



**MDIY**  
**Journal 2026**  
**On The Yoga Path**

## Manchester and District Iyengar Yoga

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*We thank Mira, the daughter of our teacher Yelena Grigorenko, for painting our front cover, and graphic designer Amy Grayston for preparing the artwork.*

## Chair's Address

Welcome to this year's journal!

We've had another packed year, and in particular we've really seen some great work in the therapeutic yoga space. Nicky Wright and Sarah Pettitt have been granted the new Preliminary Therapy Teacher status by IY(UK), as they continue to work alongside Yelena and assisting teachers in the weekly therapy class. We have a new dedicated Back & Shoulder class and are running regular therapy workshops on common conditions like niggly knees and high blood pressure. And a donation from our long-time and supportive member Olive Wood has allowed us to invest in new equipment to ensure our members can get the support they need.

We also received a generous donation from the family of Susan Barber of "the Macc pack" who used to travel over from Macclesfield for Jeanne's Tuesday night classes in the 90s and 00s - which may bring back fond memories for some of you!

Thanks to the journal team and all our contributors – it's great when our members feel able to get involved in supporting us and our community. Whether that's writing an article for the journal, answering the door at our events, helping Kim, who is in charge of our garden, with some weeding, or anything else – we're a membership organisation and that means we all have a part to play, however small!

## Editorial

Hi everyone!,

Welcome to your 2026 edition of our MDIY journal. We always think there should be a 'theme', but, as the articles come in, we have to alter our ideas slightly! However, we think we can say, from the inspiring personal stories in this edition – that 'On the yoga path' would be fine! We hope you enjoy our venture into 'Desert Island Asanas', where Clare interviewed Senior teacher Jayne Orton and her long-time love for Iyengar Yoga. Hermann Traitteur tells us what motivates him in his yoga; Debbie Wilkinson writes movingly on her recovery from an ankle fracture. There are inspiring thoughts on 'moving up' in Yoga teacher levels and, of course, we have wonderful reflections on the life of our great friend and yoga teacher – Marion Kilburn. Thanks to everyone who has contributed, and especially to Mira, daughter of one of our teachers, Yelena Grigorenko, who designed our front cover.

Your editorial team - Joan Abrams, Julia Bennett, Andrew Green, Lizzie Nicholls, Clare Tunstall, Jayne Wilson.

## Hermann Traitteur Interview

Dr Hermann Traitteur is a medical doctor who has specialised in orthopaedics, as well as a senior Iyengar Yoga teacher. He is the co-founder and co-director of the Iyengar Yoga Institute Berlin. His book “Yoga Asana Anatomy” was first published in 2016 in Germany. An English translation published three years later includes contributions from Lois Steinberg and a beautifully written foreword by Geeta S. Iyengar.

Hermann visited MDIY in October/November 2025 for a weekend workshop, which followed two online sessions earlier in the year. He was kind enough to spend half an hour after class chatting to me.



**Julia:** Can you tell me how you started yoga?

**Hermann:** Like everybody I just went to a class once a week. This was the start of yoga for me. It happened during my medical training, I was not that happy, it was very stressful. And I was looking for something to counterbalance the stress and so yoga was a wonderful thing to do.

**Julia:** So you hadn't thought about doing yoga before you'd started to train as a doctor?

**Hermann:** I did some other yoga before, just a little. And my career as a doctor was not straightforward because I wanted to study psychology. And then I was told it's better to study medicine if you want to do psychotherapy. So I applied for medical school and luckily they took me. Then I was a little bit overwhelmed because I was not prepared for this kind of study, I was prepared for studying psychology. And then in this process yoga helped me a lot to, to get through that. And then I also became more and more curious to explain what's going on with the yoga, with medical things.

**Julia:** So could you explain what you feel are the benefits of Iyengar yoga therapy compared to the medical side, the physiotherapy side. How do they link together, do you think?

**Hermann:** So just to come a little bit back to my background. So, I started medicine. I worked in an orthopaedic practice for a few years. And after I learned to diagnose orthopaedic problems and knowing the main therapies, then I focused on yoga. In my understanding, I think yoga therapy is mainly for people who already do yoga. People who have some knowledge, theoretically, practically, and we give them the option to continue to practise. If you already practise yoga, you can use your tools to solve your problems, which I think is superior.

I think also with yoga in comparison with physiotherapy, that it's more holistic. You are not only working on your back you're also integrating other parts. And for some people it's more fun and for some people who want to have a quicker solution, maybe it's not the right thing.

Or maybe the main idea of yoga therapy, being in the yoga community, people practise yoga. And the nice thing in Iyengar yoga is you get a problem and people don't say you have to stop. There are some solutions. And the other thing is, for sure, we also attract people through yoga therapy to start doing yoga. And actually it's easier because the bodies are not so refined. So very often, if people have a problem, they try yoga therapy. It works quite fast actually, faster than with people who have already practised yoga. We would expect something different. But it works very well also for people who do not have any experience.

**Julia:** Do you think it's important that we move our bodies in these ways that we do in yoga that are not part of everyday life or does it not really matter if, for example, somebody's got stiff ankles and never does *supta vīrāsana*?

**Hermann:** It's a good question. So the first answer should be: it's better to move than not to move. There are studies that show people who move are much healthier than those who don't move. So, it's just activity and moving the body. It doesn't have to be yoga.

