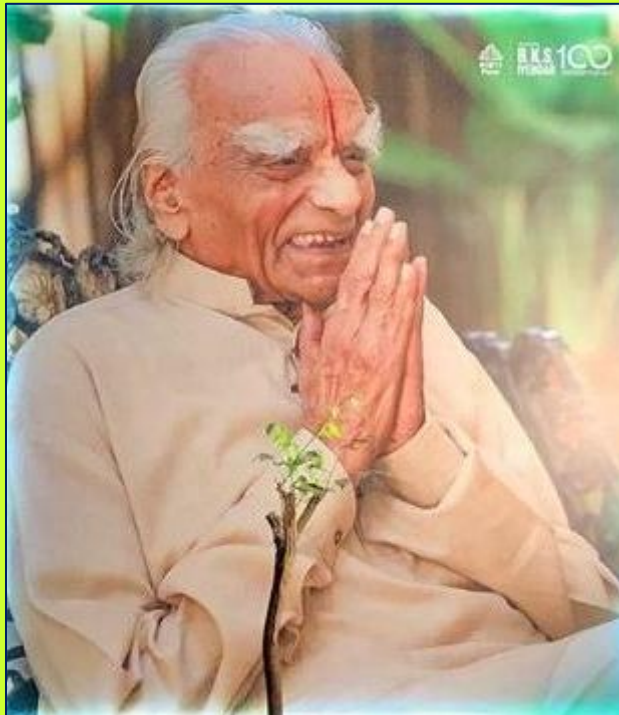


Manchester and District
Iyengar
Yoga



**JOURNAL
MARCH 2019**

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We welcome all your articles and suggestions.....



Guruji, his daughter Geeta, and son Prashant



Sri Prashant Iyengar, Honorary President of the MDIY

**It is through the alignment of the body that I
discovered the alignment of my
mind, self, and intelligence.**

B.K.S. Iyengar

Chair's Address – Charlotte Everitt

I was fortunate enough to spend October 2018 in Pune studying at RIMYI with Geetaji, Prashantji, Abhijata and the Indian teachers, and even more fortunate that nearly all the 'Ladies' Classes' were taught by Geetaji. At the start of the month, Abhijata introduced her – 'You know her? This is a special day!' and Geeta said that she didn't know about it being that special – she explained she was just trying to manage through her bad health, apologising that she had become so old in comparison to her age. She told us she had asked her father, Guruji, to keep her alive to celebrate his centenary in December – 'so I am sure he will help me up to that.' Then she taught about 130 of us, from all over the world, showing us how we are getting it all wrong.

About 6 weeks after we left, another contingent arrived, including a number of our Manchester teachers and students, to celebrate Guruji's centenary; and if you follow pretty much any Iyengar yogis on social media, you will have seen pictures and sensed the excitement and passion that came bubbling through from everyone there. The Centenary Convention ended on 14th December, and while many of the attendees were still travelling home, we heard the sad news of Dr Geeta S Iyengar's death. It might not have come as a surprise to her, but the rest of us were shocked; she had spent the last few years telling us that we're not ready to be left on our own, but now here we are, without her. Abhijata has pointed out that between them, Guruji and Geetaji have left us at least enough study teachings to last each of us a lifetime, so we are not actually on our own.

Editorial

It was with great sadness that we learned of the passing of our President, Geetaji, Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar on the 16th December 2018. In this issue we have tributes to Geetaji and an interview from the IY 2014 magazine about her early yoga and how she was inspired by her father, BKS Iyengar.

We have photographs from the 2018 Convention where Tricia Booth and Julie Brown led the main sessions. As part of the special sessions at this convention, the 100th birth year of BKS Iyengar, Marion Kilburn led yoga and dancing sessions.

All our contributors have generously given their time and effort for this magazine. Many, many thanks.

We are sad to report the loss of two valued members of the MDIY, Marjorie Saville and Carole Lawrence. We welcome further tributes for the next magazine.

With the magazine about to go to print, we received a message from Jeanne Maslen's family: Jeanne was in hospital after a fall, but sadly, died on Saturday evening, 2nd March. No-one has contributed more to the MDIY than Jeanne Maslen. In the next issue of this magazine there will be an opportunity for a full tribute to her. Our condolences go to her family.

Lynda Ogle and Joan Abrams

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Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar (1944 – 2018)

In her father's light, not shadow!

At the MDIY IN 2009



Dr Geeta S. Iyengar, daughter of Yogacharya B K S Iyengar, and the senior-most teacher in the Iyengar community passed away today morning. She had completed 74 years on December 7, 2018.

Sister to her five siblings but a mother figure to the whole community of Iyengar yoga practitioners which now spans 59 countries across the world, Geetaji lived a simple life which embodied all the principles of being a yogini.

She chose to lead a life of brahmacharya (celibacy) and devoted her life to yogic pursuits.

As the director of the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute (RIMYI), Pune, together with her father B K S Iyengar and her brother Prashant, she was instrumental in moulding and teaching generations of yoga aspirants from their Yoga-shala in Shivajinagar, Pune. Last year, the prestigious

Prime Minister's Award for the best Yoga Institute in India was awarded to RIMYI. This, in a way, acknowledged her six-decades-long years of commitment to teaching yoga and mentoring generations of yoga teachers which has resulted in the Iyengar yoga certificate becoming the gold standard in the field.

The eldest child of Ramamani and Yoga guru B K S Iyengar, Geetaji was born near Tumkur, her maternal place but did her schooling in Pune, where her father had settled down as a yoga teacher.

She was inspired to take up yoga early and never looked back. An early attack of nephritis at age 9 had left her with only half a kidney and ever since, she became a keen student of yoga. Decades later, asked whether she felt she was in her father's shadow, she wittily said, 'I consider myself fortunate to be in my father's light, not his shadow.'

In 2012, Geetaji conducted a mega class in Portland, Oregon, US, which has become a benchmark for the congruence between Yoga, medicine and Ayurveda. In this convention, she gave the principles of how to hone the art of observation and application of *yogasanas* in the treatment and alleviation of various diseases. She repeatedly stressed how *yogasanas* have transformative power and this comes with the alignment of the outer, inner and innermost bodies.

When people talk of alignment, they only point to external points of reference like arms and legs and muscles and joints. But here was someone who showed us how to align a life to the teachings of a Guru; to the learnings of an art; to the responsibilities of a practitioner (sadhaka), a teacher and a pillar of the yoga community.



Geetaji at the MDIY in 2009 with (L to R) Abijhata, Janice Yates, Pen Reed, Tricia Booth, Jeanne Maslen, Susan Halliwell, Margaret Carter, Debbie Bartholomew, David Reddicen, Kathryn Duffy, Margaret Ellison.

Though a teacher in her own right, she always remained a *shishya* to her father and the subject of yoga till the end. Even at the recently concluded centenary celebrations of Yogacharya B K S Iyengar, where more than 1,200 students

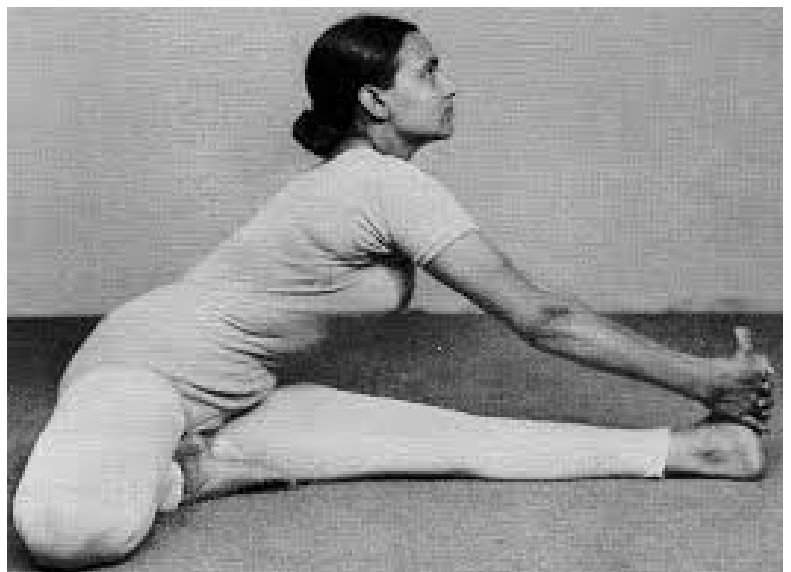
from 53 countries participated in a ten-day *yogasana* and *pranayama* session, she taught tirelessly for six hours a day exhorting students to experience the intelligence in their bodies first-hand and not depend on second-hand experiences. This insistence on self-learning and self-awareness in the body, mind, consciousness and breath became her defining ethic.

She authored the classic, '*Yoga – A Gem For Women*' which is now translated into several languages. Her continuous exploration resulted in the volumes, *Preliminary Course* and *Intermediate Course* which became a beginner-level learner's text - guides to her father's definitive *Light On Yoga*. Her six-decades-long commitment to the subject of yoga has been something which will now inspire generations of practitioners.

