes: Six members of the local group met on May 4th in Green College to hear Dr Gerry Bodeker talk about Traditional Medicine - International Developments and Prospects. He began with some statistics indicating the importance of traditional medicine, principally herbalism, in treating sickness, particularly in Arica. While the majority of the people rely on this form of health care government funding goes into Western style medicine for the minority. The treatment of Aids, malaria and tuberculosis, identified by the WHO as among the most serious threats to life in the developing world, by traditional indigenous means, was discussed. Natural remedies are proving effective in dealing with all three, though a cure for Aids is NOT claimed. In some cases pharmaceutical companies have developed drugs based on natural remedies (e.g. quinine) by isolating the most active ingredient from a complex natural mix. Unfortunately the agents responsible for the diseases often adapt rapidly to these drugs, while they do not appear to do so to the natural product. Such behaviour shows that the interactive roles of the different components are not understood.

A problem, which adversely affects traditional medical treatment, is the increasing number of poorly trained practitioners and charlatans. When herbal treatment fails or leads to the death of the patient, it is the method, not the practitioner, who is blamed by Western doctors. A further problem is the influence of Western cultural arrogance - younger people are ceasing to believe in natural remedies (presumably because they think that they do not have a proper scientific basis) and so a knowledge of them is dying out.

To tackle these and other problems Gerry and his colleagues are trying to interest governments in traditional ways of healing and to get them to divert significant research funding into the area. Despite the difficulties he is hopeful that they will be successful. Our thanks are due to Gerry Bodeker for a fascinating talk and for answering our questions in the discussion.

Scottish Group – DAVID LORIMER 01333-340492

DAVID LORIMER writes: The Edinburgh Group met to discuss the question of memories associated with organ transplants, particularly those of the heart. About a dozen Members and guests attended and minds were stretched all round. We also arranged a visit to Rosslyn Chapel with Gordon Strachan, an outing that dovetailed nicely with the marriage of two group members, JON RALLS and KAREN McLEOD O'KEEFE.

South West Group – JOHN COSH 01803-863939

JOHN COSH writes: The Spring meeting of the SW members was held in Bogan House, Totnes on 17th April. There were 31 members and guests present, and Anne Bancroft was in the chair.

Our first speaker was BRIAN GOODWIN on the subject of "Living on the Edge of Chaos". The discovery that the mathematical behaviour known as chaos is an ingredient of complex and unpredictable processes such as the weather and turbulence in liquids, has led biologists to wonder if chaos also plays a role in the complex dynamics of living systems. It turns out that a healthy heart has a significant component of disorder that is similar to chaos, mixed in with the regularity of the average heart rate while, paradoxically, certain pathologies of the heart are associated with too much order. This type of observation has given rise to the idea that the best strategy for living in an unpredictable world is to live 'on the edge of chaos', not stuck in any pattern of behaviour but always ready to respond flexibly to new demands, as does a healthy heart. From this perspective, health and creativity are closely related, both involving appropriate but often unexpected responses to novel situations, never getting stuck in fixed patterns of behaviour. Healing is then restoration of this flexibility so that the person can behave with the unpredictable creativity that is a sign of healthy living.

Our second speaker was NICKY PROUVOST on the subject of animal healing. She drew on her experience of the weekly clinic for animals which she started in Totnes in 1994. Although she had no particular contact with animals in childhood, she later discovered that she had a natural empathy with them. She found that by focussing on a feeling of loving concern for an animal, without any form of physical contact, it would respond with calm relaxation, often ending in sleep. In the clinic she seeks to induce this state of healing calmness rather than concentrating on any illness or symptom in the animal. In this way she feels that she is a channel for a spiritual energy from a higher level. The human owner is often more in need of healing than the animal he brings; Nicky has found that an improvement in the attitude of the owner may come about as a result of attending with the animal. Most of her "clients"

are dogs and cats who are domestic pets, but she has also worked with farm animals, birds and even reptiles. An interested discussion followed. Our next meeting will be on Saturday 9th October.

Isle of Wight Group – SONIA BEWICK 01983 868919

SONIA writes: Our activities over the past few months have been wide-ranging and well subscribed.

