

EAST OF SCOTLAND IYENGAR YOGA INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER 6

FEBRUARY 2008

Happy New Year

We hope you all had a happy and peaceful festive period, but bet it feels like it all happened a long time ago!

Your ESIYI Membership Forms for 2008-09 – if you are not on email or have asked to have documentation posted then your membership renewal form is enclosed. For those on email, the form is attached for you to print off. It would be much appreciated if the forms could be returned to Anne, our membership secretary before 31 March 2008. Thanks.

We would like to take this opportunity to notify you that some committee members will be standing down at the AGM in June, and in order to keep the Institute going new faces are required. Two definite positions being vacated are Chair and IYA (UK) Rep but a big benefit to the committee would be the appointment of a secretary – the latter post is not onerous but spreading the workload helps immensely. Also we could really do with help in composing the newsletter so anyone with editorial and or publishing skills would be much appreciated. Committee meetings are held approximately once a term and the main priority is events where any help is always greatly welcomed. If you feel a glimmer of interest to help in any capacity, please, please contact Gordon. Here is a very brief overview of the two positions being vacated:

Chair: arranges Committee meetings, ensures action points are carried out and the smooth operation of the committee.
IYA (UK) Rep: attends 3 IYA (UK) meetings per year, provides a summary of the meeting (on the web-page), and brings points to the attention of the IYA (UK) which have been raised by the committee, teachers or students. This would best suit a teacher but could well be done by a keen student who has some understanding of the organisation

In addition, it would be very much appreciated if anyone can assist with ESIYI's event to celebrate Guruji's 90th Birthday in December. Contact Mona or Marianne to put your name down.

We are always looking for articles for the newsletter and have been fortunate enough to have received three for this newsletter. If you have an article you would like to share with the other ESIYI members please forward to Gordon.

**Gordon Jardine at gordieric@hotmail.com
or phone 0131 445 7549**

ESIYI Calendar of Events 2008

February 9th Margaret Austin 10am-4pm
Margaret, who is a senior teacher, teacher trainer and moderator, will be travelling up from Sunderland where she is part of the North East Institute of Iyengar Yoga. This Saturday workshop will be a General level class for students of 6 months or over. Murrayfield Parish Church, £25 non-members, £20 members

April 6th George Glen 10am-1pm
George is a popular local teacher who teaches at the Edinburgh Iyengar Yoga Centre as well as his independent classes around Edinburgh and the Lothians. George is also a trainer and assessor and has visited Pune several times. This Sunday is a general half day workshop which is a great opportunity for those worried about managing a whole day. Venue - Edinburgh Academy, check website for forms and details in March

May 31st & June 1st Judi Sweeting & Tig Whattler 10am-4pm
We are delighted to host another return visit with Judi and Tig who are a dynamic husband and wife team from the Cotswold Iyengar Yoga Centre in Cirencester. Judi has been practising for over 33 years, teaching for over 22 years and has studied with the Iyengars on many occasions. Tig has been practicing for over 25 years and teaching for over 12. We very much look forward to this weekend
Saturday 31st May General level for students of 6 months' experience or over. The practice will be all day with a lunchtime break.
Sunday 1st June Intermediate level for students of over 1 years' experience. The practice is all day with a lunch break in which we will hold the ESIYI AGM meeting. Members and people interested in becoming involved are all welcome.
Venue - Rudolf Steiner School, check the website for forms and details in April

September 28th PD Day: Teaching for Pregnancy and for Children (Teachers Only)
Elaine Pidgeon and Meg Laing will be the senior teachers moderating this Professional Development day for teachers of all levels. These days are always interesting and involving and are a chance to share skills, ideas and knowledge. Time and venue TBC

October 25th Lyn Farquhar 3 hour workshop
This Sunday will be general half day workshop in the Stirlingshire/Falkirk region which is a great opportunity for all levels to be involved. Time and venue TBC

December 'Teach in' Guruji's 90th Birthday Celebrations
This is a very special occasion which is an outstanding honour to host an event for. We are planning a different kind of workshop with several teachers followed by a pot luck lunch social afterwards. More details to follow. Time and venue TBC

Application forms for all events will be sent to members and are available on the website 1 month prior to the event. Please keep checking the website for further details. Members of ESIYI are entitled to a £5 discount at each event. Membership cost £10 per year and forms can be downloaded from www.eastscotlandyoga.org

A weekend workshop with Richard Agar Ward 24 & 25 November 2007

Richard Agar Ward is a Senior Iyengar Teacher who, together with his wife Kirsten, runs the Bath Iyengar Yoga Centre. Richard confesses to being "nearly 50" and has been practising yoga for many years, with frequent trips to Pune to study under Guruji. He is therefore well able to bring this influence and Guruji's words directly to his teaching.

