THE TWO REVIEWS presented here in the Summer Issue reflect both the deep professional commitment and the breadth of talent that exists within our worldwide Transactional Analysis community.

I am delighted to introduce Steff Gates’ review of Ken Mellor’s latest book, Inspiration, Meditation and Personal Wellbeing: A practical guide to balanced living. This inspiring book was the outright Winner in the Spirituality Category of the 2012 Next Generation Indie Book Awards in the USA. This book awards programme is open to independent publishers and authors worldwide who have a book written in English.

In the review, Steff writes from her personal experience of actually working through Inspiration, Meditation and Personal Wellbeing during a recent period of convalescence. Interweaving her own process of using the material with commentary on applications with clients, she provides an engaged and engaging glimpse into the book’s informative five sections.

Robert Jenkins has written a polemical and pertinent review of two recent books about the regulation of psychotherapists. The Turning Tide is a new collection of papers, edited by Keith Tudor, about the history of regulation, and the post-regulation landscape in New Zealand (Aotearoa). Readers will know Keith as a creative and prolific author and editor of writings on Transactional Analysis, Person-Centred Therapy and supervision. He emigrated from Sheffield, UK a few years ago and is currently Assistant Professor of Psychotherapy at Auckland University of Technology.

Janet Haney’s Regulation in Action was published this year by Karnac Books. Janet Haney (nee Low) is active in the Alliance for Counselling and Psychotherapy, which campaigned, during the last government, against regulation by the Health Professions Council. While psychotherapists and counsellors will now not be regulated by the HPC, psychologists are already regulated by it. Regulation in Action follows a fitness to practice hearing held by the HPC, of Dr Malcolm Cross, a practising psychologist (and himself a HPC Council Member).

In his review, Robert argues that ‘the regulation game’ has entailed both magical thinking and mindless action on the part of politicians, regulators and practitioners in both countries. Calling for critical reflection and mindful action, he concludes that in the UK, ‘it is now possible to focus on further improving existing voluntary frameworks that are reasonably congruent with, rather than fundamentally inimical to, the values of psychotherapy’.

There are many exciting books coming out and, as ever, I welcome new reviewers for these pages.

Dr Celia Simpson, reviews@ita.org.uk

Inspiration, Meditation and Personal Wellbeing.
A practical guide to balanced living.

by Ken Mellor

The Awakening Network Inc., Seymour, Australia, 2011
(Paperback & eBooks)

Review by STEFF OATES

IN ONE OF the final chapters of this book the author describes it as a ‘compendium of common sense’. This too was my experience on reading.

The context of my reading the book may also be relevant. I was going through a period of convalescence following recent surgery and so I was able to read it from cover to cover, thoroughly, recording my processes in a log book, as suggested by the author, and trying all the exercises. This is only one way to read the book; it is also a book that you can dip into. Reading it in my way brought with it some pleasure and some not insubstantial challenges. At times it was as if I was in a challenging therapeutic relationship with the book, reluctantly having to do my ‘homework’, at times appreciating the care and common sense with which it was written and at other times feeling resentful towards some ‘Parent’ who was gently guiding me to practise what is good for me.

The author describes his overall wish as ‘that you will be inspired to use what you find here to go deeply into yourself and soar to the heights of your full potential,’ and he suggests that we take our time to learn what the book offers.

The book is divided into five sections. Section one is described as about both inspiration and life itself. ‘Life’ is called the Infinite. In this section readers are invited to contemplate on what life is, that ‘inspiration arises out of “nowhere” and “no when”’. Readers are encouraged to make conscious their natural, previously unconscious inspirational processes in order that they may start to knowingly use them. This is an informative section that also includes reasons for meditating and contains a useful checklist for assessing our wellbeing.

Section two, called Practices for a New Life, guides readers in getting organised using goals, how to set
goals, identifying priorities and beginning to meditate. Readers might be delighted to know that 'we are already meditating in a variety of ways every day, although we may not call it that' (p48). The author defines meditation as paying 'sustained self-aware attention to a subject, object or process' (p49).

Chapter nine describes Grounding as a life changing meditation and this has certainly been my own experience. Having learned the process with the author some twenty years ago, it is now an intrinsic part of my everyday life and vital in my work. I particularly liked the statement, 'So when you are grounding yourself, if you find that you are putting effort into it then you are probably trying too hard. Your body will do it all for you...' (p55).

This indeed was music to my ears as I have often seen people use the phrase 'get grounded' as (in my mind) an incorrect confrontation of people expressing intense emotion. The section proceeds to give information on centring and living with centring. At times I found it hard to understand the difference between the two as they are often experientially combined. Later in the book (p166), there is a clear definition of grounding as a process of being earthed physically into the world and centring as enabling us to plug fully into the life energy of the Infinite. The section continues, as the author accompanies our learning of how to fulfil our awareness using noticing, accepting, experiencing and sustaining our awareness. There is further useful information on physical self care through diet, exercise, rest, etc.

