Come, gather in the tent together…

Welcome to our June newsletter. We are looking forward to our annual retreat and have exciting news of the programme. Join us as we draw together once again as a “secret society of congenial spirits”. Read on below…

Also in this issue:

- **Soul and Culture**
  - Pam Douglas-Smith

- **Soul and Culture**
  - Kris Misselbrook

- **Soul Practice**
  - Ingeborg Borst

- **Flyer for our annual retreat**

- **Biography of Mika Hadar- Borthwick who will be joining us at this years retreat together with the Sacred Funk Trio.**
The summer sky is illumined with the warmth of sunlight by day and its night holds twinges of light at its farthest reaches even while the stars still shine . . . an inspiring time of radiant light. A time of enlightenment at every level of being . . . the summer solstice. A time to reflect on the outer expression that your life is and how it weaves together with the greater whole.

The world has ever fascinated me with its infinite diversity. There are so many cultures, religions, castes, traditions . . . so many races and sexual expressions and sizes . . . so many possibilities with no two beings exactly alike. And where we reside profoundly impacts our experiences. We have varieties of music, art, clothing, food, drink and even prayer that are unique to our life path perspective.

Traveling opens up imaginative alternate realities to explore what might have been if you’d been born in a different place or to a different family. Looking out the windows of a train passing through the countryside of Europe, I’ve always found a little house here and there that I might have been raised in instead of in Texas. How different would my life have been, especially in external ways.

Soul Voyagers are explorers by our very nature. To encounter the new and different is to see another aspect of the Divine Creation. We embrace the journey with all its interesting adventures, detours, encounters and experiences. We live in an embrace of life that Wade Davis reminds us is possible when we open to it . . .

“The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you; they are unique manifestations of the human spirit — other options, other visions of life itself.”

A favourite story about how we can expand not only our acceptance of, but the celebrating of, other cultures comes from the life of the spiritual master Gandhi. The Hindu father of a grieving family whose son had been killed in the streets during riots with the Moslems came to Gandhi to ask how he could move forward from his grief. He knew forgiveness was required, but could not overcome his hatred. Gandhi compassionately and wisely made a suggestion. He told the man to adopt, unconditionally love and raise a Moslem boy in that child’s own faith. Then he would experience forgiveness and soul healing. He would honour both sons as he became the bridge between the diversity that seems to separate us and the oneness that unites.

In the ways of soul rather than outer culture, we realise that we have more in common than we have different. And yet at the same moment, each of us is a totally unique spark of divine energy. We are eternal spiritual beings having a human experience for a divine reason.

In The Seven Whispers: Listening to the Voice of Spirit by Christina Baldwin, she reminds us how to abide in the midst of the cultures of our world while being true to
the inner calling that each of our souls has to express. She tells of the Hasidic teaching that when a baby is conceived, an angel accompanies it to the womb. Together they discuss and decide the purpose of this child’s incarnation. What lessons will it learn, what gifts will it find, what challenges will it face, what will it contribute to the world? Who will it love and who will it grow with and who will it serve with? When labor begins, the angel returns to heaven, but first places the seal of its loving touch with its finger just above the upper lip as it whispers “hush . . . forget.” The angel imbues the child with love to remember its soul purpose while gifting it with amnesia for all the details so each moment can be experienced as it comes. This little cleft reminds us of our angel’s presence and blessing with us throughout our incarnation.

One of the most powerful tools that is found in all cultures and spiritual traditions is that of conscious breathing. Mothers do it when they give birth. Meditators do it when they center within. We do it when we are faced with things that ‘take our breath away’ for good or ill. Christina Baldwin suggests a wonderful and easy practice to connect with your soul so you can express yourself in whatever culture you choose to exist. She recommends doing it for 15 minutes each morning and each evening. The simple process is . . .