Any individual's experience of a workshop is inevitably personal, so I decided to gather the views of some of the others who attended one or other of the two days. Everybody I spoke to praised Richard's teaching. It was described as 'wonderful', 'meticulous', 'exact', 'detailed', 'clear', 'compassionate', 'generous', 'gentle mannered' and 'strong'.

His demonstrations were among some of the best I have experienced. He was able to describe a movement with clarity and then show it quite visibly in his own posture. Therefore, although I was not always able to emulate I would have the visual memory to carry into my practice.

To describe his teaching would take a book, so here are just a few points. The theme of Trikonasana dominated the morning of the first two days. The approach being a little different between the days. Before starting the classes he described the necessity for the body first to be fed and nourished by the physical work so that, once the body is full, the mind and breath can sustain the pose.

Unfortunately, on the first day the hall was exceptionally cold and we had to work hard just to keep warm. The nourishment of the body and development of Trikonasana came through the repetition of the pose between each of the major standing poses, and observing how one pose informed and nourished the other. We were encouraged not to aim for perfect poses, but to develop an understanding of the links. (eg opening the chest in VII and taking that opening to Trikon.). On the second day, and with a more experienced class, Trikonasana was taken to a deeper level through a clear demonstration and practice of individual points in that pose, (eg the highest point in each of the triangles) as well as again linking Trikonasana to other standing poses.

The repetition of poses and links between them continued throughout the two days, and I cannot start to do justice to all the points that Richard made. Emphasis was placed on extending the limbs instead of simply straightening them, extending the walls of the chest to prevent lower back strain, the vertical lift of the spine in Sarvangasana through better use of Setu Banda with a chair, the lift and extension of the inner knees in Sirsasana and Sarvangasana through working in Supta Padangustasana, the opening and lift (elevation) of the back groins in Adho Mukha Svanasana and understanding this by doing Uttanasana with a brick between the top of the thighs; and much, much more.

I hope that I have been able to give you at least a flavour of two days with a compassionate and meticulous teacher. We did work very hard and I thought that I would feel really tired by the end of the second day, but thanks to the teaching (and two long Savasanas) I have seldom felt more lively and energetic!

In the meantime Richard is running a retreat in Glastonbury from 23-28 May 2008 details on www.bath-iyengar-yoga.com

Ailsa Peck

Thoughts on Ahimsa

During our introductory teacher training, we had to write an essay on the ethical precepts of yoga and how they apply to our lives. Having to really think about yama and niyama made me realise that this is where the real power of yoga lies.

Among the ethical principles listed in texts on yoga, ahimsa – non-violence – is the one that encompasses all the others. But how do we put non-violence into practice? It is not easy to become non-violent: as with asana and pranayama, it must be cultivated through practice and the application of intelligence. In 'Light on Yoga', Mr Iyengar explains that "violence is a state of mind" which "arises out of fear, weakness, ignorance and restlessness".

In order for us to become non-violent, we must work to get rid of our ignorance by analysing our own actions and what motivates them. This is highly relevant in the context of the modern world. For example, we who live in the wealthy part of the world consume the vast majority of the world's resources. The richest 20% of the world's population, which includes all of us here in Scotland, consume 80% of the world's resources. Moreover, almost everything we buy originates outside the UK.

Many countries do not have or enforce laws that safeguard the rights, safety or environment of the people who work to make the things that we buy. In other words, the 'satanic mills' that thankfully no longer exist here are now located in poorer parts of the world. In some industries, conditions are as bad as they were here in the early days of the industrial revolution.

One simple way of lessening the harmful impact of our actions is to be more careful when deciding what to buy. Starting to question where a product comes from and how and by whom it was made before deciding whether to buy it is a good first step towards non-violence. For myself, I don't want to eat, wear or give someone a gift of something made from the suffering of another.

