



Welcome to the Realisation Festival *27th-30th June* *St Giles House, Dorset*

The Realisation festival is a gathering of 150 people in the beautiful setting of St Giles House in Dorset. From Thursday evening to Sunday lunchtime, we draw on nature, music, improvisation, expertise, art, dance, inquiry, and above all each other to help unlearn and reimagine the challenges of our lives and times. We believe the overarching early 21st century conundrum is not so much problem solving or policy innovation but enriching our relationship with reality.

Realisation can mean the simple but often profound 'aha' experience of becoming aware of something or beginning to understand it ('to get real'), the philosophical or spiritual sense of self-realisation ('to become real') or the achievement of making ideas manifest for instance, to realise a personal dream ('to make real'). We also call it a festival for the soul, by which we mean the experience of being alive.

Learning is a key feature of the weekend - not primarily in the sense of seeking 'learnings' but more fundamentally in the sense of pursuing afresh what it means to learn. Remarkable speakers spark stimulating conversations. Engaging workshops invite

imaginative journeys. Music and improvisation help catalyse the alchemy of change. We hope you enjoy and are stimulated by the weekend. Come ready to share, listen, participate, and receive.

Realisation arose from an alliance between Perspectiva, a charity that works on the relationship between systems, souls and society, and the twelfth Earl of Shaftesbury and associates. The organisers' desire is that St Giles House, with its rich history of philosophical innovation and social reform, might be of generative public value today.

The Festival is run by the Realisation Foundation, a Community Interest Company. The festival organisers would like to thank The Shin Kong Life Foundation, Taiwan, for their direct support for the festival and The Fetzer Institute and The JJ Family Trust for their support for Perspectiva which made its contribution to the festival possible.

realisationfestival.com
stgileshouse.com
systems-souls-society.com

PERSPECTIVA

S T • G I L E S



新光人壽 慈善基金會
Shin Kong Life Foundation

The Realisation Festival

Programme 2024

Unlearning & Reimagining

St Giles House, Dorset

Thursday

Welcome

From 4pm

Arrive at St Giles House
Settle into your accommodation and explore the grounds

6pm

Welcome drinks in the Tapestry room, in the main house

6.45pm

Gather in the Library, in the main house
Welcome from our host, Nick Ashley-Cooper. Introduction to the weekend from the Realisation team.

7.30pm

Dinner in the marquee, with your small group

9pm

Ceilidh in the marquee with The Ceilidh Tree

7.30—8.30am	Running with Ed Haddon. A light jog around the grounds. Meet by the statue of Anteros. Yoga with Rowan Cobelli in the Great Dining Room. These gentle movement sessions will explore subtle motion. Suitable for all ages and capacities. Wild swimming in the stream. Self-led. Ask for directions.
7.30—9.30am	Breakfast
10am	Morning welcome with The Realisation Players Passions of the Soul — Rowan Williams Soul makes sense of our lives and surroundings, hence the negative connotations of 'soulless'. Soul is also linked to having a story to tell and a song to sing. Soul speaks to why stuff and objects aren't, ultimately, satisfying and also why a good life is not the same as one possessed or controlled. Without a sense of soul, the way we live will go astray. Rowan Williams will help us develop an awareness of this fundamental aspect of ourselves and the world in which we live. Chaired by Elizabeth Oldfield.
11am	Break
11.30am	Q & A
12.30—2pm	Collect a picnic lunch
12.30—2.30pm	Discoveries: a variety of entirely optional events, each lasting no more than an hour, to dip into or attend in full. Those marked * are particularly designed for coming and going. See noticeboard for locations. 12.30 A step into time: a practice approach — Ivo Mensch 12.30 The Realisation Players pop-up* 12.30 Discovering the maverick within: a coach explores — Ed Haddon 1.30 Into the parkland with the oaks — Benedict Pollard * 1.30 Recovering the place of the soul in science — Mazviita Chirimuuta 1.30 A game of chess with a grand master — Jonathan Rowson* 1.30 Poetry and perceiving other worlds also here — Mark Vernon

2.45—4.15pm

Workshops: A chance to explore becoming more real through a choice of practices, thinking, embodiments. Pick one for today. Some are repeated tomorrow.

Realising how you see — Vanessa Brassey

Drawing combined with some philosophy can untangle thoughts and show how the everyday act of seeing is laden with assumptions. Assuming no artistic experience, this workshop will explore how we can perceive the world through different lenses. This workshop also runs on Saturday.

Yoga as inquiry — Rowan Cobelli

What is it to be a self? Where do the boundaries between ourselves and others lie? How are we present in the world, to ourselves and others? Using movement as well as thought, this workshop will be an embodied exploration of the dimensions of our being.

Staying human in an age of AI — Esmé Partridge

AI is talked about as both a tremendous threat and holding great promise, so what wider narrative about ourselves can guide us through this fast evolving territory? An exploration of technology and the soul drawing on a variety of insights from the philosophy of Plato to the psychology of Iain McGilchrist.

Let's Make Beautiful Music — The Realisation Players

Music is a key to the soul. Join Christopher Ash and Jonathan Ainscough as they guide you through instant song creation, collectively writing the Realisation theme tune. All voices welcome.

Winter is Here. And So Is Spring — Indra Adnan

To move from the polycrisis to flourishing futures requires radical change. Yet like winter moving into spring, it can also be a natural phenomenon. What can we leave behind and what can be adopted anew to put ourselves back on track? More importantly, who do I need to be to achieve this act of metamorphosis? This workshop can be taken by itself or paired with a praxis workshop on Saturday.

4.30—5.30pm

Tea

5.30—6.30pm

Small Groups meet to reflect on the day

6.30—7.30pm

Pop-up bookshop open for sales. Bar open.

7pm

Collapse — Dominique Savitri Bonarjee

Experience a performance art piece created for public space. Dominique will respond to the nature and site of St Giles House. The action offers a space for contemplating themes of collapse and entropy through the medium of a human body.

Continued overleaf...

Friday

continued...

7.30pm

Dinner

9pm

Fireside chat with Bettany Hughes

Well known from her sparkling TV programmes, tracking down the greatest figures and locations of the ancient world, as well as her richly textured books on wonders and philosophers, Bettany Hughes will join us to explore what she has learnt about being human, then and now.

