CENTRE FOR MINDFULNESS RESEARCH & PRACTICE

BANGOR UNIVERSITY

INTEGRITY | COMPASSION | CONNECTION

Summer 2016

THIS ISSUE: Teacher’s Listing Updates | News from the team | The Teacher Training Pathway
Dear Friends,

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter! This has been a busy time for us since the last newsletter in Autumn 2015. Our director Rebecca Crane has been on sabbatical for 6 months and jointly we have been steering the ship over this time. We are about to commence our 2016 conference, which has the theme of mindfulness supporting families; more about the conference from Eluned in this newsletter.

In this edition, Rebecca Crane offers an extended reflection on the integrity of mindfulness and how we secure quality of training and clarity of communication about our work. In the article Rebecca emphasises the challenge of bringing together the differing streams that have contributed, both historically and currently, to the richness of mindfulness in its contemporary settings and how important it is to take the long view with this integration.

We have been continuing our collaborations with other mindfulness training organisations and we are currently working with the Oxford Mindfulness Centre (OMC) to closer align some of our trainings in order to prevent overlap of events and to hopefully reach wider audiences.

Over the last year the CMRP has been going through a transition period of being more integrated into the School of Psychology within Bangor University. One consequence of this shift is that our previously dedicated research post held by Dr Dusana Dorjee will now sit centrally within the School of Psychology. This will allow for research work to be further supported and for Dusana to have stronger connections with academic colleagues within the school. As a result, Dusana is stepping down from her dedicated research leadership role with the CMRP, she will continue her research on mindfulness in schools while broadening her research into contemplative science. During her time in the CMRP research leadership role Dusana significantly expanded the scope of research projects within the centre, particularly in pioneering research on the neuroscience of mindfulness and in neurodevelopmental research on mindfulness with children and adolescents. Dusana will continue to be a member of CMRP’s core teaching team through her leadership and teaching on the neuroscience masters module and contributions to the research and thesis modules. We would like to thank Dusana for all her work with the CMRP and look forward to continued collaborations.

In addition to the shift in our research role; we have had some changes in our core training team. In this newsletter there are contributions from teachers who are moving on and we also hear from our newest team member.

One of our longest standing team members, Trish Bartley, shares some personal reflections as she looks back over CMRP’s developments since our beginnings. Trish offers her thoughts on how mindfulness teacher training has developed over time and where we could be placing our focus moving forward.

CMRP Teacher Training Pathway (TTP), has now been validated as a Bangor University module. Eluned offers a further overview and update on the TTP which includes some small changes to the previous requirements and these are outlined in the article.

Mark and Kathy, two of our current Post-graduate students have written about their personal experiences of their journey through the post graduate training. They are each taking mindfulness into very different arenas, but both write enthusiastically about how studying here in Bangor has supported them personally as well as preparing them to offer mindfulness in their differing contexts.

As we move forward in times of change in the mindfulness field, and wider uncertainty in the world, there is much to work with. We trust that mindfulness will continue to support us all, both professionally and personally and offer steadiness to all that we do.

Warmest regards

Eluned Gold and Sharon Hadley
# The UK Network Listing of Mindfulness Teachers

## An Update from Taravajra, Deputy Convener of the UK Network of Teacher Training Organisations

Since the Teacher’s Listing was launched by the UK Network of Teacher Training Organisations in the autumn of 2015, over 150 teachers have joined.

Overall, the system is working well. Many people are involved as referees and supervisors. In the background, the Listing team is dealing with inquiries.

We have been exploring the inevitable teething problems that appear when something new is started, both in terms of how referees understand the Good Practice Guidelines (e.g. issues around training and annual retreats) and the IT challenges.

We are aware that the UK Network website (where the Listing is hosted) needs an upgrade.

We are also in dialogue with the Mental Health Foundation about their listing of teachers.

[http://mindfulnessteachersuk.org.uk/index.html#UKListing](http://mindfulnessteachersuk.org.uk/index.html#UKListing)

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# How do I know if someone teaching a mindfulness course is appropriately trained?

## Thoughts from Dr. Rebecca Crane

How can a member of the general public wanting to take an 8-week mindfulness-based class be reassured that what is being offered has depth and integrity? The UK Network for Mindfulness-Based Teacher Training Organisations recently launched a listing of mindfulness-based teachers. In the emerging professional context for mindfulness in the mainstream, this is an international first. The listing goes beyond current self-report arrangements for teachers to publicise their credentials by requiring independent verification of the application by a referee from the UK Network. So far 150 teachers have been listed. It is likely to become the "go to" place in the UK for anyone wishing to find an appropriately qualified mindfulness-based 8-week course teacher.

For Rebecca Crane’s full article on the Integrity of Mindfulness Teaching, please click on this link for the online blog:

[http://www.oxfordmindfulness.org/mindfulness-teaching-integrity/](http://www.oxfordmindfulness.org/mindfulness-teaching-integrity/)
Background

The Teacher Training Pathway (TTP) is a flexible, portfolio approach to training to be a well-rounded, confident, skilful and ethical teacher of mindfulness courses based on MBSR.

It has been developed over the last 2-3 years at CMRP and is based on our experiences of training teachers over the last 15 years. We have drawn on both our post graduate training programme and our professional development courses. The Pathway itself has been developed in collaboration with both Oxford and Exeter Universities building on all our learning about the important elements of training teachers of mindfulness approaches.