An Interview with Geeta Iyengar (2014)

I have had a natural inclination toward yoga since my early childhood. From the age of three or four, whenever I saw my father practising, I would try to imitate him. I suffered from nephritis (kidney inflammation) during my early childhood, and I had to be hospitalized. After three weeks, I was discharged from the hospital with a long list of medications that I had to take. This was during a difficult period for my father, Yogacharya Sri B. K. S. Iyengar, and he could not afford to buy the medicines. Instead, he recommended that I practise asanas to improve my health. Every time I went to see the doctor for a check up, he would say that I was steadily improving and that I should continue taking the prescribed medicines. Of course he had no idea that my improvement had nothing to do with any medicines; it was purely the practice of yoga that was improving my health. About a year later, my father took me to see his own guru, Sri T. Krishnamacharya, in Mysore. We waited 2 days to get an appointment to see him, and when we did, he suggested that I should practise the same asanas that I was already practising. I was too young to understand that there was a relationship between yogic practices and health, but I could feel my health improving. Even though I was sick, I would still do my practice as I felt it nourished me. Yoga was like an elixir of life to me. I didn't even enjoy going out socially because all I wanted to do was to practise yoga and rise above everything in life. My inclination toward yoga was so strong that my cousins remember me saying at an early age that I wanted to become a sannyasin (a member of an order at the highest stage of the Hindu ashram system). I had the yogic tendency. One day, when I was 7, my father had to give a yoga demonstration, and he wanted me to go along with him. I went, but on the stage, I felt frightened, although I never let it show on my face. I just imitated whatever postures my father did. Some people wondered how I could do any asanas that he did. I was still weak

from my illness, but I was very determined at the same time. My father never taught me anything directly; instead, he would convey his intent to me through a look or an action, and I began to communicate with Guruji through his eyes. If an idea occurred to him while we were practising, he would look to see whether I had caught it. He would never point out my postures to tell me if I was doing something wrong; instead he would demonstrate in his own practice how a posture should be done correctly. Although I was his daughter, I received no special treatment in his general classes. He used to treat me as he would treat others. Sometimes he would move me to the front of the class to demonstrate the asanas but only because it made it easier for him to convey what he meant to the class. Through those demonstrations I learned to be more observant and to listen very carefully to everything that Guruji explained or instructed. I first started teaching when I was around 13 years old. I used to prepare my younger sisters, as well as other girls from my school, for interschool yoga asana competitions. My teacher was a pupil of Guruji, and she would ask to see Guruji's photo albums because she wasn't sure how to practise some of the difficult postures. That was before the publication of Guruji's book 'Light on Yoga'. After completing my schooling, I went to college, while Guruji began to travel overseas to teach yoga. While he was away, his students asked me to help them with their practice, so at the age of 16, I was a recognized yoga teacher, and I have been teaching yoga ever since.



Over the years, I have seen so many people improving their health through yoga. I have seen the relief on their faces as they rose above their negativity with the practice of asanas. In an asana, the mind has to reach inside the body to find a quiet space until a point comes where perfect balance is felt. If the mind is wandering while practising, then one is not fully present, and there can be no union. Involvement, interpenetration, and insight are the required qualities.

My own definition of yoga is that it is a restraint of mental modifications, which is the result of restraints brought about by controlling the sense of perception, the movement of the muscles and nerves, the oscillations of the intelligence, and the interference of the 'I' consciousness to a place where no individual 'I' exists. The aim of yoga, as I see it, is ultimately to reach the inner sanctum of eternal truth, which is a long process of transformation. Small aims produce small gains that can lead a person to the final goal. Through a faithful practice of yoga, a person will develop compassion, patience, sensitivity, contentment, vigour, faith, and non-attachment, all of which can be viewed as achievements along the path to discovering the inner being.

Excerpt from 'Yoga: A Journey Within' - D. Biermann

The Open Architecture of Yoga

Some Recollections of the Iyengar Centenary Event, Pune, India, December 2018

As I get older I become less of a traveller and for a cosseted Londoner like me, travelling to India is no small feat. I arrived a few days early to acclimatise. With the good company of teachers I knew and new acquaintances at the hotel, I began calming down. On the first night I convinced myself I had a stomach upset. On the second that I'd been bitten and would contract dengue. Thank god I had a room to myself - I'd probably drive a roommate mad, or they me.



Children's demonstration

Day one was slow, inevitable given 1,300 people from 56 countries working out where to place their bodies and minds, let alone shoes. Once we had settled, Abi gave a short and heartfelt welcome speech. We were here to come closer to Guruji and to bring him closer to us. Prashant then began a series of sessions running over the following five days. He laid some basic groundwork: Iyengar Yoga is not a system but a style and a way; he was teaching us how to learn, not how to teach; we need to keep Iyengar Yoga open, playful and exploratory as opposed to rigid, mechanistic and systematised. He called this the 'Open Architecture of Yoga' and would refer to it often.

He talked about the evolution of 'Iyengar's Yoga' adding, certainly for me, new information. I didn't know for instance that a severe bout of jaundice in the late 1970s propelled Guruji into exploring forward bends more deeply. Noticing how well twists came after his weight loss, he learnt more about their profound benefits. Prashant ended with a meditation on how yoga encourages 'aspects of happenings' within ourselves. These 'happenings' became profound for Guruji as he worked with props. You do not just 'do' yoga with props, you use them to create happenings within yourself. And yoga depends upon happenings.

In between profundities, basics. The daily vegetarian lunch was tasty. They worked out a balance with the air-con. As I walked around, either to the loo (which didn't get blocked despite scare stories), the props room, the lunch hall, or the exhibition hall and stalls, I

We headed to the Institute to register. All was quiet, calm and organised. I felt suddenly emotional when I entered the practice hall. In 2015 I'd been here for a month. I remembered that Guruji said he felt he'd come home when he entered the hall after an illness. The following day we checked out the venue. Finding the nearby gate into the sports park closed meant a long and unpleasant walk along the side of a busy road. Thanks to one amazing individual (you know who you are) we got the gate opened.

became used to the slow flow of people. Often, a familiar face would emerge from the crowd.

On the second day Geetaji arrived, to thunderous applause. Abi led a discussion about teacher training. She asked if they were mentored by their father. Prashant was encouraged to find his own way ('LOYO - Learn on Your Own'), came to yoga later in life and had never planned to teach. Geetaji felt an attraction to teaching and intently observed her father teaching from an early age. Neither of them were ever taught 'how' to teach. They saw and 'caught' everything from their father. The idea that teachers cannot be created mechanistically or churned out like factory products was a recurring theme. Geetaji reminded us that emotional and health issues can be ignored in the ambitious rush to get qualified. It was an important discussion and an attempt by all three to access the unique and ethical essence of Iyengar Yoga.

Day 5 was Geetaji's birthday and she was presented with a rich bunch of red roses. She came onstage with Abi who again impressed me with her sweet honesty as she asked questions. ('Can we have a chat?') It is hard to put the experience of being taught by Geeta into words. Our time with her became a matter of life and death, not just a matter of doing postures. 'You will not die! You cannot die that easily!' she cried, as she pushed us on physically further into deeper regions of ourselves. These days with Geeta were a material experience of



'Tapas' for me; the fire, passion and discipline needed to burn away our impurities. Geetaji spoke of this often as she encouraged us onwards and inwards; moving us through the kleshas, the fear and the pain - you will not die! - releasing, moving through, onwards, onwards and through... Her voice guiding and even ordering us onwards because we all hold back. 'Chest lift! Sternum up! Like a lotus flower blooming - dorsal in - throat soft - look for these things...' She repeated instructions with unceasing levels of energy, love, and commitment that did not let us let go, fall, give up, become afraid or feel inadequate. As we went further, so did Geeta in her voice and words. And then, all of a sudden, you find yourself somewhere you never thought you could be, or even knew was there.

Writing down her words for me did not work, I was still reeling when I came back to my hotel room. I trust it will surface later in recollection. And of course it was all filmed and recorded. Abi asked Geeta at one point if she liked us, given how much she shouted at us. Geeta replied that she loved us. Two days later, as I sat in my hotel room in Mumbai waiting for my cab to the airport, no longer worried about small things, I looked down at my phone. There on my WhatsApp were two words: 'Geetaji expired.'

Louise Radinger Field

Tributes to Jeanne Maslen

Jeanne was a star student on the first Yoga Teachers' class I was asked to start at Withington Further Education Centre in 1967. She was attending a keep fit class there, but decided to practice Yoga! After seeing a demonstration by Mr Iyengar on Blue Peter I wrote to him through the publishers of 'Light on Yoga'. He immediately asked me to attend his classes in London. Jeanne for health reasons was unable to attend. When I invited Mr Iyengar up to Manchester, Jeanne and I arranged his first demonstration to take place at Spurley Hey. Mr Iyengar was staying with our family in Marple Bridge and my husband Peter drove him to our demonstration, Jeanne being in the front row in Virabhadrasana 3 meeting his gaze! I warned them that his Yoga was in a higher sphere and we were all spellbound by his performance.

Jeanne in Dhanurasana in Pune (circa 1992)



As well as the Teachers' course I was running, Jeanne became course tutor at Old Trafford College. Later, Jeanne and a small group of teachers met in my old cottage to form an Institute to further the aims of Iyengar Yoga. I am profoundly grateful to Jeanne for her dedication and taking over when I had to take a break to look after two members of my family with serious health problems. **Penn Lynas**

Jeanne Maslen has been part of my life for 50 years. She has been my true mentor in the UK and with her devotion to Iyengar yoga has inspired me to follow that path. She encouraged many of our senior teachers in this country and abroad and has been a sincere, honest and true Iyengar Practitioner. One of the most senior students of Guruji - Jeanne we miss you but no one can take away the encouragement you have given us. **Tricia Booth**

Jeanne was a true and devoted Iyengar Yoga practitioner. She taught all over the country and, in fact, the world. I consider myself blessed that she was based in the Manchester area, on my doorstep! She guided and inspired me to do more than I ever thought was possible, both in terms of my practice but also in encouraging me to do more in the Yoga world: being part of the MDIY; becoming an Assessor and a Moderator and much more! She led by example and always worked diligently to represent Mr Iyengar's teachings in a pure and honest way. Thank you Jeanne for so much. **Julie Brown**

Jeanne was a very dedicated teacher and practitioner of Iyengar yoga. She taught us with great precision and purity of the subject. You took me under your wing Jeanne, you believed in me more than I did myself, and you gave me the help and encouragement to do and be where I am today.

You were the mirror that reflected all that was best in me, now you are gone I will always walk on the positive path you left behind. *Go raibh mile maith agat* - I thank you a thousand times. With my love and gratitude. **Marion Kilburn**

MDIY at the IY (UK) Convention, Sept. 2018

The 2018 National Iyengar Yoga Convention was 'home-grown', and held at Harrogate Convention Centre, with main classes taught by two of our senior teachers - Tricia Booth and



Tricia Booth teaching

Julie Brown - as well as Jayne Orton from Birmingham and Margaret Austin from the North East. The Convention (with over 500 people) was a great success, and we are very proud of our Manchester teachers.