Saturday

Getting More Real

7.30—8.30am

Running with Ed Haddon. A light jog around the grounds. Meet by the statue of Anteros.

Yoga with Rowan Cobelli in the Great Dining Room. These gentle movement sessions will explore subtle motion. Suitable for all ages and capacities.

Wild swimming in the stream. Self-led. Ask for directions

7.30—9.30am

Breakfast

10am

Morning welcome with The Realisation Players

Sea-ing through power: Trust, Text, and Theatre in the making of international law, with Siva Thambisetty

The capacity of human beings to care for planet Earth at the speed and scale required will, in part, depend upon the rules that govern conduct. In March 2023, member states of the UN agreed the text of a new Treaty to govern biodiversity in the oceans beyond national jurisdiction – widely regarded as an important success story for multilateralism at a time when faith in institutions is waning. Few have the privilege of bearing witness to the process of international law-making and planetary governance when the stakes are so high, and there is much to learn from them about what we might place our hopes in. Siva Thambisetty acted as an Advisor to the Chair of 134 developing countries; as a participant in complex negotiations lasting several years she will share the impact the process had on her. She will give testimony to the human dynamics — trust, text and theatre — in which global agreements can be reached.

11am

Break

11.30am

Choose one breakout session:

Nothing is Agreed Until Everything is Agreed

Siva Thambisetty will facilitate a playful dive into process to give participants direct experience of negotiation where compromise, cooperation and mixed motives can play a role in helping solve global problems playing out in diverse contexts, including The Pandemic Treaty and The Convention on Biological Diversity.

Continued overleaf...

11.30am

Love for Nature and the legal imagination: What could Rights of Nature look like in the UK? — Paul Powlesland

Torn between a growing love for Nature and practising as a lawyer in a system that was self-evidently destroying the natural world, Paul Powlesland discovered the growing worldwide Rights of Nature movement, and joined with other lawyers, activists and nature lovers to find creative ways to bring it about here, in one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. In this interactive workshop, we'll explore what Rights of Nature are, what they could look in the UK and how we might be able to make them a reality.

The Flip, the Formation and the Fun — Jonathan Rowson

Three big changes the world needs, and why they need each other. This workshop will be a short talk followed by a praxis of collective inquiry into the future. The contention is that the world's challenges are so great that we need a major spiritual shift in our relationship to what is real (the flip), a major educational shift that changes our relationship to what is good (the formation) and a major political and economic shift to change our underlying societal purpose (the fun). These changes are mutually reinforcing and need to be worked on together. The session can be seen as a playful but bold attempt to inform the design of planetary governance.

12.30—2pm

Collect a picnic lunch

12.30—2.30pm

Discoveries: a variety of entirely optional events, each lasting no more than an hour, to dip into or attend in full. Those marked * are particularly designed for coming and going. See noticeboard for locations.

12.30 The ethics of inheritance

— Nick Shaftesbury and Indra Adnan

12.30 A step into time: a practice approach — Ivo Mensch

12.30 The Realisation Players pop-up*

1.30 The role of virtues in being fully alive - Elizabeth Oldfield

1.30 Into the parkland with the oaks — Benedict Pollard *

**1.30 Recovering the place of the soul in science
— Mazviita Chirimuuta**

2.45—4.15pm

Workshops: A chance to explore becoming more real through a choice of practices, thinking, embodiments. Pick one for today.

2.45 — 4.15pm

Making a difference in a fast changing world — Nat Wei

How can society be transformed peacefully? What kind of power can be exercised more purposefully? Where might inspiring servant leaders be found? Join a social and tech entrepreneur, and member of the House of Lords, to pursue these questions and more.

Realising how you see — Vanessa Brassey

Drawing combined with some philosophy can untangle thoughts and show how the everyday act of seeing is laden with assumptions. Assuming no artistic experience, this workshop will explore how we can perceive the world through different lenses. This workshop also runs on Friday.

Revealing the hidden — Rowan Cobelli

How can we use activations and triggers in the body, as invitations to integrate more of ourselves into ourselves? Are the things we fight for and defend, mainly part of our own inner processes? We explore shadow, projection, and the wisdom and limitations of repression, within the path of love and self-honesty

Realising Spring — Indra Adnan, Pippa Evans & Susan Harrison

Pippa and Susan will use improvisation to spark us all back to life, whilst in dialogue with Indra. The basic mantra of improvisation – Who are you? Where are you? What are you doing? – will resonate as we explore the praxis of ‘Yes And’. A defibrillator of a workshop.

The Antidebate — Michael Bready & Jonathan Rowson

Note: This workshop will start at 1.30pm and last 3 hours

In a time of great challenges, with new possibilities beckoning, there is a pressing need to make sense of what is happening and how to respond. And yet just when we need collective wisdom, our public discourse is in trouble. The Antidebate, developed by Perspectiva, is a new mode of participatory inquiry, that seeks to bring forth fresh insights from multiple perspectives into dynamic relationship.

4.30—5.30pm

Tea

5.30—6.30pm

Small Groups meet to reflect on the day

6.30—7.30pm

Pop-up bookshop open for sales. Bar open.

7pm

Dressed in Water — Dominique Savitri Bonarjee

A performance piece to contemplate themes of renewal and energy. The landscape of the dance will integrate themes of water as a source of life, copper as the metal of the heart chakra, the spiritual symbolism of the lotus flower, and the figure of the Reclining Buddha..

7.30pm

Dinner

9pm

‘I’m With The Band’, followed by Dance Party in the Bat Cave

Sunday

What Have We Realised?

8—9am	Running with Ed Haddon. A light jog around the grounds. Meet by the statue of Anteros. Yoga with Rowan Cobelli in the Great Dining Room. These gentle movement sessions will explore subtle motion. Suitable for all ages and capacities. Wild swimming in the stream. Self-led. Ask for directions.
7.30—9.30am	Breakfast
9—10am	Pack up rooms and tents
10am	Morning welcome with The Realisation Players Open Space: This has been a rich weekend of many threads. As we come to the end of our time together, what conversations do you want to have? We will take on the roles of Hosts, Participants, Witnesses and Wanderers as we create our own agenda for the next 90 minutes.
Midday	Meet in Small Groups
1pm	Realisation Chorus & Ending Ceremony Followed by Lunch (optional) and Departure from St Giles

Terms of engagement

1. Speak to fellow realisers. No phones in St Giles House.
2. Speak wholeheartedly. Different takes are valuable.
3. Invite what you don't know. Challenge yourself.
4. Consider the soulful side. Engage with social questions.
5. Agree expecting more. Disagree with kindness and curiosity.

