

## BEYOND THE BRAIN IX

University of Winchester, August 26th–28th 2011

Please send to:

Conference Administrator, Scientific and Medical Network, PO Box 11,  
Moreton-in-Marsh, Glos GL56 0ZF. Tel: +44 (0) 1608 652000, Fax: +44 (0)1608 652001,  
Email: [info@scimednet.org](mailto:info@scimednet.org)

### PLEASE WRITE IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Accommodation** Ensuite and standard accommodation available, please indicate your choice below.

**Fees** Fees include lecture programme and all meals (excluding breakfast for non-residents) and are payable in full on booking. Vegetarian meals provided.

**Cancellations** A fee of £20 will be retained, or £75 after 1st August; after 15th August, no refund.

**Booking** Places are strictly limited so early application is essential. Send cheque for full amount, payable to "Scientific and Medical Network". Overseas bookings must be in sterling: either credit card or bank draft. **WE CANNOT GUARANTEE BOOKINGS MADE AFTER 15th AUGUST.** Detailed information about the venue will be sent with the booking confirmation.

**Poster Displays** Please let us know if you would like to display material relevant to the conference and send in an abstract by June 30th to [info@scimednet.org](mailto:info@scimednet.org).

### CONFERENCE OPTIONS

#### SMN Members:

- Residential en suite ..... £270  
 Early bird ..... £250  
 Residential standard ..... £240  
 Early bird ..... £220  
 Non-residential ..... £210  
 Early bird ..... £190

#### Non-Members

- Residential en suite ..... £290  
 Early bird ..... £270  
 Residential standard ..... £260  
 Early bird ..... £240  
 Non-residential ..... £225  
 Early bird ..... £205  
 Early bird rate - to be booked by 15th June

Student and concession rates available, please apply.

Please send me a joining form and another leaflet so that I can enrol at the Members' rate

#### PAYMENT OPTION

- Cheque/Bank Draft/Money Order  
(payable to "Scientific and Medical Network")  
 Credit card (VISA or MasterCard)

Please tick here if physically disabled and give detail.

How did you hear about the conference?

**MEALS** – are you?  
 Vegetarian  Vegan

Special requests (dietary etc.):

Card No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Expires: \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE ORGANISERS

### THE SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL NETWORK

The Scientific and Medical Network was founded in 1973 by George Blaker, Dr. Patrick Shackleton, Dr. Peter Leggett and Sir Kelvin Spencer. The founders believed that neither orthodox religion nor conventional science was sufficient to answer pressing questions about human existence and the cosmos, and that new ways of thinking were needed.

The Network provides interdisciplinary education exploring the frontiers of science, consciousness and spirituality. It draws on a worldwide community of scientists, doctors, psychologists, engineers, philosophers and theologians to provide events, publications, and courses that link insights from the spiritual traditions and the arts, with the study and application of science and medicine.

The Network assumes that there are many ways of knowing the world and ourselves, of which science is just one, albeit one highly effective and reliable, way of gaining knowledge. In order to do justice to the full spectrum of human experience and the complexity of the cosmos, it encourages dialogue and interaction between the spiritual, the scientific, the philosophical and the arts in open-minded enquiry. See [www.scimednet.org](http://www.scimednet.org)

### ROYAL COLLEGE OF PSYCHIATRISTS SPIRITUALITY AND PSYCHIATRY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

The Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group was founded in 1999 to provide a forum for psychiatrists to explore the influence of the major religions, which shape the cultural values and aspirations of psychiatrist and patient alike. The spiritual aspirations of persons not identifying with any one particular faith are held to be of no less importance, as well as the viewpoint of those who hold that spirituality is independent of religion. The meetings are designed to enable colleagues to investigate and share without fear of censure the relevance of spirituality to clinical practice. The Group now has over 2,600 members. See [www.rcpsych.ac.uk/spirit](http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/spirit)

### CHAIRS:



Dr. Peter Fenwick is Emeritus Consultant Neuropsychiatrist, Maudsley Hospital and Honorary Consultant Neurophysiologist, St.

Thomas's Hospital. He is a President of the Scientific and Medical Network and President of the Horizon Foundation.



David Lorimer is Programme Director of the Scientific and Medical Network and President of Wrekin Trust. He is editor of *Thinking Beyond the Brain, Science, Consciousness and Ultimate Reality* and co-editor of *A New Renaissance*. He is author of *Radical Prince*, which has been translated into French, Spanish and Dutch.



Dr. Andrew Powell is Founding Chair of the Spirituality and Psychiatry Special Interest Group of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

He is co-author with Dr. Bisong Guo of *Listen to your Body – the Wisdom of the Dao* and co-editor of *Spirituality and Psychiatry*.

