



Newsletter, Winter 2011



## LOUD AND CLEAR



**W**e usually think of the night that Jesus was born to Mary in Bethlehem as full of nothing but wonder and light: adoring and amazed onlookers, animals breathing their warm breath on to the baby in his comfy manger, a star shining over it all. While it is a truly miraculous and wonderful event for humanity, it is probably also true that the travelling Mary and Joseph were cold and exhausted and would have given anything for less drafty accommodation. But from these less-than-ideal conditions came forth an amazing life.

Many people in prison tell us about the less-than-ideal conditions that they face as they try to touch the divine, commune with God, or realise their true self. In one crowded prison for example, there was a group of prisoners whose usual yoga room was unavailable one week, so they asked their teacher to hold that week's lesson in the only space left: the toilet. By all accounts it was a great class!

A more common challenge – perhaps the biggest one – is how to meditate with noise all around you. Rich from HMP Parc wrote recently, “Is peace in meditation essential? Sometimes the wing gets loud at night when I’m meditating. I try to cut it out, but most of the time I just give up and end up waiting for peace and quiet. This can be annoying too. Any tips how to blank this out? Or should I just leave it and try again the following night. Which is gonna probably be noisy again.”

The challenge is not to rearrange things outside, but to shift your expectation. It is not going to be quiet out there on the wing, so how do you meditate with the noise? I’m sure you can remember a time when you almost jumped out of your skin at a loud noise, like a clap of thunder. And yet at other times the same unexpected noise will be far less startling. So it is possible to be not so disturbed by noise.

The continual noise of voices, TV and music is a little



Back strengthening at one of HMP Bullingdon's yoga classes

different – it is easy to load it up with feeling and to get involved – resisting or waiting for it to go away. But by focussing on your breathing over a period of time, you can begin to slow down the automatic responses that happen normally. You come off of ‘auto-pilot’ and are aware of responses and tendencies without needing to react to them.

There is a way to meditate in even the noisiest of environments. First of all, allow yourself to sit still, without moving, for the amount of time you have given yourself. Don’t worry about what

your state of mind is. Just be content with sitting still amidst all of the noise. The noise is okay and you don’t have to do anything to change it. As you sit, just keep the mind on the breath going in and out. Don’t worry about the noise or if your mind gets pulled away by it. Just bring your attention back to the breath when you notice.

If you get disturbed by the noise, treat your annoyance in the same way as you do the noise. It is just another ‘something’. Stay still, and bring attention back to the breath. Rest in the breath, alert to it, and allow the noise and whatever happens in your mind to carry on, while your attention is with the breathing.

Many of you say you have learned to accept noise and that after a while, there is not any distance between you and the noise. It is just one thing happening, not something happening to you. You know then, that we are never separate from other things. Our intimate connection to each other and the pull to participation in this wonderful whole is part of the great message of Christmas.



Love Sam – and Sally, Jason, Elaine,  
Lucy, Kaye, Clive & David



“The only time we waste is the time we spend not loving.”

~ Sister Prue Wilson

### ABOUT THE PRISON PHOENIX TRUST



*The Prison Phoenix Trust supports prisoners in their spiritual lives through meditation, yoga, silence and the breath. It recommends breath-focused stretches and meditation sensitively tailored to students' needs. This safe practice offers students ultimate peace of mind. The PPT encourages prisoners and prison staff through correspondence, books, newsletters, free taster workshops and weekly classes.*



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## From HMP Swaleside

I have begun to do yoga and meditation. This has been a big step in combating my anger. Over the last 7½ years I have fought everyone in the system and when I look back, I realise that I have a serious problem in controlling my anger. But picking up your book, *Freeing the Spirit*, I have seen a picture of myself "calm". I just need to practise this daily. It's my only way of combating the stress of prison life. I'm fed up of myself flipping, having Control & Restraint teams busting my cell door and being angry and violent. The breathing techniques have helped me. Reading others' progress in your newsletter has given me that little extra boost and confidence. My previous behaviour has begun to go, because I wouldn't see sense and that other person isn't the real "Johnny". I'm trying now to tune my energy into a lot of evening exercises and breathing.

