



Oxford & Region Iyengar Yoga Institute

April 2010 Newsletter

Dear Members and all who are associated with ORIYI,

This is the time to renew your membership if you haven't done so already. We strongly encourage you to support your local institute which is an IYA(UK) member institute - we pay your IYA(UK) fee out of your subscription which automatically makes you a member of IYA(UK). The cost for single membership is £9 per annum and £12 for joint membership. For this you will receive the IYA magazine twice yearly as well as reduced prices for various yoga events.

Many thanks to all who contacted me after receiving the first newsletter I'm glad you liked it even though it was visually extremely dull! Hopefully you will see improvements in this version. Don't forget to contact me with suggestions for future articles and features – you might even like to write something yourself! Barbara Burke suggested we publish more background information about the teachers doing the ORIYI Yoga days - she wrote,

'I will never forget Marion Kilburn's demonstration of Irish dancing but I realise this might be a bit too frivolous for some!'

So we have included a personal biography from Nathalie Blondel this time and will try to include more personal details in future reviews.

We would like to thank Manchester and District Institute of Iyengar Yoga (MDIY) who have very kindly given us permission to publish an article from their past journal we hope you find it interesting.

Best wishes

Mary

Membership Secretary

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Message from the Chair – Tessa Martin

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to the second of our "new" newsletters, I hope you enjoy the format and content, I think Mary has done a great job here and is open to suggestions so please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any ideas or contributions or constructive comments. We do appreciate that in the past one of the problems has simply been lack of communication so

we are hoping these newsletters will help. We are also aware that the ORIYI website is not up-to-date and just to let you know we are trying our best to get this sorted out, apparently technical problems, I'm afraid I'm pretty clueless when it comes to this sort of thing.

I've been asked by Mary (membership and newsletter secretary) to give a little background about myself which is quite embarrassing but here goes. I first attended a yoga class about 4 weeks after the birth of my 2nd daughter and this was with our Judith (Jones). At the time I was a teacher of aerobics, step, circuits, weights etc and I loved the contrast feeling that yoga was something I could do JUST for me! However, within a couple of years and with Judith suggesting that I could do the teacher training I went ahead and trained for my introductory levels with Judi Sweeting in Cirencester passing level 2 in 1999. I never thought for one minute I would take it any further and do the Junior Intermediate Levels but having taught for many years some of my students were (and still are) capable of being challenged further so I embarked on the "Juniors" and finally passed Level 3 in March of this year. It was an absolutely gruelling exam but I am so pleased to have done it and to be able to offer my students a little more depth and a few extra postures. Yoga is a huge part of my life and the more I appreciate and understand its deeper meanings the more the effects of it tipple over into all other aspects of my life, as I am sure should be the case with any spiritual path.

We are extremely lucky that Jenny (events organiser) as well as other members of the committee over the years have forged relationships with some great senior teachers around the country whom we have invited to our area for yoga days. These days are really of a high standard and I do recommend that you try one out if you have not already done so.

Yours in yoga,

Tessa.

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The Committee contact details can be found on the ORIYI website

<http://www.oriyi.org.uk/contacts.htm>

My first trip to the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute, Pune, India by Jenny Furby (Events Secretary)

For many years I yearned to go to the source of our yoga in Pune and this February I was lucky enough to go. During the first weekend whilst settling in I enrolled onto a month's course at the Ramanani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute.

When we approached the Institute it felt very surreal. My two friends went ahead and entered the building. I was aware of someone behind me and turned round to see who it was, imagine my surprise when I saw Guruji!

The institute is a lovely building to be in, much smaller than I expected. I feel very privileged to have been in Gheetaji's and Prashantji's classes. In some of Gheetajis classes Guruji would also be present doing his own practice, the teaching and atmosphere was incredible. Pranshantji's classes were very interesting, always giving you a lot to think about and to practice and explore in the future. Practice sessions at the institute were something very

new to me, I enjoyed them, finding a place and equipment was an experience and then keeping focused on my own practice was a challenge! Guruji was always there in the mornings doing his own practice and teaching students, mostly Abhijata and Raya. Gheetaji would also be present, doing her own practice and sometimes just watching!

We stayed in a tower block next door to the Institute, this cut out travelling everyday. There are many other apartments available and of course hotels. I would recommend reading Kirsten Agar-Wards guide to Pune (available through the IYA) and also Bobby Clennells Guide.

