



# Other Wise

*Your Guide to Inspirational Living*

Issue 7

Autumn - Winter

€ 4

History

Travel

Food

Personal  
Development

Sustainability

Arts

Creativity

Mysticism

Reviews





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“How do we digest, nourish and root ourselves?  
The children without clans need a deeper connection to the  
Earth for the lives they would lead outside of the tradition-  
al village, in a place and time without stories and elders  
to guide them. Modern people are mostly born without  
clan and without village, and we are desperately in need of  
roots, stories and wilderness experiences to bring us back to  
health, to connection and to sustainability”.

From *The Other Side Of The River* by Eila Carrico.

Having read *The Other Side Of The River*, water themes  
gushed and slooshed into my awareness, carrying seed ideas  
and insights. This led me to ponder, how can we live a  
more inspired life, which Carries our Visions, Dreams and  
Hopes and brings them out into the Wider World where  
we seek to be met by others with whom we can share them?  
Inspiration comes from the Latin, *inspirare*, with an  
original meaning which is; to “*Breathe in Spirit.*”

Shamanic people have long known that if they want to  
change the world they engage in perceptual shifts and by  
doing so can transform their relationship to life.  
For example Inca elders would often sit in meditation and  
envision what they wanted to create.  
As the Shamanic teacher and author Alberto Villoldo said  
“True Healing is nothing less than an awakening to a vision  
of our healed nature and the experience of infinity”.

We live in a time when we need to remember to have  
Vision, to create a better place for our children and all our  
relations, so we can truly dream the World into Being...

*Saskia*

OtherWise have switched to a more naturally produced  
paper with less inks used for printing as we strive towards  
lessening our impact on the environment.

We’re also giving our website **[www.otherwise.ie](http://www.otherwise.ie)** a new  
look. Here you’ll soon find many more articles, previously  
published or new: nice photos and artwork from our  
archives, poetry, news and a lot more.

Please visit our website and facebook page to see and  
engage with our online content; comments, shares.  
Help to spread the Vision of OtherWise of a more  
Inspired World.

*Jano*



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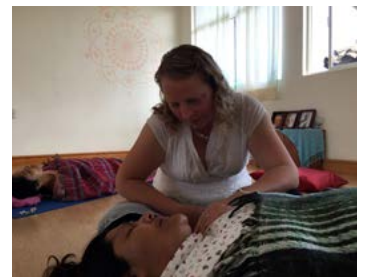
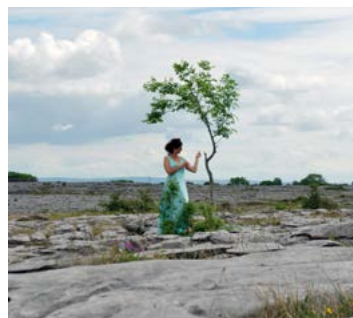
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**Womancraft**  
PUBLISHING

Life-changing, paradigm-shifting books  
by women, for women



# Walking in the Footstep's of Samuel Hayes and Charles Parnell at Avondale, Co. Wicklow

by Andrew St. Ledger

In 2013 The Woodland League and The Natural Resources Protection Alliance which was formed to protect Ireland's Natural Resources for Public benefit organised an event to celebrate Public ownership of Ireland's Public forests. This event, "A Walk in the Woods" on April 28th, was the culmination of a five year campaign started by The Woodland League to prevent the selling off of Coillte - The Irish Forestry Board, forest assets to private interests.

The Woodland League suggested the historic Avondale estate as a venue for this occasion and for the theme to be a family day of celebration with music, poetry, woodland walks and oak tree planting, rather than a protest. The event was headlined by musicians Christy Moore and Paddy Casey with the actors Jeremy Irons and Sinéad Cusack performing poetry. Approximately 5000 people came out to support this action, stopping the traffic on the N11, as people exited for Avondale. An announcement was made that evening by the government on the six o'clock news, we believe in response to this highly successful day. The statement said it was unlikely that any proposed sale of Coillte forest assets would be proceeding.

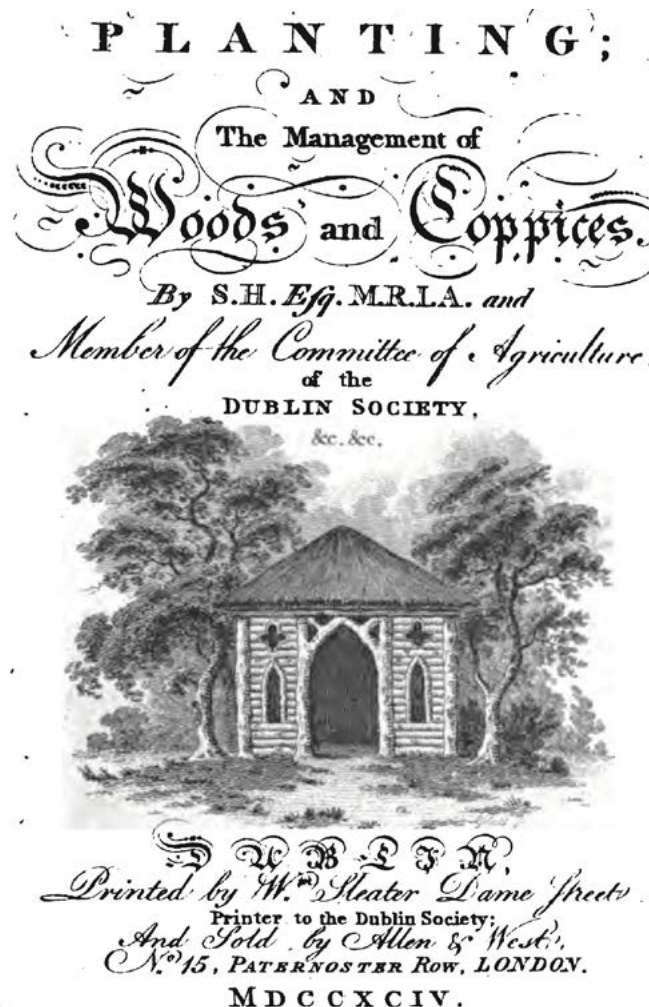
In 1770 Avondale estate was afforested, and laid out by Samuel Hayes who was a barrister and an MP in Henry Grattan's Irish Parliament on College green, which is now

the Bank of Ireland. The 18th century saw a resurrection of a woodland culture in Ireland led by the Dublin Society, of which Hayes was a prominent member and a leading pioneer of the reforestation of Ireland at the time. The Dublin Society was made up of United Irishmen. It was the forerunner of the current Royal Dublin Society, having been taken over and incorporated as a Royal society subsequent to the Act of union 1801.

This was the time after the failed 1798 United Irishmen Rebellion, when the Irish Parliament voted to dissolve its own legislative powers and cede governance to London. This was achieved by the payment from the Crown of 15,000 pounds (a vast sum of money at the time) to Irish MP's, who were not affiliated to Grattan to secure their support for the Act of Union.

The Dublin Society had earlier commissioned Samuel Hayes to write a manual on tree planting and management of woodlands. This was part of the United Irishmen's objectives to improve the state of Ireland, which was denuded of trees, culture, and lacking

in Industry after hundreds of years of war and turmoil. Hayes said he would go further than merely produce an instruction manual, but would seek to encourage a love of trees in his fellow countrymen/women. A few years earlier in 1788 Hayes presented a bill to the Irish Parliament entitled- An act for encouraging the cultivation and better preservation of trees; this was the first modern Irish Forestry Act.





Hayes went on to produce the definitive forestry instruction manual, relating to all aspects of woodland management, including practices and principles of tree nursing, planting, after – care, thinning and “Coppicing with standards”. Included were ancient recipes for treating damaged trees and it even recorded the remaining ancient monumental and sacred trees still standing in various places around Ireland. These trees were the remnants of the once mighty oak forests, revered by the Irish people. The book was first published in 1794 and titled, “A Practical Treatise on the Planting and Management of Woods and Coppices in Ireland”. The book was republished in 2002 having lain dormant in the library of the Royal Dublin Society for almost two centuries. The sudden interest in publishing the book by the Royal Dublin Society was seemingly stimulated by the digitising of same by Oxford University, who obviously recognised the books merits for a new audience. It is highly recommended for anyone interested in trees today, so packed full of down to earth, practical and wise information.

Between 1783 and 1791 The Dublin Society encouraged the planting of 70 million trees, mostly hardwoods, during a short period using its own funds to offer grants as an incentive to landowners. This information is in the original books Appendix under the heading, “Extracts from the Proceedings of The Dublin Society”. It also paid out bounties and prize money to encourage crafts, improve farming and industry practices, among other beneficial ideas. The Society set up a sculpture and drawing school in the basement of Leinster House, some of the classical sculpture copies still exist there today.

The legacy of this patronage of the Arts and Crafts, the true measure of a civilised society, continues in a piecemeal way by the RDS, via the annual Crafts competition, farming and Science exhibitions and lectures, etc.

Avondale estate in County Wicklow was bequeathed to John Parnell in 1795, the great grandfather of Charles Parnell, one of Ireland’s great leaders, who was born at Avondale in 1846. Parnell continued the planting of trees

on the estate which had been initiated by Samuel Hayes. For the entire 19th century, these trees provided beauty, firewood for landlord and tenants, and a great deal of employment in the local timber Industry. Parnell became known affectionately as “The Great Oak of Avondale”, due to his great affection for trees, and resolute campaigning for tenants/people rights to land via the Land League and Home Rule.

When Parnell died in 1891 ruined and penniless, the estate was bought by a Dublin butcher, William Boylan, from Phibsboro in Dublin, who proceeded to cut down many of the forest trees for short term profit. It seems history repeats itself as our own government recently was considering selling the harvesting rights of the Public forests to modern day speculators and profiteers. A reminder too that the Public must remain vigilant for the forests as the Privatisation of Public assets is an ongoing concern.

The estate was subsequently sold on in 1904 to the English Forestry Commission the forerunner of the current Forest Service, to set up a forestry school with sample plots for finding suitable timber trees to grow in Ireland, for a United Kingdom industrial economic agenda, requiring quick growing softwoods, for timber and pulping purposes. Ireland’s current forestry policy has continued this agenda to the detriment of restoring our once great native oak and mixed species forests, paying little regard for the rich cultural Gaelic woodland traditions associated with our native trees.

Ireland is a forest country, its people a forest people who have lost their forest. Ireland has a unique alphabet composed of the first letter of each of the main twenty native tree species, called the Ogham Alphabet. At the same time the ancient Brehon laws of Ireland the second oldest written law code after Sanskrit Laws in India, provided protection for trees and a system of fines and penalties for the wilful damage and destruction of trees.





It seems we have come a long way from that tradition of reverence and awe, which our ancestors held for their environment and in particular, the forest which underpins all land based ecosystems and biodiversity. To quote the writer, John Stewart Collis who in the 1950's, referred to trees in terms of "The Ministry of Trees in the Governance of Nature".

The Woodland League recognises Samuel Hayes as the pioneer of Sustainable Forestry in modern Ireland. For the Forest Service and the Irish Forestry Board, Coillte, Augustine Henry is given that honour. Henry was tasked with researching suitable fast growing softwoods at Avondale for timber production and pulping. Timber Production as an Exclusive Goal and Primacy of Profit as embraced by modern Irish Forestry are the antithesis of Samuel Hayes vision for Ireland's forests.

Addressing the Senate in 1925, WB Yeats recalled, the people of Grattan, Swift, Emmet, and Parnell – as no petty people, the reforestation of Ireland remained their common vision. In time, 1905, Arthur Griffith at Sinn Fein's first convention, described Ireland's reforestation as a main component of his party's mission statement. Combined with the harnessing of Ireland's rivers and streams for sustainable energy in order to cut our dependency at the time on imported coal. These were the two main planks of that new party's economic policy in 1905.

Irish State Forestry Policy, originating in 1906 when the Crown granted an autonomous Forestry Commission to Ireland, is addicted to the unnatural pursuit of relentless chemical dependent Plantation forestry. This comprises of approximately 60% Sitka Spruce, an exotic conifer from the west coast of the United States and Canada. It is a National forest without seasons that continues to offer local communities very few benefits, themselves largely alienated, and surrounded by inhospitable dark and jagged skylines.

For the sake of our national physical and mental well being, the Woodland league calls for a halt to this unnatural Industrial mono – genetic model, a halt to the extreme

exclusion of the wider ecological view that advocates for forest vitality as, promoted by the generations of Patriots associated with Avondale.

To this end the The Woodland League is seeking support for the transformation to mixed native woodlands, of most of the 500,000 acres of Coillte Public forest identified by the economist, Colm McCarthy, as economically unviable in his assessment of Coillte's state assets in 2010. This native tree focused proposal would be in keeping with the Heritage Council recommendations from 1997, when they expressed concern at the increasing blanket conifer - isation of our delicate uplands. This should be

done using a Public Works Programme, to create a new National Forest using trained community co-operative teams, targeting local fuel- wood production, soil erosion and flood alleviation to start with. A close to nature system of sustainable forest management is the preferred option, using natural regeneration of native species, some planting and continuous cover.

The Woodland League believe, if only 250,000 acres of the unviable component of the Coillte estate was utilized, 25,000 jobs could be created in this new Public – Public partnership model.

If you aimed for training in basic sustainable forest management 5000 people each year, using the 14 existing Coillte management units as venues and target the transforming of the unviable sites, this would equate to 120 people with four months training, by three times each year, giving approximately 360 jobs per region.

The funding and investment could come from existing models and community schemes, the EU Rural Development Funding, as well as the New Era.