I love yoga and I love Iyengar yoga, and when I think of all that we have learned, we have

so many good options. But there are also other good options to move, I think. Maybe if I look to my mother, she turns one hundred next year and she did sport when she was a teenager and then never did anything again. Somehow, maybe this is also why she got so old. I don't know. She was a person that didn't have very good health, but she always knew when to stop. And this somehow made her very old. And she's kind of healthy also, still at this age.

And, so that means doing things like yoga or other things, they could improve our health or, if we abuse it, they could even make something worse. And for some people it depends also on the goal. What do you want from life?

So I'm not a person who says, you only stay healthy if you do Iyengar yoga, you'll only be happy if you do Iyengar yoga. But I'm totally convinced that with Iyengar yoga, you have a big potential to stay healthy. You have a big potential to be happy.

**Julia:** Do you think it's possible to change our anatomy? Often, people say, I can't do that because my body doesn't work like that. Do you think it is possible for us all to do all the asanas, if we really practise?

**Hermann:** Let's put it the other way. We change anyway. So if we don't do anything, we change. If we do something, we change. If there are some poses which are difficult for us, for me, what is really nice in Iyengar yoga is that you always try. It's not so important to reach the goal, but to be on the way. For example, if you cannot do Padmāsana, then there are ways to prepare for it. Maybe you always only prepare or maybe you do half Padmāsana. But I wanted to do Padmāsana and actually also hurt my knees because I wanted to do Padmāsana very fast and then I realized there's pressure on the knee. And then I learned a lot about the knee. So, I'm convinced that Iyengar yoga really can change bodies. It has a big healing potential, but that doesn't mean that it can heal everything. It can support healing processes or it can support change to bodies and it's nice to have goals.

I was taught by Guruji a few times, and if there was a pose you couldn't do, you could not escape. So he wanted you to do the pose, but he didn't force you to do the pose, or to reach it aggressively. But he wanted you to have the fire to get the pose. But in the end, it was not important whether you finally got into the pose or not. I was fascinated because it's so easy to say 'Okay, this pose you cannot do, just don't do it'. That was not his solution. He tried to make mini steps or Geeta, she made even more steps in between. And at the end some people reach the final pose. Some people don't reach it, but at least they get an idea of the experience. We shouldn't force our students though. But still, there should be a burning desire to get it. Without like, putting too much ego on that or hurting yourself.

**Julia:** If you're focusing a lot on anatomy where does that leave the spiritual side of yoga, do you think? Is it incorporated within anatomy as well?

**Hermann:** I know for me it is helpful to look at the yoga poses, how they work, what is involved, et cetera. But, in practising yoga, I think sometimes it's also good to forget about that in order to be open for more.

And this is always the process I'm going through. So I studied medicine, I did yoga. I always wanted to have explanations. My friends who just did yoga and didn't study medicine, they progressed further because they were not thinking so much and they were not asking so many questions, and I was stuck a little bit. Until I realized when I go to Pune or when I go to yoga class, I forget everything that I learned. and then I progressed because then I made experiences beyond the things I was expecting from my anatomical knowledge. And this is for me a little bit like whatever spirituality means.

Sometimes it's good also, especially if there are problems, to really analyse things anatomically - what is the situation, what does it look like? What can we learn about this? And this is a starting point to progress. And then after having analysed it, I think it's also good too, to a certain degree, to forget it again and practise fresh from what you're feeling intuitively.

So for me it's integrating, let go, integrating let go. It's a mixture, but for sure, it can limit the spiritual path of yoga. And in the end also, I hope if I can let it go, it can support me.

**Julia:** So yoga has been shown to help with chronic pain management. Iyengar yoga specifically, but other yoga as well. Does the pain actually go away or is it just that the mind changes? And if so, how does the mind affect the body?

**Hermann:** To really explain it, it depends the reason for the chronic pain. Very often there is not one reason, there are lots of reasons. And maybe with yoga you touch more reasons because it's more holistic. And the other thing is, there's also a theory that you learn pain. And then by doing yoga, you kind of relearn it. You learn either first to accept the pain because you're watching and suddenly things are changing. So I think on the physical level, something is changing, but also on the level of the brain, if you practise yoga, something is changing. For example, that you can accept the pain better, that you can look at the pain. And just by observing the pain, something is changing. And some people have to live with chronic pain but can learn to accept it more easily.

**Julia:** In IY News recently they had an article on men in yoga and how few men come to yoga class in Europe and the US. In India you get just as many men as women. Do you have any thoughts on why that is?

**Hermann:** I think one reason might be that, in the first yoga class, as a woman you tend to be a little bit more flexible. It's just easier. And for a man, it could be very frustrating, especially if there are a lot of women around who do the poses much better than you.

And maybe men also prefer to go to the gym. And maybe men are not interested so much in holistic things. Then also there are far more female yoga teachers than male yoga teachers. That might also be a reason. But, I don't know. The good thing as a male yoga teacher, you also attract more men. So in my classes at least, there are more men than in the classes of my colleagues.

I'm really happy that in our yoga community also, Iyengar was male of course, but then there was Geeta, and she changed so many things. And after Geeta, Prashant, who is still there as a male, and he's important, but the main person right now is Abi and I love it. Living in a world where men have a lot of power, I like that in Iyengar yoga the most powerful woman or guru, is a female. I also think she does a great job and I'm so happy about this kind of energy. I feel actually as a man that it was always a bit easier for me than my female colleagues because they would think 'oh, he's a man, he is stiff', so I felt a little bit privileged in the certification assessments, being a male. I don't know whether it's good or bad that at the higher certificate level, the percentage of males is higher. To put it the other way around, I think it's great that we have strong women in our system, and I'm very proud of them.