I really enjoyed Pune. It was as I expected, very busy, noisy and hot. The pollution was terrible and of course the difference between the wealthy and poor. You cannot help but be affected by it. I really enjoyed the Indian culture and of course the food!

Sadly, there was a bomb in the German Bakery, a popular meeting place, killing at least 15 people. Not surprisingly this did overshadow our visit and caused some concern at home.

I would recommend The Institute in Pune to anyone who regularly practices Iyengar Yoga. Even if you are not taught by the Iyengar family you would be taught by some of their senior teachers who are also excellent. I really appreciate how lucky I am and am grateful to my family who supported me going.

Congratulations to Emma Pinchin (ORIYI's IYA rep)

Baby Sebastian James Rufus Pinchin was born on the 12th January, weighing in at 6lbs 15oz and a little bit.



Isn't he cute !

Emma and Sebastian on Mother's Day

Yoga Events

Nathalie Blondel's Yoga Morning at Newbury on Saturday 30th January.



ORIYI members enjoyed a wonderful morning of yoga in Newbury at the end of January. As always Nathalie's teaching was clear and precise. The whole class was beautifully orchestrated weaving the two main themes of focus on the lower back ribs and the sacrum throughout the morning's practice.

Working with variations of Supta Padangustasana Nathalie taught how to keep the back safe, by keeping the sacrum long and evenly placed on the floor. The sacroiliac region can be vulnerable to misalignment, so working mindfully in this way keeps it stable and healthy. Virasana, Marchyasana, Paschimottanasana, Sirsasana and Triang Mukhaikapada Paschimottanasana where just some of the asanas where we were instructed to work more deeply from the back body, drawing the back floating ribs in and softening. It certainly made Parivrtta Trikonasana and the opening of the chest in Adha Chandrasana more fluid. The class was well attended and some of us even managed to 'buy the t-shirt'.



Jane Hedge

Nathalie's biography.

My first Iyengar yoga class was in a university gym 30 years ago. At that time I was a very flexible 20-year-old and I remember that my favourite pose from the outset was supta virasana which I would flop into without a second thought nor, indeed, any extension in my leg muscles. Like so many young people I worked from an overflexible lumbar and delighted particularly in poses where I could extend and twist ever further. I remember once catching two bricks placed beyond my feet in paschimottanasana and backbends were, unsurprisingly, 'easy' to me. Or so I thought. At first I attended a weekly class and it was some years before I began to go to workshops and conventions. By which time I had had

three children and whilst the yoga had been very helpful during my pregnancies, what understanding I have began after the birth of my third child and the sacroiliac pain I suffered from for a couple of years. I began teacher training after over 15 years of practice and under the excellent guidance of my teacher (and teacher trainer) Judi Sweeting began to appreciate the fundamental importance of working my legs accurately. That's truly when I began a proper svadhyaya of yoga and realised and constantly re-realise the significance of Guruji's statement of the necessity of bringing a 'stiffness' to those parts of the mind or the body which are apt to run away with you. I have been teaching yoga full-time for a number of years now and attend workshops, conventions and, of course, Pune as often as I can. As with all knowledge - and especially one which is a science, an art and a practical philosophy - the more I know and learn and understand, the more I realise that I have just begun to scratch the surface of this wonder that is Iyengar Yoga. What I love most about it is its ethical quality. It's fun too, and a sense of humour is a crucial element if you're going to impart something to others but for me it's the fact that it brings such balance and equanimity if you approach your practice with a measured openness. If you try to cheat, you only cheat yourself. As long as you're true to what you understand, and remain a student primarily even as you teach, yoga will remain a constant source of strength in all aspects of your life.

More yoga days are planned for 2010 they are:

Saturday 12 th June	Mary Heath	10.00 – 4.00pm Newbury
Saturday 25 th September	Marion Kilburn	10 am - 4 pm Thruxton Village Hall, Andover.

Yogic Flying – by John Aplin (from MDIY Journal April 2003)

Many members will be flying south for holidays, some on shorter Mediterranean trips, others on long-haul flights to India, North America or the southern hemisphere, in which the combination of changes of time zone and the length of travel may trigger symptoms of jet lag. Many will have read in the newspapers about the increased risks of deep vein thrombosis attendant on air travel. How can yoga help with air travel?