The new Native Woodland strategy is another new source of funding which has provision for community woodlands creation.

There has been a huge increase in the use of stoves for home heating, while at the same time, no planning to provide sustainable wood production is in place.





However, we have failed to plan for this firewood demand scenario and we need to put measures in place immediately to ensure an orderly supply of firewood is provided to those most vulnerable to fuel poverty. Native hardwoods provide better burning than softwoods, due to what is known as a higher calorific content, and can be managed using coppicing systems. Coppicing is when you cut the tree close to the ground, encouraging them to grow back vigorously as new shoots spring back which can be harvested every five to seven years, this also prolongs the life of trees and therefore will lock up more carbon. Suitable native species for this are oak, birch, willow, hazel, and ash. As these new native woodlands replace the failed softwood conifers, local district heating systems could be created and supplied with thinnings from the long term management of these community woodlands.



This would provide a long term economic return for local community co-operatives and ensure resilience for communities against the ongoing economic uncertainty. An alternative vision for Ireland's Public Forests, is badly needed. This common sense option negates the need to sell off the harvesting rights of our Public Forest estate, which was itself created using Public money and the hard toil of forest workers. It makes absolutely no sense to give private speculators the rewards for this long term public investment, rather we should invest in its transformation and rejuvenation as a long term economic bulwark and backbone for ensuring Ireland's sustainable future.

In his poem "A culture is no better than its woods", the poet WH Auden implied that a place without natural woodlands has no roots, no strength, and therefore no shelter.

*All illustrations come from Samuel Hayes' book:  
A Practical Treatise on Planting and the Management of  
Woods and Coppices (published 1794)*

**Contact the Woodland League if your school or community would like to receive the Know Your Native Trees training and make a Dunemann Native Seed bed as we will be continuing the project into the future.**

[www.otherwise.ie](http://www.otherwise.ie)

## Notes

Charles Parnell was president of the Land League, they had three aims contained within the three F's,  
Fixity of tenure,  
Fair rent,  
Freedom to relocate.

The Woodland League has three aims, contained within the three R's,

Regeneration of the Great Forests of Ireland,  
Restoration of the Forest Culture of Ireland,  
Reform of State Forestry Policy.

Further to this aim, the Woodland League have designed a basic introductory manual for native trees and woodlands; how to identify them, what they are useful for, their history, an ABC of native trees, so to speak. This is to raise awareness of their multiple benefits, their cultural and natural heritage connection, the unique Gaelic Ogham alphabet of the trees and how to identify and grow native trees from seed.

The Woodland League Mobile Digital Classroom have delivered an introduction to native trees training to approximately 150 people in counties Clare, Cork, Meath and Galway as part of an exciting pilot project, which included children in 3 national schools. In response to the great interest and feedback, we created an extra practical dimension to the training; the Dunemann Native Seed bed, Forest in a Box plan. This appendix consists of a set of instructions on how to make a copy of how native trees grow in nature, 1m x 1m wooden box, aimed at national schools. Additional information is included e.g. carbon storage, health and biodiversity benefits of native trees and background on the Dunemann method of growing trees.

The overall aim of this Native Tree promotion is to increase awareness of the overall value of native woodland as a sustainable community resource, to inspire them to grow native trees from seed and plant community woodlands helping to take responsibility for their carbon footprint which can be offset by growing native trees. This is also the Woodland League's 1916 commemoration legacy project in 2016.

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

Andrew St Ledger  
is PRO of the Woodland League.







# Series on Permaculture

## *an Ecological Design Science by Suzie Cahn*

### Permaculture and Empowerment, designing people systems

Permaculture design is best known as an approach for creating and maintaining ecologically sound, low impact, abundant food production systems in agriculture and smaller gardening applications. It is aligned to many movements that look at sustainable land management and natural building practices. In the next two articles, I'll be exploring how permaculture design and design processes can be used when designing resilience, ethical, people systems.

There are a number of design processes used to help guide a designer or design team through the various stages of designing. These use all parts of the designers' resources their **heads**, (meaning their logical, analytical, as well as, their creative, holistic brain functions mentioned in my last article) their **hearts** and other sensory organs, and their **hands** and practical experiences.

To help think about what is meant by design process, I've taken various frameworks created by other permaculture thinkers, and made a synthesis of them as follows:

#### ***Seed phase (vision, helps and limits)***

Observation, Listen,  
Resources

#### ***Exploratory phase (patterns, ideas and principles)***

Survey,  
Boundaries

#### ***Productive phase (integration, action and momentum)***

Design,  
Implement

#### ***Reflective phase (appreciation, reflection and pause)***

Evaluate,  
Maintain,  
Tweak

These are not necessarily used in a linear fashion. They can be jumped about in whatever order makes sense to a particular designer or situation. They can be useful for designing for organisations and creating community based structures.

An example of a design I am very familiar with is that of the All Ireland Permaculture Gathering. To demonstrate how the ethics and principals, and active design techniques and process have been applied over the last 6 years of its evolution, I'll tell its story high-lighting various aspects that specially come from its permaculture design.

The **seeds** of the Gathering were sown into ground already made fertile by the various permaculture education initiatives that had been slowly gaining momentum in Ireland over the last 25 years.

Two influences in this **seed part** of the design process were:

1. The attitudes we bring to our designing are to be guided by Mollison's "**attitudinal principals**" one of which is **Minimum Effort for Maximum Effect** (make the least change for the maximum possible effect).

2. Some of the people I knew were very interested in the idea of **self-organising or non-hierarchical systems** like those found in nature.

Self-organization is a process where some form of overall order or coordination arises out of the local interactions between smaller component parts of an initially disordered system.

A forest is a self-organising system. This means that unlike in the children's stories (whether Aesop's fables or the Lion King), there are no bosses in the woods or jungles of the world. Instead, there is a complex ecological rule book and observing this is what lead Mollison and Holgrem to develop **permaculture principals**.



However, as modern people few of us have much experience of living in such a system, as most of our systems are **hierarchies**: a system of people or things ranked one above another.

I was interested in having a place we could be experimenting with 'walking our talk.'

To move forward in designing a permaculture network, I had the idea of an annual Gathering that would not just be about the event, but also the annual process that brought it about. I began to think about the people **resources** I knew at that time.

The first principal I applied to the design was **Value Diversity** so I sought people with different experience and skills to my own for the temporary initiating team.

Another aspect of this scattering design pattern was a decision early on to move the Gathering around the Island each year. The purpose of a scatter pattern in nature (seed dispersal, frogspawn etc- is that of maximising the chance of success -form follows function in all of nature's design and in many human designs).

However, at first, we applied this as we began to gather in others interested in participating with as many diverse skills, ideas and energies as possible. We also started to survey the available sites in Co. Wicklow.

We found a site quite quickly with landowner who wasn't using his land and was looking for ideas and ways to develop it or see it used by people. Once we had a this, we started making a detailed site survey and having discussions with the landowner and neighbors. These yielded some **boundaries and limits**.

Over the lifetime of the Gathering the principal **Observe and use the effect of edge on the system – maximise/minimise as appropriate** has been a useful frame for the interactions that bringing a large number of people to an area for a new event brings about with the people already in the area. We have made some mistakes and **applied self-regulation and accepted feedback**.

As the **productive phase** of the design got underway, the principles **Catch and store energy and Integrate rather than segregate** became keystones of the participant interactions as illustrated in the following:

The Design team created a plan for building participant momentum and engagement. The idea was to have **each element perform more than one function**. As we were developing the site for a large Gathering, we were also helping the land owner and **obtaining an immediate yield** for him in clearing paths and building bridges while generating a yield for us: content for PR for the Gathering. This was done at regular workshop days which exchanged learning for labor and brought in new people. From the very first site visit, the days were either filmed or photographed or both, which served as a resource to advertise the next workshops and the Gathering itself. They also educated viewers and subscribers sharing permaculture design, ethos and methods. They showed people how to get involved.

These processes allowed all types of contributions to be integrated, and individuals were encouraged to **find their niche**. They also helped manage the increasing complexity as each emerging team self-organised without hierarchy. Coordination arose out of the local interactions between the *'smaller component parts of an initially disordered system.'*

This method is somewhat similar but less formalised to a system called Sociocracy which is used in intentional communities, eco-village movements and other grass roots communities and even companies around the world. Decisions were made in circles by consent not consensus. Each group was accountable for its own development. This meant that everyone working on any area or affected by it agreed to "live with" the decisions taken or offer viable alternatives. It was exciting was seeing it work with diverse people who didn't know each other very well, but who were aligned to a common purpose or (driver.) Everything that was being tried was good enough to or safe enough to try. We could then observe and learn.

Some people bring a capacity for cleaning toilets, others for listening or being enthusiastic appreciators, others cook or do dishes, and still others share wisdom, pass on skills, tell stories, make music, people of all ages bring laughter, innovation and adaption.

There are also those who come with Kali energy blowing strong storm like energy through the system knocking some things down, making room for the builder and peace-makers to take on a role in that newly made niche.





Others ask edgy questions and push the growth of Permaculture and the Gathering in new directions. All have been welcomed and the system has shown itself to be remarkably resilient and adaptive.

The weekend event itself maintains the non-hierarchical approach by using an adapted version of a facilitation method called **Open Space**. This was invented when someone realised that all the good discussions and connections at conferences happened in the breaks. Also, that there was a great deal of collective intelligence in groups not being developed or shared when people listened to just one pre-scheduled presenter talking about their topic.

As part of this facilitation method, the Gathering uses anchor people in a number of ways. These people are the ones who are happy to coordinate an activity that needs to be done (food prep, cooking, welcome tent hosting, compost toilet management, facilitating, etc or once a scheduling board has been created people can then offer to anchor a workshop topic or activity that they wish to host. These anchors can, in fact, change as long as an anchor either finds someone else to replace them, or alerts others in their group (or the facilitation team) as to their need to stop being an anchor. A replacement can then be found or the workshop or activity brought to an end as needed.

In Open Space facilitation there are few rules, but one is the “Law of Two Feet” which specifically allows and suggests that everyone should move to where they feel most useful or engaged at anytime. This democratises the interactions in a really refreshing and unique way. It also tracks the energy and interests of the group in a way that mirrors nutrient flows in nature. If there is not a lot of energy or fertility for a particular topic or activity, people move to where there is.

Every year we have used this tracking in our **Reflective phase** as we appreciate, and reflect on the Gathering and pause to evaluate how we can maintain the momentum or tweak the design. This has resulted in a comprehensive handover document which is given to a new year team by the steering group when a new part of the Country has been agreed for the Gathering to travel to.

The Gathering is great fertility or compost for us all. Since its first year in Wicklow, it has been to Roscommon, Galway,



Tipperary, Down and The Cloughjordon Eco Village. Each year the numbers of attendees have varied between 200-350 people from campers to local day trippers. They are all ages and often come from many countries and parts of Ireland. Year teams have also varied in size and level of activity. Trees have been planted, compost toilets, field kitchens and bridges built. Workshops and discussion topics are too numerous to list here, but range from spoon making with 11 spoon makers, to 4 intentional communities discussing their approaches with a participating audience, to my youngest child's pasta making workshops, as well as, many farm walks, bee-keeping talks, information on planting native woodlands, forest garden pros and cons, community gardens, relaxation sessions, fireside sessions and so much more.

The process and handover materials have been taken on each year by different year teams. The selection criteria for hosting the Gathering is the ability to reach out and tap into local networks and start creating a crew for this with regular meetings and workshop events a minimum of 6 months prior to the actual Gathering date. **The Year team** is offered support and advice about any aspect of the Gathering especially PR and site selection from **the Steering group** that reform after each of the latter by self-nomination. Funds for seed money for site development, local PR, tent rental or whatever is needed are made available. This fund is replenished each year from attendance fees. Sites are left enhanced when the Gathering passes through and local groups are also given an infusion of energy.

For some first time participants there can be a period when they feel it will all end in tears or that chaos will reign. The idea of a self-organising system working seems to them at best naive, or at worst, a recipe for disaster. I have heard from such people of their doubts that it would all work, but then later their delight and amazement that it does in fact work so very well, and what a good time they have had experiencing it.

I hope that over time more people and organisations get to experience the changing Culture of system re-design to help create one that allows us to keep walking our talk of Earth Care, Fair Share and People Care in every aspect of our human designed systems.



*Suzie is a permaculture teacher at Carraig Dúlra, a small-holding she develops with her husband and many volunteers and students as a productive research and demonstration site in Co Wicklow.*

*She recently appeared on RTE's Supergarden, where she used permaculture design to create an urban garden. She says her favourite tweet when the show aired was “Perma What?”, which is also why she is happy to write this series for OtherWise.*

***www.dulra.org***



# The Tale of Kale

Kale is a long time waiting for stardom. Backyard kale survives the hardest winter and when we were growing up it was in everyone's back garden, the tall sentinels of the veggie plots. Well kale, now is your time to shine, now it's time to take centre stage. Our very own acclaimed superfood, everyone from TV personalities to sports stars are knocking back healthy kale smoothies and nibbling on kale crisps. And no wonder - as with all the rest of the cabbage tribe and cruciferous family, kale is proud to have wonderful anti-cancerous properties and is a rich immune and energy boosting food. This is because it is jam packed with antioxidants, beta-carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin not to mention many more nutrients supporting healthy cell replication. Like the rest of its family kale is rich in a chemical called indole-3-carbinol which helps keep our hormones in their healthy form. Another super compound found in kale is d-glucaric acid. This combines with calcium then acts to keep our gut flora in balance and improve detoxification thereby benefiting overall health and well-being.

