



westernchanfellowship.org

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NEWSLETTER 42

WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND EVENTS

We are pleased to announce that in November we will be holding our first in person retreat for more than 18 months. Details are listed below. We intend to list further in person retreats subsequently so please keep an eye on the website.

Covid-19 has not gone away and we still need to take precautions, but it is now possible to hold retreats so long as we implement measures for Covid-safety, measures such as distancing, ventilation and more.

Building works at Shawbottom have been delayed but are now almost complete and we expect to start holding regular retreats there very soon. More details about Shawbottom on page 4 of this newsletter.

Alongside in person events we intend to continue to hold some online events. Below we list one online retreat and also give details of regular online sessions hosted on different days of each week.

In this newsletter we also have a short article by Jake Lyne telling us something about the work of the European Buddhist Union, and information from John Crook's children about how you may hire Maenllwyd.

Please refer to the website at www.w-c-f.org/Q342 for the latest events updates and more details.

13TH – 20TH NOVEMBER: ILLUMINATING THE MIND

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: MAENLLWYD [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-417](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-417)

We thought we had run our last retreat at Maenllwyd. However as Shawbottom building works have been delayed (but are expected to be completed very soon now) we are running one more retreat at Maenllwyd.

Running an in-person retreat currently requires attention to Covid precautions, and in Wales the Covid safety laws are more restrictive than in some other UK countries. For example, Welsh law will require wearing of face-coverings whenever indoors during the retreat (other than at mealtimes), including when meditating in the Chan hall.

Please read our Covid plan for the retreat (linked from <http://w-c-f.org/Q487-417>) before making your booking. This is so that you can consider whether you are willing and able to adhere to the necessary restrictions.

Silent Illumination is a profound meditation practice which leads to a mind of great calmness and insight, using ancient Chinese Zen methods which are just as applicable to the modern West. It is the origin of the Japanese Soto Zen practice of Shikantaza but is approached somewhat differently and full instruction will be given.

This seven-night silent retreat is an opportunity to learn and deepen this practice through intensive meditation, with instruction and personal guidance by individual interviews with an experienced teacher. Whether or not a breakthrough to Enlightenment may occur, establishing a practice gives a firm basis for subsequent ongoing mindfulness and compassion in everyday life.

Previous experience of a residential retreat is recommended but serious beginners are also accepted.

4TH – 11TH DECEMBER: LIVING AS A BODDHISATTVA - “AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE”

THE SIX PARAMITAS ONLINE RETREAT

LEADERS: JULIET HACKNEY AND ALYSUN JONES. VENUE: ONLINE VIA ZOOM <HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-418>

A monk once asked the ancient Chinese Zen master Yunmen, 'What is the teaching of a whole lifetime of Buddha?' Yunmen replied, 'An appropriate response.'

This retreat will explore the training for bodhisattvas, the six Paramitas (or perfections): Generosity, Moral Integrity, Joyful Effort, Patience, Concentration and Wisdom. The practice of the Perfections can be seen as being like a raft to take us to the shore of enlightenment. They can also be seen as a way of fulfilling our bodhisattva vow, to help us find an appropriate response to others in our world of suffering.

We will use a number of different methods including small and larger group sharing and some guided meditation during this retreat. Each day a different Paramita will be introduced and investigated. There will be two full days of practice, one at each end of the retreat. During the week practice will be in the mornings and evenings.

Personal interviews will be arranged outside of the schedule in the mornings. If necessary, participants will be assisted with the use of Zoom technology.

There is no need to book time off work during Monday to Friday 9-5. However, participants should plan to attend all sessions and ensure that arrangements will work for them.

This retreat is most suitable for those with prior experience of WCF retreats. Applications will be considered and any not accepted will receive full refunds.

DAILY/WEEKLY ONLINE EVENTS

On most days of the week there are online events available for you to attend. Please see the list at <http://w-c-f.org/Q728> Even when these events are arranged by a WCF local group leader they are open to attendance from anyone including those outside their area.

We also have a Western Chan Fellowship Practice Support Group on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/257812581073712>

And we have a long-established mailing list called WCftalk, where you can discuss Chan topics with others.