**Julia:** That's great. Thank you very much.



# Bharatnatyam and Yoga

**Misha Popat**

When I shared with MDIY members that I had been to a Bharatanatyam evening of dance and how wonderful it was, I was invited to write an article for the next annual journal. This was an honour! I had got to grade 2 Bharatnatyam during my Uni days but did not manage to maintain the training when I moved to the North West. Then, when my daughter turned 7, she joined a local temple and trained and performed most weekends till graduation level, age 17. They would do yoga asana for warming up and cooling down and I'd often be invited to take that portion of class. I saw the close connection with Yoga, which was my other deep interest.

Bharatnatyam, is one of the oldest classical dance forms of India, and is not merely a performing art but a profound spiritual practice deeply rooted in Indian culture. Emerging from the temples of Tamil Nadu, this dance form was initially performed as an offering to the gods, blending artistic expression with devotion. Over the centuries, Bharatanatyam evolved into a structured art form, embodying intricate movements, rhythmic patterns, and expressive storytelling. Its connection to yoga is integral, as both are disciplines that unite the body, mind, and soul, offering a pathway towards self-realisation.

## The Philosophical Connection

Both Bharatanatyam and yoga draw from the same philosophical foundation: the Vedas, Upanishads, and ancient texts like the Natya Shastra by Bharata Muni.

The Natya Shastra views dance as a holistic practice that combines drama (Natya), music (Sangeeta), and expressive gestures (Abhinaya). Yoga, on the other hand, is described in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali as a method to quieten the mind and attain liberation (moksha). Both disciplines aim to transcend the mundane and establish a connection with the divine (or higher self) through self-discipline and self-discovery.

## The Role of the Body

Bharatanatyam is a physical and mental discipline similar to yoga. The dance requires precision in postures, balance, and synchronisation of movements, much like yogic



asanas. The geometrical positions in Bharatanatyam, such as the aramandi (half-sitting posture), resemble yoga asanas. Movements in Bharatanatyam are not random; they are deliberate and mindful, fostering awareness and control over the body—principles central to yoga.

### **The Role of Breath and Energy**

Pranayama, or breath control, is a vital component of yoga, aiding in the regulation of the body's energy. Similarly, in Bharatanatyam, controlled breathing enhances the dancer's stamina and grace. The energy flow in the body is consciously directed through hand gestures (mudras), facial expressions (bhavas), and rhythmic footwork (adavus). This synergy mirrors the yogic concept of prana (life energy) circulating through the body's nadis (channels).

### **Mental Discipline and Meditation**

Both Bharatanatyam and yoga require unwavering focus. A Bharatanatyam performance demands the dancer to immerse completely in the story, embodying the emotions and intentions of the character. This meditative absorption aligns with the yogic principle

of dhyana (meditation), where the practitioner becomes one with their object of focus. The dancer's engagement with the tala (rhythm) and raga (melody) mirrors the yogic goal of harmonising with the universal rhythm.

### **Spiritual Significance**

Bharatanatyam is often described as a form of bhakti yoga (the yoga of devotion). Each performance is an offering to the divine, with dancers striving to experience and express a union with the divine spirit. The repetitive practice of movements, combined with the intention of devotion, elevates the art form to a spiritual exercise. Similarly, yoga incorporates devotional practices like chanting and prayer to deepen spiritual awareness and includes various mudras.



## Therapeutic Benefits

Both Bharatanatyam and yoga offer therapeutic benefits, promoting physical health, emotional stability, and mental clarity. The dynamic movements in Bharatanatyam improve cardiovascular health, enhance flexibility, and tone muscles, while yoga provides similar benefits through asanas. Both practices also help reduce stress and anxiety by calming the mind and focusing on the present moment.

Bharatanatyam and yoga, though distinct in practice, share a symbiotic relationship. Both are paths to self-discovery, fostering a deep connection between the individual and the universe. Through the disciplined training of the body, mind, and spirit, Bharatanatyam transcends mere performance, becoming a moving meditation and a celebration of life. For those who practice or witness it, the dance serves as a reminder of the unity of art, spirituality, and the eternal quest for enlightenment.



## Recovery

**Deborah Wilkinson**

In 2023, I was cycling from my home downhill. At the bottom there were roadworks. Loose gravel covered the surface, the bike skidded and I lost control. My ankle took the full impact, twisting my foot sharply outward towards my calf. The result was what the doctors called a tri-malleolar fracture. The ankle bones were shattered.

In A&E, the emergency team straightened my ankle. Over a week later, a team of three surgeons operated on it with plates, pins and screws inserted to hold everything in place, to allow the bones to heal. While this happened I was to keep my leg elevated, even while sleeping, and to not bear any weight for twelve weeks. Life, quite suddenly, changed direction.

Injuries arrive unannounced. I found myself thinking about how, if that exact moment had unfolded just slightly differently, I would still be moving through all the plans and events I had lined up. Instead, I was being asked to pause, adapt, and was met with something I hadn't planned for.