1. Let Go
2. Be Here
3. Ask: What Now?

The ‘letting go’ allows us to lay down our outer lives for a few minutes and gives time for reflection. The ‘being here’ gifts us with an acceptance of life exactly as it is and ourselves exactly as we are in the moment. There is nothing to do; only to be.
The ‘asking for’ what comes next, what do you want me to do, how do I need to change in order to do it then invites us to shift into alignment with Spirit as we embrace life anew. Having been renewed with inspiration we can re-enter our lives consciously with vision and purpose.

Wherever we were born was just right for each. Wherever each has journeyed has been its unique soul adventure. Those people each has encountered have given interwoven connections of passion and caring. The inner calling that sparks each onward is a compass to navigate the outer world with the wisdom of soul. May all always find their true north.

For a final inspiration, the words of John Philip Newell in *Sounds of the Eternal: A Celtic Psalter*

> That truth has been inscribed into our hearts and into the heart of every human being, there to be read and reverenced, thanks be to you, O God. That there are ways of seeing and sensitivities of knowing hidden deep in the palace of the soul, waiting to be discovered, ready to be set free, thanks be to you. Open our senses to wisdom’s inner promptings that we may give voice to what we hear in our soul and be changed for the healing of the world, that we may listen for truth in every living soul and be changed for the well-being of the world.
Souls build culture in the patterns of their incarnated lives. Together we create that milieu where we can act together and play out our dreams. With acknowledgement of soul, the culture has true liberty, equality, fraternity, creating a society, a culture, that thrives and brings happiness. This culture is organic and in symbiotic with its habitat.

But the gross imposter, culture without soul, serves shallower desires, makes gods of wealth, entitlement and exclusion. Without soul we create self serving hierarchies, and we exploit both earth and fellow man to their detriment.

Alastair McIntosh’s book ‘Soil and Soul’ illustrates actions in the Hebrides bringing the soul back into the cultural and political debate and how this can change the vision shared and direction of a community. For him a just society brings souls together, and with their soil, their land.

Thus a soul culture sees how we are all part of the web of life, with our family, fellows, and ancestors, the earth and its tumultuous inhabitants in myriad layers of life. This is the basic knowledge lost when a culture denies the soul, loses its root connection, and in a real sense ‘loses the plot’. And more insidiously this soulless culture can then colonise the individual, and seduce the timid soul to cover its own light and knowing, dumbing it down. It makes great play and pomp, especially in all media to play down the source of soul in each and all, so that depth is forgotten, overridden, covert. We need to depose this colonisation of the soul by a culture busy to impose its short term meanings over our own inner vision.

As Parker Palmer said:

“Like a wild animal, the soul is tough, resilient, resourceful, savvy, and it knows how to survive in hard places .... Yet despite its toughness, the soul is also shy .... It seeks safety in the dense underbrush, especially when other people are around and, unfortunately, community in our culture too often means a group of people who go crashing through the woods together, scaring the soul away .... Under these conditions the intellect, emotions, will, and ego may emerge, but not the soul : we scare off all the soulful things, like respectful relationships, goodwill and hope.

A circle of trust is a group of people who know how to sit quietly “in the woods” with each other and wait for the shy soul to grow up. The relationships in such a group are not pushy but patient; they are not confrontational but compassionate;
they are filled not with expectations and demands but with abiding faith in the reality of the inner teacher and in each person’s capacity to learn from it.”

May Soul Voyagers be such a circle of traders and culture makers, prophets not profiteers, bringing back this faith, creating community and its whole, holy, web of culture. As Robert Schumann put it:

“Every age has a secret society of congenial spirits. Draw the circle tighter you who belong to one another; that the truth of art may shine ever more clearly, spreading joy and blessings everywhere.”
The tree which represents this month, June, Summer Solstice, is Holly. (Ilex aquifolium) Tinne(Celtic)

The Holly Tree offers protection from negative influences that can attack, or rather, possess us. Dr. Edward Bach, describes it as a more or less spiritual protection from influences that have become internal.
We do not like being jealous or angry; we all prefer happiness to rage. But at times we become helplessly overwhelmed by negativity.
There is a strong tradition that associates Holly with the power to ward off evil. Whether it is in the Roman rites of Saturnalia, through the Druids or the Christian Church matters little. The Holly tree has the reputation for immortality since it keeps its leaves throughout the year. It grows slowly but with great purpose and strength, forming impenetrable hedges. The tough waxy leaves show its vitality. His message is that everybody is able to develop their inner great self which has the power to overcome our life difficulties.
Thus Holly acts to reunite us with our own self, to drive out the negativity and flood us with the healing vibrations of love.
Its action is protective but it is also transforming. We can see this more in the sweetness of the flowers than in the sharpness of the leaves. When the buds open in May, the bees throng the tree for nectar, drawn by the delicate scent. Sweet-scented flowers always stir the heart.