As well as 'main hall' teaching, there were 'special interest' sessions, including a dance session led by Marion Kilburn. You might like to 'peek in' on the notes from some of our Manchester attendees.

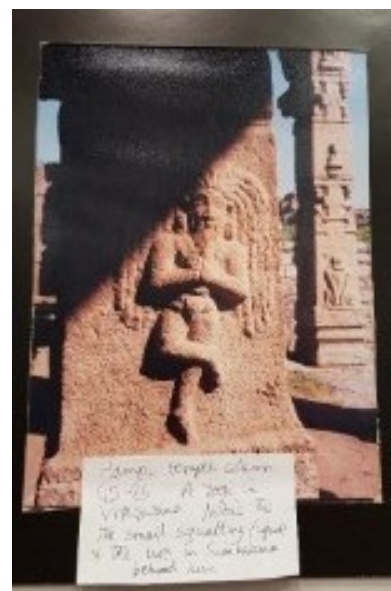


Julie Brown teaching

Asanas in Classical Indian Texts

Sallie Sullivan used a variety of images to describe the two main themes that thread their way through the history of yoga asana. The first theme was the one probably familiar to us from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras: sitting for meditation; there are images from the Indus Valley (modern day Pakistan) dating back to at least 1300 BCE showing seated poses. The second is perhaps one we can associate with less today – austerities and mortification, to punish the body; eg. taking up a squat position, and then fasting until death.

She then traced the line through Patanjali's Yoga Sutras – which mentions asana in only three sutras – and Vyasa's commentary on the Sutras – which lists 12 asanas, ending with 'etcetera' - suggesting there were others (both of which date back to before 400 CE); through to the 15th century, when texts including the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, started to use the word *asana* to describe non-seated poses – HYP lists 15 poses, of which 8 are active rather than meditative. We saw pictures of the re-created 15th century meditation room of the Dalai Lama; comparing these to gym warm-up exercises, Sallie pointed out how these images start to suggest the idea of sequencing poses.



At the end of the 18th century we first see translations of classical texts into modern European languages leading to publications aimed at a wider audience. In 1928 the Raja of Aundh published the '10 point Way to Health', and in 1934 Krishnamacharya's Yoga Makaranda was published – both of which have an emphasis on active poses, probably influencing the then

‘gym culture’. Sallie told a living story, asking us to guess at what poses were meant by their early names and descriptions – many similar to today’s *asanas*. **Charlotte Everitt**

The Role of the Breath

A very practical session, Richard Agar Ward asked whether we had ever really read ‘Light on Yoga’ and whether we had only read what is written, or whether we had read what isn’t written. We did poses from ‘Light on Yoga’: first Tadasana, then Utthita Trikonasana: inhale, spread the legs, turn the feet, land with arms and legs extended – and only then exhale. The classical pose asks us to do a lot on a single inhalation. He made the point that we’ve read the description of the pose many, many times, but make assumptions, mix our information up, and the outcome is a pose that is not wrong – but is not a ‘Light on Yoga’ pose! He asked us to have that awareness, that focus, that precision, to understand what exactly we are being asked to do.

He then taught Utthita Parsvakonasana and Ardha Chandrasana to illustrate how the position of the breath can affect the pose. While the shape of Trikonasana focusses the breath in the chest, the shape of Parsvakonasana creates more of an abdominal breath; in Ardha Chandrasana, we tried firstly keeping the chest-focussed breath as we came through Utthita Trikonasana, before changing this to more of an abdominal breath. The shape of the pose may stay the same but the pose as a whole felt very different. **Charlotte Everitt**

How to improve your daily practice

This was a packed workshop taken in a very positive and lively way by experienced senior teacher Brenda Booth from the SE. Main motivational points were that we didn’t need a ‘well-appointed studio’ in our homes to use ropes (improvise with belts on safe door-handles or 2 belts over the tops of doors with the buckles securely on the other side – see photo). To motivate us to practise regularly, she offered: 1) You can’t do it wrong! 2) Practise what your body remembers 3) Make an appointment with yourself by mobile 4) Take one day a week off 5) Read a few pages of a yoga book 6) Work on a new set of poses (ie supported Ustrasana with shoulders over bolster/s on seat of chair) 7) Open the armpits in all poses (‘small armpit = small brain!’) 8) Aim for no ‘sour taste’ from the pose, but ‘sweetness’. Questions were honest and open (who likes to admit our struggles?) – but I’m sure we all left feeling thankful, confident and courageous for our next practice. **Joan Abrams**

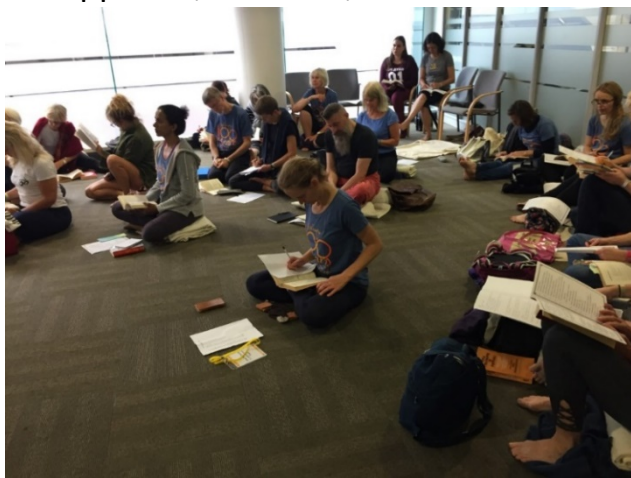


Chanting

Gerry Chambers and Lynda Purvis took us on a whistle-stop tour of the 2nd chapter of Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, the Sadhana Pada. The Sutras are a compendium of yoga texts and

knowledge, in a workbook of equations that the reader is asked to solve – and you have to work for the answer! The 4 chapters cover what yoga is: what you have to actually do; what you will get from it; and a recap. Where chapter 1 starts with what yoga is (*'citta vrtti nirodhah'*); chapter 2 starts with the actions of yoga – *tapah, svadhyaya, Isvara pranidhanah*. A burning desire, study of the self, and surrender to the Lord – *yoga* is not there unless all three are present.

We chanted the sutras in Sanskrit and read a translation before reading in more detail. The first 11 verses, cover the *klesas* – the afflictions or the causes of our suffering, how we can be misdirected or misguided, and how hard it is to fight against them. All are dependent on our lack of spiritual knowledge or understanding, which means we get things fundamentally wrong. Our sense of our own personality, and the things which cause us pleasure, unhappiness, and fear, stem from this. In verses 12 to 18, we looked at *karma* – not the



simple cause/effect that is so often used, but seen as patterns of behaviour from the past, that will dictate how we act, instinctively, in the future – and how to escape it. The Yoga Sutras are difficult to study without help; this session gave us that starting point, signposting the depths that are there and giving us an indication of where and how to start.

Charlotte Everitt

Dancing at the Convention

About fifteen of us gathered at 9am on the last day of a wonderful convention for our session of Dancing With Marion. We were a little apprehensive, but we were soon put at ease. Marion started the session by teaching us the steps first then it was our turn. We



formed a circle around a lighted candle and did three dances, all to beautiful music.

The first dance was a Sephardic Lament. For this dance Marion (thankfully) had put in simple steps to make it easier for us to follow. The second dance was an Israeli Dance, the Klezmer Dance, fast, full of fun and needed concentration, something we lacked at times! The third dance was called The Dance of Gratitude which we dedicated to our Guruji. It is a poem written in the Middle Ages by a German crusader and sung by Javier Rubai, a Spanish singer and is a meditation dance.

Finally, we held hands in a circle to share energy and sing:

May the circle be open yet unbroken,
 May the love of all beings be ever in our hearts,
 Merry meet and merry part,
 And merry meet again.

Though we may have got our steps mixed up at times we all enjoyed our unusual start to the day and went to the last session of the weekend feeling energised and uplifted.

Susan Halliwell

My Life in Yoga

We love to hear from our student members. Here's a story of a journey towards yoga that finally leads to our centre in Dukinfield.

When my youngest child started school I was 38 and in a housewifely rut. I took two college courses and expanded my mind. I read quite a lot of sociology and realised there were alternative ways to live, and yoga sounded interesting but I couldn't find a class at the time. In 1975 I started working in an engineering college and discovered that many engineers are interested in esoteric subjects: I decided to follow every suggestion. A year in a Spiritualist development group, a serious study of Astrology; Practical Philosophy with S.E.S.; one year of Transcendental Meditation and experiments with dowsing followed. I then joined a brilliant women's group: nine ladies, where we did belly dancing, meditated while walking a stone circle, as well as studies in a variety of areas.

At last I found a really good yoga class, held in a school gym, but after a few months it ended and I went to a less good class in a church hall – at least I'd had a good start. But then I tried one at the swimming pool where we worked on bath towels on a slippery floor with no real direction; we were glad to get into the sauna!



I was helped when a friend suggested Bikram Choudhury Beginners' Yoga Class which had 28 days learning poses followed by a 3-day rota to be followed indefinitely. The book was published in 1976, before Bikram's reputation became sullied.

Around this time, one of the engineers, Derek Suter, was studying to become an Iyengar teacher, with Jeanne Maslen. He had been inspired by a demonstration she had given at our college. He told me of a class held at a school in Dukinfield where 3 teachers led about 50 students. This must have been while our MDIY was being converted. I attended during that summer.

Next I spent 5 months in Western Australia and attended 2 different yoga classes (and three art classes) each week. When I returned I joined the MDIY and have practised here for about 25 years. I am just

about to be 84!

Gwyneth Smith

Carole Lawrence

We are sorry to announce the death of our long-time member and teacher, Carole Lawrence, on 28th January. Carole lived and worked in the Manchester and Didsbury areas. We send our sincere condolences to her family. An obituary will be in our next edition.