When everything comes to a stop, the question becomes: how do we cope? Yoga is often understood as physical movement, but in reality it offers more. During my recovery, when movement was limited, the practice met me in quieter ways. With blended classes becoming part of life post-Covid, I was also able to stay connected to the yoga community. From my sun lounger in the garden, my leg carefully raised on a bean bag, I joined Julie Brown's teachers' class. I was determined to soak up as much sunlight as possible, topping up on vitamin D while observing the class and taking part in discussions about the asanas. Even without physically practising, I found I had the opportunity to learn, observe, listen, and stay engaged in a way that felt nourishing and deeply supportive.

During this initial period, I began to practise yoga in a more internal way, drawing on all the previous experience. I would visualise each pose, focusing my mind while recalling the steps that would lead me into it, the rhythm of my breath, and the steadiness that accompanied the movement. Even without physically practising, this memory brought mind and breath together and remained an accessible and meaningful way to stay engaged.

In my role as a volunteer with MDIY, I helped coordinate the visit of Devki from Pune. I had injured myself in May, and when she visited in August I was in a boot rather than a



cast, using crutches. Although I wasn't able to take part in the whole event, I did manage to join for one afternoon. A local student kindly drove me from Hebden Bridge to Dukinfield, making it possible for me to be there.

To get to the hall, I bumped up the stairs backwards on my bottom. It was a satisfying reminder that all those years of yoga had left me strong enough to lift and support myself. Once inside, I was set up with props so that I could practise from the ground. I wasn't able to do standing asanas such as Virabhadrasana I (Warrior Pose), but by turning them around, I could work instead with poses like Supta Padangusthasana.

It can be humbling to ask for help, yet it also fills your cup to the brim when you experience the kindness of others. During Devki's visit, I needed that support, and the MDIY community came together in such a natural and generous way. Devki later commented that this coming together of people, each offering what they could, was yoga itself.

There is a particular pause that comes with waiting to move forward, especially once the cast was removed. I had imagined that moment as a green light, yet what I hadn't expected was the fear that followed. Without the cast, my ankle no longer felt protected, and that sense of vulnerability took me aback. At the same time, I could look to yoga for reassurance. In practice, we often meet asanas that feel unfamiliar or uncertain. With careful guidance, time, and repetition, we gradually build resilience. Drawing on those experiences helped me trust the process and find a way forward with steadiness rather than urgency.

The question became not how quickly I could move, but how well.

Once my foot was free, I had to consider where to begin. Seeing my foot, ankle and leg again after twelve weeks in a cast was a shock: the loss of muscle was unmistakable. I had expected to re-learn how to walk, but hadn't realised how much I would need to strip things back. Even putting my foot down was something to re-learn, paying attention to how weight was received and how each small movement connected to the next.



The focus became one of gentle reawakening: warming the joint, moving it carefully, and then responding to the swelling. Cold water brought real relief, easing inflammation which added to my restrictions. The swimming pool became a valuable space to practise what I came to think of as "walking well." Supported by the water, I could explore movement with greater ease and awareness. The coolness of the water felt like a gift.

Resting my legs up the wall became another way to create this sense of relief. It wasn't only about moving the joint; just as in savasana at the end of a class, there also had to be time to rest and recover. These quieter moments were as important as the movement, allowing the body to settle, soften, and absorb the work done.

From this place of rest, I could begin to rebuild movement. Strength didn't return through force, but through attentive, repeated actions, guided by sensitivity rather than ambition. As in practice, the body revealed what was possible on any given day. My role was to listen. Small movements gradually became more coordinated, and simple actions began to feel reliable again.

Each careful step and each moment of balance carried the imprint of earlier stillness.

The doctors originally told me that the metalwork would remain in place, but recently it has all been removed. Although the surgeon could offer no guarantees of increased movement due to the scar tissue, I find myself writing this out here in Pune, practising at RIMYI.

Utkatasana, once elusive, is re-emerging. This is a reminder that patience, steady dedicated practice, and trust in the process can carry us further than we ever imagine.

