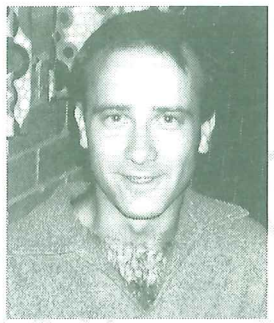
PAUL CROSS, 34



"I went to see the Dalai Lama when he was here in 1992, and that blew me away. I had read some books by him and was reading a lot about meditation, psychology and philosophy generally.

Then I reached a point in my life when I was ready to pursue Buddhism a bit more seriously. I started coming to TI regularly about four years ago, after my marriage broke up. I wanted to de-stress and I thought meditation would be good for me so I started coming Monday nights, then I took the Refuge precepts.

About 12 months ago, I decided to take the leap to Wednesday nights, and this year I took the leap to Tuesday nights. I have a seven-year old son, Jordan, who started going to Dharma club last year. I thought if I was going to try to teach him, then I should know what I was talking about! "

How does Buddhism help you?

The main thing is learning how to take everything a bit more calmly, such as all the little things that happen at work, or if my son is misbehaving. Whatever happens, getting upset is counterproductive on every level. You can't look at things calmly and rationally when you're upset.

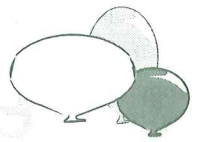
What does Buddhism offer young people?

Understanding the concept of attachment and that those attachments are only temporary pleasures. And seeing that the things you grasp at and are obsessed with are only a temporary fix for whatever desire you've got going. It has made me think twice about what I prioritise in my life and what I think I need, because a lot of those things are really not that important."

How is TI meeting/not meeting the needs of young people?

"For quite a while when I first came, I felt it was a little bit of a closed shop. I had to make an effort to knock down some doors and make friends. That was a little frustrating but it did not bother me in a big way. It also took me a while to figure out the sequence of prayers and what prostrations were about.

The structure of the program is good, although it's not easily accessible. The main thing I would find useful is some kind of direction on what to do when I get home, what to meditate on, and some sort of progression from one practice to the next."



Dharma Club

Begins again on
Sunday 10 June at 10.30 am.
Watch for the full details in the June newsletter

AUSPICIOUS DAYS IN MAY

Auspicious days are calculated according to the lunar calendar.

On these days the benefits of action are greatly multiplied, so they are especially good for spiritual practice.

Tuesday 1	Tibetan 8	Tara Day	Tara Puja
Wednesday 2	Tibetan 10	Tsog Day	Guru Puja
Monday 7	Tibetan 15	Full Moon	Precepts
Thursday 17	Tibetan 25	Tsog Day	Guru Puja
Wednesday 23	Tibetan 30	New Moon	Precepts
Wednesday 31	Tibetan 8	Tara Day	Tara Puja

Building a much better Centre....

The end of the financial year is fast approaching and this year we are seeking over $20,000 in donations to our Building Fund to complete the payments for our sparkling rebuilt commercial kitchen. All donations are very welcome and are tax deductible. Please keep a look out for the donation form in the June Newsletter and consider assisting Tara Institute as well as taking advantage of a tax deduction.

Regards,
Mark Fernandes
Treasurer

MEMBERS' BULLETIN

If you're a member of TI, included with this newsletter you will find a new Members' newsletter 'Members' News and Views'.

With an active new Membership Team on the job working hard to make membership a more positive and beneficial experience, now's a great time to think about becoming a member.

For more details contact the office or the Members' Team via their email address: tarainmem@hotmail.com

Tara Institute

3 Mavis Avenue,
East Brighton
Victoria 3187
Phone 9596 8900,
Fax 9596 4856
email: tarainst@netspace.net.au

Tara Institute is a branch of the FPMT — the Foundation for the Preservation of the Mahayana Tradition — a network of Buddhist Centres in Australia and worldwide.

Following the Mahayana teachings of the Buddha — in the tradition of Lama Tsong Khapa — we work to relieve all beings from suffering in all its forms.

Tara Institute is fully audited, non-profit and run by volunteers. We rely entirely on the support of Members, friends, benefactors and bequests. Donations and fees are requested in order to keep the Centre running.

