



westernchanfellowship.org

June 2025

NEWSLETTER 52

WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP NEWS AND EVENTS

We have extended our retreat programme up to the end of 2025. We are continuing to take some non-intrusive precautions against Covid-19 transmission on retreats: details are given on the website retreats page which also lists upcoming events and any updates: www.w-c-f.org/Q342

RETREAT FEES REDUCED

The fees for second half of 2025 are lower than in the first half of 2025!

We continue to review our retreat fees to endeavour to make them more affordable. Retreat bookings have increased and this makes it possible to reduce fees. We hope to be able to maintain lower fees into 2026.

Supported retreat places continue to be available to support those who need financial help to be able to attend retreats. There is no means-testing, simply select that option when booking.

28TH JUNE – 3RD JULY: MID-SUMMER SILENT MEDITATION RETREAT – 5-NIGHTS

LEADERS: ALYSUN JONES AND JULIET HACKNEY. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-474](http://www.w-c-f.org/Q487-474)

This silent retreat is based on the Buddha's early teachings on mindfulness. It is suitable for beginner and experienced meditators alike. It will encourage you to develop your awareness through focussing on different aspects of mindfulness (including the body, feelings and mind).

Practising meditation may help to clarify and settle your habitual reactions. This leads to a more direct appreciation of the here and now and the possibility of experiencing greater freedom in everyday life.

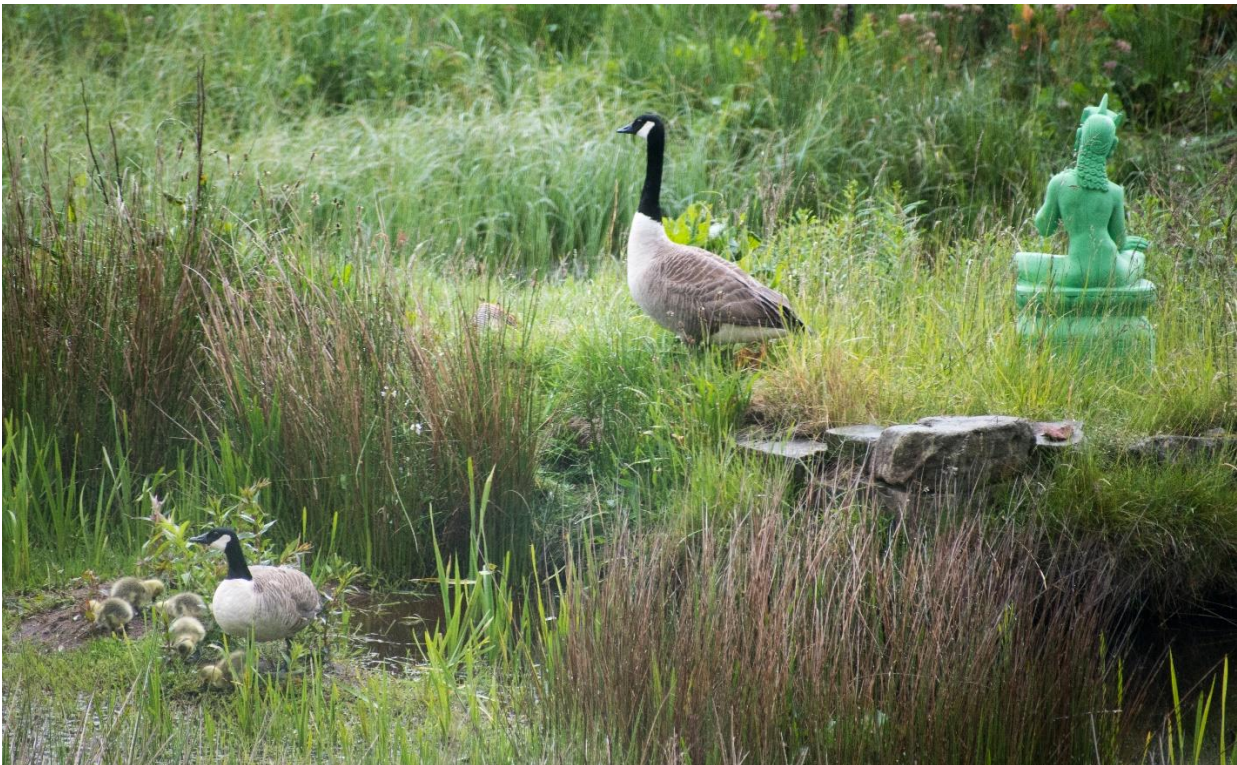
Rising early each day the retreat will include teaching on Buddhist principles, meditation instruction, silent and guided meditation. There will also be mindful movement practice (from a qualified Tai Chi Movements for Wellbeing instructor), and individual meetings with the teachers for personal guidance.

18TH – 27TH JULY 2025: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 9-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-475](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-475)

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 nine-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.



FIRST SIGHTING OF NEWLY HATCHED GOSLINGS: SIMON CHILD

23RD – 28TH AUGUST: WESTERN ZEN RETREAT – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: JAKE LYNE. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-476](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-476)

Who am I? Thoroughly confronting this question can take us directly to the centre of our being. Over the course of this five-night retreat you will investigate the question "Who am I?" within a standard retreat framework, using silent meditation in conjunction with a unique method of verbal inquiry. This format allows you to use words to go beyond words and thereby enter the main gate of Chan.