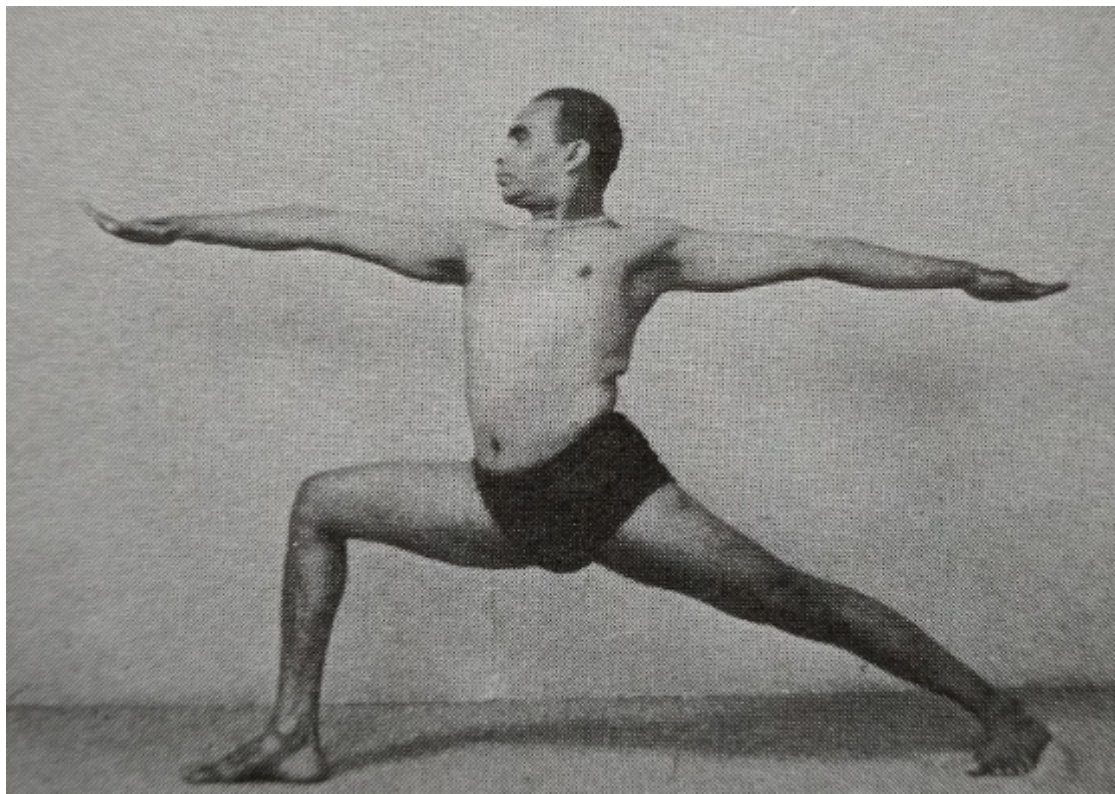


## Science Corner

### How muscles pair up in yoga practice

John Aplin

‘There is always relaxation in the right position, even though you are fully stretching.’



BKS Iyengar

Have you noticed how your teacher instructs the right leg in Vīrabhadrāsana II? ‘Bend the knee?’ ‘Release the thigh?’ ‘Descend into the right angle?’ How many of us are reluctant to release the buttock fully enough to allow the thigh to run parallel to the floor?

Here three groups of muscles are required to act in synchrony in your thigh, the hamstrings at the back, the quadriceps at the front and the adductors at the inner edge. Conscious contraction of the quads as you go into the pose stabilises the knee joint and connects the gluteals (buttock muscles) to embed the femur head in the hip socket. This is the primary instruction. The hamstrings and inner thigh (adductor) muscles then respond by releasing. It’s best for beginners not to work with ‘release’ at first, as stabilisation avoids injury. In more skilled practitioners the inner thigh muscles are accustomed to stretching and less prone to strain – these students may not need reminding to tighten the quads, but should still do so to keep on improving strength and stability.

Your teacher will encourage you to move the right buttock bone towards the upper inner thigh. This requires an improved capacity to release the adductor muscles at the top of the leg. In addition to allowing descent to a full right angle at the knee, this gives a life-enhancing experience of connection from the buttock to the body groin. The adductors connect the femur to the pelvis, allowing the releasing action to open the frontal aspect.

The sequence of instructions reflects a phenomenon known as reciprocal inhibition, in which muscles communicate via nerve signals that take a short route through the spinal cord, not requiring involvement of the brain. When you consciously contract the quads, a message is automatically sent to the spinal cord which in turn triggers a message to release the hip flexors, hamstrings and adductors. The short path means the signal gets more quickly to its destination. This is useful in situations where, for example during sporting activities, balance is lost and muscle strains or tears can result from sudden overstretching. Crucially for yogis, through practice and observation, one can become aware of, and encourage, the softening and release that occur in the right side pelvis and inner thigh during entry into Vīrabhadrāsana II. Exhaling during entry will lead to better awareness. In this way, by reducing resistance from the opposing muscle, you can achieve a deeper stretch more safely. This is breath-mind-body connection in action!

These principles apply in very many postures. In Adho Mukha Śvanāsana, contraction of the quads triggers release of the hamstrings which in turn helps the legs to straighten and the heels to descend. In Baddha Koṅāsana notice how when you activate the grip from the outer knees to the outer hip the femur head embeds more fully and inner thighs lengthen. When the adductors are tight the knees stay high, pitching the waist backwards. As the adductors soften and the knees descend, the result is a lower centre of gravity, creating a more stable base for the pose. Now less effort is required to bring the back ribs in and lift the trunk.

These principles are useful in Matsyāsana. Sit in Padmāsana and roll backwards taking the spine to the floor with knees pointing to the ceiling. As you descend the knees, grip the outer thighs strongly into the hip socket, allowing the inner thighs to release. Eventually the whole outer thigh will reach the floor, creating a tremendous opening in the frontal abdomen.

Muscle physiologists have discovered that holds of 20-30 seconds allow the fullest initial releasing action on the opposing muscle. If within one or two minutes one repeats the action, as much as 15% more extension becomes possible. So it's good to repeat postures! Don't expect to reach your deepest stretch on the first try.

When I used to play football I'd often acquire muscle strains. Most often they occur in an area close to a joint, as for example in the inner leg groin. This highlights the tendon-muscle connection – the capacity of tendons to lengthen is much less than that of muscles. I was surprised to find that Jānu Śirṣāsana with knee support could be done painlessly after a minor groin strain (not a tear) as long as you go slowly and keep the adductors passive. Thus one can bring improved blood circulation to the affected area, reducing inflammation and nourishing the satellite cells that act to repair muscle damage.

## Desert Island Asanas

(a nod to a long running Radio 4 programme!)

We asked Jayne Orton, Senior Iyengar teacher based in Birmingham, when she was visiting us last.

What would be your desert island asanas if you could only choose a few?