History

The TTP was developed in response to requests from our trainees to have their teaching assessed, without necessarily engaging in the academic postgraduate route. Over recent years, the number and style of mindfulness teacher-training programmes has increased and it feels more important than ever to engage in a programme that offers rigorous development and assessment of training undertaken. At CMRP we are keen to offer training, which fully acknowledges the depth and breadth of personal development and the integrity needed for this work, as well as the acquisition of skills and knowledge.

Recent Developments

Following the first pilot run of the TTP where we took on a limited number of participants, we have reflected on the learning and made some adjustments and developments.

It has become clear that it is important to embed the assessments of teachers into an academic structure, which ensures rigour and fairness, with a clear assessment procedure. It has been challenging to accommodate this and still retain a flexible approach, which allows trainees to develop and progress at their own pace.

The TTP now retains the flexibility and the capacity for student led progression in all aspects until Part 2B, (assessment), which requires registration onto a Bangor University module.

Registration for the module, Mindfulness Teacher Professional Pathway (MTPP), will open in September each year, (starting this year September 2016) and students will have until end of June the following year to submit their work for assessment. For this reason, please make sure you only register on the module when you are ready to record your 8-week course and submit it for assessment. You may submit a recording that is already completed, but it must have been recorded in the 18 months prior to registration. If you are not able to submit in the year you register, you will have to register again the following year and be charged again. You will also be taking the place of another student who may be ready.

Please follow this link and read all the pages carefully for more information.

https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/training-pathway/index.php.en

You must have successfully completed TTP parts 1 and 2A in order to apply and register on this module.
The Mindfulness Teachers Professional Pathway (MTPP) Module

The module is a 15 credit module at postgraduate level (7). The requirements for this module are:

Registration on Mindfulness Teachers Professional Pathways (MTPP) Module:

- Attend 1 teaching day in Bangor: Professional and ethical issues in mindfulness teaching
- Submit video recording of 8 week MBSR/CT course teaching for assessment
- Submit Written assignment, demonstrating learning outcomes for Part 2B.

See TTP Handbook for learning outcomes:


The TTP module and CMRP post graduate training.

It is not possible to transfer from the TTP onto the Postgraduate training, because the TTP does not require academic assessment through out all the sections. We are considering possible ways that students on the post graduate training may be able to join the MTPP module for their teaching assessment.

The TTP and the UK Mindfulness teacher Listing.

Within the UK there is now a process by which teachers may register with the UK Network for Mindfulness-based teacher training Organisations. This network listing offers a way for teachers to express their commitment to the UK good practice guidelines for mindfulness teachers and a way for the public and commissioners to have confidence in the teachers they are choosing. See link below for FAQs on the UK listing.


It is not essential to have started or completed the TTP in order to join the listing. They are 2 separate processes. The listing represents a way to acknowledge and ensure minimum standards for mindfulness teachers and the TTP is a rigorous and committed pathway of training and development leading to a teaching assessment.

The next phase of the TTP

Many of you have been waiting patiently to join the pathway and we thank you for your patience. We have been delighted, and a little overwhelmed, by the response to the pathway. We currently have; 33 people engaged on the pathway at differing stages; 15 on a waiting list and 33 expressions of interest.

(Expression of interest is a way for us to keep your contact details so that we can keep you updated of new developments and information). We still have a little way to go to meet the needs. We are in the process of recruiting more mentors so that more of you can begin your pathway.

And finally ….  
I would like to finish with a personal note of my experience of developing this pathway and engaging with our pioneer TTP travelers. Those of us in the mentoring team have been impressed with and gratified by the commitment and enthusiasm of our trainees. The TTP seems to be meeting a need that is felt by mindfulness teachers to have guidance and support though their training and to have their integrity, skill and genuine commitment recognised.

Eluned Gold  
Head of CPD
The structure of the Master’s in Mindfulness degree programme allowed part-time study around work and family commitments. I have very fond memories of the journeys to Bangor, and the study weekends spent there with the course tutors and my student colleagues, which allowed group members many opportunities to share knowledge, teaching, and meditation practices. I have met some truly wonderful and inspirational people, and made some lifelong friends. This has resulted in many hours spent on Skype: - with tutors, discussing essays and receiving supervision; - and also with student colleagues practising various meditations, teachings, discussions and shared learning. Attending retreats throughout the course has allowed me to immerse myself in Mindfulness practice further, and has facilitated the cultivation of a rich and fertile ground for further growth and development.

The flexibility of the course enabled me to take a year out to gain teaching experience. I was fortunate enough to be able to introduce Mindfulness into the NHS work environment where I was employed in a non-related role, in order to support NHS frontline staff. This led to the choice of my thesis topic: “The impact of Mindfulness-Based Interventions on nurses’ health, well-being, levels of stress and quality of life.” My supervisor was very supportive, encouraging, and accommodating, throughout the whole process, but particularly during a bout of ill-health.

I have recently moved to a different part of the country, where I hope to build upon these research findings by offering Mindfulness teaching to NHS staff at a different Trust, in the future. Additionally, having a Master’s qualification has offered several career options and opportunities, which I had not previously considered.

By Kathy
A Journey Like No Other

by Mark Roberts

Embarking on the Masters in Mindfulness Based Approaches with the CMRP at Bangor University has been a journey on many levels. I remember arriving in October 2012 in a room full of 40 plus other students enrolled on the Foundation module, unsure about what I’d let myself in for! The warmth and camaraderie I felt that first Friday evening set the tone for the next 4 years. For five weekends that first year we all made our individual ‘pilgrimages’ (A fellow student referred to it recently as akin to making a pilgrimage!). The extreme weather conditions we endured that first year, (snow, wind, floods and landslides), engendered a real bond between students and teachers. People having to sleep in cars or stuck at train stations, doing everything they could to be at those teaching weekends. That's what this Masters programme means to people!