If undelivered, please return to —
3 Mavis Avenue, East Brighton 3187
Phone (03) 9596 8900 Fax (03) 9596 4856
email: tarainst@netspace.net.au

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Tara Institute NEWS

MAY 2001

THIS MONTH

"LOVING KINDNESS"
ONE-DAY COURSE
SUNDAY 20 MAY
9am – 5pm

SAKA DAWA NYUNG NYE
FRIDAY 25 AT 8PM
UNTIL MONDAY 28 AT 6AM

YOUNG PEOPLE & BUDDHISM

In this issue we look at young people and the dharma, and talk to several committed 'young' members. Read their responses and feel very, very positive about the future of Tara Institute!

The interviews were conducted by Adair Bunnett, Mary-Lou Considine, Nicole French and Dianne McDonald.

ANTHONY 'ANT' DEAGUE, 21

Not so long ago Anthony 'Ant' Deague was fiercely competitive in several sporting arenas, even making trials for the Olympics rowing team and competing at an elite level in swimming and triathlons.

Today, at 21, Ant (an ironic nickname given his great height!) has channeled his considerable energies into the dharma instead.

"I lost the joy for sport and I got sick of the incredible ups and downs," he says. "When I'd win I'd feel happy, when I'd lose I'd feel sad. I was totally consumed by the eight worldly feelings!"

Ant has been a regular face at TI for the past two years. He now helps coordinate the Tuesday Night Study Group, and regularly helps greet people to TI on Monday nights. This is a role he particularly enjoys, as he remembers how intimidating he found it to first come, and how several people were kind and helpful to him at this time.

In response, he tries to help people of all ages 'in' to TI in whatever way he can, whether to have a cup of tea with them, or just to take the time to talk and listen. Ant also often generously takes professional photos at events and then simply gives them to the subjects.

Many of his friends think he's nuts – doing stuff like this for no money – but Ant says learning about karma, the law of cause and effect, has helped make him a much more peaceful person.

Outside of TI, Ant works hard to apply his understanding of karma at home, at university where he's studying Human Resource Management, in his role as a volunteer surf lifesaver at Portsea, and at work.

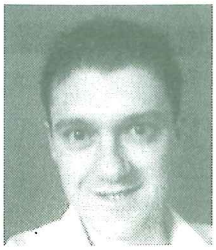
In his part-time catering job he enjoys practising learning to tune into other peoples' needs and trying to anticipate their wants without being asked.

He'd like to see more young people attending TI, as he sees that Dharma has so much to offer.

"The Dharma gave me some answers when I needed them," he said. "After high school, a lot of friends split up, some killed themselves and some started on heroin and died. It was a depressing time. I wanted to know what was going on."

(Cont'd page 2)

ROBERT BAKES, 32



For some time Robert had been interested in Buddhism. "I had read books, attended classes at the CAE, and done meditation courses. However it got to the point where I felt I just wasn't getting anywhere. I felt that I needed to learn more. The problem was, where?"

"Then a friend at work mentioned Tara Institute in passing. I was aware of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and thought that as a Tibetan Buddhist Institute it might be something reputable".

" In all my previous searching all that I had encountered were very small groups of people. I had always wondered how qualified they were. I was quite pleased when I later discovered that TI had a resident lama."

So Robert came along to some Monday nights, and then sampled some Wednesday and Tuesday nights. Robert is interested in both the nature of mind and reality, and in finding out ways of becoming happier. He decided to attend Tuesday nights on a regular basis.

"From almost the first night I found my questions being clarified," he said, "I must be benefiting otherwise I wouldn't keep coming back."

The Dharma that Robert finds 'most challenging' is "decreasing my self cherishing and helping others".

"I had read about it, but not really considered it. However, I think that I am beginning to see some benefits."

"Dharma has the capacity to stabilise lives, make people happier and clarify things so that they are saved from an infinite amount of suffering."

"The younger you are, the more attracted you are to sex, drugs and rock and roll. TI can never hope to meet those sorts of interests!"

Robert believes, however, that it is 'doing a pretty good job in other aspects'. He feels quite comfortable with his regular involvement with TI.

PILGRIMAGE

There will be a Tara Institute pilgrimage of the holy places of the Buddha's life in India and Nepal at the end of this year. The dates are: departure Sat. Dec 22 and return: Fri Jan 25. We will be visiting Dharmsala and the four main pilgrimage sites - Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar and Lumbini, as well as many other holy buddhist places. If you are interested in going please pick up an information sheet at the centre.

Damien Busby co-ordinator.