Small Groups

Small groups are the beating heart of the Realisation Festival. When designing the festival, thinking about how we might help people unlearn and reimagine, we wanted to create spaces for listening, reflecting and discussing. The talks and workshops provide varied and stimulating content, there is plenty of unscheduled time for reflection, but it is the daily small group meeting that creates the chance to integrate, discuss and play with the ideas that germinate during the festival.

The groups are designed as a safe space where people can explore and push their thinking, or simply share how they are experiencing the festival. They are facilitated by group leaders who will aim to guide the group to positive and constructive conversations, whilst encouraging people to be open and brave in sharing their thoughts.

Each day the groups are given an enquiry question, to reflect the arc of the weekend and help conversations develop. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

The enquiry questions are:

Thursday — Who are we?

A chance to introduce ourselves.

Friday — How can we become more real?

A chance to consider the resources we have to draw on, not least in terms of soul.

Saturday — How can we get more real?

A chance to consider the challenges we face and begin to reimagine how we might live.

Sunday — What have we realised?

A chance to gather the unlearnings and reimaginings of the weekend, individually and perhaps in conjunction with others.

Please be conscious of the terms of engagement that guide all interactions across the course of the weekend. Do speak to your small group leader, or to Lucy or Mark, if you have any questions or concerns.

Realisation Festival



Speakers, Musicians & Team

Indra Adnan

Indra Adnan is Founder and Co-initiator of The Alternative UK, a socio-political platform serving systemic transformation. AUK publishes a Daily Alternative news blog, develops cosmological agency networks (CANs) and connects planetary regeneration projects. Indra is concurrently a socio-psychotherapist, writer and consultant on soft power. She is also Visiting Director of Poiesis at Perspectiva. Clients have included the Danish and Brazilian governments, World Economic Forum and NATO. Her book *The Politics of Waking Up: Power and Possibility in the Fractal Age* was a Times Literary Supplement Book of the Year in 2021.

Jonathan Ainscough

Jonathan Ainscough is an actor, singer, multi-instrumentalist, director, writer, musical director and arranger. Alongside his work as an improviser with Showstopper and Austentatious, he has worked for the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Opera North, the Royal Exchange Theatre and the Leeds Playhouse, as well as the award-winning charity Streetwise Opera, leading music and drama workshops with people experiencing homelessness.
Twitter: @JAinscough85.

Christopher Ash

Chris is a composer, workshop leader, musical director, sound designer, and multi-instrumentalist. A founding member of Showstopper! and *An Improbable Musical*, he is sometimes found teaching Musical Theatre Writing at Goldsmiths or Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, or coaching Musical Theatre Improvisation at the Royal Academy of Music. As a composer, Chris created "Wasted" with Carl Miller; a "Live Rockumentary" about the Brontë siblings. Collaborating with digital media company Megaverse, Chris has created music & sound for Virtual Reality, and smartphone gameplay. Chris has led creative workshops for International School students around the world, including on the "Unseen Stories" of asylum-seekers in Hong Kong, and on "Bayanihan" in Manila (ISTA). He has been a guest musical director for many of the London 50-hour Improvathons, and at festivals in Oslo, Rome, Edmonton, Hamburg, Canmore, Copenhagen, Birmingham, and beyond.

Speakers, Musicians & Team

Nick Ashley-Cooper

Nick Shaftesbury graduated from the London Business School with a Masters in Business Administration in 2008. After an early career as a DJ and music promoter in New York City, he returned to the UK in 2005 and has since overseen the restoration of his family home, St Giles House. The project has won several national awards, including the 2015 Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) Award for Building Conservation and the Historic England Angel Award, Best Rescue of a Historic Building or Site. The work has been documented in a book entitled, 'The Rebirth of an English Country House', which he co-wrote with Tim Knox, the current Director of the Royal Collection. He is the first Shaftesbury for 50 years to live in St Giles House, alongside his wife Dinah and their three children.

Dominique Savitri Bonarjee

Dominique is an artist and a dancer. Her research focuses on embodied knowing in ancient Sufi, Daoist and Vedic wisdom traditions. Through an unconventional art practice combining living matter, sound, song, sculptures and drawing, she contemplates notions of time, energy, transformation, and impermanence, both in her body and the materials she works with. Her Art PhD (Goldsmiths University, 2024) entitled Space of the Nameless is presented as a game, involving meditations, koan riddles and dances, for improvising across disciplinary boundaries. In her current work with handcrafted electronics she is creating an 'instrument as installation', to hone less visual and more holistically sensuous states of attention. Her monograph, *Butoh, as Heard by a Dancer* (Routledge, 2024) is an oral account of Butoh's postwar Japanese origins and legacies, told from a practitioner's perspective.
www.dominiquebb.com Instagram: [@dominique_savitri](https://www.instagram.com/dominique_savitri)

Vanessa Brassey

Vanessa Brassey is a Visiting Researcher at King's College London, specialising in the philosophy of art, the adeptness of perspective-taking, and the imaginative leaps possible across both space and time. She publishes papers, produces films, and is currently co-editing a book with Derek Matravers for Routledge, due out in spring 2024, focusing on the expression of emotion in the visual arts. She is also a figurative painter.

Michael Bready

Michael Bready is an educator, social entrepreneur, musician, and the founder and director of Youth Mindfulness. He consults internationally on the development of wellbeing education. He is also Associate Director of Community at Perspectiva, where he is developing processes and practices to explore responses to the metacrisis.

Mazviita Chirimuuta

Originally trained in neuroscience, Mazviita Chirimuuta is a philosopher at Edinburgh University who writes about the history of ideas behind the mind/brain sciences. Her book on colour vision and perceptual reality, *Outside Color*, was published by MIT Press in 2015. This was recently followed by a new book, *The Brain Abstracted*, about the ways that the theories developed in neuroscience are a vast simplification of the underlying complexity of brain, mind and body.