But this is not just a personal sacrifice for many of us with families you rely on support from the people back home. I would be lying if there were times when leaving my youngest son, who was one when I started, hasn’t been really tough. But the training is not just about gaining academic credits the programme takes you on a journey to your heart. The modules dance between the theoretical and experiential underpinned all along by practice, practice, practice! For me mindfulness has been about how it brought me back from the brink of burnout in my working life. My interest is how you bring mindfulness training into the workplace without losing its integrity and efficacy. So I embark on my final year planning a thesis that hopefully adds to the discussions in this area.

This Masters is like no other. Yes you gain an academic qualification, but you walk away with so much more. Everyone should embark on this journey!

Remembering Shanti

Shanti Burgess, one of our Masters students sadly passed away on 31st January 2016. She had achieved an MSc Mindfulness-Based Approaches with Merit and was due to graduate this July. She was a loved member of our student community and many of us have fond memories of her.

Our sympathy and warm wishes went to her family and friends at the time of her death and we want to send our warmest thoughts again via this newsletter, and our hope that their grieving is eased with wonderful memories of Shanti.

From all at CMRP.
Deep Listening in London

By Katherine Betteridge

I started my PhD in the music department at Bangor University, believing that my studies in music and my job in the Centre for Mindfulness were two separate and unrelated parts of my life, but over time, and especially after a recent weekend in London, it’s become apparent that the two aspects have become inextricably and fascinatingly intertwined.

On Sunday 26th June I made my way down to London to an event at St John’s Smith Square which was part of a weekend of Minimalism put on by The South Bank Centre called “Deep Minimalism”. The event on the Sunday started at 3pm and finished just after 10pm. The music was of the genre of minimalism, and involved in some pieces very little movement and a lot of very still sounds. Also many of the pieces were 20 minutes or longer. There were compositions which involved live musicians, pieces involving electronics, and pieces involving both. The audience were invited to bring cushions and mats and subsequently the large room filled with of hundreds of people lying down or sitting on the floor.

The main featured composer for the weekend was Pauline Oliveros, the American Avant-Garde composer and accordionist. Oliveros made her name largely as a result of a recording she made in the Fort Worden cistern, Port Townsend, 14 feet underground with two other musicians in 1988. She released the subsequent recording and named it and also the band “Deep Listening” and went on to form The Deep Listening Institute. Oliveros describes deep listening as “Listening in every possible way to everything possible to hear no matter what one is doing.” The mission statement of the Deep Listening Institute is:

Deep Listening, as developed by Oliveros, explores the difference between the involuntary nature of hearing and the voluntary, selective nature -- of listening. The practice includes bodywork, sonic meditations, interactive performance, listening to the sounds of daily life, nature, one’s own thoughts, imagination and dreams, and listening to listening itself. It cultivates a heightened awareness of the sonic environment, both external and internal, and promotes experimentation, improvisation, collaboration, playfulness and other creative skills vital to personal and community growth. Plus it’s a ton of fun.

The organiser of the Deep Minimalism event in London, Oliver Coates, interviewed Oliveros and at one point discussed his own experience of Deep Listening in the context of performing the type of music taking place at the event (he is also a cellist and was performing in several of the pieces). He said the more he listened, the deeper he discovered his capacity for listening, almost like finding greater “reservoirs” of attention.

Personally, I made several discoveries of my own at the event. I was already familiar with the type of music that I was about to hear, but I encountered a noticeable amount of initial resistance. I was feeling very tired from the journey and very aware of the fact that I was going to be in the Hall for 7 hours or more. I initially felt like I had to do something with the music, I had to feel a certain way, and there was an expectation that I would be moved in some way, there was also resistance to my expectation, and resistance to the slow moving, very gradual unfolding nature of the music; and worrying that I wasn’t understanding it correctly, that I was missing something. Eventually I felt a desire to lie down and immediately become more submissive, and consequently I began to start listening
in a different way to how I would usually listen in a concert.

As I gave myself permission to do this, it was like the music began to bypass the judgmental aspects of my cognitive processes and move into my body, almost as if my body began doing the listening, not just my ears. The sounds started to take on a different form and resonate in different parts of my body; it seemed to wash over and through me. I noticed that as soon as I sat up, my listening experience changed again—back to my normal listening process.

The tones and sounds that I heard mutated in my mind and I noticed the unintentional overtones created by the combinations of sounds, or the rhythmic vibrations created naturally from the pitch of notes, or the spaces in between the notes, or the blended sonority of several notes together and the nature of that particular blend. The textures of harmonies came in waves, each wave having its own flavour which I felt from somewhere inside my body. It was like my body felt the sound first without labelling it and then my brain decided on what to make of it.

A number of thoughts have crossed my mind since the event, the first of which being that the informal physical nature of the concert and the fact I could make myself comfortable by lying down seemed to be one of the reasons I was able to instigate the cognitive bypass I experienced. The nature of the actual music also enabled me to listen differently partly because I had two choices and I chose the easier option – I could sit and think and dissect or I could lie down, relax and let go of the desire to understand every aspect of the music.