On Pranayama

About 2 years ago, Sharon Dawn Taylor started teaching a weekly pranayama class, the first of its kind at MDIY, at least during my time at the *alma mater*. I have been attending since the early days—and indeed early mornings, since the original timing was 7-8.30am—so my hand just shot up when Sharon asked if someone wanted to volunteer to write about it.

Starting my Tuesdays in this way made a difference to the texture of the rest of the day, as it left me feeling more awake and more relaxed at the same time.

The class is now at an arguably friendlier time, attracting a steady number of students, not all of them teachers or advanced practitioners. The first hour of class is dedicated to restorative asanas, which prepare the body-mind for the actual pranayama practice in the remaining half-hour. Some of this preparation aims to open and relax the chest area to make space for the breath—pranayama can be translated as ‘breath conditioning’. In addition, we prepare the mind to accept the idea of not doing very much for a while. Often, this is the most difficult aspect of the practice: developing a quality of mind conducive to a focused observation of the breath. Anyone who has ever struggled to calm the restive brain in Savasana will understand.

Guruji with Yehudi Menuhin

There is a saying amongst yogis that the postures you find most difficult are the ones you need to practise most. If so, then Savasana and pranayama should be top of most students’ practice list. And yet, this is what we find most difficult to fit into our busy lives: surely there are a million pressing things to do? What is the point of just



lying or sitting still for minutes on end? That question shows how ingrained the mantra ‘I do, therefore I am’ has become. ‘How are you?’ is answered by ‘busy!’ People will explain the stress caused by demands on their time, and yet, when presented with genuine time-saving alternatives, will opt for the status quo, ironically citing lack of time as the main obstacle—or excuse—for not changing the very habits they complain about.

Constantly rushing from one thing to the next, we seldom ponder uncomfortable questions such as ‘Who am I?’ or ‘Why am I here?’ Slowing down, shifting our focus from doing to being, making space in our lives and our bodies, may result in such questions showing up. Questions to which we may not have answers; or answers that don’t satisfy us.

I have sometimes wondered what is behind the recommendation that students should have practised asana for about two years before starting a pranayama practice. Sometimes the reason given is that the body needs time to acquire both the suppleness (in the hips, especially) and the strength (in the trunk) that are required in order to sit upright with crossed legs for several minutes at a time.

I began a pranayama practice a few years into my asana practice, and can vouch for the time it takes a body like mine—used to sit on chairs and sofas rather than the floor—to get comfortable enough in Swastikasana so that I can observe and, hopefully, condition the breath, rather than being constantly distracted by one protesting limb or another.

In addition, though, one needs time to get comfortable with stillness; this goes against the grain of most of our lifestyles, which value activities with a visible, outward purpose. I suppose that is one reason why a pranayama class doesn't yet draw the same numbers of students as an asana class: it doesn't give you an immediate sense of achievement. You might wonder where those 90 minutes have gone, when you've only done a handful of preparatory (aka restorative) asanas, and a few cycles of pranayama.

Also, that thing about being still...with practice, one learns that one can be *sitting* still, and be all turmoil inside. In my case, this practice is never 'done'; the monkey mind, constantly tugging at my synapses, will take a long time to tame. So perhaps, more than the skill of being still—one more thing for the ego to tick off the achievements list—this practice is about being able to show up for it. About recognising that what gets routinely pushed off the agenda is exactly what we should make more time for. And the only way to train this willingness is to make space for it, a little at a time; perhaps attending a workshop or a class here and there, to learn the rudiments, and then practising a few minutes at a time, whenever possible.

I wouldn't advise forcing some sort of regimen, which is counter-productive with regard to breath-work. It's the quick route to exhaustion and frustration. Whereas we aim for 'effortless effort' in our asana practice, there should be no sense of effort at all when we practice pranayama. Less is definitely more. Thankfully, a little pranayama goes a long way, and the practice brings its own rewards; indeed, over time, just sitting still and observing the breath for a while becomes satisfying in and of itself, while also making one want to come back to this stillness again and again. With sustained practice, we slowly notice 'a growth in willingness and a surrendering of willfulness', as Richard Rohr OFM succinctly puts it.¹

It makes sense, then, that pranayama is the fourth of the eight limbs of Patanjala yoga: it is the one that teaches us to use the body to go beyond the body; the gateway to the contemplative practices of the next four limbs. It asks us to let go of expectations, at least temporarily; to lay aside what we would like to achieve, the benefits we hope to derive from practice. I am very thankful for BKS Iyengar's candour in sharing his own struggle with pranayama, which apparently went on for years before he found some ease and satisfaction. I remind myself of this, first because it relativises my own (renewed) failings, and, also, it illustrates the yogic virtue of satya—truthfulness—that binds all of us, wherever we are on the path.

During practice, it becomes clear that it is not just the breath one is playing with, but the life-force itself, or prana. Like the breath, prana is freely given, flowing and sustaining life and growth; it is not something to be constrained, hoarded or used to further egotistical aspirations. Perhaps, like an instrument, we aim to tune it to the best of our abilities, hoping that our life's tune resounds in harmony with the AUM, the sound of the universe.

¹In *Eager to Love, the Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi*.

Laura Dias de Almeida

Zubin Zarthoshtimanesh at the World Yoga Festival UK, Reading. 19 – 22 July 2018

Nestling in the beautiful surroundings of Beale Park, Reading, you'll find the World Yoga Festival, UK. Now in its third year, the festival is organised by Ran and Sonali Banerjee who, recognising how yoga is becoming diluted in the west, had the dream to showcase the authentic 8-fold path yoga in a festival. They invite the best Yoga master teachers and Vedic scholars world-wide. Iyengar yoga is highly represented here and Geeta Iyengar is approached every year to send a senior teacher. Again in 2018 we were lucky to have Zubin. His two master classes per day (4 hours each day) gives a great opportunity to build your understanding of Iyengar yoga for beginners and teachers alike.

Below is a run-down of Zubin's first session as a taste of his excellent teaching and sequencing over the weekend. Zubin built on this first session beautifully, seemingly making it easy to teach such a large crowd, compiled of complete yoga beginners to experienced Iyengar teachers. Uday Bhosale was assisting and you could see they were both loving being there and sharing their wisdom with us all.

This hot summer, Reading daytime temperatures were reaching 30 degrees, so that first morning I was (fairly) grateful to have the 6am, cool of the day alarm call. Our classroom was a packed marquee tent and Zubin pointed out the bumpy covered field floor was to be embraced, as sometimes all our modern day facilities and props don't help our practice and often working in these different circumstances can deepen our awareness therefore benefiting the practice.

Zubin reminded us that yoga is a tool to enable us to transform our lives. The very heart of Yoga (from the Sanskrit meaning to unite) is to help us in our understanding of the uniting potentials within ourselves. Over the weekend his classes taught



us what yoga does within us, how it helps us to unite, so body, mind and breath can talk to each other and how we use this united force to better ourselves. So we began our exploration of how the body and breath influences the mind, the mind and breath influences the body. We learnt to practise not just in a 'doing' state but to listen to what the body intelligence is sending to the mind. 'The mind has to become a good receiver so these exchanges help us to understand our potentials.'

Day 1, session 1 - How to evolve in asanas - Touching the back body. "The asanas have deeper potentials to access your mind, yourself, your breath, everything within you.

Tadasana- 'How aware are you of the back body? As yogis we have to learn to study. So if you have a back problem, the feet need to be wider; then the pelvis can become level, then

the back body starts to react.'

Virabhadrasana 2- Doing the asana from the firmness of the hips. 'Go wider. Wider. Wider still' came the cry. Then we could 'sit down' enough and work the hips and then no pressure on the knee. "With this firmness of the hips and legs you can ascend the para-spinal muscles. The spine holds the nervous system, so you are working for this. In the gym you work for big biceps. Why? This is just 'show' for others. What do **you** get out of this?" After we'd helped our nervous system we moved on to:

Utthita Parsvakonasana- Now Zubin got us to work with the arms raised as in Urdhva Hastasana and maintain this as we came into and completed the pose. So no touching down with the hand, just maintaining the extension of the arms when coming over. I tried to work out what this method was giving me and then Zubin told us 'your organs are at the sides of your body. So do the pose for your organs'.

Parsvottanasana - a pole was placed horizontally at the front of a student's hips to show how they have to turn so both hip bones come facing forwards, level on the pole! (Note to self...must work harder on my turn).

Virabhadrasana 1 - Lift of the arms for para-spinal muscles and then no back pain.

Virabhadrasana 3 - Looking at levelness of the pelvis

Shoulder work - Interlocking of fingers / various use of belts etc .

Prasarita Padottanasana - hands interlocked behind and coming half way only. 'Lift arms up, then roll the arms over. Roll over more. Roll. Roll!'

Supta Baddha Konasana as Savasana.

So concluded the morning session and then I was off to pack in other activities at the festival



before the next Zubin 'Master-class' at 2.30 pm.

If you want an Iyengar yoga weekend, I can't recommend this festival enough. Set in a beautiful country, lakeside park surrounding, it's still a quite small festival so has a very relaxed friendly atmosphere. It's not every day you sit eating your dinner whilst watching Zubin walking around and stopping to

playfully help children in full arm balance. For a reasonable price you get 3 days of teaching from a senior Iyengar teacher from RIMYI. There are many other activities such as music, dance, food and gift stalls. I enjoyed excellent talks from some of the best Swami Masters. A great opportunity to build on my understanding of The Yoga Sutras and Vedanta teachings. I leave you with Zubin's advice for teachers: It was 'to practise'. 'They should know how to teach themselves more deeply and I quote a beautiful line from Bruce Lee: 'I fear not, the man who has practised 10,000 kicks once; I fear the man that has practised one kick 10,000 times.' Yoga teachers should have taught themselves 10,000 times, to have removed and know what is the seed of fear inside them and then they can give that same confidence to another being outside them.'