Soul and Culture

I always end my article with the words;

Mi Takuaway OYasin (we are all related).

When you journey for a client it is always a surprise where your guide is leading you, or from which situation you are going to retrieve a lost soul piece.
Very often people who are living their lives in the here and now, have issues coming from traumas from previous lives.
To give some examples, in these previous lives they were perhaps man or woman,
poor or rich, Celts, Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Egyptian or Viking, living in different cultures. So because many of us lived so many lives, there is no doubt that we once were both victim and perpetrator. If you have experienced the Deep Memory Process, you will probably have had many experiences of past lives and the traumas we suffered.

The Souls living on this planet, at the moment, shared many lives together. We are all related, we all have red blood, emotions, hopes and dreams. That is what us connects as human beings. We are all descended from the same original species. So whatever religion, culture or ancestral background, we are all related! When we keep this in mind, the only answer to peace on our planet, is respect, understanding and love.

This time I tell you about a journey I made for a 50 year old woman Monique. Her complaints were, deep grief, weight problems (obese) and obsessive overprotection of her children.

The first piece I had to retrieve was from a past life.

I was placed in a desert. The landscape, dry, bare mountains, somewhere in the Middle East. A caravan with camels and mules is slowly moving through the sand. Some of the men and women are walking, others are sitting on the camels. A young veiled woman sits on a camel. She holds a baby against her breast. When the caravan enters a narrow passage between the rocks, they are ambushed. A group of wild Bedouins, slaughters the whole caravan with big scimitars. Also the woman with the child is killed. Afterwards they take all the goods and are ready to leave. I stand next to the man who killed the woman and child. I tell him that he took their lives and that he still has a piece of her soul. First he is confused, and does not understand me, but then suddenly he realises what he has done. He falls on his knees and cries. He gives me a white rose with red spots, as if it is splattered with blood. In return I give him a green emerald (brings joy and satisfaction).

When I looked energetically to Monique I noticed a black stripe over her throat, as if she was beheaded. The colour black means that it is a residue from a past life not yet healed. It can also be the cause of problems with the throat, like swallowing food and not being able to express emotions. My guide removes it and heals it with golden light.

The second piece comes from a past life too.

Holland during the 2nd World War. People are starving. They even ate tulip bulbs.
During that winter people died of hunger. It is cold and raining. Somewhere in the countryside a young girl looks for potatoes or turnips in the mud. She is starving but saves everything she finds for her little brother and sister. The twins are very weak and about 3 years old. The mother is ill too. She lies in a crib and is nearly dead. Because the girl's condition is not as bad as the others, she refuses to eat what she finds herself, but she is almost fainting. Finally she collapses and dies along the road. Her last thoughts are for the children and she feels guilty because she no longer can take care of them. I tell her that she is dead and that she can leave and go to the light. She refuses because of the children. I tell her that they are all dead too and that she can be with them again, in the light world. She hears them calling her name, and goes to the light to join them. She gives me for Monique an old, black and white picture of herself, happy, with her little brother and sister holding each other.

When I journeyed a second time for Monique I brought back pieces she lost when her grandma suddenly died, and a little baby sister. In both cases she felt guilty and was convinced that it was her fault.

When we were talking about the pieces, she could understand now why she always felt that deep grief. After the death of her grandma and baby sister, nobody ever talked about them any more.

The main theme in her life was to learn to cope with the death of loved ones. Her past lives were also dedicated to saving the children. But she did not succeed. In this life she wants to protect her children too, resulting in being overprotective.