I had made an appointment for the day after the concert to visit the anechoic chamber at University College London (pictured below). An anechoic chamber is a soundproof room lined with sound absorbent material and no flat or reflective surfaces on walls, ceiling or floor which drastically minimises the reflections of sound. Within the context of my PhD, I’ve been reading a lot of writings by the composer John Cage and his 1951 visit to an anechoic chamber at Harvard University. This visit changed his direction and philosophy on music and on sound. He subsequently went on to write 4’33”, a silent piece of music. What affected him so profoundly about the anechoic chamber was the fact that even in this soundproof box there were still sounds to be heard. He could hear, what he discovered afterwards to be, blood circulating in his body and also a different noise which was his central nervous system. He concluded that whilst being alive it will never be possible to experience total silence “Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death.” He became very interested in the concept of writing music in which the composer takes a backseat and does not impose their ideas or will upon the music. The composer provides a frame and nature provides the content (he became very interested in using the I-Ching to compose the music).

My own experience upon entering the chamber was one of immediate disorientation and dizziness. I became aware of a fizzing sound which I assumed was blood in my head, and an occasional hum, there were also occasional bass-like sounds. It was hard to distinguish from where the sounds came. The experience of entering an anechoic chamber can for some people be extremely disturbing. There can be a feeling of a suspension of time and space & people often do not know for how long they have been in the chamber, however, I found a great deal of solace in this feeling, especially in the darkness (I also spent 7 minutes in pitch black darkness). I felt like this environment enabled on a deeper level my meditation practice & dramatically pulled my attention in. Everything I heard in the chamber I felt that I had heard before (bodily sounds), but I now heard everything differently, almost as if for the first time. Since returning to normal life (!) I’ve been extremely aware of the nature of sound and the echoes in a room, and how sounds sound the way they do as a result of the environment & context. I feel ever so slightly permanently changed as a result of these two experiences and am now aware of the potential that we have if we openly embrace listening on a new level.
I’m writing this with just a few weeks to go before our 2016 CMRP conference.

As with every conference, the conception and planning of this has been an exciting, engaging and challenging task.

This article gives an insight of the rationale behind our conference theme and a flavour of some of the exciting workshops, keynotes and presentations. If you are not able to be with us for these exciting events, this article may serve to inform and enthuse you about developments in mindfulness supporting families.

The Conference theme, mindfulness supporting all aspects of family life is a broad ranging topic, and yet there is still a relatively little research into mindfulness and the family. Therefore, some of the motivation for this conference theme is to bring together researchers and practitioners in order to seed new conversations and projects.

We are delighted with our final line up of speakers, workshop facilitators and research presenters. Between them, they represent a wealth of knowledge and experience. We are sure all our delegates are going to enjoy meeting them and learning from them. We are grateful to all the presenters for giving us their time and coming to share their expertise.

Glancing, through the programme, a clear theme is evident; the role of mindfulness in fostering connection and attuned relationships both within families and in those working with families. We are beginning to have greater understanding of the importance of human connection on our physical and mental health. In particular, early years and in utero experiences affect not only the development of the neuro-physiological architecture, but may also influence our epigenetics. With this in mind it seems clear that our attention and resources need to go into supporting parents and families as the guardians of our future generations. In a recent radio 4 programme, Lord Layard commented that we need to support and educate the parents of today in order to build resilience in our future.

Our pre-conference institutes consider these important themes in various ways. Nancy Bardacke will talk about her work on mindful birthing and parenting, bringing mindfulness into maternal, child and family healthcare. Dr. Philippe Goldin, offers experiential reflection on how contemplative practices can enhance important life skills. Dr. Graham Music, will explore the interface between, attachment, mindfulness and brain science and offer insights in to child development and mindfulness.

Our key-note speakers, between them, offer an overview of the current field; Professor Katherine Weare begins the conference with a key-note considering an overview of our current understanding of Mindfulness for young people, children and those who care for them. Nancy Bardacke, offers a discussion of her programme Mindfulness–based Childbirth and Parenting and focuses our attention the role of mindfulness in the very early stages of life. Professor Ruth Baer will discuss

several ethical issues, of recent concern amongst the mindfulness community. In the UK, we have not yet adopted Good Practice Guidelines (GPG) for mindfulness with children and adolescents. Ruth’s considered wisdom on this topic may helpfully contribute to discussions on developing these. Our final keynote comes from Dr. Nirbhay Singh speaking in his role as editor of the premier journal in this field ‘Mindfulness’. He will explore research with children and families within the context of mindfulness research in general.

Our workshops and research presentations cover a range of topics on the theme of mindful families. We will hear from prominent practitioners and researchers in the field of mindfulness and learning disabilities. Adolescent mental health is considered in two separate workshops, one considering mindfulness in the midst of chaos and the other offering a newly developed programme for young people at risk of mental illness.

Mindful Movement is often a way to engage young people with mindfulness and there will be an experiential workshop on mindful movement giving us all an opportunity to work with our bodies as well as our minds and offering some useful pointers on how to teach movement to young people.

Communication and connection is a strong theme in two workshops on Mindful Communication within families and ‘Nurturing Parents’- reaching hard to reach parents.

A further workshop on Mindfulness and the Developing Brain is offered by Dr. Dusana Dorjee and some of our Bangor University home-grown PhD students. Two workshops help broaden our cultural perspectives discussing cross cultural perspectives on mental health and reflections on work with Syrian refugees.

The fascinating research presentations and posters are divided into an afternoon on Mindfulness in Education and a morning on Mindfulness with Children and Parents in health care contexts. They all showcase some important and fascinating work across the field.

All of this work is supported by our day of practice offering us the ground for our work of authentically connecting with one another.

This is a specialist and emerging field and we are confident that this is a key area, which will continue to develop. If you haven’t been able to make it to our conference this year, we hope that this has whetted your appetite for further explorations and we would love to see you at next year’s conference on our broader theme of Mindfulness in Society.

For further information on our 2017 conference please see the back page of this newsletter.
It’s a real honour for me to join CMRP’s core training team and alongside Cindy in London.