The exercise videotapes that airlines are now showing as a regular part of their safety routines contain stretches that will be second nature to anyone familiar with yoga – arms above the head, legs lifted from the knee and extended to the heel, toes lifted and separated, ankles flexed and so on. One can exercise the knees and hips a little more by placing an ankle on the opposite thigh. Garudasana is useful in the upper body. However, relatively little movement is possible in seats in economy cabins, especially when someone is in the next seat and the person in front has lowered themselves into the recline position! Supporting the lower back with a pillow placed long ways improves posture when sitting and an inflatable U-shaped pillow can be useful for neck support. One can always practice deep breathing, though I do not recommend this while the plane is still waiting at the departure gate, as engine fumes often contaminate the air conditioning in the passenger compartment. Getting up for a stroll through the cabin is useful after a few hours of flight,

and one might find enough space for lifting the leg into a discreet vrksasana or ardha baddha padmottanasana. If someone is asleep in the next seat, just stand on the chair and jump over them, though preferably not when the plane is experiencing turbulence.....One should drink plenty of fluid (I always carry bottled water), avoid alcohol altogether, and eat copious quantities of fresh fruit , vegetables and dried fruit. Whether in winter of summer, travel in loose clothes with buttoned or zip pockets (cf head stand) and comfortable sandals, taking the later off once in the seat.

Carry hand luggage in a backpack rather than a shoulder or hand bag. During a long journey one often ends up walking considerable distances. And it can be heavy – in addition to water, money, passport and a few toiletries, my hand luggage usually contains all the books and papers I have not had time to read during the preceding several weeks, as well as the vital CDs and walkman and sometimes a laptop computer. A small backpack will distribute this weight evenly between the two shoulders. (Editors note. Things have changed a bit since this article was written – fluids/toiletries are usually not allowed in hand luggage and mp3 players have replaced walkmans!)

My personal experience has been that yoga practice can be helpful before and soon after flying. When travelling from Manchester I try to find a few minutes after check –in to go to the chapel and practice headstand, dog down, uttanasana and prasarita padottanasana. Sitting poses such as janu sirsasana, triang mukhaikapada passchimottanasana and passchimottanasana are also useful for their calming properties. People using the chapel for prayers usually find this behaviour acceptable!

On arrival at a stop-over destination I do not fail to practice hand stand, several standing poses, uttanasana, downward and upward dog, chattaranga dandasana and, again , head stand. Airports are busy places and it is useful if one can find a reasonably quiet space, since passersby are a distraction and it is important to avoid being run down by passenger transporters or becoming a victim of an industrial vacuum cleaner. In Singapore airport recently I was able to find space behind a pillar in an empty departure gate for a satisfying half hour of yoga following a 13 hour flight. The standing and inverted poses restore fluid balance, bringing circulation and life back to the parts that have become dull with sitting. Uttanasana will stimulate the kidneys. Headstand feels quite different after being in the air for several hours – one's sense of balance is altered and so it will be wise to do handstand first, and use the wall for support for both postures. The sense of balance and poise will be restored. Venular thrombosis can arise because of slow peripheral blood circulation, which this work will prevent.

While waiting at the boarding gate, avoid chairs and instead sit on the floor in virasana, baddhakonasana or swastikasana. One can find a wall to support he back. Alternatively, this is a good time for tadasana. All these measures improve the quality of the breath once confined on the plane.

On arrival at the destination, avoid retiring to bed until the normal time. Recently I arrived at Melbourne at 4.30am having travelled for about 24h, and through a combination of yoga, a long walk by the river, drinking tea and conversing with friends, stayed awake until 11pm, after which I had a good sleep and awoke well adjusted to local time. Whether or not jet lag is a prospect, the practice of standing poses, head-stand, backbends and shoulder stand will allow rediscovery of energy resources and make even the first day enjoyable. Patterns of food intake are altered during travel, and these postures will help in assessing what to eat, when and how much. Sitting and prone poses are best avoided at least until the evening, as one will be tempted to fall asleep.

Teachers Notices

INTERMEDIATE WORKSHOPS WITH JUDITH JONES - Saturday mornings 10.00am - 1.15pm

24 April, 15 May, 26 June in central Newbury

For teachers and students to learn more about the "Intermediate" asanas. It is not teacher training but teachers wanting to take Intermediate Junior assessments can ask questions and may have the chance to practice teaching.

Booking essential - for details contact Judith Jones 01488 71838 jjyoga@btinternet.com

SUMMER WORKSHOPS with TESSA MARTIN

Saturday morning workshops in Newbury and ropes workshops at home studio. See website for details and to enrol.

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