## From Training Unit, Dublin

When I was locked up in Portlaoise prison I was given your address through Stella, our yoga instructor, who was a great help in practising yoga and meditation. She's a great and warm teacher. After years of heavy drug and drink abuse I was physically and emotionally in a bad place and the last thing I would have dreamt of doing was yoga as I associated it (wrongly!) with hippies, wimps etc. Yet with Stella's help and your book *Becoming Free* and the CD I got to spend a lot of time locked up not staring at



television for hours or stressed out, but for once relaxing, de-stressing, breathing and stretching my body. This helped kick start my getting back to fitness and studying lots of courses with plans to go on to a degree course next September. I also have been reading up on meditation and more eastern-focussed teaching. I hope to help others with addiction, stress and weight issues through a holistic approach.

## From HMP Long Lartin



I received your CD *Clearing the Head, Relaxing the Body* and the book *Freeing the Spirit through Meditation and Yoga*. I have decided to routine myself for a daily practice. I've been very shocked and pleased at the high feelings of energy and calmness and I will definitely be continuing with this. I have found some of the yoga moves, especially the ones stood up, are not really for me as I have my left leg amputated below the knee, but I do my best to adapt what I can to suit.

## From HMP Full Sutton

I am still going to the IBICS course. I finish next month and will come back to textiles work. I am still going to education too. I do meditation with the breath every day. This is morning, afternoon and evening. I do yoga every second day and Roland's breathing exercise on your CD every day before I go to sleep.

I've been doing this for about three months now and remember how I felt before I started. Now it is so much better. When I am angry I can take ten breaths



and my anger is gone. I'm starting to accept where I am and how I am and I am starting to feel good with this. I know prison is not a good place but I am starting to feel like, "I am here and can't do anything with this, so I don't need to feel bad every day. Nothing externally is going to change, so I'd better just feel happy." This is all because of yoga and meditation and your support.

I am still in touch with my mum. We speak once a week and write. She will be able to come see me next year. I don't have much other news because every day here is the same but because of this yoga some part of me is relaxed in this world.

## From HMP Frankland

The books *Freeing the Spirit* and *We're All Doing Time* and CD you have sent me has given me a release from prison even though I am locked in a cell, a concrete box that is my living room, kitchen, bathroom and bedroom. This is my second life sentence. A past life of profound psychological pain and torment which I tried to blot out with alcohol which only made my situation worse. My emotions erupted like a volcano with consequences to family, victims, friends and anyone associated with me.



I have been a Quaker for many years, a Quaker way of life, passive and non violent is how I want to live, but the tormented ghosts of my past lurk in the background and always surface. The Quaker way of worship is to sit in silence and let God enter our being – for quite a while I have been unable to attend meetings of worship as I feel it is not right for a person like me to be in a house of God.

So I am used to sitting in silence but I feel I never had any control of my breathing and my mind forever spinning like a rotor blade. I feel all of us prisoners wear a mask when the cell door opens. We give the impression we are fine, we can cope, nothing bothers us. Then when that cell door is slammed shut incarcerating us in a small concrete box, that sound of the door and lock, removing the mask and many times the emotional and psychological pains and torments start, our minds begin to spin, our breathing increases, tears of anger, pity, sorrow and regret may run. What then? Crack up, explode, smoke a joint, drop a pill, even though we know this is not the solution as these methods do



Taking the roughness away



# Letters



not deal with the problem.

I have only concentrated on yoga and meditation for a short period of time. I previously hardly breathed through my nose. Now I make the effort to always breathe through my nose and fully concentrate on the asanas in my daily life. I can concentrate on a dirty rough piece of wood, saw it, plane it, sand it and eventually reveal a lovely smooth grained item. This is how I see myself. The yoga is what takes the roughness away and gives me a tranquillity I have not felt in a long time.