My first encounter was way back in 2008, on what was then the Teacher Development Retreat before it became the TTR. I still remember the gentle but curious and insightful energy of both Judith and Cindy who led the group in North London, I had no notion of the delight of Trigonos at that time! This followed a special study module during my medical degree in 2006 with Mark Williams and his team in Oxford, itself an Oasis of kindness and compassion in the hectic energy of Medical Training. The TDR inspired me to start the Masters in teaching. So not only is it quite special for me to join but I know it to be quite a special team, the quality of its research, the contributions of its characters and it’s place as a leading organisation with integrity at its heart.

I am already touched by the commitment and generosity of the team, and their welcome and acceptance of me on several teaching events.

My employment background is diverse, having experienced private, public and charity sectors. I also grew up and live in London. Both Mindfulness in the workplace and the needs and possibilities for London are areas I am interested in.

It was interesting to return, briefly, to a busy full time role in the city’s financial sector after many years away from it. I witnessed "commuter rage" when someone failed to queue "properly" for an escalator (!) and found how so much time is spent away from nature and even family, where doing and striving are often the norm. In a shrinking world with less job security and emerging technologies demanding new skills, it seems that the pace of change has never been greater. All of this with the amazing diversity within the Capital not to mention it’s scale.

Unsurprisingly the need for wellbeing and increasingly, the demand for mindfulness is great. Within this is an enormous opportunity for compassion, and one which will demand insight to skillfully handle the issues.

I would like to express my continued appreciation to the team in general but to Cindy in particular for her insights, time and generosity, after all while "to err" may be human, "to wobble", well that’s a place to instruct from :)}
Mindfulness & Individual Therapy

Residential 5 day programme for trained therapists working one to one and others working with individuals and group using psychological theories.

Increasingly therapists are coming to understand the value of mindfulness, both as a way to support us in our work and as a tool to pass on to our clients. Mindfulness offers a deeper, richer and more grounded way of being that flows from personal experiential understanding to become integrated into our therapeutic work.

This training offers an innovative programme primarily for those who are working therapeutically one to one: counsellors, psychotherapists, clinical psychologists, psychology professionals, who are interested in exploring the relevance of mindfulness in their work. The course will also be useful to those who work with groups. The programme offers an intense immersion in personal mindfulness practice, as well as exploring the integration of personal practice and therapeutic style.

- Theoretical foundations of mindfulness and therapy, arising from both eastern and western psychology
- Applications of mindfulness across a range of mental health issues, with particular reference to use of mindfulness and:
  - Therapeutic relationship,
  - Developing client's body awareness.
  - Mindfulness and attachment.

The teaching will be retreat style and founded on mindfulness practice. We aim to support a safe and stimulating environment in which to explore mindfulness and psychotherapy, experientially and theoretically. We aim to create a community of like-minded professionals interested in developing personal practice and applying it in their own professional therapy settings.

The Teachers
Jody Mardula and Eluned Gold are both trained and experienced psychotherapists who between them have more than 60 years of experience in the therapeutic field, and almost as many practicing mindfulness. As well as working as therapists they both have many years experience of supervising and training psycho-therapists. Between them they have particular experience in the following areas: Addictions, Trauma, Children and Families, Mental health, Working within the NHS, Brain injury and Group work.

Next course: 23rd -28th October 2016 Trigonos, North Wales.

For more information see https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/courses.php.en
14

As another academic year ends – there is a small window of space through which to reflect. Counting on my fingers, I realize that I have been involved in this work for 17 years. When does time start flashing by?!

Snatches of History

In a conversation recently, I realized that the history of how the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice (CMRP) came into being is not well known. It started in 1999 with a retreat led by Ferris Urbanowski an inspiring senior teacher from the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. We gathered on Bardsey, a Welsh island with no bathrooms, or running water. Arriving in boats, we brought our provisions like early settlers. ‘We’ were the impressive MBCT trial folk from Cambridge, Toronto and Bangor – and a ragbag of other practitioners. I was one of those others, enthusiastic but without much clue as to what we were doing. Extraordinary how significant some arbitrary decisions are, when you look back.

The first MBCT for depression prevention trial was in progress and John, Mark and Zin del were keen to share developments and train new teachers. Ferris Urbanowski was tasked by Jon Kabat-Zinn to teach this embryonic group. She was a generous supporter of our early development and returns later this year to celebrate all her many journeys to Wales. Developing CMRP was an exciting process, not without its difficulties. Like most fledgling organisations, we faced many challenges.

We were carving out our values and identity – a messy business - yet there was a thread that held the beginnings of our understanding about the importance of integrity, of how to learn from each other, and of the centrality of the practice. Gradually we started developing training for teachers. We had much in common – including a love of the practice and a wish to find ways of acknowledging complexity. We were blessed with generous mentors without whom CMRP would not be what it is – Jon Kabat-Zinn, Saki Santorelli, Ferris, Melissa Blacker and Pam Erdmann – and notably Mark Williams and John Teasdale. We needed them, and over time came to realise that we could stand on our own and do things a bit differently. Given that our original teachers were drawn from Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, a key part of who we are has involved us in bridging these two forms and developing clarity about what each offers, how they relate and how they underpin other mindfulness-based programme forms.