Apply for membership at: <https://groups.io/g/wcftalk/>

THE EUROPEAN BUDDHIST UNION (EBU)

JAKE LYNE

The EBU website is at www.europeanbuddhism.com. The most interesting page, featuring podcast interviews and teachings, including two from Zarko Andricevic a Chan Dharma Heir based in Croatia, is:

<https://network.europeanbuddhism.org/insights>

The EBU Buddhist magazine is available online at:

<http://www.ebumagazine.org>

EBU project groups can be joined by any Buddhists in Europe (despite Brexit, the UK is in Europe!). If you would like to know more about any of these projects please find the details on the EBU website or, if there is no link to the project that interests you, contact Jake Lyne, WCF EBU representative at kjlyne@gmail.com who can put you in touch with the project leader.

- Buddhist Action Month
- Eco Dharma
- Interfaith Dialogue and Action on a European level
- Compassion in Action (<https://www.mia.eu.com>)
- Buddhist Chaplaincy
- Buddhist Women's Network
- Rainbow Sangha
- Scientists and Mindfulness Network
- Buddhist Academics
- Teaching Buddhism in Schools
- Buddhist Youth

DHARMA INTERVIEWS

Personal interviews are routinely offered on residential retreats and sometimes also on day retreats. COVID has suspended these activities and left a void for those feeling the need for an interview. Simon Child is offering online interviews e.g. using Skype or Zoom, for those who would like that. This offering is primarily for those who have had WCF personal interviews in the past. If you would like to request an interview please email teacher@westernchanfellowship.org



FEMALE BARN OWL
(INFRA RED LIGHT)

SHAWBOTTOM UPDATE

SIMON CHILD

My apologies that the building works at Shawbottom have overrun so badly, as I know from your enquiries that many of you are keen to be able to visit and use Shawbottom. The good news is that we are nearly there!

In fact the builders have promised that the facilities should be useable to a large extent in just a couple of weeks, and some of the WCF local group leaders are expecting to attend a residential event at Shawbottom at the end of this month. However at that point there will still be some works yet to be done before it can be formally regarded as complete.



The Chan hall is largely complete. In many ways it is very similar to Maenllwyd Chan hall, with a similar size and shape of room (though slightly larger), and with two trusses exposed below a pitched ceiling. But it has electric lighting (with dimmers to regulate the light) and it has underfloor heating! Once the screed covering the underfloor heating pipes has dried thoroughly we will install wood flooring.

Also like Maenllwyd it is close to a stream, and it has long views across open countryside.



The accommodation barn is also largely completed. Again there is underfloor heating. We have five principal bedrooms, one of which has disabled facilities, with a total of 5 showers and 6 toilets. Retreats will also have the use of some additional bedrooms and toilets in other parts of the property.

You may remember that we are situated in a wildlife corridor which connects two nature reserves, with most of the land around us being owned by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. This area is important for breeding of wading birds such as curlew and snipe, and several birds of prey. We often see foxes, badgers, and hares. The red deer mostly stay away during the summer when the cattle are here, but from October to April there are no cattle and during these months red deer have been frequent visitors during day and night. This video <https://youtu.be/3nvAKZisKf0> was taken with a security camera on the barn wall at Shawbottom and shows deer moving around at night.

Once works are more complete and we have usable accommodation it will become possible to welcome people who wish to visit to see the place. Also, several of you have kindly offered to help out by being part of a work party but unfortunately without accommodation it has not usually been possible to accept your offer. If you would like to visit Shawbottom when that is possible, whether a day visit or to stay overnight, and whether to offer work or just to view the place, please email me teacher@westernchanfellowship.org and I'll get back to you when that becomes possible.

RENTING MAENLLWYD

Maenllwyd is now available for rent for small groups for independent meditation practise – see www.maenllwyd.org

BOOKS OF JOHN CROOK'S WRITINGS

John Crook's son Stamati has published compilations of some of John Crook's writing and poetry on Lulu.com, and also his book The Koans of Layman John.

<https://www.lulu.com/search?contributor=John+Hurrell+Crook>

Circling Birds, the compendium of New Chan Forum articles by John, is now also available on Amazon

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Circling-Birds-John-Hurrell-Crook/dp/0955685915>

Further books by John (Hilltops of the Hong Kong Moon, Tale of Two Houses, and Chine Soldiers) are also available as ebooks at www.johnhurrellcrook.com

DON'T MISS A NEWSLETTER!

We usually send newsletters by both post and email and which you receive depends on your preferences on record in your WCF account. Sometimes, to save postal costs, we send a newsletter by email only and you will miss out if you are not registered for emails about our events.

To receive email newsletters you must have opted in to promotional emails – if you have not done that then data protection law forbids us from sending email newsletters to you. To do that, login to your WCF account at <https://www.westernchanfellowship.org/login/> then select Communication Preferences, then Update your record and select "*Consent given for email about our events and other activities*".