Rowan Cobelli

Rowan Cobelli has been a full-time tutor and teacher trainer of Yoga for 24 years. His studies have taken him from the psychological to the spiritual, exploring the art of inner resolution and true rest. He grew up with a Roman Catholic family and schooling, lived for several years at a Tibetan Buddhist Meditation College, then experienced Ashram living whilst studying Yoga & Yogic philosophy. He is interested in the complexity of human interaction, and subtle and determinant forces that inform behaviour, opinion, choices, and purpose. Rowan became fascinated by the non-dual path of inner communion, silence without effort, and direct recognition of the nature of Being. He is now particularly interested in the fine line between the direct experience of Self recognition, and the study of the very human journey of understanding and psychological integration. These explorations have taken him into the realms of trauma, shadow and repression, spiritual bypassing, and the brilliance and precariousness of the human defence mechanisms, and their roles in a more honest and emotionally developed life.

Pippa Evans

Pippa Evans is an award winning improviser, musical comedian and author of *Improv Your Life: An Improviser's Guide To Embracing Whatever Life Throws At You*. In 2013 she and Sanderson Jones started Sunday Assembly, the church for people who don't believe in God which became a global phenomenon. Though no longer involved in the Sunday Assembly project, Pippa finds herself drawn to the Venn Diagram of secular spirituality, improvisation and humour. How can we be fully ourselves in relation to others? Can we do serious work without taking ourselves too seriously? Teaching improvisation has taken Pippa everywhere from Drama Schools to boardrooms, working with everyone from footballers to NHS workers. Pippa has been collaborating with *Perspectiva* since its early iterations and is excited to return to the Realisation Festival for 2024. www.pippaevans.com

Speakers, Musicians & Team

Ed Haddon

Ed is a coach who specialises in working with entrepreneurs and those looking for a more autonomous meaningful life. He works with purpose led leaders to develop their own models of success in business and life. He is particularly interested in redirecting focus from shareholders to a broader set of beneficiaries. He uses coaching to generate honest conversations and change, working at the intersection of psychology and business. He is the author of *The Modern Maverick*, which helps readers unlock their potential for the benefit of all those around them and society as a whole. He holds degrees in Psychology from Oxford University and in Business from Harvard University and a Diploma in Performance Coaching from The Coaching Academy.

Susan Harrison

Susan is a member of Showstopper! The Improvised Musical. She has also improvised with Mischief Movie Night, Austentatious and her own company These Folk. She teaches improvisation for Hoopla & The Bridge and is passionate about creating a playful & supportive environment. As an actress she's worked with numerous companies including; CBBC, The National Theatre & Radio 4. Susan Harrison and Chris Ash will be improvising a mini musical, exploring whichever themes rise to the surface during the festival. Using your suggestions they will conjure up a slice of spontaneous entertainment to delight and inspire.

Bettany Hughes

Bettany Hughes is an award-winning historian, author and broadcaster. Her books include *Venus and Aphrodite* (shortlisted for the Runciman Award), the *Sunday Times* bestselling *Istanbul* (shortlisted for the Runciman Award), *The Hemlock Cup* (shortlisted for the Writers Guild Award) and *Helen of Troy*. She has made many documentaries for the BBC, Channel 4, National Geographic, the Discovery and History channels. Bettany has been a Professor at the New College of Humanities and Research Fellow at King's College London. She has been honoured with numerous awards including the Medicott Medal, Europe's Cultural Heritage Prize and an OBE for services to history.

Ivo Mensch

Ivo Mensch is developing the Praxis strand of Perspectiva. He designs practices and courses as a means to skilfully navigate larger arcs of cultural transition, shifts in consciousness and whatever the meta-crisis throws at us. He researches and writes on Time (Temporics), the Imagination and Logos as fundamental realms of change. Ivo is an ordained monk in the Zen Buddhist lineage, and practices for over a decade in the wisdom school of the Diamond Approach. Besides working for Perspectiva, Ivo supports individuals in their unfolding and realisation as a coach. He is a published author and has written on the inner, developmental sides of entrepreneurship. He worked over a decade as a journalist, covering tech, law, spirituality and was a communications consultant after an early, winding career in tech, yacht carpentry and greenhouse construction.

Elizabeth Oldfield

Elizabeth Oldfield is an experienced leader, speaker, writer and podcast host with a passion for intelligent public engagement on issues of faith, identity, and healing our common life. She appears regularly in the media, including BBC One, Sky News, the World Service, and writing in Prospect Magazine, UnHerd and The Financial Times. She also hosts The Sacred, a podcast, events and visual content brand which creates space for a wide range of guests to reflect on their deepest values. For ten years she was Director of Theos, the UK's leading religion and society think tank. She spent the first part of her career working at the BBC in television and radio, contributing to programmes including Beyond Belief and the Moral Maze, as well as Radio 3 and 4 documentaries. She is motivated by the dearth of real wisdom in public life, by a desire to increase empathy across our deep differences and the way spirituality can help individuals and societies flourish. She has a masters in Theology and the Arts and lives in an intentional community in south london. Fully Alive: Tending to the Soul in Turbulent Times is now available to preorder. More on her coaching and consultancy practice at elizabetholdfield.com. You can find her regular writing at morefullyalive.substack.com.

Speakers, Musicians & Team

Esmé Partridge

Esmé Lily Katherine Partridge is a writer who works at the intersection of religion, philosophy and culture. She is currently researching Platonism and philosophies of religious pluralism at the University of Cambridge, and writes for publications including *The Critic*, *First Things*, *Renovatio* (The Journal of Zaytuna College) and *UnHerd*. She previously worked on interfaith and religious freedom initiatives as a consultant for a number of clients including the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace, the FCDO, and the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Christianity in the Holy Land. She is also interested in the philosophical and spiritual implications of technology, and regularly writes and speaks on this subject.