My first choice would be Scorpion pose, 'Vrschikasana' [p.387 in LoY]. There is a very old photograph of Mr. Iyengar, I think, in his 60s taken in London for a photo shoot. It's a vintage poster from Yoga and Health magazine from the '60s or early '70s. I had it as a teenager on my wall at home. I just think it's an amazing pose. I've never managed to get my feet on the head, but I can get students into it. I think it's got a beautiful combination of mobility and stability, that's why I love it. I had that was the picture on my wall. Like other people having their favourite pop star, I had Mr. Iyengar.

My second choice is Krounchasana –Heron pose [p. 158 in LoY]. It's elegant, a beautiful pose. There's another famous shot, in one of the books of Mr. Iyengar and Geeta doing it alongside each other on a lawn. You can do it many different ways. . On the island, you could put your leg up a palm tree and get a huge hamstring stretch!

Next is Anantasana. [p.248 in LoY]. That pose is incredible. I think it sums up Iyengar yoga because it doesn't look anything. I always say to my students - it's an easy pose to do badly and a very difficult pose to do well. If you're lying back and let your buttocks roll back and chest collapse then it's just the hamstring. But to actually lie on that very thin line beautifully, aligning the back of



the head, tailbone, heel and then open the front body like a standing pose that, I think, is the real yoga here. It's so much more than just leg stretching. I can spend a whole workshop practising that. I love it.



The book I would take to the island is 'Light on Yoga'. I am sure everyone says this and if you could have more you would take 'Gem for Women' too. But if it just one it's the bible of Yoga, as we say. I think the Introduction is the best introduction to Yoga philosophy in any book. It relates so much to what we do both in and out of class. I sometimes read out the whole list of benefits for halasana and Sarvangasana.

There's an amusing story about the book. My husband found a present for me of a hardback first edition with the dust cover pristine. I took it to Pune with me and asked Mr. Iyengar to sign it. He said 'This is an amazing copy, better than some of mine'. Then I had to say, well it's not my usual copy – mine is half falling apart....I had to explain it wasn't my 'working copy'!

And my luxury item would have to be Sparky, my dog, of course!



## The Different Requirements Between Level I, Level II and Level III

According to Prashant and Abhijata Iyengar there are four aspects to the Iyengar Yoga system: physical posture; sensitivity; perceptivity; and reflectivity.

These four different aspects can be related to the three sariras or the three layers of the body, moving from the gross body (physical asana) to the subtle body (sensitivity, perceptivity and reflectivity).

Physical posture is just that, the physical asanas. Sensitivity is the mental contribution, when we make an action and are sensitive to the results of the action. Perceptivity is a heightened sensitivity which enables us to see the connections between distinct body parts: to perceive the effects a pose has on the organs, muscles, breath. Reflectivity is where we consider the information received from our practice or our teacher.

**At Level One** correct and precise action is required. Understanding the shape of the asana, or the configuration of the pose. For example, in Uthitta Trikonasana straight arms, straight legs, feet in the correct alignment. In Uthitta Parsvakonasana the front leg should be at a right angle, and so on. The breath is not usually mentioned in asana practice at this level.

Understanding sequencing is important. In a beginners class you wouldn't start with Parivrtta Trikonasana. Asanas which help the hamstrings, back muscles, shoulders, hips etc. would be done first. We are expected to know the different categories of asanas, e.g. standings, forward bends, back bends etc.

At Level One you begin to make the student aware of the mental aspects. For example the mind is very different in Parsvottanasana with hands in Paschima Namaskarasana than when the hands are on the floor.

**At Level Two** the ability to feel the body, sensation, is needed. For example,

observing how pressing the big toe of the front foot down in Parsvottanasana brings stability, how the inner calf muscle lengthens. To open the chest involves the shoulders and shoulder blades. The mind moves from outside to inside. At Level Two we should be able to maintain the pose to feel the spreading, softening, releasing of the body.

At this level you observe the breath. There is not as much breathlessness or holding the breath. You can observe the difference in the breath as you bring the arms into different positions in rope Sirsasana, for example. Watching the breath like this is an external

action, like watching someone walking as opposed to being the person walking. You are watching the breath from outside. You are starting to move from the gross body (sthula sarira) to the subtle body (suksma sarira).

Understanding connections between different categories of asanas. For example, Parivrtta Parsvakonasana has similarities to Marichyasana III.

**At Level Three** there is a connection of distinct body parts. In Parsvottanasana, press the big toe and the calf muscle extends which draws in the hip lengthening the spine.

An increased awareness of the connections between the categories of asanas e.g. Parsvottanasana, Uthitta Hasta Padangusthasana I, Supta Padangusthasana I and Eka Pada Sirsasana.

In Iyengar yoga we have Precision, Sequencing and Timing. The first time we come across timings, usually, is in the inversions which we aim to hold for five minutes to receive the benefits. This allows time to observe what is happening, what is releasing, what is spreading etc. To hold Uthitta Padangusthasana while observing the breath is difficult due to balance. Introduce the breath in Supta Padangusthasana and observe what is going on. Then try in Parsvottanasana, then in Uthitta Padangusthasana I.

Now we are aware of the breath from inside. The mind has moved from outside to inside and involves the intelligence. This is breath awareness. The mind, body, breath and intelligence move together. We have moved through the three layers – gross body to subtle body to spiritual or causal body known as karana sarira.

Moving through the different levels isn't all about achieving certain poses. Moving through these different stages doesn't happen in a linear way. They come up at different stages of our yoga life and practice. It is not step by step, it is an evolution.

## **Maria Sharmina** – training to become an Iyengar Yoga teacher

Why am I training?