The amazing properties just keep on going with Kale – a perfect balance of calcium and magnesium, a selection of B vitamins including folate (bio-available form of folic acid), and a source of iron. Of course we need Vit C to use this iron but no surprise, Kale already has it ready to go. From dark green cavalo nero to purple fringed ragged Jack the variety and flavours of kale are wide.

Note: Those with hypo- thyroidism need to moderate their intake of kale and crucifers due to their goitrogenic effect



## Eat Me Kale

### King Kale Smoothie

*Health Benefits – Anti- inflammatory; hydrating; vitality drink; rich in fibre to support healthy digestion.*

- 1 thick slice of fresh pineapple including the centre core
- Juice and zest of one organic lemon
- ½ ripe avocado
- 1 apple
- A good hand full of kale leaves
- 1 inch piece of fresh root ginger
- cup of Juice not from concentrate such as apple, tropical...
- enough water to bring to desired drinking consistency
- one and a half table spoons of pre steeped linseed.

#### Method

- Soak the Linseeds over night in a pint of water
- Blend the ingredients on high until smooth and add enough water to meet your preferred drinking consistency

### Stir Fry Kale

- good bunch of kale (apart for the well known curly kale try out some of the older varieties that are once again in the market)
- 50 g clarified butter ( ghee)
- pinch of sea salt, black pepper and a tea spoon of turmeric
- one large onion or 3-4 spring onions
- one red pepper
- zest and juice of one organic lemon
- one clove of garlic

#### Method

Chop all the vegetables including the kale. Add the clarified butter to a heavy iron pan or wok. Heat and add the salt, pepper and turmeric. Add the onions and red pepper, stir fry for 3 minutes then add the kale, stir about and cover with lid for 8 minutes. Then add the garlic and lemon zest, mix through . Taste and adjust seasoning if needed. Serve on warm plate with a squeeze of lemon juice as a side dish.

### Traditional Colcannon

Steam kale and some spring onions. When cooked add to creamed spuds with a good lump of real butter, black pepper and sea salt to taste. Settle down and ENJOY!!!



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## Earthly Delights

### Amazing Apples

**Botanical name:** *Malus pumila*

*Malus* is the classical Greek word for ‘round fruit’, derived from the Greek word *malon* or *melon* while *pumila* means dwarf. In English, apples are named after a province in Italy, Abela, where the modern apple is said to have first appeared. Botanically they are members of the *Rosaceae* family, which also contains roses and other edible fruit species such as pears, plums and raspberries.

#### Myth and Symbol

Of all the fruits, apples seem to be the most prominent in the popular myths and legends of Europe and western Asia. Often appearing as a mystical or forbidden fruit, the serpent guards it, the dragon watches it, and Hercules plucks it from the Tree of Life. It is the healing fruit of the Arabian tribes, and bestows immortality on the Turks. Not only Eve holds it in her hand, but so does Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love.

In Norse mythology, apple trees are the symbol of rebirth and beauty, and the tree itself is sacred. One of the Norse myths tells of golden apples that are given to the gods, which grant them immortality and perpetual youth.

In Irish mythology, Conle, the Red son of the high king of Ireland, Conn of the Hundred Battles, saw a beautiful woman, invisible to the rest of the company on the hill of Uisneach one day. She invited him to go with her to the Plain of Delight and live forever in her kingdom of women, until Coran, the king’s druid, drove her off by singing. She tossed the boy an apple and disappeared. The apple sustained Conle for a month, each bite intensifying his longing for the woman and her land, and a month later, on the plain of Archommin, she returned. The two sailed away in the woman’s ship of glass and Conle was never seen again.

Also from Ireland, folklore tells that if an apple is peeled into one continuous ribbon and thrown over a woman’s shoulder, it will land in the shape of her future husband’s initials.

Though the forbidden fruit in the Book of Genesis is not explicitly identified, popular Christian tradition holds that Adam and Eve ate an apple from the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. This may have been the result of Renaissance painters adding elements of Greek mythology into biblical scenes. The unnamed fruit of Eden thus became an apple under the influence of the story of the golden apples in the Garden of Hesperides. As a result, the apple became a symbol for knowledge, immortality, temptation, the fall of man, and sin.

During the Jewish New Year -Rosh Hashanah - it is customary to eat apples dipped in honey to evoke a “sweet new year”.

#### History

It is likely that the apple we cultivate today originated in Central Asia – it is probably native to the Caucasus Mountains of western Asia and perhaps specifically to Anatolia, in Turkey, where carbonised apples dating back to 6500 B.C. have been found.

Archaeological evidence suggests that our Bronze Age ancestors collected small wild apples, but it wasn’t until the advent of grafting that the extensive cultivation of apples could occur. Records show that a form of apple resembling the domesticated apple occurred in the Near East 4,000 years ago, which is consistent with the date when grafting was first being used.

The domesticated apple was brought to Europe and North Africa first by the Greeks and then by the Romans before spreading worldwide with colonisation.



The Romans, quite possibly Caesar himself, who took a keen interest in botany, brought apples to the British Isles. Roman officers planted apple orchards within their walled gardens, but they quickly sprang up in the surrounding native villages, proof of a plundered orchard here and there!

## Health benefits

An apple a day...

The disinfectant and therapeutic qualities of apples are highly valued in natural medicine, and the health-promoting properties of daily ingesting an apple are renowned – keeping the doctor away!

Research indicates that eating apples daily will help reduce skin diseases, arthritis, and various lung and asthma problems.

Naturally anti-toxic, apples benefit the intestinal environment by replenishing the friendly beneficial bacteria and inhibiting the growth of yeasts and disease-producing bacteria in the digestive tract. The malic and tartaric acids present in apples promote the removal of impurities in the liver, gently assisting the body in its daily detoxification functions.

An easily digestible alkaline food, apples have a water content of around 85% which quenches both immediate and cellular dehydration and is almost as effective as drinking water itself. In the stomach, apples cool the digestion with their alkaline effect, and serve to satisfy the appetite. In terms of their digestive benefits, apples are considered 'amphoteric', meaning that they balance extremes. Folk wisdom holds that cooked apples cure constipation while raw grated apples are best for diarrhoea.

In addition to balancing stomach activity, the gel-forming fibre that apples contain, pectin, helps lower blood cholesterol levels, especially the potentially artery-clogging LDL. This action benefits heart health and circulation. Pectin also works as a bulking agent in the colon, gently pushing through the digestive tract, cleansing it along the way, clearing impactions and curing persistent constipation.

Pectins are also powerful protectors against the toxic effects of certain chemicals present in our diets such as cyclamates found in artificial sweeteners. Further, European studies show that apple pectin binds with radioactive residues and removes them from the body, along with lead, mercury, and other

toxic heavy metals.

In the past five years, no area of apple research has been more dynamic than the area of apple polyphenols, flavonoids, and their antioxidant properties. Proponents claim anti-cancer benefits, pointing to the high phytonutrient content of apples, especially quercetin. Large scale clinical research in the US has shown that eating apples regularly does reduce the risk of lung, colon, and rectal cancers.

Because apples are fibrous, juicy, and non-sticky, when eaten raw they clean the teeth and exercise the gums.

## Be aware

Sadly, in the Environmental Working Group's annual "Dirty Dozen" report listing the fruits and vegetables most often carrying pesticide residues, apples consistently rate number one. According to the USDA Pesticide Data Program, of the 47 pesticide residues found on apples, 6 are known or possible carcinogens, 16 are suspected hormone disruptors, 5 are neurotoxins, 6 are developmental or reproductive toxins, and 11 are toxins that affect honey bees. Not all of the 47 pesticides in use have been studied for these effects, so their presence is not included in the statistics on harmful effects.

As if that's not enough, once apples are harvested they are often waxed to improve appearance and prolong shelf-life, which locks pesticides in, making it impossible to wash them off. Peeling the apple helps, but robs the fruit of many of its health-giving properties. Plus many biocides are absorbed into the flesh of the fruit, all the way to the core.





What many people don't know is that commercially available supermarket apples are on average a year old by the time they end up in your fruit bowl. They are picked slightly unripe, treated with chemicals (1-MCP) to keep them crisp for longer, waxed, boxed, stacked, and kept in cold storage for an average of 9-12 months. Since the antioxidant levels of apples start to decrease after 3 months in storage, an apple coming out of cold storage after a year will have almost no antioxidants left in it at all. This will apply to many of the other nutritional qualities of the fruit.

Happily, Ireland abounds with mature productive apple trees and even old abandoned apple orchards. It is easy to avail yourself of free organic fresh apples. Ask around; find one in your neighbourhood, in someone's garden, in the countryside around you. Adopt it and harvest its fruit.

Frequent your local farmers market and buy local apples from someone growing them organically.

Or best of all, if you have a bit of space, plant your own apple tree. Semi-dwarf trees can fit in a small urban garden and dwarf varieties can suit even a balcony.

## 8 Applications of the Apple

1. Raw grated apple is perhaps the best simple remedy for infantile diarrhoea. Use small amounts frequently until the diarrhoea stops. (If it persists, see a doctor).
2. For nausea, or during recovery from a bout of vomiting and diarrhoea use grated apple and ginger. Grate unpeeled apples coarsely and grate one teaspoon of ginger finely. Mix and eat straightaway to settle an upset stomach.
3. Use cooked apple sauce for weak digestion and constipation. Wash apples, cut into quarters, put in a pot with a little water, cook over a low heat until mushy. Eat daily.
4. Fresh apple juice made from unpeeled apples is good for everyone. It is rich in minerals and vitamins, and normalises bowel activity.

5. Apples give off ethylene, a gas which accelerates ripening. Put unripe avocados, tomatoes, bananas (or any other unripe fruit) in a paper bag with an apple and they will ripen faster.

### Apple cider vinegar (raw, undiluted, unfiltered)

6. Massaging diluted ACV into your scalp cures dandruff. Mix with a little water and a few drops of tea tree essential oil, and use weekly.
7. Adding a teaspoon of ACV to your dog's water bowl whenever you fill it benefits your woof's coat, and their general health and vitality.
8. ACV stimulates digestion if taken 5 minutes before a meal. Put a teaspoon in a little water and drink before eating.

## Appetising apple and beetroot summer salad

### You need:

2 beetroots  
2 apples

1 tablespoon chopped mint  
some crumbled feta cheese

### For the dressing:

2 tablespoons of olive oil  
1 tablespoon of apple cider  
vinegar

big pinch of salt

mix together (shake in a small  
jar)

Peel the beetroot under running  
water (saves a lot of cleaning up!)

Core the apples

Slice the beetroot and apples  
and cut the slices into thin strips  
(julienne)

Mix everything together

Serve immediately

For 2-4 people



Photos by Irish Seed Savers, Co. Clare



by Pinnih

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# Healing Attachment Trauma: a gateway to your true self



In therapeutic circles today everyone is talking about trauma. There have been ground-breaking discoveries in the last two decades about how people become traumatised and how we can recover from this. Research shows us that trauma is physiological as well as psychological and that healing from it requires somatic as well as psychological processing. There are ways to recover from these experiences that were unknown until recently and now trauma sufferers have good reason to feel optimistic.

Trauma is an inevitable part of human existence. Every person on the planet has experienced trauma. So developments in this field are of enormous consequence.

When most people think about the word trauma things like war, rape, violence and abuse come to mind. Yes, these are events likely to lead to trauma. However as trauma pioneer Peter Levine says “trauma is not in the event, it is in the nervous system”. It is in how we process the event and recover from it or not. Experiences such as war and rape usually lead to trauma because the

events are so overwhelming to the victims that being able to process and move through the fight/flight responses is usually impossible. Traumas resulting from these types of events are sometimes referred to as big T traumas and much of work which has developed in the last two decades about trauma recovery has focused on post-traumatic stress disorder related to big T traumas.

Over the years I have worked with many people recovering from experiences including rape, childhood abuse, domestic violence and near fatal accidents. Yet some of my clients have not experienced these things and yet show clear signs of trauma.

Symptoms are always chronic and include one or more of: anxiety, hopelessness, depression, lethargy, numbness, feelings of unreality, detached or dissociated experience, overwhelming emotions, self-hatred, exhaustion, difficulty relating to others or maintaining relationships, pain and physical disorders which are inexplicable to the medical profession.



Often what is afoot here is attachment trauma – seen as a ‘small t’ trauma – failure to form a secure attachment with the main care-giver in the first years of life. Attachment trauma is so wide-spread it is the silent epidemic of our times. It leads to huge psychological and physical suffering with enormous consequences for community, economy, environment, everything in fact, because it affects how we relate to other people, to animals, to ourselves and to the world we inhabit.

Dr. Allan Schore calls it “trauma in the first 1000 days, conception to age two.”

While developing in the womb, at birth and in the first couple of years of life we are creating the blue-prints of our lives ahead. We are learning at a phenomenal rate. As the brain and nervous system develop and inform the growing body-mind, neurons connect based on our experience, making pathways that direct our own becoming and the life we will have. Perhaps the life we will lead is written in the stars but without a doubt it is written in our neural pathways.

In the womb the baby grows in a fluid ocean of everything mom feels and experiences. “What mother feels is what I am” is the motto of the embryo. Even after birth and for the first couple of years the relationship with mom (or main care-giver) is the main creator of this human being. The holding environment created by mom is the womb now, it is the inter-personal space between mother and child and it is here that they continue to be formed.

In the first years we exist in a state of oneness, a non-boundaried, connected place – a place which can be heaven or hell. A baby feels everything 100%. A baby who feels cold becomes the experience of cold, a hungry baby is the hunger, a baby who feels loved is love, at this stage there is no differentiation between me and my experience. No differentiation between me and my environment, no differentiation between me and my mother; because there is no ‘me’ yet. ‘Me’ is created gradually as the brain develops and usually this happens somewhere between 2 and 3 years old as the pre-frontal cortex, the thinking part of the brain, comes on-line.