*A **BIG THANK YOU** to all of you who helped at the Garage Sale - helping raise more than $1000..... also to those who got down and got dirty helping with cleaning TI .*

The Bookshop

Mon – Fri : 9am – 5pm (Office Hours)

Mon - Wed: 7.15pm – 8pm

The Bookshop is open before special events such as Pujas and Weekend Courses

NICOLE FRENCH, 27

"I had always wanted to come to TI, but didn't pluck up the courage to come through the doors for a few years! Finally, things got so bad in my personal life that my search for meaning became very urgent and I started coming.

Dharma has definitely given me more stability. In general, I have felt great benefits in being a part of a vibrant and caring spiritual community.. I love being able to walk in the doors of Tara and see a friendly face, to sit down for a cuppa with my TI friends, and also to know that Geshe-la is there 'watching out for us'. I also love getting Mandala and seeing what good people are doing the world over.

I see other benefits as finally thinking about taking responsibility for my life and my happiness. Also, thinking as never before about how my actions affect others. In general, I feel happier and more alive when trying to practice Dharma.

"I love being able to walk in the doors of Tara and see a friendly face, to be able to sit down for a cuppa with my TI friends, and also to know that Geshe-la is there 'watching out for us'."

I believe Dharma offers everyone the same things: peace of mind, a method for achieving happiness, a way to be kind to others. I don't think these are age-specific. However, it can be very hard to practice Dharma as a young person - there are so many seductive, materialistic influences out there.

To make TI more 'young people friendly' we can do more to make TI more friendly for people of all ages by encouraging them to get involved with and take responsibility in the centre, establishing an informal support network via the members' team, or maybe having more social events - anything that encourages people to spend time together in a 'caring and sharing' way.

Overall, I think we can just keep letting people know that TI is Tara's house and a place of acceptance, understanding and refuge open to everyone."

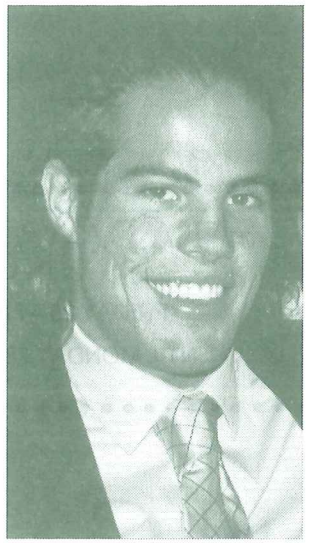
Nicole French is on TI's New Members' Team and TI's Newsletter Committee.

(Cont'd from page 1)

Eventually he'd like to see debating – Tibetan style – taught at TI as well as more opportunities for discussions about teachings.

While it's been hard for a person of Ant's age to 'go against the grain' in so many ways, he says he's become 'very stubborn' about doing what he believes to be right.

"My Mum says I'm the kind of person that goes all the way in everything, then when I've reached the top I'll just drop it," says Ant. "I think she's realised I'm not going to drop this by now. I just say, 'If I can go all the way in Buddhism, then, hey, great!' "



KATE DANFORD-STOREY, 30

His Holiness(HH) the Dalai Lama was the "lynch pin" of Kate's beginnings with Buddhism. In her search for wanting to know how to be kinder to others she found him to be the perfect role model. She knew that she had to find someone who could teach her the subject matter that HH teaches.

Finding that teacher took quite a long time. Then one day Kate, who lived in Sydney, walked home using a different route. And there it was, an advertising poster for Vajrayana Institute offering a qualified teacher! She rang the centre the next day.

That teacher was Geshe Dawa "who answered all my questions". "They were such commonsense answers. I didn't have to make radical changes. It was like I had blinkers on and through his teachings and example they were slowly removed. Geshe Dawa was the first positive influence on me. Like Geshe Doga, he lived what he taught. He was putting the Dharma into practice."

"I knew Tara Institute was the Melbourne centre and when I moved here I made contact within a couple of days. When I walked into the gompa I was awe struck by its size and beauty."

For Kate, Tara Institute is "a community of support, a bit like a family. What I hear in the gompa I don't leave behind. For me it is a method and set of instructions for living life. Really it is all such common sense, although sometimes it takes a while for me to catch onto things."

Kate draws inspiration from the way people give of their time for projects for the centre. She draws strength from seeing the generosity of others. "It is the people plugging away on the various tasks and projects that make it a really great place to come to," she says.

To help to meet the needs of younger people, what she would like to see is Tara Institute's very own retreat place.

PHUONG NGUYEN, 27

Phuong Nguyen's first visit to Tara Institute was five years ago as part of a Vietnamese New Year pilgrimage with others from Quang Minh Temple in Braybrook. Although the 27-year-old psychologist comes from a Buddhist background, Phuong had always been looking for the right teacher.