I started teacher training because I felt that teaching, helping, and observing other yoga practitioners would offer me a fundamentally different perspective on the practice, one that self-discipline and self-study alone could not provide. Drawn to the strong sense of community and support among Iyengar Yoga teachers and trainees, and I wanted to become part of that lineage. Perhaps most importantly, yoga has given me so much over the past decade and a half: better health, a more even temper, and a clearer mind. I feel profound gratitude to the subject of yoga itself and to all the teachers who continue to pass it on. This shift crystallised for me when a fellow practitioner observed, "Iyengar yoga teachers are so giving." For years, I had been mainly receiving, absorbing yoga like a sponge. I realised I was ready to learn how to give back, to pay forward what I had been given. As BKS Iyengar writes in *Light on Life*: "I am so grateful for what yoga has made of my life, that I have always sought to share it." And then he entreats us, "Carry the flame forward." *Tathāstu* (so be it).

## **Tracy Fisher** – Training to be a teacher

I have been a student of Iyengar yoga since the 1990's and had often wrestled with the idea of trying out for teacher training. But lack of confidence, a busy lifestyle with work and family commitments meant the time was never right. But I kept coming back to it. The turning point was when a friend challenged me to stop wondering and just take the first step and make some enquiries.

That first step led me to many more first steps on my journey as an Iyengar yoga mentee.

I attend weekly mentoring sessions in a live class and as many classes and workshops as I can manage, as well as daily practice and study. At times it's been bewildering, overwhelming and a lot to take in. But it has also been the best decision I could have made.

I am so grateful for the education and knowledge being shared by my mentor and teachers' home and abroad. Yoga has more meaning for me than ever and I feel I am living my passion... finally!

I honestly do not know what I did with my time before becoming a mentee but couldn't think of a better way to spend it now, than immersed in Iyengar yoga practices. Anyone like me considering becoming a mentee should maybe take a leap of faith and take that first step.

## **Laura Kwasnicki** – Training to be a teacher

Yoga has always been a part of my life. In my 20s I utilised yoga as part of my fitness regime but after my son was born it started to carry a deeper meaning for me. Although my life is busy being a dentist in a busy specialist practice, teaching at the dental hospital and being a single mother, I decided that I wanted to embark on the process of becoming a Iyengar yoga teacher. My mentor Debbie Bartholomew has been a real source of inspiration, support and knowledge, and has been so understanding as to the pressures of a busy working/family life.

The new mentoring system has placed the emphasis on in class learning which I have found both easy to access and essential for learning things like modifications.

Yoga is for all and I feel that Debbie has embraced this mantra both as a mentor and as my teacher.

If you're considering teacher training your enthusiasm will be embraced and you will be supported, no matter what your current situation in life is.... So go for it!

## **Lizzie Nicholls** – Training for Level 2

My decision to do level II teacher training, was initially made for me by my students who I could see, could do more, and I felt I needed to progress in order to help them progress!

Level II has been challenging both physically and intellectually - lots of Padmasana and arm balance work and learning about Kriya-yoga and the Bandhas - but the focus on building up poses gently, with consideration of the connections, seems to cultivate a deeper and more subtle approach that is so refreshing. Infusing each pose with such sensitivity, awareness, and breath, has been like 'putting colour on a sketch'.

There is also a greater focus on health issues and how to deal with them. I should think a concern for many teachers is of unintentionally hurting someone, so learning more about how to adapt poses and what possible alternatives there are, has been enormously helpful.

Studying within a small but very supportive peer group has been a wonderful part of this journey too. I count myself fortunate to be amongst such good company.

I also feel very lucky to be taught by some wonderful and highly experienced teachers at MDIY, who happily pass on their knowledge and insights ("Carry the flame forward"), alongside my own mentor, Sue Lovell.

## **Jayne Wilson** aged 62 years – training to Level 2

I was encouraged to start my Level II mentoring by my teacher, Debbie Bartholomew. It had been 7 years since passing the Level I (I was one of the cohorts who did the earlier type of assessment). I think Debbie's response to my asking her was "it's about time you did that!", followed by one of her legendary stories of how she ended up going along to train for her next assessment, despite feeling happy where she was.

That was where I was, 'comfortable in my teaching', my students were also 'happy where they were'. However my own burning desire (tapas) to deepen all eight limbs of practice had been growing for a while. I was already attending weekly Yoga Philosophy classes and I had a daily asana and pranayama self-practice. It was finally after I retired from my career as a school teacher that I decided to commit fully to the Level II program.

I have now completed the first year with my mentor, Monica Bejarano, at Zag Yoga in Sheffield. She is a vigorously compassionate mentor and has thoroughly supported and guided me to access the Level II syllabus with my physical limitations. We meet up once a month, along with two mentees working at Level I. The mentees share our prepared presentations on anatomy, physiology and Yoga philosophy and teach our poses; all meticulously organised by Monica.

The most challenging aspect for me has been cultivating my own asana self-practice to complete the Level II syllabus of postures, so they become as inculcated as those I currently teach at Level I, and addressing my own physical limitations at the same time.

## **Heidi Sherwood**

Training for L1 was more structured, as you're training to actually become an Iyengar Yoga teacher. L2 is more down to you to decide the pace you want to go at, of course, with the support of your mentor.

I wanted to do L2 to challenge myself & get a deeper understanding of Iyengar Yoga and to study the more complex poses.