If blessed with safe, loving, well-attuned and empathetic care-givers, who are able to create a good enough holding, then there is a possibility that the personality that is created is in resonance with the most innate basic being of this little one. Whether the infant has a good enough holding environment will depend hugely on the attachment to mom. If the attachment is secure then they feel safe enough and this safety become the base line of their being. I can trust my mom, I know she is there, I know she loves me, I have enough space, enough holding, enough tenderness, etc., then I feel I am enough.

I am able to rest into simply being and my development is an unfolding from this basic state.

Insecure attachment however is terrifying for a little one. The fear that a baby feels when the relationship with mom is not secure is not like anything we know as adults unless we have experienced a gun to our heads. This is because for a baby, their survival depends entirely on being taken care of by another. They cannot meet their own basic needs for food, shelter, touch, etc. If they are not sure mom is really there and wants to care for them then the fear that is felt is the fear of death.

Actually this is what trauma is – the fear of death frozen in time. Fear sequences through the body when we can get away from the source of fear or fight it off. In the case of a baby with its mom – these are not options and if the fear is big enough often enough – the baby gets stuck with it. It becomes part of them.

Perhaps there is a lot of stress at home, perhaps mom has her own unresolved trauma, maybe she is distant and cold, or overly clingy and needy, or scared, or angry. It need not be anything huge to have a huge impact. This is subtle and profound, because to be engulfed in an atmosphere so intensely and consistently at such a young age impacts on every aspect of this developing human being. It is much like how a tree or plant will be influenced by the soil and winds and overall environment in which it grows.

Our senses peripheral nervous system take the information of what this world is like in to the brain and from there neural connections are made which inform the rest of the developing body and mind, which hormones to produce – endorphins if the world is love, stress hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline if the world is fear. It affects our developing immune system, our developing digestive system; in fact everything grows based on this information.

As Darwin explained we are adaptive beings, we survive only if we adapt to our environment. When the environment within which a child grows is not safe enough than rather than this personality emerging purely from a basic state of being our psyches split and the personality and body that develop are based on defensive survival strategies and self-protection. The person may grow up feeling out of touch with themselves, others and the world they inhabit.

“Children with insecure attachment patterns have trouble relying on others to help them, while unable to regulate their emotional states by themselves.

As a result, they experience excessive anxiety, anger and longings to be taken care of. These feelings may become so extreme as to precipitate dissociative states or self-defeating aggression...” Dr. van der Kolk.



This is still the experience of these children when they become adults and this is what is bringing most of my clients into my studio.

Attachment trauma is a type of developmental trauma. When secure attachment is not achieved then we do not have the foundation or steady ground upon which our developing selves can grow and flourish. With insecure attachment the child's development is greatly impinged and as adults in therapy people often feel the places where developmental stages were not completed. Adults for example who have never managed to achieve a sense of individuality may feel themselves still in the infantile merged place, without adequate boundaries and personhood. This is a very confusing existence, where someone is still feeling others emotions to be their own and is often overwhelmed by external stimuli. Or on the other end of the spectrum people who feel themselves solidly but find it impossible to achieve any sense of intimacy or closeness with another and feel lonely or lost much of the time. There are many shades of insecure attachment. Some have been labelled and researched: 'avoidant', 'ambivalent', 'disorganised' and there are as many nuances and manifestations of attachment as there are individuals.

One to one therapy is essential for healing attachment trauma and coming to a place of security in oneself. Woundings that occur in relationship need to be healed in relationship. Group therapy can also be very useful at

times in the journey. Healing attachment trauma takes time – there is no quick fix. The neural connections which were formed early on need to change, and change they can, one by one, through repeated positive relational experiences which can offer repair.

Healing from trauma and developing resiliency in the world requires the felt sense of safety, and of being attuned to, by an empathetic other as this is what was missing to begin with. It is essential to find a therapist with whom you can feel safe and who you believe cares about you. The therapist needs also to have a good understanding of attachment trauma and be trained to work somatically (with the body) as well as psychologically.

To undertake such a healing journey is to open up the possibility of becoming the person you most truly are, it is entering a new becoming, where a felt sense of safety and easefulness could allow you to exist in the world as an individual who is in a state of flow and connection.

As Carl Jung said be "willing to surrender what you are for what you could become." The journey of healing trauma has been for many of the people I have worked with a gateway to positive transformation. It is a physical, psychological and spiritual journey home to who you really are.

[www.gwenmchale.wordpress.com](http://www.gwenmchale.wordpress.com)



Gwen will be starting somatic group therapy specifically for recovery from attachment trauma in a venue near Scarriff in October. Feel free to get in touch with her to make inquiries.

*Gwen McHale (MA, H.Dip, DCG, Dip.STME, Dip.yoga, Dip.DTR) is a somatic therapist and educator. She holds a general practice and also specialises in trauma recovery, attachment/relationships, dissociative disorders and body connection. Gwen works with individuals in personal therapy and runs somatic group therapy in Counties Clare and Galway. Somatic therapy is a talk therapy deeply grounded in and through the body. It engages practices such as mindfulness, art making and guided embodiment explorations.*





# Conscious Connected Breathing

by Ciara Longman and Fiona Bury

## Ciara - Rebirthing Breathwork

Conscious connected breathing is also known as circular breathing and rebirthing. It is helpful in alleviating anxiety, headaches, pain, worry, improves self esteem, deepens meditation, expands awareness and so much more.

Whilst taking a bath back in the 1970s Leonard Orr the founder of this technique, started spontaneously regressing to a state of feeling like a helpless infant and he couldn't get out of the bath for 3 hours. He continued bathing and more prenatal and birth memories rose up. Whilst using a snorkel to breathe underwater he discovered how the breath is crucial to moving through a difficult experience. He found that under water he was forced to keep breathing through any experiences which came up. By assisting other people through their own experiences whilst breathing in a hot tub and consequently, wet rebirthing was born. Leonard realised that the emotional pain of birth experiences for some people were just too overwhelming, even with what we consider as a normal birth in a hospital. At the time, Frank Leboyer's book "Birth without violence" had been published and the long term impact of birth trauma on a

person was beginning to be understood. Leonard realised it was better to start breathing sessions out of water, as this is more gentle and so dry rebirthing was born.

During sessions Leonard noticed that the breath became circular, whereby the inhalation merged with the exhalation and the exhalation merged with the inhalation. There was no pause in between breaths. This is the crucial part to component to breathing energy (prana or Chi) which moves around the body. Within the first few sessions the focus is initially on unblocking the breathing mechanism and releasing energy blocks which prevent the movement of energy through the body. As we continue to breathe in energy while using connected breathing it finds emotional blocks in our system. This may be a discomfort in the body, a memory, a pain or a fear and no matter how difficult it may feel, the person is guided to breathe through the experience until they reach a state of relaxation. This is crucial so that person doesn't get trapped in the drama of it and that an energetic or emotional release occurs.

"I trained with Leonard. When I first unblocked my breathing mechanism it felt like a pressure valve popped and I felt instant relief. It was wonderful to feel what it was like to breathe full breaths again. Everyone has different life experiences and so, no two sessions are the same. Your experience may be completely different to mine. Then the work began - and I remember during sessions experiencing childhood situations, the pain of being an unborn child. So much tension had been stored in my body. All kinds of feelings and sensations come up which can be difficult and I wanted to stop breathing but having the support of a breathworker guiding you helps you move through the experience rather than giving up.





As children when a difficult experience came up we often suppressed it or were told we're not allowed to feel it. Breathing allows that feeling to go through to completion without being suppressed. It's not easy and my mind played many tricks on me to try and make me stop, but I kept breathing through it and it was really worth it. Memories were shown to me and I felt pain in my body, by continuing to breathe these gave way to coming to a place of peace and serenity. Sometimes my body felt like it was floating, I felt light and free – not a care in the world.

I finally came to a womb memory of not wanting to be born and coming out into the world. I wanted to stay put. My Mam told me she fell at 7 months and my head got wedged into her pelvis. I was a late birth and the obstetrician was considering a caesarean. While re-experiencing this during a session I had a feeling of “oh no this cannot happen!” My Mam went to the toilet and as she crouched, her pelvis unlocked and I starting coming out. I was born in 4 minutes!

It's not an overnight process, after a minimum of ten personal sessions for most people they're able to breathe themselves through issues which may arise. [I encourage anyone who has had ten sessions to sit with another experienced breather because simply having the presence of another person there with you when you breathe makes such a difference. When you feel like giving up there's someone there to encourage you.

The method of Rebirthing has diversified into many different breathwork techniques but they all come back to one essential component of \*conscious, connected breathing.

### ***Fiona Bury - Breathwork Mastery***

I was introduced to Breathwork during my teenage years and had early and influential encounters with world-renowned facilitators. When I moved to Australia at age 21, I wanted to really study and experience Breathwork. I come from an academic background so the approach I longed for was one which was easy to understand, sensible and relatable to everyday life. I found the perfect trainer in Alakh Analda. Her courses had long been accredited by the Australian Department of Education and Training, so my academic check-box was ticked!

Alakh teaches an approach called Breathwork Mastery. It acknowledges its lineage in Leonard Orr's Rebirthing and also in yoga. Full, conscious, connected breathing is the tool used for supporting intentional living. At the beginning of a session, we set an intention for our lives.

During the breathing session, unresolved material that is preventing the manifestation of the intention may come up for clearing. This can surface as physical sensations, emotional release, images or memories, among other things. The Breathwork Mastery facilitator is thoroughly trained in supporting the release, reframing and resolution of these experiences.

The result, in my experience, is more and more freedom, joy and unity. We can take full responsibility for our lives, manifesting our intentions at a pace that is self-regulated and manageable.

My own process is ongoing. Parenthood has brought both love and challenges that I never knew were possible. While I have completely resolved some of the core issues of my life, others resurface in spirals, each round presenting a deeper layer of understanding and insight. My intention now is to take a light-hearted, step by step approach to my own self-mastery. Even more joy, more beauty in my life, more play - that's what I'm going for!

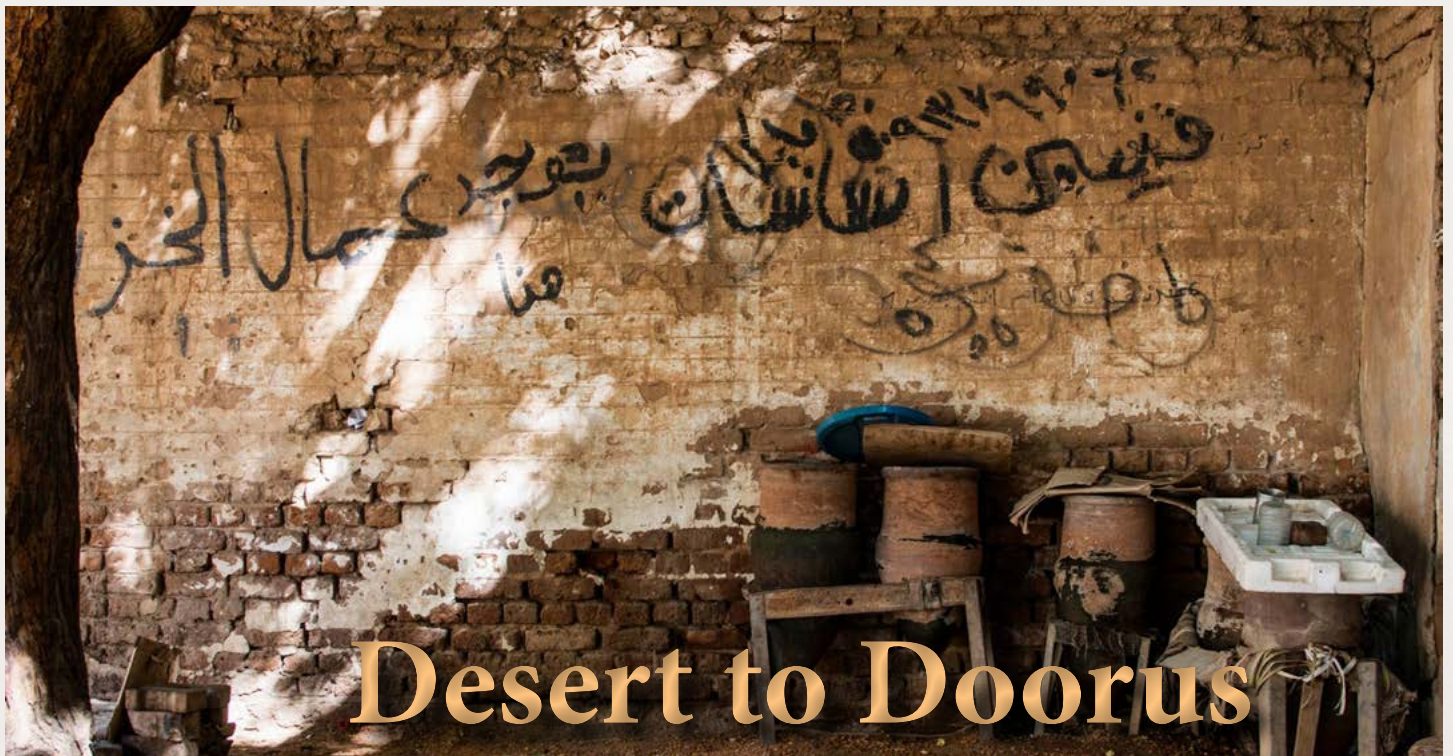


*Fiona Bury is based in Co. Clare. She offers individual sessions and monthly breathing circles in Tuamgraney. Email: fo@of.io*



*Ciara Longman gives breathing circles, individual sessions and breathwork trainings. ciaralongman.com/breathwork*





# Desert to Doorus

by Denise Heeley

Khartoum, Sudan ; Photo by Sudanese photographer Muhammad Salah

'Maktoub' is Arabic for 'it is written'. I am reminded of this every time I try to make sense of the space I occupy between the Desert and Doorus.