When she arrived at TI, she experienced a 'sense of coming home', as she put it.

After the pilgrimage, she made the journey back to TI with her mother, and just happened to be in the library when Geshe Doga walked in. Although at first he mistook her for a Tibetan and spoke to her in Tibetan, she says she felt very relaxed with him. A few months later she took refuge with him.

"I see Dharma as a method enabling me to incorporate my values and goals into daily life," she says simply.

"The beneficial thing about TI is that it's such a strong support group. It actually helps you through your Dharma, to understand things. There's always someone around TI you can actually ask questions – they're always approachable. There's a really strong sense of connection and community and anyone there is willing to help you."

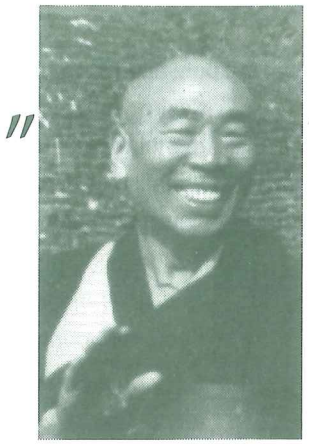
"In terms of what Dharma offers to young people, it allows them to actually conceptualise what is happening for them, and understand why things are happening to them. It gives them some sort of structure – a framework to understand themselves. It also gives young people a sense of belonging," Phuong says.

BUDDHA STATUE

The new Buddha statue will be consecrated by Geshe Doga and Geshe Tashi Tsering on Saka Dawa, Wednesday 6 June. The filling of the statue will take place over the two days prior to the consecration, Mon 4 June and Tues 5 June. These activities will be full day events. It is very auspicious to witness the consecration of a new statue and everyone is invited.

Over this final month before the consecration there are a great many things to prepare and collect for the consecration and filling of the statue. If you are able to help with the mantra rolling or any of the other activities, please check the notices at the centre to see what help is needed. The mantra rolling will continue each weekend, Saturday and Sunday afternoons, until all the mantras are rolled.

"LOVING KINDNESS"



ONE-DAY COURSE
SUNDAY 20 MAY
9am – 5pm

"Currently we have everything needed to sustain life – food, clothing, shelter etc. Because of this our suffering seems to be very slight unless we are undergoing acute illness. Even real mental distress seems remote. Yet despite all these favourable conditions we can also appreciate that all is not well with our mind. We are continuously restless and dissatisfied. The main cause of this chronic mental sickness is our failure to practise Dharma and particularly our inability to maintain the thought of loving-kindness. It is this thought that produces happiness in both ourselves and others. Without it we give rise to negative and destructive thoughts which result in much unhappiness both personally and socially. All kinds of misconceptions, distorted emotions, mental problems and finally pain arise in our mind. ***The loving-kindness thought should therefore be regarded as our foundation practice****. If it is absent, we invariably must fail to practise correctly. Even a good intellectual grasp of the Dharma will yield no tangible benefits or signs of accomplishment."* - Geshe Doga March 1993

Developing loving kindness is essential for leading a happy and harmonious life. Geshe Doga will give advice and techniques for developing this positive quality, thereby creating the conditions to provide a stable and happy environment for those with whom we live, work and relax.

Course Fees: $60 (Members $40) includes vegetarian lunch, morning and afternoon tea. ***Bookings are essential****. Please call the office on 9596 8900 by Wednesday 16.*

SAKA DAWA NYUNG NYE

FRIDAY 25 AT 8PM
UNTIL MONDAY 28 AT 6AM

The Nyung Nye meditation retreat, based on Chenrezig, the Buddha of compassion, is a concentrated practice consisting of eight meditation sessions, with praises, prostrations and mantra recitations over two days. The eight Mahayana precepts are taken for the duration of the practice and on the second day, additional vows of not eating, drinking or talking are observed. The emphasis of this practice is on developing compassion.

The retreat finishes early on Monday 28 May, in time for a fabulous breakfast and plenty of time to get to work. The benefits of this retreat are inestimable.

$65 ($50 FPMT Members) residential

$40 ($35 FPMT Members) non-residential. Bookings are essential.

For more information please contact T.I. office on 9596 8900

MONDAYS
• 7, 14, 21, and 28 at 8pm

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHIST MEDITATION

with Catherine Wilde

We often blame our boss, our partner, our family or our circumstances for the stress, anxiety and frustration that we experience day to day. It's much easier than looking inside ourselves and making change. And much less effective.