## From HMP Kennet

Thanks for the yoga book and CD. But most of all thanks for the peace of mind! When I was lying on my bunk and my mind was racing so fast that there was smoke coming out of my ears, only one thing saved me: meditation, the ability to think about absolutely nothing. That is the key. Quiet the mind, still the mind, empty the mind.

Not so long ago I hit an all time low. I've always managed to keep my head together in prison; then my wife fell ill. She was seven months pregnant and there was a race to save her and the baby. This



was possibly the worst time in my life ever. They both survived, being fighters, but I took a hell of a bashing emotionally and while I was thankful that everything turned out right I felt drained. I hadn't slept all week. I didn't tell anyone in case they put me on suicide watch.

I had put my name down for yoga some months before and the timing was most welcome. Raj, our teacher, was an inspiration. Thanks to him I had already learnt enough to know that if nothing else yoga makes you feel better and it was free, something to do in your cell when the door shuts. I now start every morning with Sun Salutations (gone is my back pain) and when I am in my pit at night and the demons raise their ugly heads I empty my mind and concentrate on my breathing and destroy the demons.

## From HMP Leeds

When I first wrote I was in a bad state of mind, wondering how or if I would cope. It has been a long and hard, and at times a lonely period and yet I still don't know my fate. But what I do know is, I no longer worry how I will handle my sentence because through yoga and meditation I found coping mechanisms within myself.

I am at this moment in time sitting a 1<sup>st</sup> Teachers B.S.Y. course. I am sure you



will share in my gratitude at being given this opportunity, one I hope I will be able to share with others within my sentence. Being sent to prison away from family and loved ones, to feel stripped bare of any decision making is punishment enough. I don't want to waste my time, to punish and torment myself further by asking "Why me?" "What if I didn't mean it?" To be in these surroundings, in this situation, says I have been wasting and abusing my life, my very being; it's time to take stock! For until such time as I recognise who I really am and how I benefit from my potential, I will forever more be doing myself an injustice.

## From HMP Liverpool

I'm writing to thank you for help with the CD and book. I'm truly learning as much as possible. Being a Buddhist, I relish the fact that part of Buddhism is the breath and the power it holds, spiritually, mentally, and physically. I am still practising regularly with the CD and I still haven't smoked and I am off diazepam so I'm staying strong with your help and the CD and books. I did a charity run the other day for children with learning difficulties and I did 4½ miles. I didn't win it but I still did it – I couldn't have done it without your help.



## Meditation Corner

# The Art of Not Being Whole

**I** sometimes find it aggravating when meditation and yoga experts speak of becoming part of the

**whole.** In other words it is discouraging to sense ourselves as something distinct from the world around us. Some think this is nonsense, and I can sympathise: this morning I cycled to work, with **me** turning the pedals, **me** puffing up the hills, and **me** wishing I had worn something warmer. It was also me who wanted to overtake other cyclists and be in front. Nothing unusual going on here: just another morning with me pedalling away to work.

I am certainly not the only one to feel this way. It's pretty hard to feel part of the whole in a prison cell, bulking up at the gym or making sure you are respected by other people. After all, no one can argue that we don't have our own personalities, or our own thoughts and unique ways of presenting ourselves to others (who are also separate human

beings too).

But this sense of 'me' is not always reliable – sometimes it just seems to disappear, maybe whilst watching television, listening to music or being focussed on an activity. This can also happen during meditation when focussed upon the breath. The mind begins to quieten and thoughts about 'me' become less important. It is interesting how we start to feel happier and more content the less we think about ourselves; it shows how tiring it is re-inventing 'me' when it doesn't need to be there. There is a way of looking at all activities which just involves becoming aware of what is happening. It is perfectly possible to just cycle, feel cold, overtake and simply arrive. The same process goes for other activities - even in prison. Banged up in a cell can be just sitting in a room, bulking

up at the gym can easily be exercising. Being respected is really getting along with those around you. It's simpler, sharper and far more accurate to take yourself out of the equation.