After ten years in Sudan, Doorus beckons. Having spent childhood holidays in and around the Burren I am returning to share it with my two young children who are half Sudanese. Much has affected me during my time in Sudan and I feel I cannot leave without continuing a connection.

Hence the creation of Desert to Doorus. How did the idea come about? Well, the catalyst was a group of artists who came together to form Sudan Unite under the leadership of the late Sabry Babiker. It was in response to the 2011 independence referendum on whether the South should remain as part of Sudan. Sudan Unite believed that the failure of the Khartoum government to prevent the separation of South Sudan would only serve to further divide people from very diverse ethnic backgrounds. Sudan Unite took art to the streets to spread their message in a call for Unity and celebration of Diversity.

Likewise, Desert to Doorus looks to artists to share a part of Sudan that remains in obscurity to those beyond its borders. Our perception of countries in Africa like Sudan is shaped by the information we receive through the international media which invariably reduces it to conflict, poverty, corruption and so forth. Very often we are faced with a response which is very limiting - we stick money in an envelope and send it off believing it will make a 'difference' and the link ends there. In creating a platform for creative or artistic exchange Desert to Doorus aspires to forge relations at a more meaningful level in an effort to come to a different kind of understanding of a culture which is remote but not inaccessible. We are facilitating the link between artists in the Kinvara area and in so doing create dialogue with real people from here and from there.

The first event of Desert to Doorus was an exhibition of Sudanese art in the Courthouse, Kinvara at the beginning of this year. The main focus of the exhibition was the work of Salah Ibrahim, a leading Sudanese artist from Darfur. There were also paintings from Ahmed Hussein, another Darfur artist. Salah Ibrahim's work is unique; it has a mystical almost ghostly quality embodying the coexistence of myth and reality. I felt this resonated with the local environment of the Burren and indeed many visitors to the exhibition identified those themes. Ahmed Hussein whose work also featured in the exhibition is from Darfur as well. His tribe, the Dajo, are descendants of the ancient kingdom of Kush in Nubia. He has a very different style reflecting the symbolism of Phaaronic Sudan. Ahmed Jabir, a Sudanese painter, calligrapher and writer attended the opening night and gave some insight into the fascinating world of Sudanese art with its Kushite, Arabic and African influences. Ahmed will return to do a workshop next summer. Additionally, local artist, Anne Korf linked in with Ahmed and she hopes to make a journey to Sudan this Autumn.

Desert to Doorus is not a profit making organisation. Projects are funded through sales of Sudanese craft at the Farmer's Market in Kinvara. In July this summer Desert to Doorus organised a day trip to Kinvara for asylum seekers in Direct Provision who are resident in The Eglinton Hotel, Salthill. The community of Kinvara very generously brought food to share whilst local musicians entertained. It was a very happy occasion of coming together in celebration of a diverse community. Last summer, Burren Pottery in Corofin very kindly displayed a series of photos showing pottery making along the Nile by a young Sudanese photographer, Muhammad Salah Abdul-Aziz. This exhibition will be brought to Kinvara as will the work of painter Bakri Bilal and Sudanese photographers in The Secret Garden, Kinvara in the new year.





*Pottery maker in his studio on the banks of the Nile ; Photo by Sadig M Ahmed*

## The Mystics of Sudan

'If there is a family in Sudan that does not have at least one Sufi, then it is not Sudanese' or so the saying goes. Sufis are Islamic mystics and Sudan has the largest number of Sufi groups in the world. My 'Desert' home in Sudan, is spent in a Sufi village called Omdoban, meaning Mother of light. My Sudanese husband's grandmother of generations back was the first of her tribe to put down roots there trading in its market or souk. Her people were camel herders and spice merchants from northern Sudan. By the time of her arrival, the Sufis of Omdoban had become well known ascetics. They were desert mystics, healers, seekers of enlightenment. Like them she was led through the desert and into the mother of light.

The other part of my time is spent in Sudan's capital, Khartoum. It is the administrative capital, the confluence of the Blue and White Nile and where the Mahdi revolutionaries defeated the British at the battle of Omdurman. Khartoum is characterised by dilapidated, dusty, brown buildings and waves of suffocating heat. But the Sudanese are resilient and proud. They float through the streets in their white jellabas and colorful saris while the 'Khwajas' (foreigners) look like they are about to expire. On the darker side; it is the intersection of the displaced fleeing persecution and desperate to keep moving. Scattered out from the Nuba mountains, Darfur, South Sudan, Ethiopia or Eritrea, Khartoum becomes the liminal space, time suspended, lives put on hold as the desert beyond awaits its next victims. It has an ominous presence as it lures caravans of refugees to make the dangerous, uncertain journey up through the Sahara to Libya to embark on the perilous voyage to Europe. There is no Moses to ensure they have a safe passage through the desert and across the sea. They are at the mercy of and fall prey to marauders and slave traders squeezing the life out of them.

The Exodus of Africans has been as relentless as western greed for their resource rich countries. It is a crime against humanity and yet the exploitation continues.

The Sufis were drawn to the enigmatic remoteness of the deserts in much the same way as the early Christian monks answered to the beckoning of the Burren. The holy wells, round towers, fairy forts, ancient stone enclosures and burial grounds of the Burren all serve as a reminder that I am hovering between two powerfully sacred, mystical worlds. I have no idea how I ended up in the desert in Sudan nor in the alluring, healing beauty of the Burren or how I have become a trader in the local market like my ancestral in-law. Never did I believe I would discover such remarkable similarities between two such contrasting worlds. Desert to Doorus has been a gift which has made our transition home so full of grace. My children will not be disconnected from the desert and will hopefully grow in the awareness of their late father's legacy, which is to celebrate diversity, not to fear that which is different and to respect each and every way of life. I have no desire to embark on a quest of unlocking the mystery that has become my life. I accept it as....'Maktoub'.

Sudan Unite. Africa Unite!

**DeserttoDorus** 

*Denise Heeley who has a background in theatre and subsequently fell into teaching has been living and working in Sudan for the past ten years. As she transitions back to Doorus, Kinvara she wants to keep the link with Sudan, to share its rich culture, history and beauty. With this in mind she set up Desert to Doorus, a non profit project to show Sudan through its artists eyes and also to link in local artists with those from Sudan. Desert to Doorus aims to show Sudan from the inside out as opposed to through the lens of international media which gives a very limiting overview of Africa's most ethnically diverse country.*





## The Way We Ate – 1916

*by Imelda Byrne*

Ireland a hundred years ago was, as now, largely a Rural country; still a poor country; still a “subject” land – but a hopeful one. By 1916 two-thirds of Irish farms, instead of being Tenanted, were now Owner-occupied and this trend was to gather pace in the following decades – about 230,000 farms were of less than 30 Acres (in contrast to about 50,000 today) but 30 Acres was, then, considered enough to feed a family!

The Easter Rising was a seminal event for us, Nationally, but most of the action took place in Dublin, with some sporadic activity in places far apart, so when the Rising had been quelled, and our heroic Leaders shot, or in prison, life went ‘back to normal’ and we went back to being a small island tacked on to a large Empire at war with another large Empire – Germany!

World War 1 was two years old and the farmers were doing well – prices for Cereals, Butter, Eggs, Potatoes, Cattle, Lambs and Pigs rose threefold – but the bulk of these food supplies were bought and shipped to Britain to feed the Fighting Forces – which inevitably led to food shortages for the general population. Essential items like butter, eggs, bacon and sugar were becoming nearly unobtainable, and too expensive, even if you could find them!

Country folk were generally better off for food – the smallest cottage could always find room on its patch of

land for hens (eggs); ducks; geese. Scraps could always be found to feed a pig, and every house had a garden for potatoes; onions; cabbages; turnips; carrots. There could be a Hive of Bees; blackberries were there for the picking for jam; rabbits were plentiful and easy to snare and a milk cow would provide rich butter, cream and buttermilk for breadmaking!

Grocery shopping was a much more modest affair in 1916. There were no Giant Supermarkets instead, there were street markets; Grocers; Butchers; Bakers; Hardware Stores and other individual shops – and Shopping Lists made up of items such as Mutton; Lard; Cheapest Tea and Margarine – the notion that strawberries, raspberries, grapes could be bought all year round would have been as unimaginable as New potatoes in Winter!

Recently I read a Central Statistics Office Survey, published in a back Issue of the ‘Irish Times’ (thank you, Conor Pope, for making my research so much easier!) – it compared prices today with those of 1916 and they proved – wait for it - that, in the matter of cost, today’s Consumers have it much better, And cheaper, than people a hundred years ago! Lead Statistician, Helen Cahill, told that “things were very poor back then – Poverty jumps out at you, and the lack of variety – we have average prices of groceries that people bought. There was very little variety in food!”





Condensed Milk was a common purchase, largely because, though fresh milk was plentiful, getting it from country to town and city was hard, and it was harder still to keep it fresh in the days before refrigeration!

To continue with the Statistics – The Survey found that neither fish nor fowl were listed on the Consumer Price Index “which suggests that these modern day staples were something of a Treat back then!” and that reminds me of visits to my Uncle’s farm near Ballinasloe during the Thirties. I recall pairs of Salt Ling hanging from the rafters in the Back Kitchen, and my Aunt taking them down on Thursday evening to steep overnight in water – to soften and de-salt them – then on Friday she would poach them in milk and onions and butter and serve them with Colcannon for Friday dinner – Fast-day, you know!

Back to the Statistics:	<u>1916 Prices</u> (in today’s money)
Pound of Beef	€3.67
Bacon; Sausage	€4.90 lb.
Creamery Butter	€7.35 lb.
Cheese	€4.90 lb.
Lard	€3.67 lb.
Milk	€1.22 Quart
Doz. Eggs	€4.90
“Best” Tea	€15.92 lb.
Cheapest Tea	€9.79 lb.

Not only were prices higher in 1916, wages were much lower – a person in a good Civil Service job, then, would have been doing very well, indeed, to earn the equivalent of €100 euro a week!!!

Another interesting Statistic – a hundred years ago, 50% of the average Household “spend” was on food – today that figure would be less than 12%. Back then 17, 5% went on Clothes (about 6% now). In total, 87% of the average Household Spend was on food, clothing, rent, fuel and light – now these categories cost us about a quarter of our income! Today’s Consumer Price Index lists Transport; Restaurants and Hotels; Recreation and Culture; Health and Communications – these items did not feature in the 1916 Index – there would not have been enough money in the Household!

Although some people lived in big houses, many, many more lived in very small homes. Close to a quarter of people living in Dublin city in the 1911 Census lived in a Tenement – a whole Family to a room! Reading about the Dublin Lockout, in 1913, when Jim Larkin led a Strike of Factory and Dock Workers, and the Employers Locked them Out for several months, without pay, and people had to exist on Charity and contributions from Trade Union sympathisers in Britain, - I came across a Case, just the stark facts – “Living in Bride Street; Messenger, wife and four children; Income 11 Shillings, Rent 3 Shillings; Wife and youngest child Consumptive; Diet – Tea and Bread!!!” I had cause to remember all this during the Miners Strike in Britain in the ’70s, when the bould Maggie Thatcher wouldn’t “bend” to the Miners.





I happened to be in Dublin on a Shopping Trip. I was going to have a look in Clerys, when I passed an English Miner standing outside with a Collection Box – I asked him how he got to Dublin and he said the Workers in the B & I Line were allowing Striking Miners from Britain to travel free, in gratitude for their generous help to our Strikers in 1913, and he had permission to stand there – well, what could I do, my extra £20 went into his Box, and I hope his Family had a good meal with it!

Incidentally, apropos of nothing in particular – in 1916 the Irish Times cost one penny, and a Pint of Guinness was six pence.

Frying, or Boiling, or Stewing were the methods of cooking back then; townsfolk would have had access to Gas Cookers; large rural houses would usually have a solid fuel Range, with its oven and even a back boiler to heat water; but the humbler dwellings, women had to cope with frying pans in fireplaces; heavy kettles which hung from hooks which swung over the fire, and out into the room to decant steaming water for cooking and washing, and a Bastible (pot) oven for baking. Boiled Bacon, cabbage and potatoes was always the most popular dinner (eaten in the middle of the day, except in the posher houses) but if all you could afford was pigs cheeks or crubeens you had to work with what you were

given, and simmering them away for hours, with potatoes and any available vegetables, gave you a nice ‘porky’ broth – what would we have done without our pigs?

I am grateful for an Article I found in “Farming and Country Life in 1916” which was produced for the Athenry Celebrations last June. It was compiled by Regina Sexton, Food Historian – she wrote “Pigs Heads; Fox-in-the-Bag; Casseroles; Field Mushrooms with Bacon; Seabirds Eggs; Oatcakes and Tapioca (ugh) were just some of the Dishes available in 1916. She also tells of Fine Dining in Upper-Class houses at the time. They, and high-end restaurants, followed an elaborate meal structure of several Courses, including Soup, Fish, Entrée; Remove; Roast; Sweets; Savoury/Bonne! A typical meal in French Classic style would include dishes such as “Sole Alice; Veal Sweetbreads Financier; Roast Lamb: Duchesse Potatoes and Iced Souffléz. However, for us mere mortals she did include “time saving foods” such as tinned soup; tinned meats and fish; picnic meats; tinned tomatoes; tinned pine apple; Yorkshire Relish; OXO; desiccated coconut; cornflour; custard; golden syrup; macaroni; sago; semolina and again tapioca (Ugh!)