The intensive nature of this process of inquiry drives each practitioner into a self-presentation that is difficult to experience in other ways. To guide and support you, personal interviews with the teachers are offered regularly throughout the retreat. With whole-hearted engagement this retreat may lead to the acceptance of self, the experience of 'self at ease', and may even provide an opportunity for direct insight into the ground of being.

26TH – 28TH SEPTEMBER: WEEKEND CHAN RETREAT – 2-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-480](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-480)

Discover who you are through Chan meditation. Learn to cultivate clarity, wisdom and compassion through the practice of meditation according to the Chan (Chinese Zen) tradition.

This weekend retreat will offer teaching in Chan methods for newcomers, and ample practice opportunity for experienced meditators. The schedule will be less intensive than that of a full Chan retreat, but we shall rise early with a concentrated programme of sitting meditation and exercise sessions.

4TH – 11TH OCTOBER: INVESTIGATING KOANS – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-477](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-477)

The ancient Chinese Zen practices of investigating Huatou and Gongan (Koan) are best practised in a supportive environment such as this intensive silent Chan retreat, supported by personal interviews. As one becomes deeply absorbed in the practice, mental constructions drop away and one is confronted by a realisation that one does not know the nature of existence and one's fundamental assumptions of life are groundless. Staying with and cultivating this 'doubt', it can become all-consuming 'Great Doubt' which may 'shatter', giving a direct insight into reality which may be what is known as an Enlightenment experience.

15TH – 22ND NOVEMBER: ILLUMINATING THE MIND – 7-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: FIONA NUTTALL. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-478](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-478)

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.

29TH NOVEMBER – 4TH DECEMBER: WESTERN ZEN RETREAT – 5-NIGHT RETREAT

LEADER: SIMON CHILD. VENUE: SHAWBOTTOM, PEAK DISTRICT [HTTP://W-C-F.ORG/Q487-479](http://w-c-f.org/Q487-479)

Who am I? Thoroughly confronting this question can take us directly to the centre of our being. Over the course of this five-night retreat you will investigate the question "Who am I?" within a standard retreat framework, using silent meditation in conjunction with a unique method of verbal inquiry. This format allows you to use words to go beyond words and thereby enter the main gate of Chan.

The intensive nature of this process of inquiry drives each practitioner into a self-presentation that is difficult to experience in other ways. To guide and support you, personal interviews with the teachers are offered regularly throughout the retreat. With whole-hearted engagement this retreat may lead to the acceptance of self, the experience of 'self at ease', and may even provide an opportunity for direct insight into the ground of being.



MR AND MRS: SIMON CHILD

Live owlcam and blog: <https://peakdistrictretreat.co.uk/live-owl-cams/>

DAILY/WEEKLY ONLINE AND LOCAL 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>

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/>

Details of local group meeting schedules and events can be found at <http://w-c-f.org/Q3>

CARDIFF CHAN GROUP DAY RETREAT SATURDAY, 11TH OCTOBER 2025

Cardiff Chan group are hosting a one day retreat at the Woodland Retreat Yoga Centre, Cardiff. More details available on request through cardiffchanretreat@gmail.com

BRISTOL CHAN GROUP DAY RETREAT, 19TH JULY

The Bristol Chan Group will be running a day retreat on 19 July led by Jeremy and Jeanine Woodward.

Theme: 'Spiritual Faculties: Spiritual Powers - An exploration of the Five Faculties as expounded by the Buddha, their transformation into Five Powers, and their relevance to Chan Practice'.

Venue: Bristol Zen Dojo, 91-93 Gloucester Road, BS7 8AT.

Contact Pat Simmons 07443479363 bristolchan@westernchanfellowship.org

KENT CHAN GROUP

THURSDAY EVENING MEETINGS

Currently the Kent Chan Group meets online, but it is planned at some point in the Spring that the class will be hosted in a new Dharma Centre which is due to open in Rochester. The class will then be offered in a hybrid format meaning that people can either attend in person or continue to connect online.

DAY RETREATS AT THE ST BENEDICT'S CENTRE, WEST MALLING

The regular quarterly programme of day retreats continues in 2025, scheduled on the dates below. Further details about the day retreats can be found at <http://w-c-f.org/Q41>

- Sundays 8th June, 7th September, 7th December

DAY RETREAT WITH BODHICHARYA LONDON AT THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY

On Saturday 11th October, Stuart McLeod will be leading an Introduction to Chan day retreat as a guest of Bodhicharya London, hosted at the Buddhist Society near Victoria. You can find more details at <https://bodhicharya-london.org/day-retreats/>.

WESTERN CHAN FELLOWSHIP AGM: SUNDAY JUNE 22ND

SHAWBOTTOM OPEN WEEKEND AND WCF AGM

Similar to 2023, the 2025 AGM will be held as a hybrid meeting both online and also in person at Shawbottom. This includes an open invitation to members to take the opportunity to visit Shawbottom and stay over the weekend on a self-catering basis at no charge. An opportunity for socialising, for longer walks in the area, or whatever you prefer. If you wish to stay, apply in advance to teacher@westernchanfellowship.org so that we can coordinate numbers and parking.

FULL MOON SPOONY DHARMA

A series of zoom meetings for those with chronic illness, 'Spoonyies'. Helpful and healing Buddhist practices for those who can't practice formally or regularly attend retreats. If you would like to be sent an invite, email hughie@hugle.uk