So many of you tell us that taking time each day to sit and focus on the breath – to forget oneself with the breath – makes life a little easier. And the best thing is that by losing 'me' nothing useful has been lost. Cycle? Push on the pedals! Gym? Lift the weights! Meditate? Just sit!



By Jason

# Prue's Circus

**Good friend and long-time letter writer Prue Wilson died recently, not long after her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.**

She touched the lives of many of her friends, both in and out of prison, with her authenticity and kindness. She not only wrote letters to prisoners, she had also been a PPT trustee, a headmistress and a missionary in Ghana. She was a Sister of the Society of the Sacred Heart.

In her book *My Father Took Me to the Circus* she describes her take on life: *The kingdom of heaven is like this: it is a great gathering of people, each one a performer, and each one rejoicing in the performance. It is a show on the road, and its stage is a circle of light in which each discovers what it means*

*to be uniquely, miraculously gifted. The night sky vision of the universe is its big top. What parts will be taken up by whom will never be written on the programme, but the whole of the living world will be caught into the joy and magic and skill of the performance, and every act will show us something more about freedom and interdependence and trust.*

We are grateful to Prue for sharing this vision by living it.

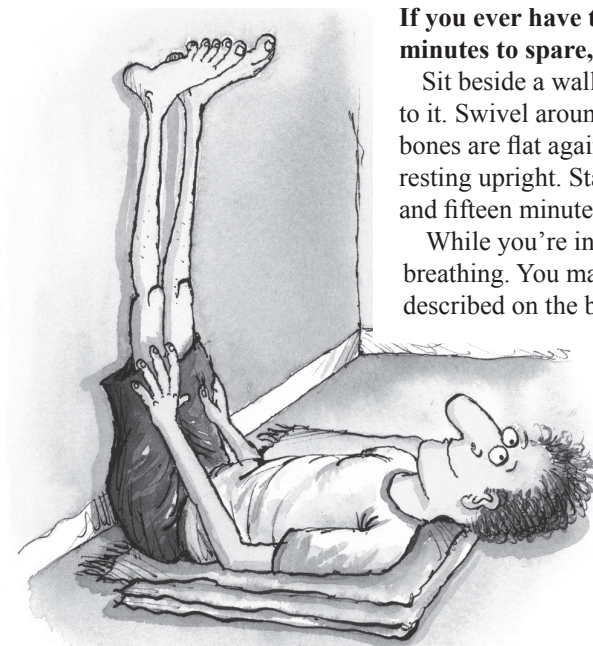


## Sally Joins Us



It was almost ten years ago that I first came across the Prison Phoenix Trust. I attended the second ever training course for yoga teachers hoping to offer yoga and meditation to prisoners. I was taught by Sandy and Sister Elaine who many of you will have met. I taught yoga at HMP Eastwood Park for four years, a time I look back on with joy and gratitude. Whizz forward a few years and here I am, Yoga Co-ordinator at the Prison Phoenix Trust. I am delighted to be here and hope to meet as many of you as possible in our yoga and meditation workshops around the country.

## Put Your Feet Up



© illustration Korky Paul

**If you ever have tired, achy legs and five minutes to spare, try this simple pose.**

Sit beside a wall with your bottom close up to it. Swivel around and lie back, so your sitting bones are flat against the wall and your legs are resting upright. Stay like this for between five and fifteen minutes.

While you're in the pose, stay aware of your breathing. You may even want to do the breath described on the back page.

This pose will help you:

- Sleep better
- Relieve anxiety
- Reduce headaches
- Heal and relax the body and mind
- Prevent colds and flu
- Stop your feet and legs aching

# Free Bird

**By a prisoner,  
HMP Lindholme**

I'm still residing at the Hotel Lindholme, with no word of a move to open conditions yet, but that's okay. I'm fine with that. I think God has more work for me to do here.