Some time I hope I can actually meet her – she sounds so interesting, and such a fund of information on The Way We Ate in 1916.



*Imelda Byrne is Arts promoter for Carlow Federation I.C.A. She is one of the three women on I.C.A. Bootcamp featured on RTE.*

*Photos: National Library of Ireland*



# Jungle Spirit of Amazonia

by Simona Taylor



Visiting a tiny part of north eastern Amazonia for two months was a heart opening experience. The presence of the rain forest, with its mysteries, strong energy and healing plants, had a powerful effect on me. Everywhere I stayed the relaxed manner and generosity of the people, who seemed happy with very little, was highly contagious.

I travelled by boat on the mighty Amazon, from Iquitos, Peru, to Leticia, on the Colombian side of the three ways border between Peru, Colombia and Brazil. Another boat took me to Puerto Nariño, further into Colombia; from there, I took a trip to Lake Tarapoto, where I was delighted to see grey river dolphins leaping out of the water.

The Amazon basin contains the South American lands drained by the Amazon and its tributaries, home to the largest rain forest in the world. It is a tragic fact that some of the forest has been cleared for cattle pasture and soya plantations.

My journey to this part of the world started when I landed in Iquitos, which is the capital of Loreto, a large area covering most of the northern Amazon region of Peru. Iquitos can only be reached by boat or by plane, so it is somewhat isolated from the rest of the world. As my flight from Lima got close to landing, I could see thick jungle and rivers like long blue snakes, no roads in sight! But the town itself does have roads, and the traffic is chaotic; avoiding to be run over requires some dodging skills. I was there in July, which is considered winter over there, and it was hot and humid. In fact there are only two seasons in Amazonia: the high water season, (December to March), and the low water season, (June to November).

I spent a month in the forest, at a healing retreat, some two hours away from Iquitos by boat. The retreat catered for a small group of people of various nationalities and it was facilitated by shamans, or 'maestros' from the Shipibo tribe. This tribe comes from Pucallpa, an area which is over 500 km south of Iquitos. Like other indigenous peoples, they have travelled to other areas in recent times, looking for work and some of them seeking a more westernized lifestyle. Because of this, much of their culture and knowledge is getting lost. However there are still some who are interested in keeping their traditions alive, and learning the art of working with medicinal and sacred plants.

Some of them become shamans, and are able to cross the threshold between ordinary reality and the spirit world. They know that all knowledge comes from introspection.



*Approaching tiny village of San Pedro*





*In the forest*



*The bark of the huge Lupuna trees has medicinal uses*

Their training involves many years of apprenticeship with a teacher and long periods of solitude, living deep in the jungle, following a simple, special diet and communicating with the spirit of plants. Some of these plants are seen as 'teachers', just as a human teacher would be. To the Shipibo, the ayahuasca vine is a 'master' plant. Such plants can aid the process of physical and energetic cleansing, and help remove emotional blockages. One's intentions in working with them must be very clear, honest and humble. This is a very important requisite, together with a real commitment to receiving the teachings. A drink made from the ayahuasca vine and another plant called chakruna is taken by the shaman in order to 'see' his patient, work on blockages and facilitate healing. The healers enter a state of communion with the plants and receive spiritual gifts from them. These can be sounds in the form of 'icaros', (direct transmissions of universal consciousness), or visual patterns to use in their work. The Shipibo believe that plants have their own consciousness, and hold an 'akashic' record' of mankind, a deep knowledge of our present, past and future.

To learn about the existence of these teachings encouraged me to look deep within, in order to overcome challenges. During the retreat, the Shipibo men and women who worked with us often sung tunes which contained the icaros they knew. They explained that they literally heard the icaros emanating from the plants, learned them and used them during sacred ceremonies. Icaros are chanted to evoke the spirit of the plant, which helps us to open up and receive healing.

I also found that much of the healing comes from the jungle itself; it's so alive and vibrant; it invites one to wake up, to be present. Some of the nicest memories of the retreat come from the evenings spent in my 'tambó', (a tiny wooden hut), going to sleep to the buzz of a thousand insects, a soothing night time concert. I would

wake up to the singing of birds. When walking in the forest, I saw hummingbirds, woodpeckers, lots of 'pau-carsillos'. These are rather large, black and yellow birds, which make a very distinctive sound. I can only describe it as a futuristic, electronic machine being switched on!

Especially at weekends, I could hear music and drumming from nearby and distant village parties. It didn't bother me, I was happy that they were having a good time. Sounds seemed to carry very far in the jungle. I saw 'spider monkeys', swinging from tree top to tree top, making a lot of noise, and 'iguanas', coming out of the undergrowth, on the sandy paths; they are giant lizards, half brown and half green. While washing my clothes in the creek, I was graced by many beautiful butterflies dancing around me, but my favourite has to be the glorious 'blue morpho', with a wing span of at least 15 cm across, whose colour is a translucent sky blue on one side, and black on the other. To see one of them cannot fail to delight the heart, and fill it with gratitude and wonder. Then there were all the incredible plants to look at, during my walks in the forest; from delicate, tiny orchids to towering trees, which allowed strands of sunlight to filter through; all of the plants radiated such a strong life force, it was impossible not to be in awe of them.



*Rainforest flower*





*Embroidering traditional patterns*



*Native art*

Towards the end of my stay at the Temple, I decided to take a day off and go for a very long walk through the jungle, reaching three different villages on the banks of the Nanay river, San Pedro, Lupuna and Santa Rita. These villages are connected to each other through narrow forest paths, or otherwise can be reached by boat. They don't have electricity, but some of the villagers have their own generators: nobody owns a car, or even a motorbike, so most of the time life is very peaceful. I saw women selling bananas outside their front doors, children playing with sticks near the river, wooden houses on stilts being built or repaired; babies being rocked by older siblings. Everybody has at least two hammocks on their balconies, and they make great use of them. A lot of the cooking is done outdoors.

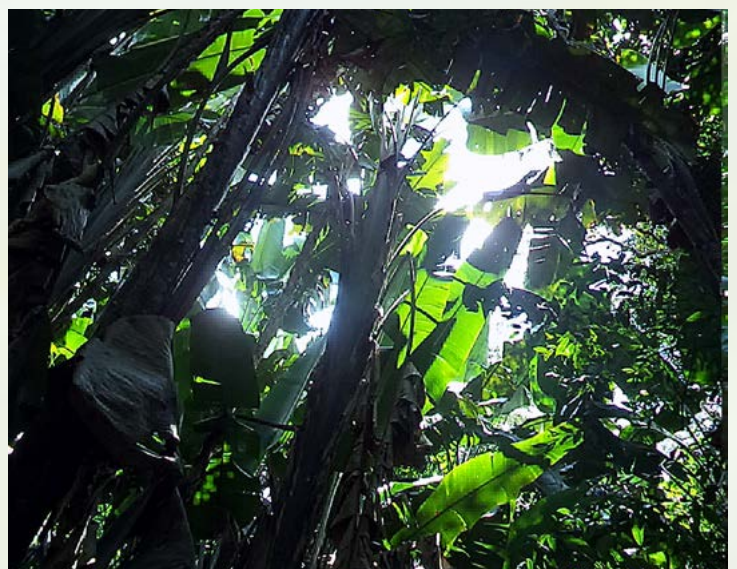
Most of the local people cultivate 'chakras', jungle garden plots; they keep chickens and sometimes pigs, they fish and go hunting; they even grow rice on the wet river banks, although their traditional staple is yucca.

They help each other with childcare and house building. More than one family invited me into their homes and I could see that they all slept in one large open space, including teenagers. 'Privacy' does not seem to matter in the same way as it does in the west, which I found very refreshing.

I was lucky enough to partake in the 'flower bath', (jainpoitil), an important ritual in the Shipibo tradition, which connects us to the plant world. The maestras prepared a mixture of cold water, flower petals and aromatic herbs, usually marigolds, basil and other leaves. Every day at lunchtime, when the sun was at its hottest, each of us would have a turn at sitting on a chair, in our swimsuits, outside the maestras' house, and enjoy buckets full of this mixture poured all over us. This ritual helps cleansing negative energies, and attracts light and protection. We were told to air dry our bodies afterwards, as to seal in the goodness. The lovely, bright orange petals stayed in my hair, long after my body had dried.



*With my teachers at the end of the retreat*



*Light comes through*





## Chris Nelson: Creator of Paradise (s)

If you're going to Goa, there's no shortage of flimsy season hotels and cocktail happy hours, trance parties, beach bums and tattoo parlors. Seeking an unturned stone on Goa's 63 mile coastline after all these years as a hippy haven turned luxurious hideout for Bollywood's Stars seems a little impossible. But I found paradise in Goa.

Down the dusty red path that leads to the quiet, silvery Mandrem Beach from the lovely Avalon Inn, I stumbled upon Ashiyana Yoga centre, a leafy paved, stunningly designed eco village, where bamboo trees brush you on serpentine stone paths that lead to the bridge over Mandrem River. This is where, 11 years ago, Chris Nelson, founder of Ashiyana, first set eyes on this hidden sanctuary.

"I was sitting in Hotel River Cat, where everyone used to hang out, looking across the river, watching the sun rise through the palm trees and I looked across the river. I knew as soon as I saw it, I'd found it: the place for my dream of 20 years." This was the beginning of Ashiyana, which, 11 years later, has emerged as an elaborate warren of experimental eco lodges and luxurious yoga chalets, therapy and studio spaces and bedroom suites.

Some of the architecture is curved, a unique feature in Chris's vision for a design that reflects the flow of nature, but a challenging feat for the local Goan builders who had never built anything like this before.

Most of the building is in stone, and Chris refers affectionately to the beauty of the process of 'dressing the stone'. They are sometimes naturally curved, and otherwise laid in a curve to achieve the flowing effect which, as in nature, rarely has straight lines says Chris:

"I wanted to build like this, to move organically through the land. A row of palm trees is not a straight line- so paths evolved in Ashiyana around the trees. Where we had to, we uprooted and replanted a tree..."

As with ancient building rituals, Chris also took into account the rising and the setting of the sun, and the prevailing winds.

"Ancient people would sleep on the land and feel the land, and intuit what was required. I did this for weeks. Some yoga chalets appeared to be square, and some round. I could have built quickly, but it's much more beautiful to build slowly and organically."



Ashiyana, means 'peaceful home' or 'sanctuary'. The centre embraces a holistic and personalised approach to wellbeing and is now a globally recognised yoga teacher training centre and a superb destination for its Ayurvedic treatments, detox retreats and its 'emotional healing journeys'.

After the assessment, the process kicks off. It doesn't matter what method is used, it is always about the intention of the seeker: that is what triggers the body's internal and natural healing process."

But essentially, the core of true healing, says Chris, rests on one thing, and that is love. He cites Malcolm Gladwell in "Outliers", who describes the mysterious town of Rose-to, Pennsylvania as an example of an outlier. This group of extraordinary émigrés had no disease, no stress, and no social issues- despite a hearty diet of meat, pasta, tobacco and wine. The key to their happiness?

"A warm, tightly knit and loving community. Nothing will work if you do not have this."





Chris began with Satyananda yoga, but his and the Ashiyana teachers' approach in teaching yoga is spontaneous, organic and responds to the urgency of the times we are in: mankind is not flowing harmoniously with nature. Most of us lack a sense of wellbeing and inner peace. Yet, paradoxically, this is all as it is meant to be. This is a time, Chris says, in which we need to awaken and remember that we have access to a well of peace within ourselves. Yoga, at Ashiyana works in the context of the world today adapting to our current challenges. Ashiyana is a place to come home and it has become, for many, a spiritual home.



"I've watched the teachers here at Ashiyana holding the space lovingly, and I've watched the students' minds open and blossom here. I have also seen that a rigid, more neurotic approach to teaching asanas mirrors that neurotic controlling right back: the contracted mind takes over. It is always this narrow, contracted mind that needs healing."

Chris's new book, "Wake up and Soar" brings verbalises the heart of what the Ashiyana process is about. The book (due for publication in May, 2017) works in tandem with the App "Soar", which gives the user access to a coach who aids the physical, emotional and spiritual growth for the happy achievement of the client's goals.

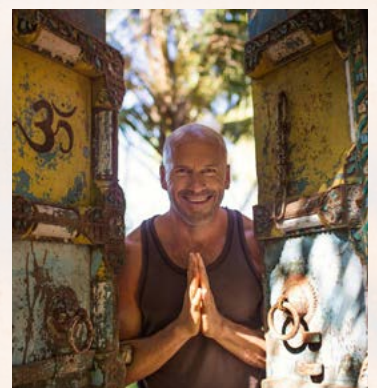
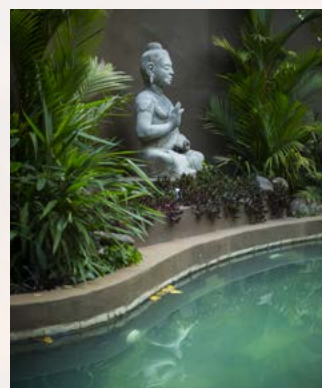
"Each Soar Coach must be living from their own inner calm, and this invites the client into their own calmness. The coach nurtures each person's dharma, or life purpose, to give them the space to explore what makes their heart sing. The key purpose is to help you be self responsible. YOU determine your health and happiness. The coach is there to help you nurture your dreams safely."