Very often when people die of starvation in a previous life, they have unconsciously, issues in this life with food, resulting in anorexia or obesity. Getting back the pieces related to it, they can now act differently. There is food enough, nobody is starving of hunger. You can choose what you eat. No need to eat until you burst. No need to feel guilty when you eat.

Bringing back soul pieces means that you can deal with unconscious behaviour by making it conscious and react in an alternative way. Breaking the old pattern.

What I learned as a shaman is that you never ever judge people, or situations. You realize that we all had different lives in different cultures and parts of the world. Often you are attracted to a certain country, religion or culture. Well, maybe once, you lived there and tried to make the best of it!

Mi Takuaway OYasin (we are all related)

Wakinyan Hotun
“Varieties of Transpersonal Experience”

Soul Voyagers Network
Annual Retreat 2017

Charney Manor, Charney Bassett, Oxfordshire OX12 0EJ

Friday 27th Oct to Sunday 29th Oct 2017

“Mysteries of consciousness, of subtle energies, of ancestral work, imaginal and shamanic journeying, inner dialogue and contemplation, and outer expression as individuals and in relationship.”
Our presenters this year are once again Soul-Voyagers members gifting their energy and experience to offer presentations and workshops based on their personal transpersonal exploration, training and research. At the same time feedback from the last retreat is encouraging us to delve into the rich transpersonal experience of all the Soul-Voyagers members present, and create an encounter where this can be shared.

We welcome especially our new member, Mlka, who has extensive experience working with subtle energies and will show us her techniques of healing for healers, and The Sacred Funk Trio who will lead us in a Saturday night celebration drawing us into an joyful experience of the subtle realms.

Our presentations include:

- Mika Hadar-Borthwick - Aura Balancing
- Pam Douglas-Smith (via Skype from the USA) - The Enchanted Map - Where are you on your Spiritual Journey?
- Jen Kershaw - The Ancestral Wild Wood
- Mary Haskins - Grandmother Group
- Non Davies - A Tent of Blue
- Ingeborg Borst - Transformational journeying
- The Sacred Funk Trio - Music and drumming

Arrive from 10.00 am for lunch Friday and leave after lunch on Sunday. Cost £275 to include accommodation and all meals. Preference for single rooms given to early bookings.

Please visit our website soul-voyagers.net for more details and a booking form which should be sent to Jen Kershaw, Priestlands House, Priestlands, Sherborne, Dorset, DT9 4HN.
or e-mail jenkershaw@aol.com
Biography of Mika Hadar- Borthwick who will be joining us at this years retreat.

Mika Hadar-Borthwick  BA, MSTAT, CST, SYT
www.subtleyoga.co.uk
mika@subtleyoga.co.uk

I was born into a lineage of Hasidic healers. I have seen and felt energy fields since childhood, and in my early 20s I trained as a yoga teacher with Penny Neal-Smith. Then, through the Elisabeth Kübler-Ross Foundation, I trained with the perceptive Jungian teacher Gregg Furth, learning about inner-dialogue and working with sub-conscious elements.

My DreamDialog project reflects some of this work: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQsNi5iAOi0&t=626s.

I went on to train and work with the wonderful healer Lily Cornford who developed with Joseph Leach an inspiring healing system called ‘Mental Colour Healing’. I specialised in children's healing and hosted a children’s healing clinic in my studio.

During my time at Lily’s healing centre I observed how lots of my healing colleagues became unwell. ‘It hits you at your weakest link’, a healer friend said. I embarked on researching and articulating the subtle system with the purpose of developing a Mind-Body Integration system that would serve healers, practitioners and patients. With this in mind, I studied and trained with the late Dr Shen Hongxun (http://www.shenbuqi.com/dr-shen-hongxun/) a master teacher and healer in Chinese Chi healing practices. The teaching of Swami Rama of the Himalayan Institute, the inspired yoga teacher Vanda Scaraveli, and my friend the writer and healer David Furlong assisted me further. Through a variety of therapeutic systems, including the Alexander Technique and Cranio-Sacral therapies, I further developed ways to stabilise body and mind and harmonise the energy system, composing a teaching program of subtle yoga therapy and Subtle Integration.