You were right about the breathing exercises: they have a profound calming effect on the mind. Letting go of things has become so much easier and through this, my sentence has become so much easier. My sleep pattern is wonderful, my body feels fantastic and my mind is serene. I find that the breathing techniques bring me into the now, which is where I seem to be most at peace.

## The mind is a fantastic thing

Do you ever have spells of no mind? I sit sometimes and before I know it, it is 10:30 p.m. Isn't the mind a fantastic thing! I feel like a fool, when I think of all the years and money I spent trying to get a high, when the body does it for free and with no health risk. What a stupid boy!

It is now 7.15 in the morning and I am sitting looking out my window at the flight of the starlings. There are hundreds of them playing in the wind and I am listening to classical music.

I have always known there was something more to the human mind, but never knew how to reach it until now. I thank God and prison for freeing me. I have a mate in here, a Buddhist and a yogi. He has had me doing some pretty extreme yoga, but I have loved every minute of it. I am 47 and am able to do the coffee table pose. Who needs weight lifting? The body is the perfect gymnasium.



I believe that I am becoming a spiritual warrior, a free bird. My journey continues and though hard at times, I know all my efforts are worth it. All of us can find freedom before we actually walk out the prison gates.



# I Wake Up Saying Thank You

**G**abe was in prison in the U.S. for murder, committed while he was a 19 year old drug addict. His story is reprinted here with permission of the Human Kindness Foundation, who support prisoners and ex-prisoners in America. Gabe described himself at 19 as “selfish and very immature. If there wasn’t nothing in it for me, I wouldn’t do it. I was very, very selfish. When I’d steal stuff from people, I always convinced myself that they owed me.”

The first time Gabe saw *We’re All Doing Time*, he felt that “here are some crying convicts, just crying because they can’t do their time,” and he threw the book in a box. A few months later, he started noticing that even though he wasn’t using drugs, he hadn’t changed. He was still acting like his friends who were addicted, and he realized that he wanted something different. He picked up the book again, and started meditating. “I didn’t understand meditating, but I knew there was something to it. It just felt good, even though it didn’t make sense.”

The letters section of *We’re All Doing Time* became Gabe’s favourite place to look for help. “Any time I have a problem, I go and look at those letters, I can relate whatever my problem is to one letter or another. Bo will say something that just makes sense — that’ll make me able to handle it.” Friends started noticing — and respecting — the change in Gabe. He said in 2005: “I always felt I was given a second chance at life, but wasn’t sure what to do or how to go about it until Bo reminded me. Having hated myself and my life and prayed every night to not wake up or to get some terrible disease, now it just feels good to be alive, relieved that life wasn’t what I thought—that there really is more. I wake up and fall asleep saying thank you. All through the day I can’t tell you how many times I just say thank you.”

## The following are Gabe’s reflections on his one-year anniversary of being released:

**W**ell, it’s been a year now and it still feels like I just got here. I’m still doing what I’ve done for years, trying to figure out how to make my life work and even though I didn’t think I had any expectations about life out here, it sure ain’t how I thought it would be.

After 19 years in the joint I knew I had to take it slow, but I had no idea of how lost and uncomfortable I would feel. Even the smallest things like getting gas or talking on the phone seem to be a struggle. I never thought I’d feel so weird being around people, just walking in a store or any social stuff—nothing to go back to prison over, but it is hard even with having practical things like a job, house, and car taken care of.

I can’t imagine getting out without having done all the inner work I did. There’s no way I could have made it. I think that is one reason I haven’t gotten into trouble like so many do when they get out. I worked with all those issues like drugs, lust, anger for years, and those are the same issues you face out here. I made the changes and it is paying off and I can face life without falling back into old ways and saying “screw it.”

My crime is still a part of my life and it seems disrespectful to all those I’ve hurt to not do something positive with my life. I still have family that choose not to have anything to do with me. I’ve let those family members know that I haven’t forgotten the hurt I caused, and I’m open to contact with them, but I’m not gonna keep bothering them. If it’s easier for

them not to be in touch with me, or if they never forgive me, that’s not up to me. All I can do is make a better life and not go back to drugs or jail, and I accept that I might not get a second chance with that part of my family.