Section Three, Harnessing Your Life Energy, offers a wealth of information regarding feelings, the aliveness of feelings, ways to notice our individual daily cycles, conflict resolution and release, and effective decision-making.

The diagrams and definitions of the characteristics of six basic feelings will serve as a guide for readers to experiment with themselves and with clients comparing their own experience of the six basic feelings that are described here. The author takes a clear stance that we can act to encourage ourselves to feel differently without suppressing or diminishing the feelings we are having at the time. Noticing and staying with my resentment and rebelliousness towards the exercises certainly did bring about a powerful release and enjoyment as I stayed with it and moved through it.

Further information on personal daily cycles and cyclic living invites us to pay attention and be aware of our own specific rhythms. This section goes on to address conflict, both intrapsychically and interpersonally with specific and in my opinion effective meditations for conflict resolution.

In the final chapter on effective decision making, which includes making decisions, evolving decisions and 10-10-10 decisions, I was particularly taken with the description of evolving decisions. In this there is an encouragement to “express and experience many different layers of feelings, nuances of responses, common sense, contradictory impulses and desires, perceptiveness, illogical conclusions...” (p145). In many ways this summarised my reading of the whole book and made for a powerful re-aligning of some of my previous ways of managing myself.

Section four, Enlivening Meditations, takes the reader through a process of learning about the power of meditation, encouraging us to give meditation a significant place in our lives. I found the basic breathing meditation both simple and profound and while recording my experience in my log book I became aware of how often I practice this during sessions with clients.

There are chapters in this section on meditating for Spiritual Fulfilment, Inner Smile and Body Clenching, on Opening our Hearts, on Mantra meditation and on integrating meditation into our every days lives. It contains important information about postures and the use of hands. I smiled to myself on reading the Opening

Ken Mellor in New York receiving the Next Generation Indie Book Award for Winner of the Spirituality Category, July 2012
"[Mellor] emphasises personal responsibility and the importance of testing assertions, only accepting as true what we have discovered for ourselves as true."

Our Hearts chapter while listening to Leonard Cohen's new album in the background. It occurred to me how the description of love in this chapter appears to contrast sharply with Cohen's raw, sometimes angry aggressive approach to love, and I found myself potentially polarised.

Section 5, called 'Starting and Persisting', allowed me to rest with deep appreciation of varied teachers, masters and mentors who have and continue to influence my cognitive, emotional and spiritual development. In addition I applaud the author's recommendation to avoid trying to fit our experiences in to the stages outlined in the mantra meditation. In fact I took this as an acknowledgment of the importance of honouring our individual experiences.

This section also provides an excellent summary and consolidation of what has been communicated in the previous sections. There is an emphasis on working out our styles of learning, very practical tips on how to interrupt a current less helpful pattern with a desirable new pattern, and a wonderful chapter on finding good teachers, masters and mentors. Again the author emphasises personal responsibility and the importance of testing assertions, only accepting as true what we have discovered for ourselves as true.

So to conclude, my appreciation of the book is threefold. I think it works well as a self-help handbook for those with a particular style of learning who are able to self-motivate. For this purpose it can be read, as I did, from cover to cover, completing the exercises as a way of learning. It could also easily be used to learn specific skills for dealing with particular aspects of life, without having to read the whole book. I can also see that it would function well as a reference book for therapists and teachers involved in working with people to find wellbeing.

Steff Oates TSTA, runs a private psychotherapy practice in Cheshire. A visiting trainer in the UK and abroad, she invites people to think about working with the body in their current practice. She is co-founder of The Northern College for Body Psychotherapy, which offers CPD integrating body psychotherapy with other psychotherapeutic theory and practice.

Review by ROBERT JENKINS

'I must be one of the first Chairs in 10 years who is confident in saying that statutory regulation won't be happening on my patch.'

Amanda Hawkins, newly elected Chair of BACP in Therapy Today, December issue 2011.

THIS STATEMENT BY the Chair of the UK's foremost professional association for counsellors and psychotherapists represents nothing less than a volte-face and begs many questions as to what finally persuaded this key player of the regulation game so resolutely to reverse its previous policy on statutory regulation. It is hoped that the two books reviewed in this article provide, albeit retrospectively and speculatively, some of the answers.

The Turning Tide, edited by Keith Tudor, is a collection of writing by therapists and others from Aotearoa New Zealand. The version of the title appearing on the back cover is "Turning the Tide". Perhaps this is an editorial slip (as is conceivably the substitution of the word 'patch' for 'watch' in the above quote from the BACP Chair). Or perhaps it's a nod to the increasing numbers of practitioners who have in recent years begun to reflect more critically on the political questions behind the assurances of their professional associations and to act more independently of them.

In the UK, certainly, there has been a move away from a view of statutory regulation as the tide coming in and of