"Soar" is a practical guide to living in harmony with yourself, and your environment. The book is the backdrop to the App, which supports the healing of the individual in their own lives and communities.

Our greatest need today, says Chris, is to learn how to relax and this begins with the mind. "Wake Up and SOAR" presents a clear and simple road map which empowers you to create a relaxed supportive lifestyle providing a stable base from which to pursue your heartfelt desires. The core tool S.O.A.R has its roots in ancient wisdom and is expressed as a modern day 'practice' to help us move from our 'normal' fear based state of mind to our 'natural' calm quality of mind, where we accept life as it is and therefore flow with her, rather than against her.

Chris will open a sister Ashiyana centre in Brazil, in 2017, located within 45 acres of forested hillside among palms and tropical mountain flora. There is a crystal clear river running through the centre's land in Alto Paradiso, (High Paradise), which is at the same altitude as Machu Pichu. The site is over a bedrock of crystals, which according to NASA, makes it the most luminous place on earth.

The vision Chris had across the Mandrem River was much more than a yoga retreat centre. A blueprint for life has evolved out of the curved paths and the organic growth of Ashiyana over 11 years: it is a global vision that is embodied in the physical retreat places of Ashiyana Goa and Brazil. I get the impression there will be more Ashiyana centres over the years, nestled in natural paradises, joined by the technology of the Soar App (launched in April 2016). "Wake up and Soar" was launched in May 2016. If you're going to Goa, drop in to Ashiyana. Oh, and by the way: the beaches are magnificent.



*by Siofra O'Donovan*

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# Spiritual Anarchy

by Eric-Jan Verwey

In his mystical handbook by the name of *The life of the world to come* the medieval practical kabbalist Abraham Abulafia (1240- around 1291) poses the question; what does a human have to do to live? The unexpected answer is: to die. Curious as this exchange may seem when taken at face value, one is instantly exposed to a thoroughly mystical understanding of life when the words 'to the fullest' and 'psychologically' are inserted. The question then reads, 'What does a human have to do to live life to the fullest?' The answer being, 'They have to die psychologically'.

The first insight we can gain from this is that there are apparently more kinds of death than only the physical one. The second is that to improve the quality of one's life one does not necessarily have to seek additions. On the contrary: by letting a specific part of one's psychological being die, one apparently gains something else in the process. The new questions that arise are: What is this full life that is attained? and: How does the shedding of something in our psychological make-up lead to that fulfillment? Since these questions are interdependent, a proper understanding of one leads to the clarification of the other.

Abulafia was a kabbalist and hence came from a Jewish background. From this one might assume that his

thoughts and emotions were thoroughly influenced by Judaism and might not apply or appeal to someone from a different tradition. The fact, however, is that although Abulafia used the Hebrew texts as his starting point, he did so in a characteristically negationist way. That is, while holding on to the kabbalistic idea that the letters of the Hebrew alphabet have creational and mystical powers, Abulafia only did so because he had experienced this for himself. Surprisingly and fascinatingly, Abulafia believed that only by stripping the words of the Hebrew Bible of their meaning, one could come face to face with the truth and essence of the holy book.

In *The life of the world to come* Abulafia describes many mystical techniques that involve the letters of the Hebrew alphabet. By concentrating only on letters and thus avoiding entire words, Abulafia strived to prevent the mental surfacing of connotations that are triggered when encountering words. He felt that only in this way could he cut all ties to his present state of mind, his present conditioning, and could empty himself out completely so as to be open to receive the truth. This implies that even though he was a rabbi, Abulafia maintained that the ultimate spiritual truth lies beyond the words of the Hebrew Bible, yes, beyond any word that makes sense.



By breaking through the confines of religious dogma in particular, and rational thought in general, Abulafia followed what can be called the path of spiritual antinomianism.

Although spiritual antinomianism (oppositions to religious and moral law, based on religious pretexts) is not a term in wide use, there are many instances of mystics passing the boundaries, and contradicting the laws, of their own religious traditions. Or, according to the adepts of these transcending streams of spirituality themselves, not passing, but instead following the deeply secret meanings of these spiritual precepts. Within Judaism, apart from practical kabbalists like Abulafia, there is, for example, Sabbatai Tsvi (1625-1676), known as the mystical messiah. Accepted as such by a great number of Jews all over the world, Tsvi, at the height of his mystical vocation, outwardly converted to Islam whilst secretly keeping on adhering to his own new Jewish doctrine. Thousands of believers followed his example, creating a sect that remained alive until the last century. One of the main proof texts of this stream of Jewish mysticism was Psalms 119:126: 'They broke your Torah.' The verb in this verse can also mean 'to declare void'; torah means religious instruction and law.

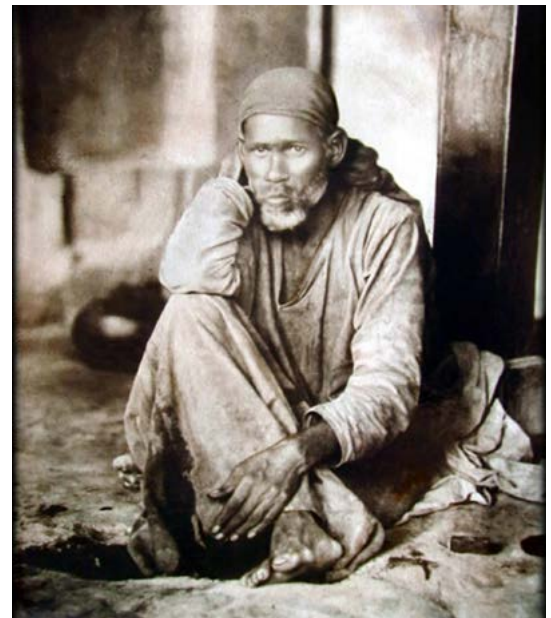
Within the fold of Christianity there are also examples of mystics apparently breaking the law. Meister Eckhart (around 1260-1328), for example, stated that true spiritual poverty implies the emptying out of oneself in order to near the truth. Eckhart emphasized that this emptying out also, and importantly, had to include all thoughts about God. In one of his sermons Eckhart says: 'Therefore I pray God that He empties me of God, because my essential being is above God.'

The philosophies of India abound with theories that seem to be thoroughly unreligious, as far as religion is understood to mean organised dogma and mental

slavery. The advaita Shaiva philosophy holds that the ultimate reality lies beyond all dualism, which in this case means that it lies beyond all rational thought.

The sub-sect of the ascetic Aghoris practices a contrariness to all laws and precepts, also aiming to break the hold that rational thought has over the human mind. On their path to the truth they break all the laws of orthodox Hinduism, drinking alcohol, having contact with corpses on the burial ground, and even eating human flesh. Indian philosophy in general teaches that religious life implies the total surrender of oneself, of the ego, to the truth so that the truth can reshape one so as to align with it, to become a proper receptacle for it. This is directly opposed to the organised religions' stance of strictly following prescriptions that are added to, and often jar with, one's existing thought system. Whereas the former aims for mental peace and freedom, the latter sows the seeds for mental violence and bondage.

Zen Buddhism, as one of the final outcomes of Indian philosophy, would of course be the clearest example of antinomianism, but for the fact that antinomianism is the heart of this spiritual practice. If not for the typical Zen attitude to renounce any conformation (including that renunciation itself), its antinomianism could be called orthodoxy. According to Zen, the ultimate reality is Nothingness. By this it does not mean nothingness as opposed to ishness, because that would imply a new dichotomy which itself is contrary to the art of Zen. Zen's Nothingness is to be understood as That-Which-Is. To the static intellect, this Void is unattainable: it is a state of dynamic being in which there is total Oneness. To Zen, all division is held to be merely a result of the rational projections of the mind, which distort the unity of reality. Seen from the point of view of any organised religion, Zen represents ultimate spiritual anarchy.





Although the religious philosophies described above might sound very alien to a modern Western mind, its trains of thought are part and parcel of our Judeo-Christian world. The convictions of Meister Eckhart, mostly renounced by the Church, were based on his own experiences and interpretations of the New Testament. Hence they can be said to be the fruits of a free-thinker. Although Abulafia went as far as denouncing everything that tied him down to intellectualism, most of the kabbalists based themselves on the, originally Hebrew, text of the Bible. The convictions of the Jewish mystics thus strictly abided by the words of the Old Testament. In this, part of the Christian Bible, we can easily follow the kabbalists' lead to find the roots of our dormant anarchistic spirituality.

To give an example of the Bible pointing at the mystical renunciation of itself, let us look at the end of the creational process as described in the first chapter of Genesis. There, in Genesis 1:31, it is written, 'And God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, [it] [was] very good.' According to a mainstream, not even mystical, interpretation, the last part of this sentence also holds the meaning 'death is good'. This interpretation is based on the semantic similarity of the Hebrew words for 'very' and 'death' in Genesis 1:31 and both Jona 4:9 and Song of Songs 8:6. Other reasons for this interpretation include the use of permutation systems, systems in which letters of the Hebrew alphabet are interchanged. In this way, the rabbis saw an overlap between the essence of the words for 'very' and 'death'.

From a mystical point of view, the goodness, justness, of death ties in with the Nothingness of Zen. Psychological death becomes the gateway to contact with the ultimate reality, and hence is Good. Living this goodness is the essence of being that the mystic strives after. Interesting in this context is that the Hebrew word for 'essence', is *etsem*. The plural form of this word (also meaning 'bones') can be subdivided into the two words *etsand*



*mavet*, respectively 'tree' and 'death'. The essence of reality thus is likened to a tree of death. It is from this mystical tree that life eventually came forth!

The example of the paragraph above is but one in the vast world of inter-textuality that forms the framework of Kabbalah. While the experiences that can be had in this world are determined by a wide variety of topics and are invariably life-changing, all the kabbalistic texts dealing with them carry the same warning: one has to come to the text without intentions, expectations or hopes. In the words of Meister Eckhart, the seeker after truth has to empty themselves out completely. Likening that psychological state to mystical death, one has to die before coming to the holy text. Since the kabbalists hold the Torah to be the blueprint of creation, the same can be said for extra- textual life. In other words: to come face to face with ultimate reality, one's consciousness has to be of the same essence as that reality, namely of Nothingness. Following Psalms 119:126, one first and foremost has to declare the Torah, and hence reality, to be Void. Having come to that state, one is living life to the fullest, since one is now one with the One.



*Eric-Jan Verwey is the author of numerous books and articles on the topic of 'Mysticism'. He was fascinated by and drawn to religious mysticism from a very early age. As soon as he was old enough to travel alone, he went to India, and experiencing the power of the temples and myths of this ancient culture and has been making pilgrimages there ever since. Through a strange set of circumstances and an illness, his path eventually led him to Israel where a compassionate rabbi helped him and started him on his path towards linguistic Kabbalah. Returning to his homeland, Eric was inspired to master the Hebrew language in order to gain access to the source texts of this stream of mysticism. He completed a masters degree in Semitic languages and spent a year studying at the University of Jerusalem. Now he combines daily study of medieval kabbalistic texts with regular trips to India visiting ever-more obscure and ancient Hindu temples. In between he also explores other streams of mysticism such as Zen Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and Jainism.*



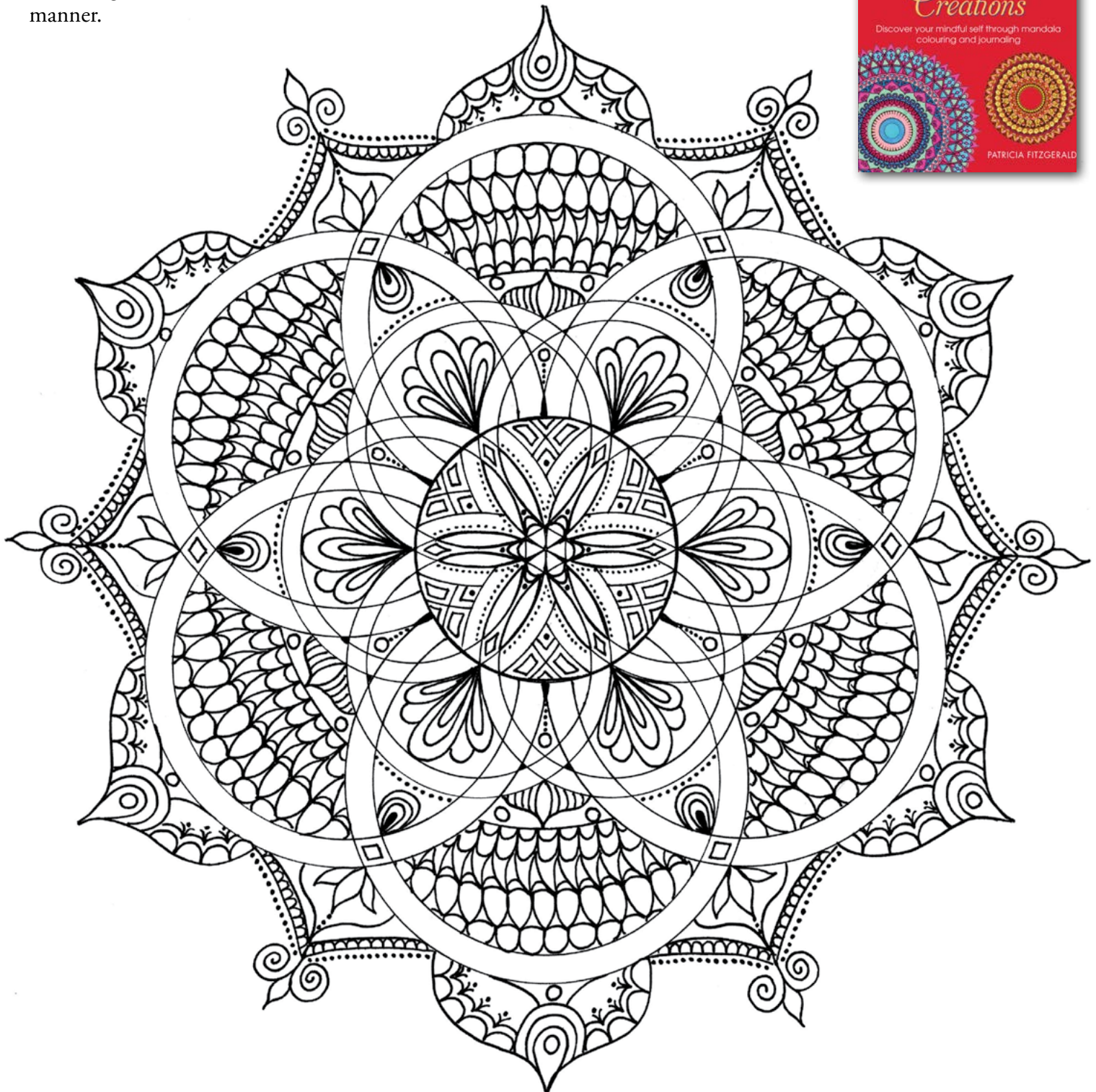
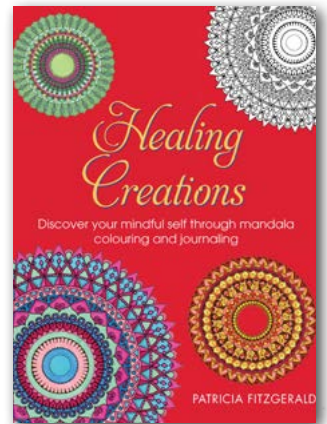
# Healing Creations