## Not giving up

I sure don’t wish I was back in, but I do feel that I was much more content and passionate with my life in prison. Maybe I’m not reaching out to God as much. I still read *We’re All Doing Time*, at least a line or two every day. I still do meditation practice, too, but it doesn’t feel the same. I know I need to do it so I make myself, but it doesn’t bring me the closeness I used to feel. But I know it’s necessary, so I do it. Nothing makes me feel that closeness that I felt for awhile in prison. But I just got here. I’m not giving up.

*Sita at the Human Kindness Foundation writes:*

*If you are released and hit some rough spots (everyone we’ve talked to has hit some rough spots in the first year or two out), don’t panic! You may have looked forward to your release for so long, feeling like it is THE big goal in life. When that goal is realized, and you still have sadness or anxiety or discomfort to deal with; when you still have anger, lust, and addiction to confront; when life is not as rosy as you hoped... many people panic and land themselves back in jail. Instead, you can keep using your spiritual practices, and you can get through the hard times. Gabe says he will not give up, and we believe him. He will keep on, doing the next right thing and being patient while he gets used to being out. And along the way, he is already helping people, inspiring people, and having some fun, too.*



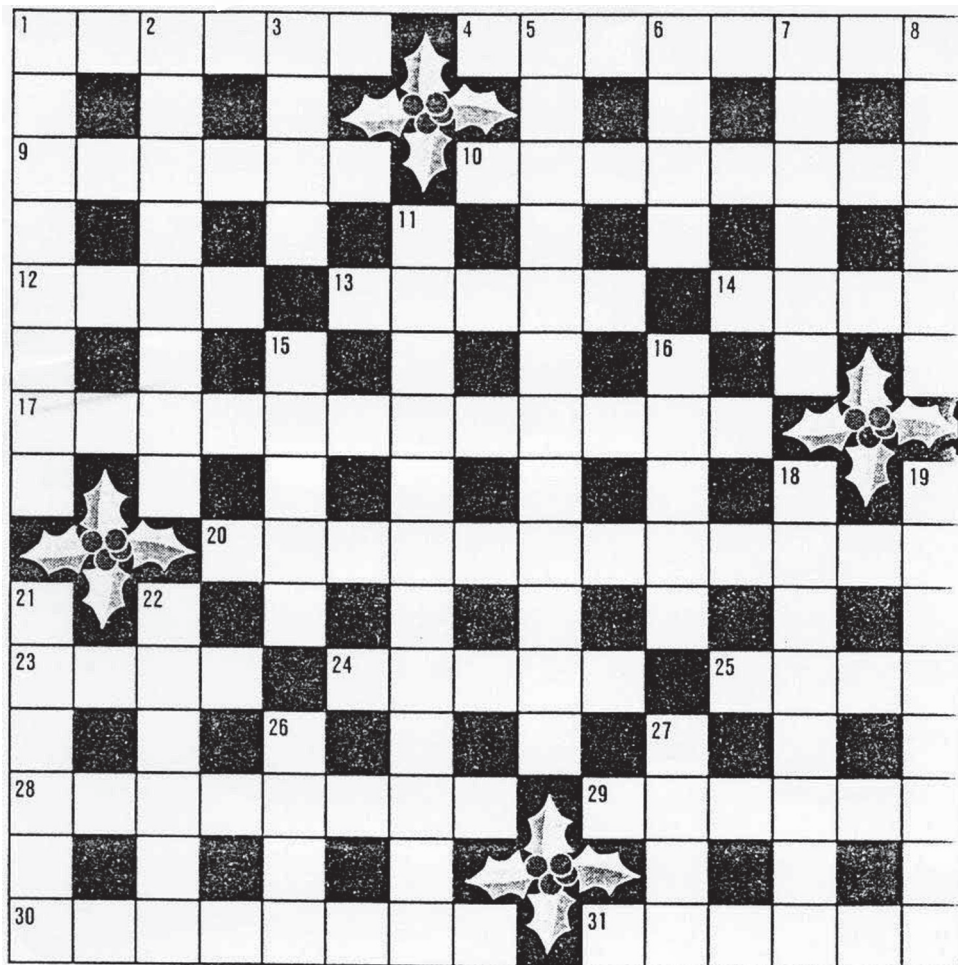
Gabe with some four-legged friends

# Cryptic Christmas Cracker

Roger Squires, Guinness Book of Records champion compiler, publishes in many national newspapers, such as the Telegraph, the Guardian and the Financial Times. He has created over 70,000 crosswords. Here is his 16<sup>th</sup> PPT winter puzzle for you to crack. Tip: it's tricky, so try it with a friend!  
(Solutions on p. 7)

## Across

- 1 First Christmas present box (6)
- 4 It's suspended just before Christmas (8)
- 9 Waits to sing these (6)
- 10 Confirms what Goldilocks found in pantomime (5,3)
- 12 Potted plant may be present at Christmas (4)
- 13 Second mince pie has a shade of brown (5)
- 14 You might say it when offering a gift or present (4)
- 17 Now it's where the thought counts! (2,3,7)
- 20 They provide a cool basis for figuring (7,5)
- 23 Clue found in a drawer (4)
- 24 At festive occasions a journalist gets treated (5)
- 25 Find the wishbone first in the bird and tease someone (4)
- 28 Seasonal blazers (4,4)
- 29 A capital cigar (6)
- 30 Give one an order - to put up the ornaments? (8)
- 31 Pretty girls said to have appeal at Christmas (6)



## Down

- 1 Drink to the end of the bird? (8)
- 2 It offers various penalties in party games (8)