Sarah Barber

MDIY GURUJI CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS DEC. 2018

To celebrate the centenary of Mr. Iyengar’s birth on 14 December 2018, we really went to town at the MDIY! If you couldn’t make it to any of the events, then, hopefully these pictures will bring you to: Julie Brown’s Advanced Junior Workshop (8 Dec); the Sunday Xmas Fair (9 Dec), and the Xmas Party with demonstrations and cake on 14 Dec.

Julie Brown teaching event:



Julie assisting in Vasisthasana



Julie in 3-point headstand

The Xmas Fair – Sunday 9 December



Kim Skinner (top), and Alison Wright (R) and sister Sarah decorating our front steps with beautiful Indian ‘rangoli’ designs.

Chanting group before the Xmas Fair



**Sarah Barber and Vanita Mistry –
Henna painting**



A satisfied customer!



Stallholders in Maslen Hall



Is this my colour?

Our Christmas Party

The beautiful hand-made celebration cake with very life-like model (in icing) of Mr. Iyengar.



a

The demonstration at the Xmas Party, showed how yoga can be done (in variations) by all ages – Tricia Booth, Clare Tunstall, Sarah Barber and Julie Brown.



Parsvottanasana

Anantasana and Variations on Vasisthasana



Urdvha Dhanurasana

Variations on balancings



And, finally, there was the CHOIR! Singing (with music!) a very changed version of

QUEEN'S BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY: here are the opening verses! Singalong.....you really had to be there!

Is this the real thing? Iyengar Yo o ga?
 Looking for contentment – Yes I'm looking for Bho o ga
 Open your eyes, look up to the skies and see...
 BKS Iyengar in some fantastic poses!
 Tucked in here, tucked in there
 Perfect alignment everywhere
 Anyway the body goes
 Really, really matters to him - to him **PIANO RIFF**
(EVERYONE LIGHT UP FACES WITH THEIR TORCH)
 Julie – nearly killed myself, put my leg behind my head
 I fell over – nearly dead.
 Julie - my headstand had just begun and
 Now I've gone and landed on my bum!



Iyengar Yoga and Beyond

I happened to stumble across a book on yoga in a library in Wigan in 1969. This book (which I can't remember the name of!) led me to begin practising yoga at the age of 14. I next read about BKS Iyengar from a newspaper article, which talked about Yehudi Menuhin, the violinist, who invited Mr. Iyengar to come t

o London to demonstrate his work. This article planted the seed to know more about Mr. Iyengar's method. Luckily and excitingly my interest seemed to develop easily, as I then saw an advert from Peter Jackson, an Iyengar teacher, looking for new students, in the local newspaper to join the teacher training course. It can be said then, that I was officially introduced to BKS Iyengar in 1975.

During teacher training days, I recall feeling aligned to the style of Mr. Iyengar's pedagogy. I enjoyed his focus on precision and alignment in a posture. I also liked the discipline and the benefit of muscular strength. I would always practice postures with the goal to do more advanced ones. I remember always feeling a sense of pride and achievement whenever I achieved a sophisticated backbend or head balance. However, as time moved on, I began to realise that the satisfaction of this had changed- I wasn't feeling the same as I used to, and I started to desire a deeper activity in my practice.

Things did however, start to change for me after a visit to Pune. Mr. Iyengar emphasised the function of the skin and referred to the skin in the following way: 'Everything cannot be observed by the two eyes. Each pore of the skin should act like an eye- your skin is the most sensitive guide'. The imagery of these words evoked an image of millions of eyes covering every part of my body, seeing and looking out from every angle, nook and cranny. I interpreted his words to mean that a person has to go inwards and see the body from inside itself, rather than just relying on periphery vision.

Since hearing these words, I put a more sensory focus into my daily practice. Curious by Mr. Iyengar's words, I started to look to other yogis like Angela Farmer and Vanda Scaravelli and became impressed by their views and approaches. Angela Farmer's notion of the 'feminine unfolding' made me sense the body and soften my body. I played with the concept in postures and found that a natural buoyancy occurred- which felt pleasurable and creative. I also toyed with the notion of gravity found in Vanda Scaravelli's work, and saw for myself how the spine released itself with this action.

To me even all those years ago, Mr. Iyengar's words highlighted that the body is a living organism and it needs to guide its own articulated movement. Although, I have been influenced by these practitioners above, I still consider myself to be a devotee of Mr. Iyengar's work. Really, the study of Mr. Iyengar's work has emphasised what it is like to be touched by someone who could be referred to as a master (or Guru), as like any good teacher he told his students to turn inwards for knowledge and solutions. My current practice lives this truth as I continue to make new discoveries for myself. I am continuously dropping my awareness into different body parts to see what they have to say about my organism as a whole. It is a joy to realise that the body has its own eyes, its own intelligence and that it will show you what to do in a yoga pose, as long as you listen carefully enough!

While it may seem that I have made an effort to 'do' this in my practice, I realise that this progression to the inner body has happened in a natural way over the 40 years of yoga. If I think back to my early years, I think this is where I displayed intense effort to 'do yoga'. In many ways, the pose was part of ambitious striving, despite whether my body felt willing to engage. Interestingly, the word 'effort' stems from the old French word, 'resforcier'- which means to 'force out'.

Trying to make a position was very common for me, and unfortunately common in the yoga culture we see today. My experience tells me though that forcing any asana/pose will only restrict breathing and tighten the brain area. Often too this way of working can reinforce tension in habitual muscle groups and constriction of organs. 'Effort' down to will like this, in my opinion, reduces the ability to detect subtle differences in the tissues which could result in over-stretching and injuries.

Currently, I am synthesising all of this learnt knowledge with my personal insights and I am realising a few key things that can help deepen the yoga practice. A main one being: I believe that the yogis need to know about all the different systems in the body, so that there is an integration of all the systems: muscular-skeletal, the organ system, the endocrine system and the nervous system. With this holistic view and inner sensing, someone can initiate movement in a supported way. There is no pushing, shoving or 'will' involved. In fact, the body expands when there is a dialogue between all of the systems and from that space, alignment happens with ease. I think looking back at Mr. Iyengar's work and seeing him in action, he did all of this instinctively. However, for my own understanding I have had to study this in an explicit way to sense like this.

The other realisation in my practice, is my acknowledgement of the function of fascia in yoga and how the external skin is connected with everything in the body. For example, the inner skin (fascia) on the big toe is connected also to the knee and then that connects to diaphragm. This is important as instead of moving isolated body parts in a pose, I have found that you can move the whole sheet of fascia which also helps the body expand from within. Playing with the fascia in this way, helps the opening and releasing of tension.

In regards to opening, I would like to lastly state that the mind can also come into the body to help further expansion. Introspection is fundamental to yoga and it should form the bedrock of all practice. I am finding that the mind can be used to enter tissue and from this direction of the mind, something quite remarkable happens and you can feel a shift in consciousness, an experience difficult to put into words! Nevertheless, an experience which greatly improves the felt sense of the body. You have to experiment with this 'dropping' into tissue and this will be a life-time exploration if you choose to go down the same path as me. I would like to end by agreeing with Mr. Iyengar and his take on the mind's relationship to the body. Mr. Iyengar said: 'the body works and the mind is calm' (1987).

Christine McCoy

OM Yoga Show at Event City, Trafford, April 2018

Iyengar Yoga now has a regular presence at the London and Manchester OM Yoga Shows. Here's an insight into the event. Look out for this year's Manchester Show on 11- 12 May 2019, again at Event City!

Thanks to the organisational skills of Lauren Currie, the stand looked fantastic: we had some eye-catching yellow t-shirts printed for volunteers; we took brochures and postcards to give out. Over the weekend we spoke to over 300 people as well as just raising the profile of Iyengar yoga by being there - the show was packed, even in the glorious sunshine on the Saturday.



We encouraged volunteers to do some practice on the stand which engaged passers-by. Dwi Pada Viparita Dandasana and Chair Sarvangasana impressed visitors, some of whom had a go themselves.

Volunteers were a mix of teachers and non-teachers. They did a great job talking to people. About half the stall visitors were from Greater Manchester, including at least one who lived in Dukinfield! We spoke to visitors from Birmingham, Glasgow, South London, Sheffield, and directed them to their nearest centre or the national website's 'find a teacher' function.

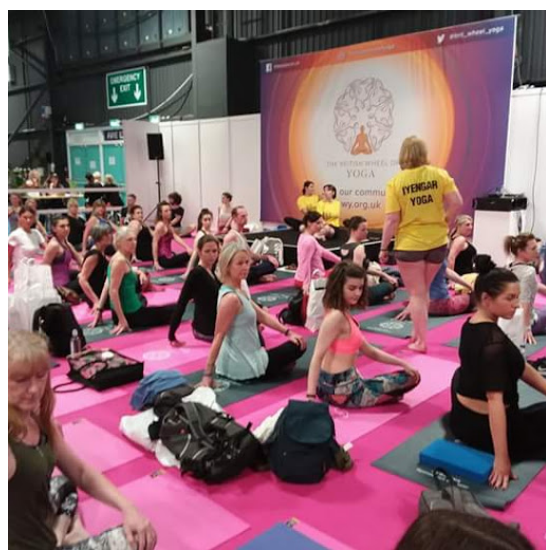
Some people had heard of Iyengar yoga, a few were practising regularly already, but didn't know of Iyengar Yoga centres even when they lived close by.

Several visitors asked about teacher training even though they have never been to an Iyengar yoga class, because they've heard such good things about the quality of our teacher training. Of course, anyone who wants to become a teacher needs to have been doing Iyengar yoga regularly for at least three years before they can start teacher training - so we helped them to try to find a senior teacher whose classes they can get to.

Teachers and volunteers on the stand

We taught 3 adult and 1 children's class. These were open, free classes that visitors dropped in to. There was lots of smiling! The classes were fairly full, and had other visitors watching as well. People commented how nice it was to see teachers adjusting and assisting in classes, as it shows care and concern for students. Clare and Sacha did a great job.

A general class taught by Clare Tunstall, assisted by Sarah Barber and Charlotte Everitt.