## Discover Your Mindful Self Through Mandala Colouring and Journaling

by Patricia Fitzgerald

[www.healingcreations.ie](http://www.healingcreations.ie)

Mandalas are a very ancient art form and can be found right across the world. The name itself comes from the ancient Sanskrit word for “circle”, or “container of spirit”. Can colouring a mandala really help you deal with stress and change? Yes! The act of creating and engaging with an intuitive piece of art brings you into a place of calmness, where negativity can be released and where decisions can be made in a much more focused manner.



- ‘If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.’ Maya Angelou
- ‘Start by doing what’s necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.’ Francis of Assisi
- ‘Creativity is intelligence having fun.’ Albert Einstein



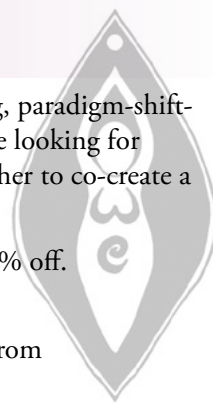
# Womancraft Publishing

Womancraft Publishing is an independent publisher based in East Cork, dedicated to producing life-changing, paradigm-shifting books by women, for women. Their books are for women who are questioning the current culture, and are looking for ideas, support, insight, and inspiration, personal and cultural, to make shifts, get empowered, and stand together to co-create a vibrant new culture, which honours the female and feminine alongside the male and masculine.

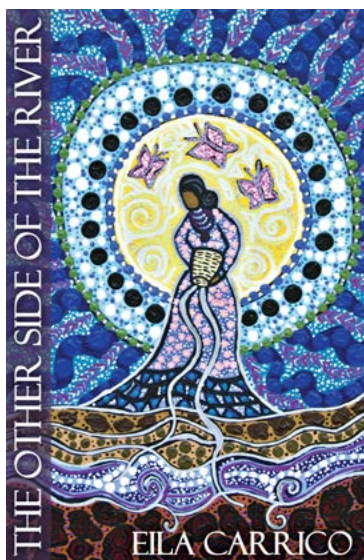
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## *The Other Side of the River: Stories of Women, Water and the World by Eila Kundrie Carrico*



What would it mean to follow the teachings of water? This is the question posed, and explored in beautiful depth by Eila Kundrie Carrico in her debut book, *The Other Side of the River: Stories of Women, Water and the World*.

“Our inner landscapes mirror the outer landscapes in which we live. Our bodies are the same as plants. We are like the trees, grounded in the earth and extending toward the sky. Water moves through us. Stories supply a wellspring, a source of spiritual richness that awakens the memory of cultures from the past in our blood. This memory infuses us with connection and reaches out to the branches of diverse peoples across the world. But what if the water dries up?

And what if the stories of where we came from are lost?”

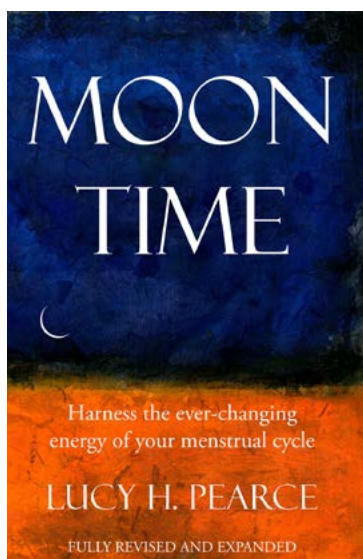
*The Other Side of the River* is a deep searching into the ways we become dammed and how we recover fluidity. It is a journey through memory and time, personal and shared landscapes to discover the source, the flow and the deltas of women and water.

Rooted in rivers, inspired by wetlands, sources and tributaries, this book weaves its path between the banks of memory and story, from Florida to Kyoto, storm-ravaged New Orleans to London, via San Francisco and Ghana. We navigate through flood and drought to confront the place of wildness in the age of technology. It tells the stories of water goddesses

from around the world, noting that the way we treat water and women is the same.

Part memoir, part manifesto, part travelogue and part love letter to myth and ecology, *The Other Side of the River* is an intricately woven tale of finding your flow... and your roots. Eila Kundrie Carrico is a mesmerising new female voice in the American canon of nature writing. Her writing is a celebration of wild nature and cultures that has the power to awaken a felt sense of our collective human story as deeply embedded in the natural world.

## *Moon Time: harness the ever-changing energy of your menstrual cycle (2nd edition) by Lucy H. Pearce*



“Despite having inhabited them our whole lives, our bodies can often feel very foreign to us. We can feel out of control, at the mercy of our own hormones, never knowing whether we’ll be full of energy or curling up in a ball, exhausted and aching.

Our female bodies are quixotic—our energy levels, moods and physical health constantly changing. It can feel disorientating and frustrating. But what’s worse is there seems to be little support or acknowledgement of this reality. We’re supposed to just ignore it all and carry on regardless.

It is my guess that no one ever initiated you into the path of womanhood. Instead, just like me, you were left to find out by yourself. Little by little you pieced a working understanding of your body and soul together. But still you have gaps.

You yearn for a greater knowledge of your woman’s body, a comprehensive understanding of who you are, why you are that way.”

*Moon Time* is beautifully written in a nurturing, yet deeply practical way, and shares a fully embodied understanding of the menstrual cycle. Full of practical insight, empowering resources, creative activities and passion, this book will put women back in touch with their body’s wisdom.

Whether the reader is coming off the pill, wanting to understand her fertility, struggling with PMS, healing from womb issues, coming back to cycles after childbirth or just wanting a deeper understanding of her body, *Moon Time* is an empowering read.

The first edition has consistently been #1 in Menstruation on Amazon.com for a number of years, this second edition features over 45 pages of additional material including: fertility charting, red tents, creating ceremonies: menarche, mother blessing, menopause and understanding moon phases.



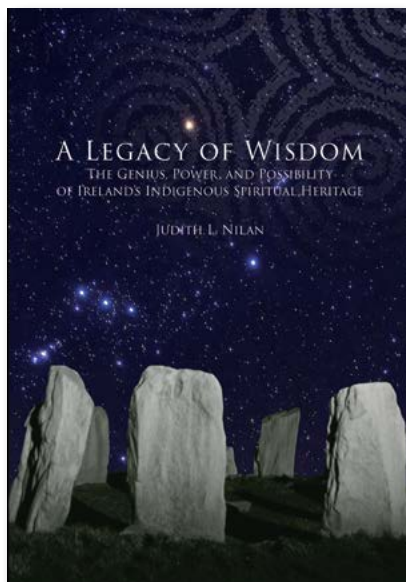
# Croí Publishing



**Do you want to get your message out? If you're passionate about it so are we.**

Croí Publishing is a new independent publisher that began by producing OtherWise magazine in Spring '15. Since then we've been working on various printing and publishing projects in collaboration with eg. the Irish Seed Savers Association, the Woodland League and some businesses as well. We've also published some books by local and international writers, a couple of which we're delighted to introduce you to here, as well as a map of Lough Derg.

## ***A Legacy of Wisdom: The Genius, Power, and Possibility of Ireland's Indigenous Spiritual Heritage*** ***by Judith L. Nilan***



Pulling threads from history, mythology, and folklore, this book weaves a tapestry of wisdom and meaning from the ancient teachings and traditions of the TuathaDé, the indigenous spiritual ancestors of the Irish.

We search for spiritual grounding. We seek wisdom to create meaning in our lives, to nurture our souls, and to guide us to the wholeness, power, and potential of who we are as sacred people.

In our quest many paths open before us. For those of us with Irish ancestry we often long for the resonance of a wisdom tradition that is uniquely and authentically ours. This book is an exploration of that wisdom tradition.

Judith Milan is a teacher, writer and minister. She leads sacred journeys to Ireland and workshops based on Ireland's indigenous spiritual wisdom.

The book is available in many bookstores and heritage shops around the country or online at **[www.croipublishing.com](http://www.croipublishing.com)**

## ***Lough Derg and its Islands: A Voyage of Discovery by Road and by Water*** ***by Gerard Madden and Shane Creamer***



Lough Derg and its Islands; A voyage of Discovery by Road and Water is the latest publication by East Clare historian Gerard Madden and Tipperary man Shane Creamer.

For 27 years Gerard has been an intrinsic addition on the waters of Lough Derg, bringing visitors from far and near on daily boat trips to Holy Island. His intimate knowledge of the lake was gleaned from a further 20 years of fishing in its waters. He has created a wonderful resource from his 10 years of research. This beautifully produced book is a treasury of local wisdom making it a must for anyone interested in Lough Derg in its 376 islands, only 113 of which are named on the Ordnance Survey Discovery Series

It is rich in folklore and history attached to the islands and includes poems and anecdotes.

"This is the first time where you have one map of Lough Derg showing all the access routes to the lake."

"Every map that was ever done on Lough Derg we have examined it and every name has been included, the old with the new."

The stunning map of Lough Derg that Gerard, Shane and a local artist Paul Berg have collaborated on shows all of the access routes to the lake for the first time in 175 years.

Book and map are available at Scéil Eile bookshop in Ennis, locally in Mountshannon and online at **[www.croipublishing.com](http://www.croipublishing.com)**



# Miscellaneous

by Raphael Ward

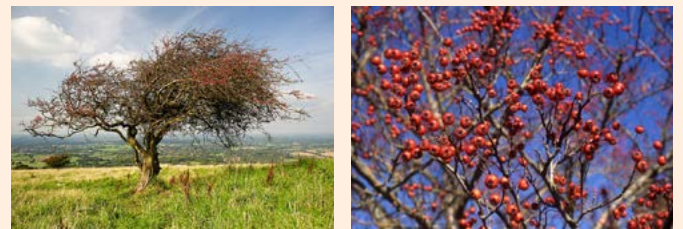
## The Lime Tree

These particular trees are a source of many medicinal cures. Containing the very important vitamin "C" the bark can be of great assistance with its properties to ease coughs, migraines. In the past it was used to cure epilepsy, ease anxiety and a sure remedy for blood pressure. Tea made exclusively from its flowers can be used as a mild relaxant and also a sleep and digestant aid. Its bark is extra strong and tough and is used in making sandals, ropes, etc. As it is one of the lightest woods in weight to work and very flexible it is in constant demand with craft workers.



## The Hardy Hawthorn

This tree has a number of aliases, called among many names "Bread and Cheese", and also "Leaves and Haw Sandwich". Known for its quick setting abilities it thrives in May with cream like blossoming and holds its strength as a mature barrier against wandering animals. It derives its name from the Greek "Kratos" meaning strength. Among its many products are walking sticks, mallet heads, tool handles to name only a few. Hawthorn Berries are one of the main source of feeding for various birds for Winter months.



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## *Our Orchard*

Apple trees filled the back garden,  
where we knew the shape of each tree,  
picking the fallen apples when in season.  
In late April and early May we played  
under the blossoms and delicate petals  
fell on us from a pink batik sky.

My mother made apple tarts from the large  
sour variety, baked on the open hearth,  
the overflowing juice sizzling and burning  
to a hard paste at the edge of the pan.  
Returning from snigging in the cocks of hay,  
or packing the saved meadows into the hayshed,  
we devoured the sweet taste of apple pie.

At Halloween a large apple hung  
from the ceiling in our kitchen,  
and with our hands tied behind our backs,  
we strained to bite into its swinging shape,  
much too big for our small mouths,  
or we dived into a basin of water  
getting drenched as we struggled to grip  
the apple's hard green skin.

The remainder were stored in heaps,  
and covered with rushes at the end of the garden.  
These were used at Christmas when apple crumble  
was baked in the oven under the rich, red coals  
placed on top of the lid, hanging  
over the open hearth of the fireplace.

*by Mary Guckian*