- 3 Measures taken to finish off the Christmas bells (4)
- 5 Opening words of a favourite carol from her list of ten (3,5,4)
- 6 Eccentric chap bearing seasonal greetings (4)
- 7 Prepared one's party clothes, perhaps, when pressed (6)
- 8 Get together and tuck in (6)
- 11 The wishbone provides cheerful reflection (12)
- 15 Packs ornaments (5)
- 16 Noisy drink? (5)
- 18 Winter dancing party? No, but it's thrown for enjoyment (8)
- 19 Where the butts of a party congregate (8)
- 21 Took a pantomime part or didn't work (6)
- 22 Cigar left out for cook? (6)
- 26 A slight incoherence of speech of one affected by the Christmas spirit? (4)
- 27 One of the Wise Men tucked into the turkey (4)



## Still Time to Order Christmas Cards!



**T**his beautiful black and white Christmas card drawn by a prisoner at HMP Wakefield was so popular last year that we are making it available again. The inside message is from Wordsworth: "The best portion of a good man's life, his little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love." There is plenty of space for your own message. The 4.25" square cards are £5 for a pack of 10 and £3 for each additional pack. To order, send payment to: The PPT, PO Box 328, Oxford, OX2 7HF. If your prison is sending payment for you, you still need to write and tell us how many you want.

## Out and About

**I**n addition to holding taster workshops for prisoners and prison staff in prisons, we are always delighted to be invited to speak to groups on the outside. So if your church group, meeting, yoga group or any other kind of gathering



wants to know more about why yoga and meditation are so effective in prison, and about the work of the Prison Phoenix Trust, please get in touch through our website ([www.theppt.org.uk](http://www.theppt.org.uk)) or write to the PPT, PO Box 328, Oxford, OX2 7HF.

## Spotlight on the Spirit

### A Great Miracle Happened Here

By a prisoner, HMP Littlehey

**F**irst I want to thank you for your book *We're all doing Time*, the CD *Clearing the Head, Relaxing the Body*, then recently the newsletter. It is a help to all us prisoners that are in the same situation. Even if you only read small amounts of the book at any given time, there is after all no rush. During my time in prison since early 2008 up to now, I have learnt to cope, be tolerant, be thoughtful, talk to those that are just left in the corner; in other words I have changed from a material person to a helping person. I am an epilepsy sufferer and the only Jewish prisoner in the prison but that now is not important. What is important is to pass on good to others. I listen to others which helps them; in fact, I will do anything within my power to help.