On Monday nights in May Catherine will look at the subject of the mental delusions that each of us experience such as anger, desire and pride, as outlined in the Lam-Rim – the graduated path to enlightenment.

These relaxed one-hour sessions include guided meditation, a talk and some discussion. They are suitable for new students and those wishing to get back to basics.

A facilities fee of $5 is requested to help cover administration expenses (Members free). Just turn up at 7.50pm or call the TI office 9596 8900 for more information.

WATERBOWL OFFERINGS

Tuesday 1 at 8am

Please feel welcome to come along and learn how to do this special practice, which benefits ourselves and those to whom we dedicate the practice.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche has said that *"anyone who is having difficulties in their job or business and thinks that they don't have the time to do offerings at home, could sponsor offerings at Tara Institute".*

Please contact Ven. Carolyn Lawler on 9596 7410 if you would like to sponsor lights and water bowl offerings.

TI MEMBERS' NEWS AND VIEWS, MAY 2001

Welcome

Welcome to a new Members' News Bulletin. Every month we will include a bulletin with the TI Newsletter specifically for members. We hope that you will use this forum to share your 'news and views' with us and to help keep you abreast of any events or developments at TI.

You can contact us with your ideas and news via our email: tarainmem@hotmail.com. You know what they say about 'no news being good news' – well this is the good news newsletter you've always hankered for! Share your good news with us – new job, new baby, new home, course comments, TI experience, happy thoughts – whatever. We'll even make space for not-so-good news, for all of us who won't feel right without it!

If you don't have Internet access, please leave a message for us via the TI Office on (03) 9596 8900.

We're looking forward to meeting and working with other Tara Institute Members. Don't be shy about making yourself known to us, and we'll try to overcome our own shyness.

Deadline

The deadline for news for the Members News Bulletin is the 15th of the month before.

The Membership Team

Dianne McDonald,
Llysse Velez,
Margie Hanrahan,
Nicole French.

Have your say

If you haven't already done so, please get hold of a TI Membership Survey Form and fill it in by the extended deadline of **10th May.** Send us an email if you'd like a copy or pick one up from the TI Office. We've had a good response, but we'd like to give everyone a chance to have a say. We hope to report in with some preliminary findings soon, with thanks to the invaluable assistance of Mark Emerson.

Eat and Meet

With a fabulous new cook and a new kitchen, dining at TI has taken on a whole new dimension. You can eat a delicious three-course vegetarian banquet every week night at 6.30pm in the dining room, for the outstanding price of **$13.50 (soup $4.50, main $7.70, dessert $3.30)** It's the perfect place to eat before teachings from Monday to Wednesday. Just book in before 2pm with the office on (03) 9596 8900. It's a great way to meet with others, and the food is truly delicious.

25 years of service

In June/July, Tara Institute will celebrate 25 years of service to the community. To mark this happy occasion, we're planning on creating a special event around this year's Annual General Meeting. More news to follow!

If you have been involved in TI since Day One or its very early days, we'd love to hear from you to help us prepare for this event and to share your stories with us. Please get in touch with the Membership Team or Suzanne in the office if you're among those very special people who helped to found this precious place.

Less than a cup of coffee a day...

Did you know that your membership (which costs far less than a cup of coffee a day!) makes a real difference to keeping the doors of TI open and therefore in spreading the Dharma?

For new members joining this year, one of the benefits we plan to re-initiate is offering a free meal in the TI Dining Room. Contact the members' team if we fail to contact you to organise your voucher! Also, don't forget to take advantage of your 10% discount on goods from the TI Bookshop and on courses, and attend any Monday night teaching for free. This new Bulletin is another benefit just for members!

Wish List

- A graphic designer to design a new flyer or postcard promoting TI and a sponsor to cover the printing costs.
- Dharma-friendly folk with 'safe' dams or waterways for the saving of fish, yabbies, etc.

Hatches, Matches and Dispatches

It's been a busy year for TI Members on the wedding front with three marriages already this year. Debbie Montjos and John Wright married in the Registry Office in the City on March 24th, followed by a reception at the Huntingdale Golf Club. According to Allys Andrews, who was a guest and who gave a speech, Debbie looked 'absolutely beautiful'. John insists he looked very handsome, too... The couple will sponsor a Tara Puja later in the year at TI to which everyone is invited.

Jeremy Cohen travelled the greatest distance for his marriage, heading off to India to marry Namgyal, Sandup Tsering's sister, in a traditional

TUESDAY
• 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 at 8pm

STUDY GROUP

The TENETS

The Ven. Geshe Doga continues to teach on the Buddhist Tenets.