A full day of experiments into telepathy, triggered by Arthur Ellison's article in a recent issue of 'Network' proved more difficult to conduct and evaluate than had been expected, although the results did indicate what seemed to be an above average success. With the benefit of hindsight we shall probably conduct a further day of experiments but within far stricter and better controlled parameters.

A discussion evening was held with a topic title '*Manhood - Changes for Men*' This was originally to be based on a book review in a recent Cygnus Book Club catalogue, but the discussion soon widened considerably. The books under review proposed that men have a rougher time in everyday life than is generally thought, but this suggestion received mixed responses from our group. Discussion included thoughts on the disadvantages brought about by lack of good fathering; difficulties fathers encountered with father/daughter relationships when the daughters reached puberty and beyond; men as househusbands; and how men were adjusting to the increased influence of, and opportunities made available to, women in management and the professions. One of our members, recently returned from New Zealand, told us of the studies by Lindsay Hazley into Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), with conclusions showing that modern living in artificial environments - predominantly indoor environments behind glass and plastics and with indoor entertainment such as television - compared with a more outdoor existence in earlier decades, suggested that some genetic lines may be struggling as a result, and leading to the greater incidence of SIDS in recent years.

Successful experiments in breeding the tuatara showed that these reptiles when new born had a pineal eye visible under the skin, which becomes covered over with less transparent scales after four to six months. Glass, plastic or other hinderances which prevented direct light reaching the pineal eye of the tuatara resulted in stunted growth, or premature death which followed SIDS characteristics. An interesting article was available which had been published in *New Zealand GP*.

Recently we enjoyed a visit from Rosemary (Ro) Steel who gave a fact packed talk about Kirlian Photography, which detailed not only the technical and historical information about this photographic work, but also showed numerous examples of 'before and after' photographs which related to changed conditions of the subjects being photographed.

The conditions of the subjects included not just clinical problems, but also differing energy levels during menstrual cycles. Ro also quoted examples of how Kirlian Photography had helped in the diagnosing conditions including autism, and manic depression.

There followed two days of workshops when members were able, literally, to take a hands-on involvement. Each members hands were Kirlian photographed at the start of the workshop, and again during the afternoon. Ro explained the significance of the energy patterns brought out in the photographs, and in particular the changes of energy between

the morning and afternoon photographs. A significant part of the workshop involved the Body Logic processes which Ro uses in her work, and her methods of balancing and understanding ones body, and body energies.

During May we enjoyed a truly wonderful visit from Arthur Ellison and his wife. The basis of Arthur's discourse was lucid dreaming, but needless-to-say the easy flow of dialogue which comes automatically when one is in his company, lead us to extended discussion on a wide range of allied topics. As a result of this meeting several members of the group have been enthused into conducting lucid dreaming experiments, and subsequently this has lead us into even further discussions on dream-states, levels of consciousness, and out-of-body experiences.

Wessex Group – JULIAN CANDY 01703 844149

JULIAN CANDY writes: in April and May we departed from our recent pattern and enjoyed contributions from invited speakers. In April Dr Kenneth McAll, author of *Healing the Family Tree*, spoke to us about 'Releasing spirits from people and places'. His experiences in a Japanese internment camp led to the study of psychiatry and a lifetime in the healing ministry. A lucid and challenging presentation, drawing on the experience and wisdom of a remarkable 89 year old. In May we were moved and enriched by an illustrated talk from a friend of Anne Baring's, in whose lovely house we continue to meet. PAMELA, LADY WEDGWOOD is an art historian and spoke on 'The Beauty of Holiness – the Springs of Artistic Innovation'.

This presentation stimulated a well-attended meeting in June in which Anne introduced a discussion about 'Opening to the Visionary Experience'. Then in July we attempted to face up to the elusive yet familiar issue of the Shadow. Again Anne led us into the discussion, which unsurprisingly saw recent events in Kosovo as sadly representative of the destructiveness of the shadow's energy when unacknowledged and unredeemed.

We plan a break in August and September, then in October to discuss 'Conversations with God'.