A general class taught by Clare Tunstall, assisted by Sarah Barber and Charlotte Everitt.

Tricia Booth, one of our senior teachers, has reached an 80th birthday milestone. She was Chair of MDIY for 29 years, retiring in 2010; helps train our teachers; teaches the Friday teachers' class, and recently taught at the IY (UK) Convention in Harrogate. Her teacher trainees ask some questions.....

Can you name some postures that really presented a struggle for you?

Virabhadrasana I (Warrior I) has always been my bugbear. I was once attending a workshop led by Mr Iyengar, and was placed next to a beautiful teacher who made this pose look very easy; Mr Iyengar asked me whether I minded working next to her. I wasn't completely truthful when I answered "Oh, no!" It was difficult working next to her because she did it so well, although she was quite inspiring, too, for that same reason.

How about inversions?

As a child, I could never do handstand; couldn't even do somersaults. So when we started doing inversions, there was a bit of fear. But Iyengar Yoga builds you up, doesn't it, slowly. So, shoulderstand first; and for ages, and even now at times, I didn't do a straight shoulderstand, it was *always* with the bum sticking out and feet over my head. But I gradually learned to improve. And then it got to headstand, and of course that was a bit more worrying. And of course we had to be able to do those two before we went onto teacher training. But, fine. And one of the things Guruji said about headstand is that it gives you confidence. And, my goodness, it does! So, yes, the inverteds; fine, but it took a bit of courage to do them. And I remember in Pune, before we went to class, I made sure I could do a handstand in the bedroom, because I knew we would be getting a handstand in the class

It's good to hear that even our very senior teachers did struggle, and sometimes still do.

Well, of course, now I'm getting older, and things are sort of getting much more difficult. With my heart problem, I had to stop completely to begin with. I had to have open-heart surgery; and I thought, well, at least I can do the pranayama. But I couldn't even do



pranayama. So I've had to build up again, and my goodness, that's helped my teaching!

Tricia in Trikonasana, with Guruji

So how did you rebuild your practice?

I felt my body was wanting to do something; I wrote to Guruji, and he gave me a programme, mostly supported postures, back bends using bricks—supports that were hard, not soft. I started

doing those, and then, very gradually, I built up. Most difficult were twists, standing and seated; they were really the last thing to bring into my practice. For forward bends, I had to

make sure that I really was open, because going forward all crunched up is wrong anyway, but it was absolutely wrong for the heart.

And I'm still building up now; it's amazing, I still come to the Friday (senior teachers) class. I couldn't come straight away, but when I did start coming back to the class, I took perhaps half the class and then lay back into Supta Baddha Konasana. And gradually, I was able to take the whole class. There are still some poses my body tells me I can't or mustn't do, but I'm still developing. I am going much deeper inside myself and learning the more organic type of work that Guruji talked about.

In this respect, the head, the intellect, is wrong—it wants one to do more; it's our body that has to tell us. One has to be patient, and that's not a quality that I have, although I'm learning!

And what does your home practice look like now?

At first it was difficult. We teachers know we shouldn't teach anything we haven't practised. And then we can get sidetracked with cobwebs on the ceiling and wanting to finish the practice quickly, etc. I find that my teaching keeps me practising, to teach my students to the best of my ability; and to do that, I've got to practise. That's what keeps me going. And in term time, I don't find it too difficult to practise. When we come to the summer break, I practise for myself. That's when the discipline is needed. I once asked Guruji about practice; I said to him 'How do you know, Guruji, if you've done enough practice, or if you're not well enough to practise, or whether you're just feeling lazy?' And he said 'Always start to practise; if after five or ten minutes your body is still not able to do it, then stop. But usually, if it's just laziness, you'll keep going.'

How do you switch between progressing in your own practice and tailoring your teaching for beginners?

This is very difficult. Guruji used to say about his teaching that he used to look at his students, and see what they couldn't do, and then he used to sometimes bind his body up to make it stiff, and then feel how to come into the pose, making his body like that of the student he wanted to help; he used to say that when he was teaching us. For all trainees this is the biggest problem: to know the pose in detail, and yet just bring out the main points for the students. That was the greatness of Guruji's teaching: he made it so simple. And from this simple teaching we made it complicated for our students! Teaching like this is an art that continues through our lives. When we progress, we feel we want to give it all to our students at once. It's hard to explain to teacher trainees that they are at the beginning of a very long journey.

How has teacher training changed over the years?

Jeanne Maslen started the teacher training, and also Pen Reed. I know about Jeanne's because I went to hers, at Old Trafford. It was under the umbrella of the Lancashire authorities, and Mack Hollinshead guided us in teaching — not how to teach yoga, but help on how to communicate. There wasn't officially Iyengar Yoga teacher training over the country then. This was just Manchester. Jeanne got a lot of support from Guruji on this teacher training course. Then it spread to the whole country and we should all run teacher training courses. Of course, it's changing slightly now, but it's basically the same; we all have to learn how to teach, learn our subject-matter, and how to communicate that. And that, of course, was what Guruji was so good at, his communication, how you actually did something.

Have you ever had BKS Iyengar stay at your house?

He didn't stay but he's been to my house. I have a chair that he sat in, and I still keep that chair and will never get rid of it! He was lovely when he visited, along with his entourage; we called them 'the boys' - senior students from India. We'd all worked very hard at the right sort of meal, but we hadn't really done our homework, so we had things with garlic in, which he didn't eat. But he had a little bit of everything; he didn't say 'I don't eat that!' He was once asked about being vegetarian and he said 'If somebody has really gone to a lot of trouble to give me a meal out of love, whether it's vegetarian or not I will eat it.'

Also, somebody asked him once 'What about a wasp if it's going to bite you?' 'Well, you slap it away, and if it dies, it dies.' You have to protect yourself.

He was a lovely guest; he sat cross-legged in his chair, like you're sitting now. People came, and some people sat at his feet, some people asked him questions. My husband—of course this was years ago—was not really used to yoga, and he [Guruji] was lovely with him. Out of yoga class, Guruji was friendly, and delighted to meet people, and in the yoga class, he was the master. He was strict, although there was also laughter, but there were sometimes tears, too. I mean, I've wept. Not because he did anything to hurt me but because I felt what a fool I was, you know? But he was very strict; he got mellower as he got older. Waiting to go up to the class in Pune, my knees would tremble sometimes. But as soon as we got into the class, that all changed and I was practising Iyengar yoga with full concentration.

Going back to that very first class when we went down to London, we had done all the standing poses and then we went to forward bends; he had us in two long rows facing in, and I was in the middle. He came to the middle as we were working in Janu Sirsasana, and it was as if he were just teaching me. I've always remembered that. And I'm sure anybody else in that class would have said the same thing. But because I was in the middle, where he was demonstrating, it was just as if it was me. Each instruction that I followed just suited my body. I think that was my best bit.

Have you experienced crippling self-doubt? How have you managed to overcome such feelings?

Right from the beginning I did. I told you, I'm stiff; I'm not a natural, I'm not a gymnast. I trained as a physiotherapist, and I like being energetic, but there are times when I felt I wasn't going to get any further forward in my yoga path. But I had to remember these moments pass, and usually I get involved in some other yoga practice and the self-doubt goes away. For example, at the Christmas party, four of us did a demonstration. The older person—that was me—showed how we could adapt poses, and Julie Brown did the really difficult ones and how the poses built up in-between. We started to practise, after the Friday class, for six or seven weeks; that gave me something to do, a challenge. The challenges encourage you.

Teaching at the Harrogate convention, that was a challenge, too. Building up to it, I thought 'I hope this day never comes!' But when I got on the stage, I really enjoyed it. So you've got to give yourself challenges, I think, if you've got self-doubts know that they do pass. A lot of people do give up, but as long as you listen to what your body is telling you, you can carry on. I thank Guruji for all his teaching and support.

Interview by Laura Dias de Almeida

A weekend of mental and physical challenge

When I arrived at MDIY for a weekend seminar in late August 2018 led by Professor Edwin Bryant and advanced Iyengar teacher Julie Brown, it was with excitement and trepidation. I started my yoga journey over 20 years ago practising Iyengar Yoga and learned a huge amount about alignment and the basics of Yoga. Since then I have found myself on a different path – though in Yoga all paths may have the same destination!

I feel grateful for such a warm welcome from MDIY and to have found this opportunity to study the **Bhagavad Gita** with Edwin Bryant through a post on Facebook.

I have studied the Gita with other teachers including Ramaswami, like Iyengar a student of Krishnamacharya; Paul Harvey, a student of Krishnamacharya's son Desikachar; and with Swami Jnaneshvara in the Himalayan Tradition of Yoga, Tantra and Vedanta. I was eager to hear what Edwin Bryant, both an academic and a yoga practitioner, would offer.

I liked the way Edwin plunged right into the text and I found his teaching style crystal-clear and mesmerising. On the first day, we had 5 solid hours with only a short break. However the time flew because he summarised simply but not simplistically key messages in the Gita, also bringing humour. He gauged the energy levels of the group well and introduced opportunities to chant at intervals to prevent us from intellectually flagging.

Julie Brown's classes reminded me of the admirable precision of Iyengar Yoga asana practice and provided a different focus for our minds and movement for our bodies, punctuating the textual study.

For me, it is easy to get lost in a text like the Gita and I appreciated the pithy summaries in Edwin's talks. I believe this made the text more accessible to those who hadn't studied it much before – though you would have to ask them to test out my theory!

It was a rare opportunity to hear from a scholar who has immersed himself in studies of many of the key Yoga texts and other *darshanas* (schools of philosophy) and has an ability to drop in and out of each and cross-reference with apparently effortless ease. This was indeed Yoga in action. In particular, Edwin's cross-referencing of the Gita and Yoga Sutra shed new light on Yoga for us all.

The Gita introduces a new way of practising Yoga, as action in the world. Before this, Yoga meant dropping out of the world. *Krsna* (major Deity in the Gita) says in two places that there are two types of Yoga – what we might call Patanjalin Yoga, and 'action in the world' which somehow got lost, so Krsna has come to bring it back.