Ishani Erasmus

IYA (UK) Convention 13 – 15 June 2008 in Newcastle with Birjoo Mehta from the Mumbai Institute

Given its locality, this is a fantastic opportunity for us north of the Border to attend the annual convention. It is open to teachers and students. Please see your Autumn IYA (UK) magazine for full details and application form.

Date for the diary - last week of May 2009 Geetaji is visiting the UK.

This event will be run by IYA (UK) and further details will be issued by them, possibly in September 08.

Committee Members

Chairperson	Gordon Jardine	gordieric@hotmail.com	0131 445 7549
Treasurer	Rachel Woodward	rachelwoodward@cavanagh.co.uk	0131 441 6405
Events	Marianne Farish	mazvingo@hotmail.com	0131 454 0334
	Mona Hislop	mona.hislop@btopenworld.com	01968 675546
Membership	Anne Hally	anne.hally@dsl.pipex.com	0131 337 2884
IYA (UK Rep	Julie Anderson	julieindia@hotmail.com	01968 661204
Non Exec	Ishani Erasmus	ishanierasmus@yahoo.co.uk	01786 449092

Notice Board

Think about other members and promote the yoga community spirit by offering lifts to those without transport.

Help – does anyone know of halls for rental for our events – must be warm!

First Aid Course – we plan to run a first aid course for teachers and trainee teachers in May with one of the local first aid course providers. Details to follow.

EIYC Sponsored Head Balance raised £3,177.55. I was amazed at the students enthusiasm and generosity. I timed everyone doing the sponsored headstand (capped to 10 minutes) and I think everyone who took part got quite a lot out of it and hopefully it will benefit the villagers in and around Guruji's birth place, Bellur in south India. The money goes to the IYA(UK) first then forwarded to the Bellur Trust. We will be getting a short report in the next IYA(UK) magazine by Judith Jones whose idea it originally was.

Elaine Pidgeon

Thanks to those of you who purchased calendars through the institute, we raised £37 for ESIYI funds (a useful addition to our bank balance).

The People Behind the Poses

First published in Sheffield and District Iyengar Yoga Association Newsletter, May 2003

While many of the names of yoga poses are based on the Sanskrit words for parts of the body and how they are worked (such as Prasrita Padottanasana 'extended stretched leg pose') or the shape made during the pose (Ardha Chandrasana 'half moon pose'), others have their basis in Indian mythology. In this article I look at the character behind Virabhadrasana, the legendary warrior Virabhadra.

Brahma, the Lord of Creation, made ten sons to carry out his tasks of creation and destruction; two of these sons were Siva and Daska. Siva was the more powerful and the jealous Daska resented his brother's supremacy. To make matters worse, contrary to Daska's wishes, his daughter Sita had chosen the reputedly matted-haired, alcohol drinking, cremation-ground frequenting Siva to be her husband.

Daska organised a yajna, a ritual sacrifice, to which all were invited. When Daska entered the celebration the guests – great sages, philosophers and demigods – stood in respect for their host, with the exceptions of Brahma (his father: so, understandable) and Siva (not so understandable). Daska was offended because as Siva's father-in-law he believed himself superior and worthy of more respect. As a stickler for etiquette and rules, Daska decided to snub his daughter and son-in-law at his next yajna to teach them a lesson.

The day of the ritual sacrifice arrived, and Sita saw people making their way to her father's house. She asked her husband where they were going and when she found out that there was a party to which they had not been invited, Sita was determined to go and confront her father. Siva advised her not to, but his wife was strong-minded and she rode to the yajna on her husband's white bull.

When she arrived her father asked why she had come, since she had no invitation. He began to insult Sita's husband calling him the 'king of goblins', 'beggar', 'ash-man' and 'long-haired yogi'. Sita was humiliated, hurt and, above all, ashamed to be Daska's daughter; consumed by anger, she threw herself onto the sacrificial fire where she preferred to die than be associated with Daska.

Hearing of his beloved wife's death, Siva became enraged. He tore a hair from his matted locks and threw it to the ground, where it became the powerful warrior Virabhadra. Siva equipped his warrior with an army and sent him to destroy Daska and his ritual sacrifice.