Since those early days, I find it extraordinary to reflect on all that CMRP has achieved. We were the first university based mindfulness centre in Europe and the first university anywhere to offer a Masters in mindfulness-based programmes. Over the years, we have trained half of all the mindfulness-based teachers in the UK – and taught and trained many hundreds of others from all over the world. My gifted colleagues have led and contributed to some extraordinary developments, such as the Mindfulness-Based Interventions-Teaching Assessment Criteria, now used internationally as an assessment tool for mindfulness teacher competence; the development of supervision training; innovative programmes for young children in schools, for parents facing special challenges, for people with cancer, and for those in workplace settings. We have collaborated with our colleagues in
Exeter and Oxford Universities in many significant initiatives, including with other mindfulness-based training groups in the UK to produce the UK Good Practice Guidelines and now the listing of UK mindfulness based teachers. Amongst us, we have written or contributed to the writing of eight mindfulness books, with two more on the way and many journal articles. There is much more - too much to mention here.

What of the Future?

New challenges await. Most people in this field tend to be a certain age, race, class, background. Attend a mindfulness conference and look around. We are strikingly uniform. Our lack of diversity, whilst not sought, is a lack that at long last we are waking up to.

Working skillfully to expand access is not easy, but we must seek to use our creativity to widen horizons and invite in those who are currently on the margins.

As mindfulness grows in volume and recognition, training and teaching with integrity present us with many challenges. Our culture is one that seeks to reduce depth and complexity, in order to get what we want faster and easier. Spa holidays are offered to add value to mindfulness teacher training packages. Jazzy websites, polished and beautiful, offer watered down training, some online examples are out there - not aligned to UK good practice. Yet if you were new, wanting to become a mindfulness-based course teacher, how would you know where to go and what is good?

At a recent teacher training retreat, a number of people said that they had chosen Bangor because of our reputation for quality and training excellence. They knew what to look for – but not everyone does. How can we compete with fancy marketing that offers newer, better, quicker training?

It seems important for us to hold our ground and stay close to what we know is authentic; to acknowledge the pressures to lighten the training, but to stay committed to what we know matters. We are learning to be unapologetic in emphasizing ethics and integrity and to practicing values that count - knowing that this is what holds us true to doing no harm.

I often encourage trainees not to believe their own marketing publicity, but to reflect, retreat, and have the courage to ask the difficult questions of their teaching practice. I personally enjoy the understated – Nordic Noir rather than Hollywood for me! However, in the current climate this might be a risky strategy. Maybe now is not the time for humility. I am proud of what CMRP offers - as long as we continue to sustain the rigour of our integrity and heart. We must persist in having the good sense to ask the important questions. Only then can we be confident that we are putting down strong foundations that will take this work into the next generation.

Trish Bartley is a member of the CMRP core training team and teaches on the Bangor masters programme. She has written Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Cancer (Bartley, 2012) and has a new book due out this autumn for people with cancer called Mindfulness: A Kindly Approach to Being with Cancer. (Bartley, in press)

To access the hyperlinks throughout this article (and any of the newsletter) please see the electronic online version which can be accessed from the home page of our website.
We offer three main pathways of training, each module is part-time and taken over five weekends a year:

**Route 1. Train to be a mindfulness teacher (4 years)**
This route is a full training to teach the mindfulness-based courses of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT). You gain a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) and the Certificate of Competence in Teaching Mindfulness-Based Courses.

**Route 2. Train to be a mindfulness teacher AND get a Masters degree (5 years)**
This route is for those who wish to train as a mindfulness teacher AND get a Masters degree. It is a full training to teach the mindfulness-based courses of MBSR and MBCT. You gain a Masters, and the Certificate of Competence in Teaching Mindfulness-Based Courses.

**Route 3. Gain a Masters degree in mindfulness-based approaches (3-5 years)**
This route is gives an overall training in integrating mindfulness into professional work, and in working with mindfulness-based approaches with groups and individuals. You gain a Masters degree.

If you would like to join us for our October 2016 term, we are open for applications until **Wednesday 31st August 2016**. Please note that we interview and offer places throughout the year, so the application deadline may be brought forward if places on our course are filled, therefore we strongly encourage early applications. For more information or to apply go to: https://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/postgraduate-courses/
Dear Colleagues,

Next February we are offering a week long Advanced Teacher Development Retreat - previously called ‘Teacher Training Retreat Level 3’. We have had lots of feedback from many of you who had a heart sink about engaging in another level of training! This made us pause and reflect on what our core intentions are in offering this. We have reworked our title and descriptor to better describe these intentions.

Our main aim is to offer a space for those of you who are established as mindfulness-based course teachers to deepen into your practice, your teaching skills and your vision for your work. As we become more senior in our roles we often find ourselves not only doing the work of teaching, but also supporting the development of other teachers and supporting the development of a context for this work to flourish in our organisations and society. We will start close in with our own practice, will engage in practicing teaching together and will also give space to reflecting on how we can respond skilfully to the wider work that is called for. All of this will be contained within a retreat environment.

Here are a few comments from previous participants:

- Really provided the opportunity to investigate a wide range of themes in great depth, giving a much rounder experience of the teaching.
- Absolutely wonderful. Balance of activities and stillness, teaching and practice was just right. It was a distinctly different experience from TTR2, built on that learning and took it further so a real cumulative impact of the courses.
- The excellent quality of teaching is clearly the fruit of many years of practice and learning. These deep roots enable flexibility in approach, agility and lightness of touch which create a rich learning context.
- The integrity, honesty and directness of the guidance combined with a deep compassion for the way things are.
- I have come away with a huge sense of 'shift'. Whilst there my 'internal weather' was as changeable as the external weather proved to be. There seemed to be more 'feeling the cold' than 'sunbathing', but always, I felt protected, well guided and cared for. And I came through it feeling like it was one of my all-time richest experiences.
- The power and richness of spending a whole week with other teachers and expert guidance. It has been so helpful I would appreciate the opportunity to attend a similar course regularly, perhaps every 2 years with a silent retreat in between.