Established in 1993, my studio offers training in Aura Balancing and Subtle Yoga.

Healing work has its challenges. Many healers have experienced moments or days of mental or physical unease following a healing session. The conventional advice of ‘protection’ doesn’t always help.

The aura system circulates energy, allowing the body to absorb fresh energy and to release used energy. When our Life force (Chi, Prana) doesn’t flow with ease, it will cause bodily discomfort, illness, as well as stress and anxiety. The aura system is well-organised in shape, character, and structure. Understanding ‘Subtle Anatomy’ and how to work with the aura is a great assistance to both the
practitioner and to the client. Easing the flow of energy and integrating the aura system will promote health, calm and vitality.

Sacred Techniques of Aura Balancing

We’ll start with an Introduction to Subtle Anatomy, the energy bodies, energy centres and how we affect each other. We’ll then explore mind-body practices aimed to open the energy centres of the feet and hands, to circulate energy efficiently through the main energy channels. We’ll explore a meditative practice for whole body subtle integration, followed by the sacred tantric practice of Behuta Shuddhi (clearing the elements). This is a powerful meditative practice to clear the chakras.

If there is time, it would be good to introduce you to Candle Aura Balancing, an ancient sacred practice that was taught years ago by the late healer, the remarkable Lily Cornford.

I feel confident that anyone interested and experienced in Soul-voyaging would readily feel an affinity with this experiential work, and benefit greatly from it.

*********************************

Also participating in the retreat this year

The Sacred Funk Trio!

The Sacred Funk Trio will be ideal to lead a joyful and celebratory party in the Solar on the Saturday evening.

If you'd like to sample their music, you couldn't do better than to track down two CDs representing two sides of their music, both of which will be included in what they present:-

The KLLB Band : Tales of Diaspora and The Kate Luxmoore Group LIVE : the grove

To quote the sleeve of the first one :- 'Tales of Diaspora' is a concept album. A joyous musical journey across continents, inspired by Ifa in Nigeria, Santeria in Cuba, Candomble in Brazil and Shango in the Caribbean - the living embodiment of Yoruba traditions found throughout the African diaspora. The Odu of Ifa is the oral history and beliefs as originally practised by the Yoruba. It is also the sacred divination culture. Divinely inspired and spiritually charged, KLLB have created a new exciting fusion of sounds that re-unites Africa, Europe, and Asia, with North and South America’ (Nothing the world needs more than this at the moment I think.)
'The journey into the spirit world of the Yoruba through this soulful infusion with jazz, celtic, classical and funk is produced by Lekan Babalola (percussion), Kate Luxmoore (clarinets) and Reuben Reynolds (guitar)

And heading the list of those to whom they give thanks for the creation of the album are

'The Ancestors for passing on the energy!'

Kate, though, emerged from the 'opposite end of the musical spectrum', having been classically trained in England, after having been brought up in rural Wessex, where generations of her ancestors lived. She has connected to them by researching and playing folk songs from Somerset - which will also feature in their programme

Their music is full of 'life, love and harmony'. I feel they and their music are living proof that the 'field' beyond all polarities that Rumi speaks of, really does exist, and we shall be able to dance there joyously on the Saturday evening of our retreat, propelled by their music............

Other tasters can be enjoyed on You-tube – ‘Yemoya’ and ‘Oya’ are recommended, but there are many others.

Kate has joined our Network because of her deep interest in Ancestral Healing, and she and Lekan follow the Ifa-Yoruba spiritual path. Indeed, Lekan is a Babaluwo (initiated as a priest) in this faith.

When Jen returned home at the end of the Liverpool project some years ago, a throng of traumatised slave women accompanied her. By astonishing synchronicity, she was able to work creatively with Kate and Lekan for some months, until the women were sufficiently healed to move on. Jen plans to share this story as part of her presentation at the retreat.