I appreciated Edwin's dismissal of modern and some New Age interpretations of the Gita and Yoga Sutra. For example, he said that the Gita as a battlefield of the mind is not a correct reading, but that it's a real battlefield. It may be interesting to explore the psychological dimensions of the internal battlefield, but the text is down-to-earth and pragmatic – it's about a real battle.

In the same vein, he also said that the fourth pranayama in the Yoga Sutra is stopping breathing and that modern yoga teachers suggest alternative readings that are less dangerous and more comfortable to everyone. It's refreshing to hear the views of a scholar who can authoritatively clarify ambiguities and conflicting interpretations, because of his

extensive knowledge of Sanskrit and a wide range of texts, and is not basing his interpretations on inherited tradition or personal preference.

Reading the Gita with a Sanskrit scholar whose native language is English, is a privilege. Bryant brought subtlety to the text and sometimes offered his own translations, varying from my Christopher Chapple edition – for instance, in Chapter 2, verse 10 he suggested Krsna is smiling not laughing which brings an entirely different tone and nuance. Often, his suggested language showed compassion for the predicament of *Arjuna* (the addressed warrior in the Gita) and the kindness in Edwin's teaching shone through.

In another passage, he explained the words 'giving up desire' were present in virtually every verse in Chapter 2.70ff, which reinforces the core message.

Another key message is that for any 'type' of Yoga, first you must understand that there is *Atman* (living soul) or *Purusha* (consciousness). He made this point on several occasions, why would you do any Yoga without a belief in Atman? That was for me an interesting question and not one that had been put so directly or in this way before.

In the Gita, Yoga is Karma Yoga which is *Buddhi* Yoga (Yoga of wisdom). If I am going to say I'm not attached to the fruits of actions, I need to have the intelligence that I am not my body-mind.

Bryant encouraged the group to remember brief statements that hold the essence of what the Gita says about Yoga:

2.48 *Samatvam̐ yoga ucyate* – Yoga is equanimity

2.49 *Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam* – Yoga is skill in action

Our final day focused on *Bhakti* Yoga (spiritual yoga practice), something that clearly lights a fire for Bryant. He encouraged us to understand the intimate yet not secret nature of Bhakti Yoga and gave us a glimpse of its many stories. Bhakti is keeping the deity in mind the whole time, fixed on one particular form that has captured your heart. 'Bhakti is monogamous' – another helpful Bryanism. He helped those of us who find Bhakti inaccessible to understand why it is unfamiliar to the Western mind - sometimes calling it 'myth' or 'story' - and to feel more comfortable with its power. He encouraged us to observe our own *samskaras* when reacting to the stories and then to step back.

There were interesting asides about, for instance, the fact that free will is not covered so much in Indian thinking as it is in Western psychology.

Valuable practical guidance Edwin offered was fully aligned with tradition: that we spend time in contemplation and meditation in the morning before our minds are full and agitated, and then we engage in *Karma* Yoga throughout the day, remembering the Atman from time to time and trying not to be attached to the fruits of action. He touched on the relationship of meditation and contemplation to asana, which is an issue worthy of further exploration. This helps to put the study of the Gita and Yoga Sutra in context for those whose main practice is asana-based. Does asana practice need to be linked with spiritual practice? My immediate answer is 'yes'. That is how I understand Astanga Yoga as defined in the Yoga Sutra and from the asana practice with teachers in the tradition of Desikachar and others. A return visit might include a move on to explore Bhakti and its stories. I feel that there is still room for a follow-up on the Gita since there is so much more to touch on – at least two return visits are in order!

Karin Horowitz

DUKINFIELD FESTIVAL YOGA DEMONSTRATION

One Saturday 7 July, one of those hot days last summer, Dukinfield held its local festival in Dukinfield Park, so it made sense for our teacher trainees to 'volunteer' to give a demonstration in our eye-catching t-shirts.....our mats are greener than the grass!



Our teacher trainees (top right photo) – front row (L to R) Sylvia Dalla, Alison Seabourne, Iona Ilmond Hindley; back row (L to R) Tracey Ashton, Muthukumaran Gurishankar, Caroline Doyle.

Garth McLean at the MDIY

Garth McLean, originally Canadian, but now living in Los Angeles, travels the world to teach how yoga can combat and help us live with chronic conditions (especially MS). He visits the MDIY annually and will be coming again from October 25 – 27 this year.

We asked some attendees at his June 2018 workshops at MDIY to give their feedback:

I loved Garth, I had always wanted to do a workshop with him. He did not disappoint, he was an absolute inspiration & testament to what you can achieve if you put your mind to it. I believe whatever life throws at you there is always something you can do to improve your situation. Garth and his yoga journey is the epitome of that. **Bev Walsh**



Being previously at Garth's workshop, I booked the whole Sunday. His positive and fun attitude, to teach the most challenging asanas, is infectious. In no time, the hours went by. His chosen sequence, gave me personally a sharp collected mind, which I needed for my upcoming Introductory Assessment. I am pleased to say I asessed **Verena Huber**

'Garth was so inspiring and his persistence admirable. He showed us that through the practice of yoga, we can overcome disabilities, infirmity, ailments.' Anon

Garth demonstrating at MDIY

What an inspiration Garth and his workshops were! I haven't forgotten 'to knit' my stomach muscles whilst in Sirsasana and handstand since, and his advice to practice Virabhadrasana 3 with the standing leg beside a wall has helped enormously. A huge thank you to both Garth and MDIY for inviting him. **Lizzie Nicholls**

I was so pleased I was able to attend Garth's teacher class. He was truly inspirational in his fun teaching style and as an exemplar for personal practice.

Heather Brennan

Garth went on to a 'one man' Yoga event in Edinburgh, and some of our teachers went to see it: **Nicky Wright, Garth, Alison Wright, Sarah Barber, Clare Tunstall, Kim Skinner, Caroline Doyle, Sacha Cash and Anna Martinez.**



Marjorie Saville

Marjorie, mother of our well-known MDIY Secretary, Janice Yates; a retired teacher of the MDIY and a long-serving committee member, sadly died on 8th January this year. Many of our longer-standing students remember her warmly as their first teacher.

MY FRIEND MARJORIE

A long time ago, possibly the late seventies, Marjorie, Janice and I met up at a local yoga class. It wasn't long before Janice mentioned that she had heard of another local class taken by Ethel Calverley a qualified Iyengar Yoga teacher who taught a very different, more



interesting method. We all decided to give it a try and were immediately impressed and became members of the MDIY - we were hooked! Moving a few years on, Janice and I decided to enrol on the MDIY Teacher Training course followed eventually by Marjorie and, luckily, we all passed our Assessments and began our own classes. At this time, we were all attending Jeanne Maslen's classes in a Fallowfield church hall.

Marjorie played a very important

part in the first years of us owning our own building on King Street. There was a lot to do and changes to be made to the internal structure. She played an important part in all of this with her usual hard work and good humour. Eventually, she taught a class and encouraged friends and neighbours to come along to our wonderful centre. Originally owning a small grocer's shop on King Street, Marjorie was well equipped to become our Treasurer but heaven help any of us who wanted money to buy anything for the centre, it was usually a firm 'No'. She hung on to the purse strings until it was proved that whatever we wanted was really needed.

Just a point of great interest to us all, the Ercol lounge and kitchen furniture in the cottage was donated by Marjorie when she had to go into sheltered accommodation. Apparently, as Sacha mentioned recently, Janice's grand children love the cottage when they attend the Children's class on Saturday mornings. What a lovely feeling!

Marjorie was a warm-hearted, kind lady, a wonderful Mum to Janice and Ray and a treasured friend to many people and will be very much missed by us all. **Margaret Ellison**

Tricia Booth, our past long-time Chair comments - Marjorie was not only a committee member for the MDIY she was the Treasurer and did a great deal of work for us when we moved to Dukinfield. She also encouraged support from her local friends and businesses for our yoga. Although she hasn't been around the MDIY recently she will be missed by the past members of our committee and the students she taught.

**MINUTES OF THE MDIY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON
SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2018 AT 134 KING STREET, DUKINFIELD AT 10.00 AM**

There were 45 members present.

APOLOGIES: Susie Murray, Sharon Dawn Taylor, Joan Abrams, Rita Mori

MINUTES OF THE 2017 AGM

The minutes from last year's AGM were printed in the 2018 Journal and were proposed as an accurate record by Tracey Evans and seconded by Tricia Booth.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS (Charlotte Everitt)

Welcome everyone to our 47th Annual General Meeting. This is a year of celebration for Iyengar yoga all over the world, being the centenary of the birth of our Guruji, BKS Iyengar. I know a number of our members will be attending the centenary celebrations in Pune in India in December, while we are here at our own party on 14th December. We'll be running a number of special events over the week before, starting with our first Christmas market on Sunday 9th December - a chance for members who "do things" to meet members who "want things".

A number of our members have visited the Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yoga Institute in Pune over the last year, and brought back the things they have learned to share with us. RIMYI have been focussing this year on reaching groups who are perhaps less able to access Iyengar yoga as easily as we can in the UK, and inviting groups from some of the "younger" countries for intensive learning every month. Last month I was attending RIMYI as a "standard" UK visitor for a month and met some of these newer yoga students visiting for a fortnight, and it was really interesting to talk with them about their experience. When we UK visitors told them that we were there for a month, several of them immediately decided they wanted to come back and do a full month as soon as possible and were amazed to learn that this opportunity was there – they thought that we in the UK are very privileged to have the chance to do that. It was interesting because I don't think that we in the UK always think of it like that! I also met a number of students from the UK who've attended the December intensives in recent years and had decided to go back for a full month. If it's something that you have always thought is the kind of thing that other people do but isn't really meant for students like you, I would encourage you to think again and consider giving it a go, whether for a December intensive or for a full month of classes at RIMYI.