Benedict Pollard

Benedict's passion for oaks started as a young lad when he was tall enough to start climbing the many wonderful veteran oaks in the 11 acre garden he was fortunate enough to grow up with, in rural Berkshire in the 1970s and 80s. A botanist by training, with a BA and MA in Biological Sciences from the University of Oxford, he was elected a Fellow of the Linnean Society in 2000. He worked at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew from 2000 to 2005, and has participated in or led over 17 botanical and ethnographical expeditions to the rainforests of Cameroon, Gabon, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Republic of Congo (1996 to 2013). In Gabon, he lived and studied with a tribal elder and his community (six visits from 2013 to 2017) learning about their spiritual practices and medicinal plants. He has co-authored five books on botany and conservation, 17 peer-reviewed papers, and numerous articles, chapters and botanical conservation assessments, including publications on ethnobotany and entomology. Since 2015 Benedict has been collecting acorns from ancient oaks and growing them on. You can find out more here: mightyfineoaks.com

Paul Powlesland

Paul Powlesland is a barrister and lawyer for nature who acts to protect trees and rivers in the courts and speaks for the Rights of Nature. He is a founder of Lawyers for Nature, which aims to transform the relationship between law, lawyers and nature, including by campaigning for the Rights of Nature, introducing nature's voice into our legal and economic systems through 'Nature on the Board' and assisting local groups in protecting trees and rivers. Paul lives on a boat on the River Roding in East London, and set up the River Roding Trust, through which he carries out hands-on restoration, guardianship and protection of the river.

Jonathan Rowson

Jonathan Rowson is a writer, philosopher and chess Grandmaster who was British Chess Champion from 2004-2006. HE holds degrees from Oxford, Bristol, and Harvard universities, was former director of the Social Brain Center at the RSA and an Open Society Fellow. He is co-founder and director of Perspectiva, a research institute that examines the relationship between complex global challenges and the inner lives of human beings. His latest book is *The Moves that Matter – A Chess Grandmaster on the Game of Life*.

Lucy Taylor

Lucy is the founder of The Make Work Play Project, a movement that believes playful working creates happier, more creative, connected teams. She's a facilitator and coach, and designs playful processes that help organisations do hard things in a fun way – from strategy creation to executive development and organisational story telling. She brings a range of creative practices to her work including improv, lego, puppets and constellations because she's a firm believer that life and work go better when we play.

Siva Thambisetty

Siva Thambisetty is an Associate Professor of Law at the London School of Economics, where she teaches and researches on the legal protection of inventions, innovation in emerging technologies, cultural property and the use and circulation of genetic resources. She attended intergovernmental negotiations on the BBNJ Treaty, first as an advisor to the Pacific Small Island Developing States (IGC2, IGC3) and second, as an expert on the G77 Chair's Team in 2022 (IGC5) and 2023 (Resumed IGC5). From 2019 to 2023 her work and publications on the Treaty negotiations was funded by LSE Knowledge Exchange and Impact. She currently leads a project on a KEI funded Oceans Biodiversity Collective, engaging in policy conversations on the Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Treaty.

Speakers, Musicians & Team

Mark Vernon

Mark Vernon is a writer and psychotherapist. He contributes to and presents programmes on the radio, as well as writing for the national and religious press, and online publications. He also podcasts, in particular The Sheldrake-Vernon Dialogues with Rupert Sheldrake, gives talks and leads workshops. He has a PhD in ancient Greek philosophy, and other degrees in physics and in theology, having studied at Durham, Oxford and Warwick universities. He is the author of several books, including the forthcoming *Awake! William Blake Re-Enchants The World*. He used to be an Anglican priest and lives in London, UK. For more information see www.markvernon.com.

Nat Wei

Lord Wei is a social entrepreneur, advisor, author and legislator with an interest in social reform. His background is in business, investing, technology, and social enterprise, which culminated in policy development and an invitation in 2009 to enter the House of Lords. Lord Wei currently serves as a Conservative Life Peer in the House of Lords. He also advises and is a non-executive director of a number of commercial boards spanning residential and commercial real estate, wealth management, and technology investment. Determined to make an even more significant impact in his community, country, and the rest of the world, Lord Wei continues to be involved in different fields, particularly technology, to be a catalyst of influential positive change.

Rowan Williams

Rowan Williams was born in Swansea and studied theology in Cambridge and Oxford, doing research on Russian religious thought. He has taught in several universities and has also served as Bishop of Monmouth in Wales (1992-2002) and as Archbishop of Canterbury (2002-2012). He now lives in Cardiff and continues to write and speak on a variety of topics. He is well-known both as a theologian and as a poet, and has published a number of books on theology, literature and contemporary issues.

Participants

We are delighted to welcome all of you to the Realisation Festival 2024.

Alex Catallo	Fay Andrews-Hodgson	Luke M Luke
Alison Joyce	Federico Gaggio	Madelaine Ley
Alison Kidd	Gareth Dicker	Malcolm Solomon
Amanda Maguire	Georgie Nightingall	Margo Yoder
Andrew Waterston	Glenn Woodcock	Mariann Wissa
Anne Katrin Schlag	Grace McIntyre	Mark Cuthbert
Annie Warburton	Hilly Raphael	Mathilde Foged Jensen
Aoibhe Cantwell	Isles Suddek	Megan Hill
Becky Sykes	Jacob Hsu	Michael Bready
Ben Smith	Jacob Kishere	Nick Mayhew
Callum Aitken	Jacqueline Merhej	Nikki Fothergill
Caroline Brewer	James Kay	Nuri Sadik
Carrie Myshkin	Jana Holla	Pat Kane
Cedric Torossian	Jane Bartlett	Patricia Mae McKenna
Cherida Birch	Jane Guyer	Pauline Rudd
Cheryl Holloway	Jasper Broadhurst	Pentti Salmiaitta
Chris Bemrose	Jean Nye	Peter Granger
Chris Newman	Jennifer Lack	Peter Johnson
Chris Speller	Jennifer Morisetti	Rachel Musson
Christopher Nye	Joe Sheffer	Renaud van der Elst
Cindy Palmano	John Grant	Rhodri Samuel
Claire Berry	John Watters	Rob Waitt
Claudia Leger	John Wilson	Robin Aitken
Cynthia Wu	Jonas Søvik	Rosa Lewis
Damian Hallam	Jonathan Woodbridge	Sadie Rittman
Damien Maguire	Jonny Williams	Sam Donaldson
Dan Williams	Joseph Bossano	Sandra Smith
Daniel Fernandez	Josiane Smith	Sarah Eldred
Daniel Haeberlé	Juliette Otterburn-Hall	Sarah Shields
Danny Cohen	Kam Bellamy	Simon Haberfellner
Darius Cuplinskas	Katrien Franken	Simone Baur
David Harrison	Kenneth Cross	Stephen Brett
David Jennings	Kim Willis	Tamzin Muir
Ellen Davis	Kimberley Hare	Temitayo Falayi
Emily Curtis	Kylen Preator	Tim Moule
Erik Ottosson	Laura Downer	Tony O'Driscoll
Esther Wieringa	Lesley Wilson	Zoe Blackler
Eugene Malthouse	Lucy Wood	

Why the Realisation Festival?