The week is open to all of you who have taken TTR2 with us previously. For further information and to register, please visit the CMRP website: [www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/calendar](http://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/calendar)

We hope you will join us!

With warm wishes,
Becca Crane, Cindy Cooper and Taravajra
A farewell message from two of our senior core trainers: Annee Griffiths and Michael Chaskalson

It has not been an easy decision to leave the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, (CMRP) as an active teacher. I have been connected to the CMRP since the year 2000 and it has been so much of my life.

I remember the very early days of the CMRP before it was even 'the Centre'. We were a group of people in Bangor who were passionate about mindfulness and developing MBCT and MBSR in the UK. In the early days we met in our houses until Mark Williams suggested we meet at the university and shortly after he set up the embryo Centre. We continued to have monthly meetings and because we were so enthusiastic about the work these meetings were very interactive and heartfelt. For me personally it was exciting that mindfulness was taken seriously by my local university and I was delighted to be a part of this development. We, as a team, never imagined that it would become so popular, that NICE would endorse mindfulness in the field of mental health and the media would promote it so widely.

In the early days we had a few memorable experiences together. There was my first teacher training retreat at the beautiful Trigonos in 2001, with teachers from the Center for Mindfulness (CFM) in Massachusetts, when we practised how to teach with each other. Also unforgettable was the time when the team did a retreat on Bardsey Island. The weather was so bad we couldn’t reach the island and started the retreat on Anglesey, a more accessible island. After a few days we took a hair-raising ride across one of the world’s most dangerous sea crossings to a tiny island with no electricity or standard toilets. We camped out in different houses and took turns in cooking the food we had brought with us. The sound of seals serenaded our silent practices, wild walks and swims. The highlights were the shearwaters coming home in the dark and a fluffy white baby seal newly born in a remote cove.

In my 15 years working with the CMRP I have taught with, been taught by and have taught many incredible people. I have learnt much about mindfulness, shared laughter and joy as well as sadness and difficulties. I was fortunate to discover a new life in my fifties, to see mindfulness in the UK blossom and become mainstream. My colleagues, our courses and students have been instrumental in my development and well being.
Another aspect of my work was working on the Teacher’s Training Retreats across the UK and Ireland. The Teacher Training Retreats are an exciting and challenging mix of personal development and teacher training and as such they are a unique learning environment for students and teachers alike.

I am honoured to have practised, collaborated and taught with my colleagues at CMRP. My relationship with them has changed me as a person and as a teacher and has been both nourishing and fun. I am glad to say that many of my colleagues are friends with whom I hope to continue to connect. I am fortunate to live near Bangor and therefore have the opportunity to continue to meet up with them occasionally. I shall still continue to meet other teachers and graduates of the eight week course on the monthly Follow up evenings that I have been supporting for the last 14 years. This is another group that has grown exponentially.

So what am I doing now? I am passionate about developing mindfulness practice personally and with others. I am still teaching eight week courses to the general public in North Wales and a six week follow up course called Staying Mindful. I am also continuing to lead practice retreats with the Mindfulness Network.

At the moment I am half way through a book which aims to be a support to practise after the eight week course. It outlines the Staying Mindful course with practices and theory to develop practice. I learnt so much on the Masters of Mindfulness programme at Bangor from the material and from the other teachers and students that I wanted to share some of this learning more widely. The book is intended as a guide for both teachers and participants. I hope to finish it one day! However, in the meantime poetry is my passion and I need space and time for this.

I love to walk. As I live on Anglesey I am fortunate to be able to walk in the mountains and on the coast. In the last year I have travelled to Nepal to trek in the high mountains. I did this 40 years ago in my twenties and was pleased to be able to visit old haunts and new. We explored the remote Nar Phu valley and climbed over the Kanga La Pass (5300 metres). At that altitude I struggled so hard to breathe I thought I was going to die! My future adventures will be less epic. We have a camper van and we hope to explore this country and Europe.

We have four children and four grandchildren and it is wonderful to have more time to spend with them, to help out if we can and to have fun. Also it is good to have more time for friends, time to listen, to support through difficulties and to enjoy.

In spring and summer our large and abundant garden is constantly pulling on our time. We are rewarded by home grown food and great beauty. So in spite of choosing to spend less time working in order to have more time and energy I find I am still busy. That’s the nature of time, it fills up!

As I leave my formal role, I realise how fortunate I am to be associated with the CMRP which is a Centre for Excellence and is at the fore front of the mindfulness movement, not only in the UK but internationally. I know that although I am no longer officially working at the Centre I shall continue to connect with and be inspired by new developments, conferences and occasionally drop in for tea.

I feel privileged to have taught many local people in North Wales (in fact quite a number of my friends are now practising mindfulness) and beyond, people from all over the UK and also from Ireland, Europe, Australia, Thailand and India.

I was in the first cohort of students to take up the Master's in Mindfulness based Approaches. Each of the four modules I took was the first time the module was rolled out, so I was somewhat a guinea pig. After gaining my MA I taught on the foundation year of the Master’s programme for seven years. Throughout that time I have seen many developments in the programme. It was an honour to share the journey with students as they investigated themes within their own mindfulness practice and to see these same students grow throughout the years of their study and beyond to make a real difference to the world.

By Annee Griffiths
Moving on – but keeping in touch

Michael Chaskalson

I was first introduced to mindfulness back in 1974 while finishing a philosophy degree. Disappointed by the rather dreary worldview offered by academic philosophy in those days, I came upon Buddhism and was electrified – it seemed to offer an answer to my questions. I have spent the rest of my adult life continuing to pursue this direction: teaching, studying, writing and retreating – and enjoying the benefits of a community based in shared values.