Nagarjuna said that the entire teachings of the Buddha must be understood within the framework of the two truths, conventional truth and ultimate truth. Explanations of the distinction between the two truths are found in the assertions of each of the four tenet systems that are recognised by the Gelugpa order of Tibetan Buddhism as authentic formulations of the Buddha's teaching.

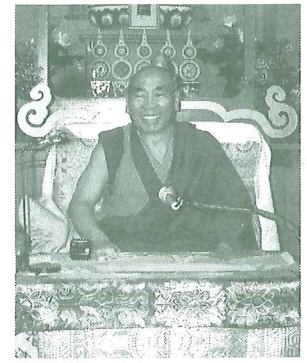
Studying the tenets with Ven Geshe Doga is a precious and rare opportunity to deepen and clarify our understanding of the Buddha's most profound teachings in a supportive, well-structured and vibrant environment.

The evenings run in six-week blocks and students are asked to attend all six sessions. You are most welcome to come and experience Study Group at any time but conditions apply if you wish to attend on a regular basis.

If you have any questions please call Ven. Carolyn Lawler on 9596 7410.

WEDNESDAYS
• 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 at 8pm

AN EVENING WITH GESHE DOGA



On Wednesday evenings, Ven. Geshe Doga inspires us to really put the teachings into practice. Using Dharmarakshita's essential text, The Wheel of Sharp Weapons, as a basis for discussion, Geshe-la offers very practical advice on how to deal skilfully with the problems we all experience with our families, work, relationships and health. Geshe-la opens the session with a short meditation and concludes the evening with a commentary from The Wheel of Sharp Weapons.

For more details ring Tara Institute office on 9596 8900.

SAKA DAWA GURU PUJA

WEDNESDAY 6 JUNE AT 8PM

Saka Dawa is a special month in the Buddhist calendar. During this month, we celebrate the anniversary of Shakyamuni Buddha's birth, enlightenment and parinirvana.

Spiritual practice is encouraged during this time because of the power of these auspicious events. It is a particularly good time to be mindful of our actions: avoiding those that harm others and cultivating those that help others. It is, therefore, most beneficial to practise generosity. Every year Tara Institute makes offerings to Brighton Benevolent Society; these are distributed to people who need them. A donation box can be found outside the Gompa. Money is the most useful offering you can make. In the past we have asked for clothes. This year, however, it is not clothes but non-perishable foods that are most urgently needed. Times are very tough for many people. Please be generous and thoughtful about what you can give.

On June 6, Tara Institute will offer a Guru puja (devotional offering ceremony). Prayers will be recited in Tibetan and English and all offerings to those in need will be blessed. Prayers will be made for the health and well being of TI's Members, families, friends and the world community.

DIARY — MAY

- *TUESDAY 1*
  - *8am — Water Bowl Offerings*
  - *6pm — Tara Puja*
  - *8pm — Study Group*
- *WEDNESDAY 2*
  - *6pm — Guru Puja*
  - *8pm — Evening with Geshe Doga*
- *MONDAY 7*
  - *8pm — Introduction to Buddhist Meditation*
- *TUESDAY 8*
  - *8pm — Study Group*
- *WEDNESDAY 9*
  - *8pm — Evening with Geshe Doga*
- *THURSDAY 10*
  - *7.30pm — Volunteers Support Group*
- *MONDAY 14*
  - *8pm — Introduction to Buddhist Meditation*
- *TUESDAY 15*
  - *8pm — Study Group*
- *WEDNESDAY 16*
  - *8pm — Evening with Geshe Doga*
- *THURSDAY 17*
  - *6pm— Guru Puja*
  - *7.30pm — Healing support Group*
- *SUNDAY 20*
  - *9am — 5pm One Day Course 'Loving Kindness'*
- *MONDAY 21*
  - *8pm — Introduction to Buddhist Meditation*
- *TUESDAY 22*
  - *8pm — Study Group*
- *WEDNESDAY 23*
  - *8pm — Evening with Geshe Doga*
- *FRIDAY 25*
  - *7.30pm — Nyung Nye begins*
- *SATURDAY 26 & SUNDAY 27*
  - *Nyung Nye Continues*
- *MONDAY 28*
  - *6am — Nyung Nye finishes*
  - *8pm — Introduction to Buddhist Meditation*
- *TUESDAY 29*
  - *8pm — Study Group*
- *WEDNESDAY 30*
  - *6pm — Tara Puja*
  - *8pm — Evening with Geshe Doga*