People come to the Realisation Festival for a wide range of reasons, from all walks of life, but they often have things in common that are not obvious at first blush, and may be hard to articulate.

Trying to figure out 'what is mine to do' in this distorted world... sometimes doing psychology experiments, sometimes making (cardboard) gods for our times with a visual artist & sometimes simply sailing my boat because of the fun of not going anywhere in particular.

I am an Anglican priest, working primarily with journalists and those in the media world (of all faiths and none) — and always welcome opportunities to think outside the box. I also write things and teach.

I'm a psychologist, mum of 3 beautiful children, love nature, plant medicines and music. I am happy and always try to stay positive, despite the challenges we all are facing.

A woman born in the West Country, I live in the London by the Thames and in the East under the Suffolk's big skies. A philosopher by training, I've worked in creative fields as a writer, curator, creative director and, now, as leader of an institution on the cusp of its 700th birthday. I specialise in materials, innovation and what is made and crafted by hand — expressions of our embodied wisdom. I strive to be kind, curious and bold. Or, put another way, to practice love and wisdom in action.

I'm a human being passionate about all things new-monastic, human rewilding and the art of commoning.

By profession i am a business analyst, a coach. I am the cofounder of a boutique that helps sustainability solution to scale and disrupt large corps that pollute and also generate toxicity. Beside I am a composer, a poet and also in the process of writing a book to identify the required means for our society to move to non exploitative forms of productions. My thesis is that our society is too problem focused and not solution driven as we have left people without creativity take control.

I love to understand how things work. That's why I love my job as a doctor. That's why I love self reflection and shadow work. That's why I love to grapple with understanding current affairs. I also deeply dislike deceit and misrepresentation, which led me to starting a health professional climate activism group in 2019. Now I am working on trying to understand the deeper meanings for self deception, especially with regards to climate change, and trying to figure out how to act.

I'm a mum, step-mum, wife, daughter, auntie, friend who lives in York UK. My work aims to help people think about how they can be the best version of themselves in order to do good in the world. I am also an artist, potter and someone who wants to understand about the world as well as find a place where I can contribute to a society that works for everyone. I am interested in Buddhism and have a mediation practice to support be in all my endeavours.

My heartfelt answer to the "who are you" question is that I am a dancing, singing vessel of love. In terms of what I do, I approach life with curiosity and I like to laugh. The universe has thrown me curve-balls and I'm finding new ways to stay on a path of meaning and love.

I have worked for several decades in organization and leadership development. I aspire to be an encourager to support myself and others to become their best selves in service to our community and the world.

I'm a fellow traveller through this wonderful life. I care about the people and the planet and I want to be a positive force for good in the world, although at the moment I am still trying to work out 'what is mine to do'. I share an understanding of how the mind works inside out through writing, group retreats and individual coaching.

I'm a seeker and a garden idea maker. I grow ideas like others grow plants and flowers. I believe in the poetry of life, freedom, and beauty. I'm curious and an adventurer.

I am friendly and kind hearted, I enjoy meeting like minded people and sharing thoughts, experiences and ideas. I also enjoy space and quiet time away from people. I am studying psychology and am interested in what makes people do the things that they do, I have over twenty years experience with recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. My main passion in life is to be a loving and attentive partner, father and friend and I love cats.

Instinctive Response: I am someone who loves continually learning and studying and seeing beyond what you think you know. I have tried to live a 360 degree life (a life in many directions) and as such I ran my own business for years, studied 2 Degrees, 3 Masters and now a PhD in Philosophy of Mind and Meditation which I teach. I was a competitive open water swimmer for many years. This gave me the opportunity to travel to locations around the world as a wild water wild swim guide.

I guess I'm taking part because I'm curious to get a wider context for my 'activism' of recent years, complementary responses to the metacrisis.

I am generally interested in spirituality, and am currently half way through a PhD in theology at Kings College London. I enjoy listening to how other people encounter their own spirituality.

I'm an explorer, following the wheres and ways my love takes me. Sometimes that's an inside journey, sometimes it's an outside journey. It's always a journey of freedom and relationships with truth, beauty and goodness as my guides.

I'm a first-timer at the Realisation Festival. I spend most of my time studying human behaviour... and the rest of it playing tennis and cycling around the countryside.

I am a high school physics teacher. I also improvise and make music by myself and with groups of people. I care about spiritual things and about being creative in the world.

I am well into semi-active retirement after a 45 year working life in diplomacy and then business. I have always been interested in matters of the mind and the spirit but have been galvanized by Iain McGilchrist's books (first the Master and His Emissary, and latterly The Matter with Things) — and by learning almost 3 years ago Vedic Meditation which I practice daily. My two big questions are: how do I spend the next 10 years of my life; and what is the right response to the polycrisis?

I look for wisdom for how to soulfully bring more good true and beautiful into our society, systems and homes in the face of the complexity of our entanglement of accelerating technology, coordination and sense-making problems.

I am the father of two daughters and one granddaughter. I am a film editor who has enjoyed some success in my career. I love the cinema, nature, good food and am very close to my family.

I help people to fall in love with Life, each other and themselves.

I've been in these kinds of spaces for 3 years but I'm also young and have much to learn. I do stuff with Vervaele Foundation, Life Itself, Lene Andersen/Nordic Building, Learning Planet, and Effective Altruism. I like to think of myself as a visionary and connector of others. I inspire people and things happen around me (I still need to learn to do stuff).

Entrepreneur (mixed results), part time comedian (cringeworthy), DJ (loud), beekeeper (bumbling), philosopher dad with problem solving volunteering ambitions saving the world.

I am a pondering pilgrim who both wants and feels deeply embodied and embedded in the natural world and a living community. And I enjoy to create spaces for inquiry and creative collaborative play.