Around the turn of the millennium, though, I started to feel uneasy. Full-time engagement with the Buddhist path was wonderful, but lacked reach. You had to come to a Buddhist centre to get what we offered – and that was quite a barrier for most people.

Searching around on the internet, I stumbled on the Master’s in Mindfulness-Based Approaches offered by the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice (CMRP) at Bangor University and felt an immediate resonance. Perhaps here was a way to re-contextualise these frameworks for understanding and working skilfully with the human mind in ways that were suitable for the mainstream. I signed up and was the first graduate from the programme. Not long after, Becca and friends invited me to join the CMRP teaching team. I spent several happy years teaching on the Masters, running distance learning courses and teacher training retreats. All this time I appreciated the new secular and pluralistic language I was learning and enjoying the benefits of a community based in shared values.

I set up a training company – Mindfulness Works Ltd. – and began to offer courses and trainings on my own account in London and elsewhere. Others joined me in that and our work began to spread. In particular, I created an eight week course specifically designed for executive coaches and some of the graduates of that began to introduce me to their own corporate clients, mainly relatively senior executives.

It seemed to me that the distress that brought a significant proportion of people to my Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) courses was founded in what they encountered at work – bullying or insensitive bosses or colleagues, overwhelming workloads, constant change. I thought that if we could begin to change something of that for the better, people’s lives could be hugely improved. By starting at the top, helping senior decision makers become more mindful, perhaps we could begin to make a difference and I began to focus my work there.

I wrote a book – “The Mindful Workplace” – and that opened further doors. Now my work is mainly focussed on delivering mindfulness-based interventions of various sorts in organisational contexts, especially in leadership development programmes. I became an adjunct professor at IE Business School in Madrid, and recently have been engaged with colleagues at Ashridge Business School undertaking a wait-list control trial investigating the outcomes of an eight-week Mindful Leader training programme. The results will be published in June.

Mindfulness teaching in the workplace is a very new area. The evidence base is still small but the interest on the ground is huge. In this context there are fewer anchor points to guide governance and good practice than in the more clinically focused developments of MBSR and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy. The result is vast variation in practice, all happening under the label of mindfulness teaching in the workplace.

I am increasingly keen to contribute to developments which lay down the foundations for good practice and integrity in workplace mindfulness. As a first step, I’ve joined with others under the auspices of the UK Network for Mindfulness-Based Teacher Training Organisations to formulate Good Practice Guidance suitable for mindfulness-based teachers in workplace contexts.

Going forward, in collaboration with colleagues, I am exploring a partnership with the mindfulness centres at Oxford and Bangor Universities to develop teacher training that is specifically designed for the workplace context. In this way we hope to train new cohorts of well-trained workplace teachers, and more widely to influence standards for workplace teaching.

With all of this – and much more – going on, I no longer had time for CMRP’s specific work of MBSR and MBCT teacher training and regretfully have decided to step back from this. I’m hugely grateful to the CMRP and all my friends there for all they have given me and the wider world. I look forward to new collaborations and developments.
Core Training Team

Trish Bartley  Rebecca Crane  Cindy Cooper  Susannah Crump

Dusana Dorjee  Pamela Duckerin  Eluned Gold  Gemma Griffith

Mariel Jones  Vanessa Hope  Karunavira  Jody Mardula  Bridgette O'Neill

Barbara Reid  Bethan Roberts  Ciaran Saunders  David Shannon  Christina Shennan

Sarah Silverton  Judith Soulsby  Taravajra  Sud Ubayasiri  Elaine Young
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<td>17th—23rd Jul</td>
<td>Newtown, Powis</td>
<td>Mindful Self-Compassion Teacher Training</td>
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<td>Venice</td>
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<td>Teacher Training Retreat Level 1</td>
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<td>9th—16th Sept</td>
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<td>22nd—23rd Sept</td>
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<td>Mindfulness Specialist MBCT 2 Day Workshop</td>
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<td>Bringing Mindfulness to Children, Young People and Families</td>
<td>Eluned Gold, Bill Young</td>
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<td>5 Day Residential Course in mindful Self-Compassion</td>
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<td>5th—6th Oct</td>
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<td>Mindfulness Groupwork Workshop</td>
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<td>17th—19th Oct</td>
<td>Chester and North Wales</td>
<td>An Introduction to Mindfulness-Based Pain and Illness Management (Part 1 of a 2 Part Course)</td>
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<td>21st—22nd Nov</td>
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<td>Cindy Cooper Rebecca Crane</td>
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<td>8th—13th April</td>
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<td>Corrymeela, Northern Ireland</td>
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Mindfulness in Society - Conference 2017

7th – 11th July in Chester, UK

Confirmed programme to date, more to follow:

Daylong workshops including:

Understanding Mindfulness and Inner Awakening with John Teasdale

Accessibility and Innovation with Kate Malleson

Compassion with Paul Gilbert

Pedagogy in the MBIs: An international exploration with Diane Reibel & Don McCown

A Day of Practice with:

Willem Kuyken and Rebecca Crane

Pre-dinner talk with Jon Kabat-Zinn

*Intimacy with Awareness: Embodied Mindfulness as a Way of Being*
followed by short Q&A session (all via video link)

Plus:

Research Talks, Research Poster Presentations and various symposiums and workshops at our popular Mindfulness in Society Conference

To register and find out more information please visit the CMRP website

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Newsletter created by
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