## BEYOND THE BRAIN IX

# The Science of Empathy and the Spirit of Compassion

26-28 August 2011

University of  
Winchester

Speakers:

Karen Armstrong  
Prof. Paul Gilbert  
Dr. Valeria Gazzola  
Geshe Tashi Tsering  
Dr. Iain McGilchrist

Chairs: Dr. Peter Fenwick, David Lorimer, Dr. Andrew Powell



The Scientific and Medical Network  
in association with  
Royal College of Psychiatrists  
Spirituality and Psychiatry Group



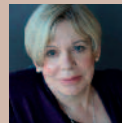
**Beyond the Brain IX** This is the 9th in our series of *Beyond the Brain* conferences initiated in Cambridge in 1995. This year we will be focusing on empathy and compassion through the lens of the emerging science of empathy, which is demonstrating that we are actually wired for empathy and compassion. Rather than seeing human beings as an outcome of the selfish gene, knowing that empathy potential exists at a neurophysiological level gives us a completely different understanding of human nature. To explore this reality we have brought together a distinguished panel of presenters. The well-known writer **Karen Armstrong** has been a leading proponent of the Charter for Compassion, which she will introduce. **Iain McGilchrist** will explore the neurophysiology underpinning empathy –the social brain - and its association with the right hemisphere. **Geshe Tashi Tsering** will speak about the spirit of compassion in Tibetan Buddhism, and following his very well-received talk at our 2010 conference **Paul Gilbert** will explain new psychological research on fear of compassion rooted in self-criticism. **Valeria Gazzola** is travelling from the Netherlands to share her insights into the workings of mirror neurons in our social interactions. This promises to be a rich exchange and we greatly look forward to your participation at Winchester.

## Speakers and Programme

### FRIDAY 26TH AUGUST

The evening will begin with a wine reception, followed by dinner. Afterwards **David Lorimer** will introduce the conference with a talk on *Empathetic Resonance and the Ethic of Interconnectedness*, and the speakers will introduce themselves.

### SATURDAY 27TH AUGUST



**Karen Armstrong - The Charter for Compassion: Wishing for a Better World**

The Charter of Compassion is a cooperative effort to restore not only compassionate thinking but, more importantly, compassionate action to the centre of religious, moral and political life. Compassion is the principled determination to put ourselves in the shoes of the other, and lies at the heart of all religious and ethical systems. One of the most urgent tasks of our generation is to build a global community where men and women of all races, nations and ideologies can live together in peace. In our globalised world, everybody has become our neighbour, and the Golden Rule has become an urgent necessity. The Charter

seeks to change the conversation so that compassion becomes a key word in public and private discourse, making it clear that any ideology that breeds hatred or contempt ~ be it religious or secular ~ has failed the test of our time. It is not simply a statement of principle; it is above all a summons to creative, practical and sustained action to meet the political, moral, religious, social and cultural problems of our time.

**Karen Armstrong** is one of the most provocative and original thinkers on the role of religion in the modern world. Armstrong is a former Roman Catholic nun who left a British convent to pursue a degree in modern literature at Oxford. She has written more than 20 books around the ideas of what Islam, Judaism and Christianity have in common, and around their effect on world events, including the magisterial *A History of God and Holy War: The Crusades and Their Impact on Today's World*. Her latest book is *Twelve Steps towards a Compassionate Life*. Her meditations on personal faith and religion (she calls herself a freelance monotheist) spark discussion — especially her take on fundamentalism, which she sees in a historical context, as an outgrowth of modern culture. In February 2008, Karen

Armstrong won the TED Prize and the wish associated with her prize was for help in creating, launching and propagating the Charter for Compassion, which is supported by the Fetzer Institute. [www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org)



**Dr Iain McGilchrist - Erasmus or Machiavelli: Empathy and the Brain**

Empathy begins to arise in higher mammals and is, by some accounts, a surprising development in evolution. It is also the basis of the social brain, a defining human characteristic. However it is inextricably bound up with the a version of the world furnished to us by the right hemisphere of the brain, and this in turn is essentially incompatible with, but needs nonetheless to be combined with, the version our left hemisphere yields. Over the course of Western civilisation, this uneasy compromise has resulted in variations in the way in which we see ourselves in relation to one another and the planet. Are we today the empathic society we believe ourselves to be?

**Dr Iain McGilchrist** is a former Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, a Fellow of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and former Consultant Psychiatrist and Clinical Director at the Bethlem Royal & Maudsley Hospital, London. He now works privately in London. He was a Research Fellow in neuroimaging at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore. He has published original articles in a wide range of papers and journals on topics in literature, medicine and psychiatry, has published research on neuroimaging in schizophrenia, the phenomenology of schizophrenia, and other topics, and contributed to TV documentaries. His latest book, published by Yale in November 2009, is *The Master and his Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*.