Virabhadra arrived at the party like a hurricane, brandishing swords in both arms. He reached way up through the earth from underground and we get the pose Virabhadrasana I; then he spied his opponent, Daska, and the pose is Virabhadrasana II; finally he cut off Daska's head, Virabhadrasana III. The head was thrown into the sacrificial fire; those who tried to defend Daska were killed, and, needless to say, the party was ruined.

Siva went to the scene of the yajna to inspect Virabhadra's work and there he absorbed Virabhadra back into his own form. The other gods begged Siva to bring Daska back to life, fearing the consequences if he did not. Siva's anger had now gone and his sorrow had turned to compassion, so he agreed. Since Daska's head had been burnt, Brahma substituted the head of a goat, cut off at a sacrifice. Daska therefore bore the mark of his foolishness for the rest of his life.

Still feeling grief for the loss of his wife, Siva fell into deep meditation until the time when Sita was reincarnated as Parvati to become his wife once more.

The following is an extract from Julie Anderson's report from the IYA (UK) Executive Council Meeting on 22 Sept 2007 (see webpage for full report)

Constitutional and contractual rules on teaching for Iyengar Yoga Teachers:

Since 2004 almost all teachers worldwide who are qualified to teach the Iyengar method of yoga are required to hold (and licensed to use) the Certification Mark (the exceptions are Indian teachers).

The IYA(UK) is the license holder in the UK and is therefore responsible for the administration of the CM on behalf of BKS Iyengar who owns the trade marks that make up the Certification Mark. The aim of the Certification Mark is to show that the teacher who displays the CM logo can meet the highest possible standards for the teaching of Gurujii's methods and philosophy of Yoga. It is a kite mark for Iyengar Yoga so the public will know what they are getting. It is there to protect Gurujii's name and reputation and at the same time it protects us as Iyengar Yoga teachers. We have worked hard to get our qualifications and now no one without our training can make a false claim to be an Iyengar teacher and bring all our reputations into disrepute.

As holders of the CM we are entering into a contract with the IYA(UK) (as Gurujii's representative) to uphold the standards of Iyengar Yoga. Therefore we are required to sign a Sub Licence Agreement to abide by the rules of the contract and the rules of the IYA(UK). The licence to use the CM has to be renewed annually by paying a fee but also by seeing that we do indeed abide by the rules of the contract, that we are teacher members of the Association and therefore that we abide by the rules of the Association. Teacher membership and holding the CM go together and cannot be separated.

At the moment these rules are to be found in different documents attached to the constitution so for your convenience what follows is a summary of the rules relating to what we may teach and when. It is also a guide to where these rules can be found.

First, look in your contract. There in the Sub Licence Agreement on page 2 is the clause 1 c) where it says that we agree to teach yoga "only in accordance with the IYENGAR method without mixing other styles of yoga or other disciplines". So we agree when we sign the contract not to teach other forms of yoga or to mix our teaching with other forms of yoga. Please note the word only plainly states that we may not teach other methods of yoga and still call ourselves Iyengar Yoga teachers. A more complete definition of what this means can be found in Appendix F of the Standing Orders attached to the IYA(UK) Constitution on the web site (iyengaryoga.org.uk). This is what it says; "Iyengar Yoga teachers are committed to teaching only one form of yoga, i.e. Iyengar Yoga according to the methods of Yogacharya BKS Iyengar. In addition Iyengar teachers do not introduce anything into the Iyengar method from another discipline or activity. It is a mark of integrity in Iyengar teachers that they do not mix the stream of learning that they are responsible for passing on."

Finally as teachers we must stay within the syllabus we are trained in. In other words we cannot teach beyond our Certificate Level. These rules are to be found in Appendix C of the Constitution in clause 1 b) where it is stated, "each Certificate has a separate syllabus and members are expected to adhere to the syllabus appropriate to their Certificate". In addition Introductory teachers can conduct general classes within the Introductory syllabus, but in Clause 2, a) viii) it is explained that "before the teaching of individual pupils, specialised classes or the training of teachers is undertaken, higher certificates are required." However Introductory teachers can teach the Introductory poses to children, but must first obtain enhanced disclosure – contact the main office to find out about this.

The Constitution of the IYA (UK) itself is our version of the international constitution that has been approved and presented to us and to all other national Iyengar Yoga Associations by Yogacharya BKS Iyengar himself.

Julie Anderson