Over the last year we have had visiting teachers, both Indian - Dr Rajlaxmi, Firooza Ali and Uday Bhosale; from elsewhere in the world, Edwin Bryant and Garth McLean; and from the UK, with Alan Brown most recently as well as our Pune weekend. We've also benefitted from workshops with some of our local teachers - Julie Brown, Debbie Bartholomew and Clare Tunstall. This is on top of our regular programme of teacher training and development, and hosting assessments for teachers across the UK and Ireland; as well as our full timetable of regular classes.

The Classes and Events working group oversee and organise all aspects of this, with the support of volunteers who help to manage specific events. Julia Mitchell stood down from the group earlier this year and Janice Yates more recently; our thanks to them for their time and work as part of the Group, and if any of you are interested in finding out more about potentially joining it, please do make yourself known.

Hopefully you all know that Janice has also stepped down as our Centre Manager and we now have Clare as our Administrator, fulfilling that role – I think she still consults Janice quite frequently so thank you to Janice for all her past, present and future work!

Over the next year, we plan to continue aiming to run one workshop per month – we have a full schedule for 2019, starting the year with a mix of popular teachers returning and first time visiting teachers, so we hope to see many of you at one of those workshops. We'll be starting the year with Julie Brown, and in April we have Tricia Booth teaching us; I know many of you were at the 2018 IYUK convention, where Julie and Tricia were two of the main Senior Teachers, so we are again very lucky to have the benefit of their knowledge and experience so close to home.

Congratulations to those of our members who have passed an assessment in the last year; we have 8 new teacher members: Indra Bains; Jean Boler; Laura Dias de Almeida; Abigail Gorton; Stephen High; Fiona Holmes; Verena Huber; and Maxine Wollaston.

At Intermediate Junior Level 1, Heather Brennan; Gillian Carruthers; Ewa Kubiak; and Jennifer O'Shea were successful. At IJ Level 2, Sarah Barber and Helen Blackett; and at IJ3, Aimi Dunstan.

Sadly, from my point of view, we have two people standing down from our Executive Committee, and we thank Kim Skinner and Debbie Bartholomew for their tireless efforts in both keeping our Institute going, and pushing it forward - they will be very much missed.

On which note, I would like to thank all our volunteers - including the Executive Committee and C&E group, but also everyone else who gets involved in any way, big or small, to keep our Institute running smoothly and allowing us to fulfil our purpose of providing Iyengar yoga to all our members. In particular, our teachers; our Committee and the C&E group; our secretary Janice and our treasurer Kathryn; and our membership secretary Julia Mitchell.

My last point of business – you should have seen an email a few days ago dropping a small bombshell. We have had some surprising news from IYUK, who have been contacted by Companies House and told that the word "Institute" is protected and no-one is allowed to use it without asking and being given permission. Looking at the guidance, which is available online, it is clear that were we to apply, we would not get permission; so will need to change our name.

This does mean a number of related changes - we will need to change the domain name of our website and edit our logo, for example, as well as changing not only the physical signage we have, but our whole mind-set of how we think about our Institute. This will take time and effort, but thank you in advance for your support.

The Executive Committee have shortlisted three new names, which are: Manchester & District Iyengar Yoga, Manchester & District Iyengar Yoga Centre and Manchester Iyengar Yoga Centre. If you have any questions or concerns, please do raise these now; with your agreement, we would like to take a vote to select one of these now, so that we can start the work required.

A discussion and questions from the floor took place and Jill Johnson gave a detailed explanation of why we had to change our name.

A vote took place and Manchester & District Iyengar Yoga (MDIY) was adopted. There was one abstention by Jacky Taylor. Jacky expressed her disappointment in having to drop the word Institute from our title.

SECRETARY'S REPORT (Janice Yates)

The committee have held five meetings since our last AGM.

They have worked hard coordinating our many events, senior and junior workshops, PD days and first aid courses.

Thank you Clare for doing a brilliant job with the admin and organisation to ensure the smooth running of our events and particularly the assessments which MDIY have hosted this year.

I'd also like to thank Joan and Lynda our editors of the MDIY's annual Journal for producing another great edition.

They have confirmed they will be pleased to do next year's Journal too.

As Charlotte mentioned, our party reverts to a Friday evening this year as it celebrates what would have been Gurujii's 100 birthday on the 14 December. Online booking is now open so please get your tickets early so we can calculate how much delicious food to order from Lily's. Thank you.

TREASURER'S REPORT (Kathryn Duffy)

These accounts are to our year end 31st July 2018 and have been audited by Michelle Pendergast (FCCA) one of our members and a Chartered Certified Accountant.

The figures show a running profit for the year of £18565 and a few points;

Subscriptions increased by almost 10% compared to same time last year due to an increase in membership.

Event income has more than doubled due to the number of well attended events with lower costs now that we have the cottage available for visiting teachers.

Class income has seen a decrease possibly due to maintaining class fees whilst increasing teaching fees, running more start up classes and speciality classes with lower numbers.

Admin costs are up due to management fees now that we have a new administrator in Clare which is proving extremely successful.

Rental income is down whilst tax cost is higher due to the higher rental income from the previous year.

Property running costs are lower as we have not had major refurb works over the year.

Looking forward to next year the bank loan taken out for our cottage will be repaid in full and due to the lower rental income our Corp Tax will be reduced so we can anticipate a positive impact on our profits.

Once again we have had a successful year due to the continued voluntary hard work of both our committees in the planning of events and our excellent class schedule with a register of dedicated teachers who work well together to maintain standards and get the most out of our continually improving centre of Iyengar Yoga.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT (Julia Mitchell)

The current membership figure is 618 of which teacher members totalled 132. There had been 151 new members during the year. On-line applications were 72%. Julia asked if people would join on-line as it was so much easier and quicker to administer.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer retire and are willing to stand again.

	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconder</u>
Charlotte Everitt (Chairman)	Julia Mitchell	Amanda Whitehead
Janice Yates (Secretary)	Nicky Wright	Betty Croston
Kathryn Duffy (Treasurer)	Margaret Ellison	Susan Halliwell

The officers were unanimously elected.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS

In accordance with our Constitution, three members retire annually. Debbie Bartholomew and Kim Skinner retire and do not seek re-election. The following members wish to stand for election.

	<u>Proposer</u>	<u>Seconder</u>
Susan Halliwell	Jayne Wilson	Kim Skinner
Tracey Ashton	Laura Dias de Almeida	David Reddican
Debbie Wilkinson	Debbie Bartholomew	Sharon Dawn Taylor

The members were unanimously elected.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 10.32 am

MANCHESTER & DISTRICT INSTITUTE OF IYENGAR YOGA
Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 July 2018

	2017		2018
£		<u>INCOME</u>	£
	8,520	Subscriptions	9,342
	6,672	Net proceeds from events	14,428
	35,836	Net proceeds from classes	25,621
	11,005	Rental income	7,220
	1,087	Net sale of publications and goods	625
	425	Donations	91
	<u>63,545</u>		<u>57,327</u>
	11	Bank interest	17
	<u>63,556</u>		<u>57,344</u>
		<u>LESS EXPENDITURE</u>	
	11,072	Administration expenses	16,040
	16,328	Institute running cost	13,289
	5,788	Professional fees	-
	477	Donations	438
	2,255	Purchase of yoga equipment	361
	4,785	IYA Subscription	5,216
	<u>40,705</u>		<u>35,344</u>
	1,227	Corporation tax	2,021
	924	Interest on bank loan	1,100
	143	Paypal fees (on memberships only)	293
	<u>42,999</u>		<u>38,758</u>
£	<u>20,557</u>	Surplus for the year	<u>£ 18,586</u>

Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2018

	<u>GENERAL FUND</u>		
27,211	Balance brought forward at 1st August	27,767	
<u>20,557</u>	Surplus for the year	<u>18,586</u>	
47,768		46,353	
<u>20,000</u>	Less Transfer to Building Fund	<u>20,000</u>	
<u>27,768</u>		<u>26,353</u>	
	<u>BUILDING FUND</u>		
263,100	Balance brought forward at 1st August	283,100	
<u>20,000</u>	Transfer from General Fund	<u>20,000</u>	
<u>283,100</u>		<u>303,100</u>	
<u>8,861</u>	Creditors	<u>11,497</u>	
<u>319,729</u>		<u>340,950</u>	
	<u>Represented by:</u>		
54,078	Bank Accounts	59,217	
5,044	Stock of goods held for resale	3,433	
282,311	Property at 134 King Street and Cottage at cost	288,007	
<u>(21,704)</u>	Bank Loan for purchase of cottage	<u>(9,707)</u>	
<u>319,729</u>		<u>340,950</u>	

Prepared from the books and vouchers produced and from information provided, and certified to be in accordance therewith.

Mrs Kathryn Duffy
Hon. Treasurer

M. A. Pendergast (FCCA) Chartered Certified Accountant
5th November 2018

Welcome to our Yoga 'Shop'

Take your equipment and fill in the form in the office equipment sales box and leave your money. Cash or cheque is fine, cheques made payable to MDIY. Any queries, just ask your teacher.

Thanks, Clare

clare@mdiiy.org.uk

Books

A Quest for Clarity £20

Elements of the Subtle Body £10

Light on Yoga £15

Light on Pranayama £12

Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali £15

Light on Life £12

Yoga in Action – Preliminary Course £10

Yoga in Action – Intermediate Course £10

Yoga a Gem for Women £13

Yoga for Children £14

Yoga and MS, A Practice Guideline, Garth McLean £27 **NEW**

Yoga Wisdom and Practice £15 – **Beautiful book to give as a gift**

Astadala Yoga Mala (VOLUME 1) £12

Alpha and Omega of Trikonasana £12 (currently out of stock with supplier)

Tuesdays with Prashant £13

Teachers of Yoga (available for teachers and trainees) £14 Order via Julie Brown

Women's Yoga Book £14.99

Practice and Enjoy (Julie Brown) Video or DVD £13

DVD of Geetaji's visit to MDIY £10



BACK PAGE PHOTO

Jeanne Maslen teaching at MDIY