I am a Creative, and was a TV director before working with startups and scale ups. I run a consultancy (Value Squared) whose purpose it is to help create more mindful businesses — and scale them successfully. I'm also a singer but don't sing enough. I am at my happiest when I'm crafting a great story, bringing the best out of people and contributing to a more positive environment. I am empathetic and want to inspire and be inspired by bringing out the creativity that society quashes.

How are you finding the world? What do you like about the world? How would you like to be met in the world? I like to imagine what the world could be like, and share my imagination, and hear other's imaginations. It's remarkable how similar they often are. How do we move closer to what we imagine?

I'm a woman who is obsessed with stories, and how they work on us. I've hunted the world for stories of wild women in wild places, I've dived deep into Britain's oldest tales to see what heroines I can find. I think the stories we tell shape who we are, don't you? And so if we tell different stories, we make a whole new world possible. I've worked with the most powerful people in the world to tell their stories, to create new stories for countries, for ideas. We need a new story, I think.

I'm not sure what it is, but something tells me I need to be here this year. Things aligned and it's happening — seems the universe agrees! I've been in these kinds of spaces for 3 years but I'm also young and have much to learn. I do stuff with Vervaele Foundation, Life Itself, Lene Andersen/NordicBuilding, Learning Planet, and Effective Altruism. I like to think of myself as a visionary and connector of others. I inspire people and things happen around me (I still need to learn to do stuff).

I, too, am filled with wonder.

I'm an aspiring artist, a dedicated wild-dipper & forest-bather, and a frustrated musician. I research, teach and write about fresh water — in particular, the science of how it moves unseen through Earth's dark interior before re-emerging to support and connect life, climate and culture. I follow a tantric thread of spiritual practice within several mystical traditions including druidry. Currently exploring how I best focus/remix any of this 'for the common good' in the second half of life...

I like to read, often several books at once. I also like to do tai chi and to meditate. I'm not very good at partying.

I am a 31 year old nature loving architect who grew up in rural Somerset, I now live in Bristol after having escaped from London. I spend most of my time working to restore old buildings, some undertaking regular Nature based volunteering, ranging from planting trees to tracking dormice and the rest of my time cycling, reading, attempting to grow vegetables and walking/running in my local woodland. I try to squeeze some drawing and painting in there too.

Origin: Cayman Islands. Fashion Designer & Artist. Currently Living in London. Shaman

I'm exploring life's realities through education and contemplation, having started with theology and finding myself drawn much further afield.

I like the concept of leader as servant. Tikkun olam — heal the world.

I love meeting people and sharing and listening to their stories. Having gone to drama school after working backstage in the theatre and been part of a folk singing group I worked as an actor, wrote songs for children's tv series and choirs and ran a storytelling company for several years. I love improvisation and enjoy cinema, gardening, yoga, and have 2 daughters and a 4 year old granddaughter.

I am a complex soul, learning to work in increasingly simple (yet creative) ways — in support of radical change. I now work via Fractal Change — a consultancy experimenting with how small pattern shifts can deliver surprisingly large organisational and social transformations. I mostly work with leaders in big companies — combining spiritual knowledge and practices with tough assessments of efficiency and effectiveness. This work once involved the Church of England and its Archbishop...

I have two kids, who are 10 and 8, they think my dad jokes are amazing. I'm a police officer.

When someone asked for a label in the past, I used to call myself a scientist, engineer, and entrepreneur. These roles do not fit me any longer. This is why I am seeking a new creative home that lives at the intersection of art, culture, and technology, guided by the question: "What does it mean to be human in times of AI?" I hope to further explore this territory at the Realisation Festival.

I am 60 year old father who lives in Edinburgh, my hometown, which I returned to recently after 40 odd years living down South working as an accountant and Finance Director. These days I work as a consultant helping people and organisations find clarity and build resilience. I like to work with people in organisations which are looking to deliver some sort of meaningful social purpose. I have particular interest in sustainability of the environment, communities and mental health.

... i am fun... sometimes seems serious so lets pretend to fight a battle together... lets be clear and strong ... whats needed for sure... harmless...

A painter, art educator and mother. I paint landscapes in the broadest sense so include domestic interiors, teach drawing and painting am designing curriculums for youth addressing crossovers of traditional art practices with digital ones, and have worked for many years trying to understand ancient ideas of measure, proportion and geometry and how this might be understood now through materials and embodied art practices.

A former TV producer turned advisor to creative businesses, who spent formative years in India studying Advita Vendanta, now part way through an MSc in transpersonal psychology and considering how I will contribute to the Great Turning!

I live, led by my heart and my soul, in nature. Learning from and working with horses, so far, has been my purpose and deep passion. I am a seeker, enthusiast and endlessly curious.

I am a kind and curious explorer of meaningful life possibilities.

I'm re-imagining pretty much everything I previously thought I'd got sorted - using myth, sea swimming, grand-parenting as some of my guides and depending on serendipity, intuition, glimpses of the divine. I write, I weave willow, I wait.

I am excited to be returning and to the challenge of new ideas, solutions and activities.

I'm a 58 year old man with a partner, two adult sons and a dog. I have been a student of Eastern thought, especially Taoism and the I Ching since I was a teenager. I have spent far too much of my adult life trying to innovate and bring about radical change in tired old hierarchical organisations that had no real intention of changing. I have given that up now and am focussed on how we change our collective narrative about the nature of reality and support systems change.

Whilst a big lover of life, younger in heart than in body, describing myself makes me nervous. I have become more insular as I age, scared of the social extremes that are tearing our World apart, and wanting to support and protect my beloved family. I work hard, running a risk department in an international bank, always with an eye on ethics, sustainability and the future... I play hard, too, although not as fit as I'd like!

I run Kairos, a space in central London I founded focused on radical ideas for social and cultural change in response to the climate and nature crises. All our talks and discussion begin with the assumption that humanity is facing a period of unprecedented transformation. Like Perspectiva and Realisation (which helped birth Kairos), we platform imaginative thinking to help us navigate the transition from one world to the next.

I have a passionate interest in human connection and have spent the last ten years researching the heart and how we are continually communicating energetically with each other through love (or its absence). I am keen to dive deeper into the social connection ideas and values discussed at Realisation and to share what I have learnt about this subject.