I have a sentence with no definite date of release, but so do others. I will get released one day, meantime I work positively towards that and carry on helping others that are less fortunate.

At this time of year we all think of our lost loved ones and what we lost outside.



But where we are now is just another part of our lives we are travelling through.

When Christmas approaches, the heartbreak starts, the tears roll, the uncontrollable anger towards each of themselves creeps in and depression is like an uncontrollable cancer. The only temporary help is that the capable help the incapable, that is what coping is together with compassion to each other.

I miss my festival of Chanukah, the family time of togetherness remembering what happened and then the tradition with culture; lighting the candles, prayers, children playing, special foods like doughnuts because of the dedicated oil lost and the miracle of one candle lasting eight days instead of one; the yiddish food of latkes, potato pancakes, chocolate coins for the children representing good fortune and more. There is a likeness of this and Christmas; it's simply called "A great miracle happened here" which is our lives – a miracle. Prison has changed me into a giver not a taker; be it talk or whatever we can give each other in this time of all being in the same boat!



*When the song of the angels is stilled*

*When the star in the sky is gone*

*When the kings and princes are home*

*When the shepherds are back with their flock*

*The work of Christmas begins:*

*To find the lost*

*To heal the broken*

*To feed the hungry*

*To release the prisoner*

*To rebuild the nations*

*To bring peace among people*

*To make music in the heart.*

~ Howard Thurman

## Christmas Card Competition

We are holding a competition to find the illustration for next year's Christmas card. Please send us your winter celebration or Christmas themed drawings, whether you're an accomplished artist or just getting started. We prefer original designs in colour, on plain unlined paper but black and white will also be considered. The winner will get their design printed into cards and sold to raise money for the Trust. We will send the winner 20 cards and all runners up a pack of 10 of the winning card.



# Breathing Thanks



By Sam

Winter is a great time for appreciating and cherishing what is most precious in our lives. To cherish something fully, it helps if our hearts and minds are clear and open. This exercise is excellent for helping to slow down thoughts, so we can take in the goodness of life, and appreciate what is dear to us. Here's how you do it:



Sit in a chair (or on the floor) with your back straight.



Breathe in and out normally through the nose for a few breaths, focussing on the feeling of the breath in the body and how the body moves with the breath.



Now begin to make each out-breath longer than the in-breaths by counting to 5 slowly as you breathe out.



Don't count the in-breaths, but just let them be natural. Simply count to 5 as you breathe out.



Do this for 5 minutes, then double the length of your out-breath, so you are counting to 10.



After another 5 minutes of breathing out to a count of 10, stop counting your breath, and just be aware of the breath going in and going out. Sit like this for 5 more minutes, or longer if you wish.

In many spiritual traditions after meditation or prayer, it is customary to bow in gratitude for what is, to our source. This may come naturally to you after breathing like this, not least because the breath helps us to appreciate all that we have.

**May your 2012, Ashura, Hannukah, Lohri, Christmas and all your festivals be full of peace, appreciation and hope.**



“Inhale, and God approaches you.  
Hold the inhalation, and God remains with you.  
Exhale, and you approach God.  
Hold the exhalation, and surrender to God.”

~ Krishnamacharya, yoga teacher and scholar, 1888-1989

*This newsletter goes to members of the prison community and to our many friends on the outside who continue to offer us their encouragement. The Prison Phoenix Trust is a small charity depending totally on supporters' kindness and financial generosity to continue in our work to help our friends inside. We are especially grateful to those who set up standing orders, which help us to plan our yearly activities more easily.*

**Prison Phoenix Trust Newsletter**  
**PO Box 328, Oxford, OX2 7HF**  
**registered charity no. 327907**