**Geshe Tashi Tsering - The Spirit of Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism**

The Buddhist tradition of Tibet has developed many techniques to enhance

empathy, compassion, and love. These come under the general heading of 'Mind Training' and they form a key part of the Buddhist approach to personal transformation. In this tradition positive mental states are not just developed in the solitude of meditation but also through the way the practitioner deals with everyday life. The aim of the practitioner is to completely turn his or her attitudes around. Instead of focusing on themselves they aim to focus on the welfare of others. The Buddhist approach is to undermine the self-centred mind that is seen as a fundamental barrier to a true understanding of the nature of self.

**Geshe Tashi Tsering** was born in Purang, Tibet in 1958, and his parents escaped to India in 1959. He entered Sera Mey Monastic University in South India when he was 13 years old, and graduated with a Lharampa (the highest possible level) Geshe degree 16 years later. Geshe Tashi taught in Nepal and India before coming to France and then to Jamyang Buddhist Centre, London, where he is the resident Geshe. Geshe Tashi teaches in English and is renowned for the warmth, clarity and humour with which he makes complex subjects accessible to Western students. Besides teaching at Jamyang, he is a regular guest lecturer at other Buddhist centres in the UK and around the world. He is also the creator and teacher of the Foundation of Buddhist Thought, the two-year FPMT correspondence and campus course on the basics of Tibetan Buddhism. Many of Geshe-la's teachings can be found on [www.talkingbuddhism.com](http://www.talkingbuddhism.com)

### SUNDAY 29TH AUGUST



**Prof. Paul Gilbert – 'Benefits and Fears of Compassion: future directions in compassion research**

There is increasing evidence that helping people develop compassion for themselves and others has powerful impacts on negative feelings and promotes positive feelings. However, clinical observations suggest that some individuals, particularly those high in self-criticism, can find self-

compassion and receiving compassion difficult. Fear of compassion for self was linked to fear of compassion from others, and both are associated with self-coldness, self-criticism, insecure attachment, and depression, anxiety, and stress. Self-criticism is the major predictor of depression, which suggests the importance of exploring how and why some people may actively resist engaging in compassionate experiences or behaviours. This has important implications for therapeutic interventions and the therapeutic relationship because affiliative emotions are major regulators of threat-based emotions.

**Prof. Paul Gilbert** is Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Derby and Consultant Psychologist at Derbyshire Mental Health Services NHS Trust. He has a visiting Professorship at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) and Coimbra (Portugal). He has authored over 100 academic papers and book chapters and authored/edited 16 books. He has researched and written extensively in the areas of mood disorder, social anxiety and psychosis. His *Overcoming Depression* self-help book is now a book on prescription scheme in General Practice. 20 years ago he began to explore the value of developing compassion, especially self compassion, for people from troubled backgrounds, who have high shame and self-criticism. With his patients, and from a variety of influences from standard psychotherapies, Buddhism and other compassion focused practices he has developed an approach to therapy called Compassion Focused Therapy. To help advance compassionate approaches to psychological and other human problems he established a charity call the compassionate mind foundation. [www.compassionate-mind.co.uk](http://www.compassionate-mind.co.uk). His most recent book is *The Compassionate Mind*.



**Dr. Valeria Gazzola – Mirror Neurons: the Role of the Motor and Somatosensory system in Social Perception**

Social interactions are sometimes described as 'touching'. It has been demonstrated in a number of

experiments that the somatosensory cortices - which are thought to process only touch on our own body - and the premotor cortices - which are thought to programme only our own actions - become in effect vicariously active when we observe what other people feel or do. This discovery is relevant to our understanding of how we process our perception of other people's sensations and actions. Valeria will show that when we are touched, or when we see others being touched, we activate overlapping regions of our secondary somatosensory cortex and when we move our hands and arms or see others doing the same, we activate overlapping regions of our primary somatosensory (SI) cortex. It therefore seems that when we see the tactile and proprioceptive experiences of others, we activate our own somatosensory cortex as if we had been touched or moved ourselves. Furthermore if we have special positive feelings for a person, that will influence the way SI processes an affectionate gesture from that person. In short, neuroscience is discovering the idiomatic truth that social stimuli can be 'touching' indeed.

**Dr Valeria Gazzola** is Italian. She studied Biology and started her scientific carrier in the lab of Giacomo Rizzolatti, studying the somatosensory components of the Mirror Neuron System using fMRI. She finished her PhD with Christian Keysers in Groningen in 2007 on the neural bases of the mirror neuron system in understanding human action. She is now a senior scientist at the Netherlands Institute for Neuroscience in Amsterdam. She is currently investigating how the somatosensory and motor components of the mirror neuron system "talk" to each other to give us this intuitive, pre-reflective, understanding of the actions of other people, by combining different neuroscience techniques. Her work has been published in leading journals, including *Nature Reviews in Neuroscience*, *Neuron*, *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* and *Current Biology* and has been cited nearly 600 times.