Italian Londoner, I studied physics, philosophy and graphic design. In my work I focus on creative leadership, brand strategy, collective narratives, identity, design, culture and systemic change. I integrate a number of creative and communication disciplines, in partnership with other creatives, writers, designers and polymaths. I am interested in exploring how stories (and thought perspectives) shape people's beliefs, how that influences our actions, and the way we show up and create the world.

Danish-Egyptian Londoner, I studied Jewellery design (Central St Martins, Royal College of Art). I worked as a designer, art director, and artist. I am currently studying and practicing to become a transpersonal psychotherapist, combining artistic and psychological enquiry. I am interested in connecting to the essence of who we are, holistically (body, mind and soul) as individuals and as social beings.

Hello there magical soul! Did you know you are the most important person in the whole wide universe?! And the most important things are what you think, what you feel, what you do, and what you believe? It's so important to remember this. So you can always be your deepest, truest self. This is all you have to do! Children often know this. Many adults have forgotten! My job is to help the adults remember. A beautiful age is dawning... where we all remember and embrace our truest, deepest selves!

I am a big boy, so instead of toys, I play with my mind.

One of the things I love to do is wonder. I spend my days filled with big questions, wondering why. I spend my days filled with the awe and wonder of the world. And I spend my days sharing these questions and these wonders with schools to help children to reconnect with themselves, each other and the planet. Some may call me a traveller, some may call me a teacher, some may call me a dreamer. I am simply here encouraging us all to fall back in love with the world.

I write (mostly poetry and songs), and volunteer at a food club that tries to make a good range of food and a sense of community available to a good range of people. I like books and beautiful places and catalysing conversations. I'm neuroatypical/"autistic", which means my brain and senses work a little differently.

I no longer have a formal job and am taking the opportunity to explore and search. I started with theology but have discovered much more!

I work as a shopkeeper on the internet. But mostly I'm interested in people and who we all are. When I was younger I spent lots of years studying Philosophy at University. At that time I was a bit of a lost soul and that path didn't answer my questions. Having spent many years not knowing what I was looking for, I was lucky enough to meet someone in whom I saw something I had lost, and with whom I've now built a life. That life has allowed me to rediscover a love for Philosophy.

I am an entrepreneur and investor with a variety of ventures focused on tackling climate change, reducing carbon emissions, promoting a circular economy, and improving education. I live on Dartmoor, where I farm sheep and alpacas and manage a blueberry farm. I have a passion for folk music and enjoy playing the viola and guitar.

Author, Professor, Speaker, Advisor.

Once upon a time there was a young Yorkshire, Roman Catholic lad named John. He had an enthusiastic spirit. He travelled, married & had three wonderful children. He loves working with groups and helping people to work well together. He grew up in a family of 10 people: what people said was often not what they felt or thought and he wondered why. Now people in organisations ask John to help when people are not really speaking to each other honestly or listening. He's now 58 and has white hair.

Struggling to engage with this. Everything I write sounds wanky and pretentious. Here's a factual summary: I co-lead an environmental community group and I'm a therapist working in sexual trauma and men's mental health. Looking fwd to getting to know you all!

I have spent a career in primary education where I have been fascinated by the way that we learn. I have also been fortunate to work in areas of potential conflict and I have worked to bring people to a point to understanding of others. Currently I am working with my husband on how we can use the power of our hearts to form deep relationships that foster communication and understanding.

I speak with a Scottish accent and I sing and play music. I love stories, dancing and listening to the world.

I help people discover a loving God by leading a local church. More than anything else I love my family and being outside in nature.

I support the broadcast industry, inspire the public understanding, that we are all a crucial part of the urgent change away from use of fossil fuels. Help farmers identify as being uniquely positioned to change our fundamental relationship with the land. I have a farm that has in the past been managed with sheep for meat. Now it is primarily concerned with farming for biodiversity, the land and the hay meadows being managed by a small matriarchal herd of Devon Red cattle.

I am very curious about how people talk to each other, and generally treat each other. What they like about each other and what they dislike and why. And I like to help them get along. And whenever possible help them understand that when two people aren't alike that's actually a great thing.

I am someone who loves to meet people who are interested and interesting and for work I am an actor, performer and I have written songs for choirs and children's tv. I have a little 4 year old granddaughter and I love improvising and love theatre visits and films. I love spontaneity and really looking forward to the festival and John and I will be camping and really hoping for good fun, great talks and good weather.

Hello! I am a middle aged man, husband and dad. I'm very grateful to have family. Kindness is very important to me. I enjoy meeting other people who are different from me who I can learn from. I love silence, nature, music, contemplation and reading. I'm a vicar, with open, questioning, evolving practice and convictions, always willing to change my mind and learn from different philosophies to mine. Can't wait to meet you!

I'm drawn to and believe deeply in sacred relationality and what recentering that can mean for us, for Life, for God.

I help people have more fun, meaningful and connected conversations.

I travel the world helping people change their lives, by changing how they deal with what they think is not them.

I'm a student and researcher interested in the narratives and practices that might flourish on the far side of the day.

Despite humans doing brilliant things, we've taken the planet for granted. Now, we have a chance to create a better future — but need to start now or yesterday! I work to help people see opportunities to make a positive difference, but I get to wear shorts & a t-shirt at work which is cool :) I listen to loads of ideas & then connect the right people to bring those ideas to life. This makes people happy & motivated. My enthusiastic, high-energy approach encourages fresh thinking in others.

I am good at practical problem solving whether it be in retrofitting buildings or upcycling clothing. I spend time in schools educating about the devastation caused by fast fashion and through events I link local fibre producers with makers. I live in Dorset.

I'm living dreams. Hopeful for me and us.

I am a gardener, writer and knowledge seeker, looking for the magic in relationship, story and care.

A mother of four, a business owner, an educator, a designer, and an artist.

For the past few years, I have been on something of a spiritual journey, which has taken me from consciousness studies at the Pari Center in Italy, to international dialogues at the Pontifical Academy, to several months of silent meditation at a Zen monastery in the forests of Oregon. I am currently researching semiotics and the Platonic Forms, as well as meditation-induced altered states of consciousness, Plato's conception of anemnesis, and creative applications of gnosis.

I lead pilgrimages, love nature and wish to help care for the beautiful world we share with different cultures around the world

















































Realisation gathering
15th October 2024
in London

Realisation Festival
26th-29th June 2025
at St Giles House, Dorset

Instagram: @realisationfestival
realisationfestival.com

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