I wanted to see what my capabilities were, and knowing that I wouldn't be able to do all the poses, how I could adapt them to be able to demonstrate, how to do them, with some inspiration.

The assignments also make you research the subject on a more esoteric level, which deepens your understanding and enhances your practice.

## What a Nerve!

Joan Abrams

Have you heard of the longest cranial nerve in the human body which ‘wanders’ from our brains down to our digestive system via the heart and lungs? Did you know that only mammals have this nerve? Would you believe that it regulates our nervous system, so that we don’t get stuck in the anxiety of ‘fight and flight’ mode? And are you thinking – what has this got to do with Yoga?



Answers!

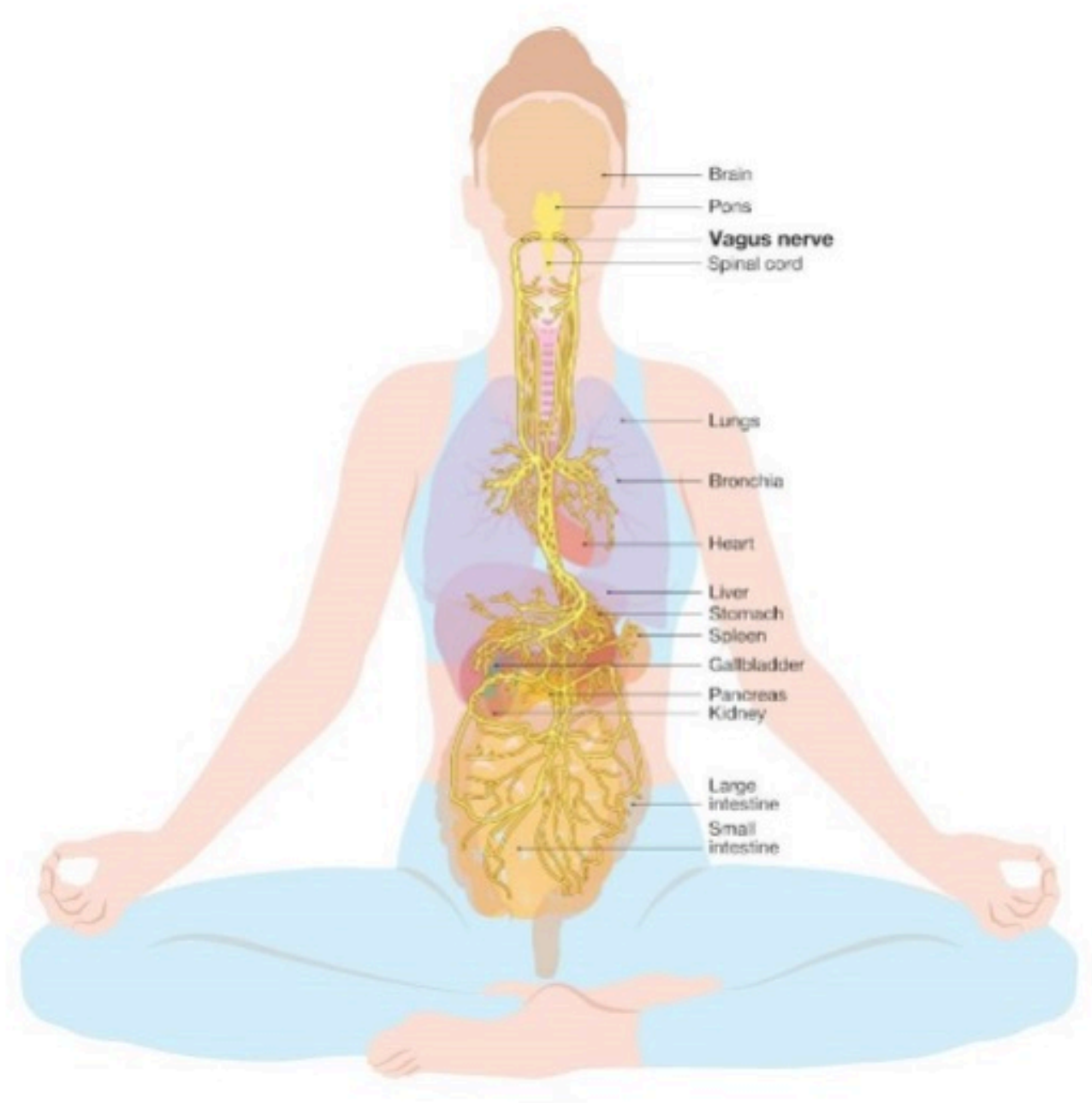
Its name is the VAGUS nerve [Latin for ‘wandering’]. A huge amount of research has shown how yoga, pranayama, chanting, meditation can have an enormous effect on how resilient and healthy our very own Vagus nerve can be.

Its purpose is to safeguard our mental well-being by balancing our 3 responses to life around us: immobilisation, mobilisation and social engagement – ie being still; being active and interacting with others. If you think about it – that’s all we do. If the Vagus nerve is ‘healthy’ (to be explained later) then we have a balanced response to stressful situations, with anxiety levels decreasing to normal when the situation has settled.

That is the purpose of the nerve – to regulate the autonomic nervous system (ANS) ie. to remain calm when stressed. There are two parts to the ANS: the sympathetic and the parasympathetic. Whenever your brain perceives a threat, the sympathetic nervous response kicks in to deal with fear or danger and triggers a ‘fight or flight’ response. The parasympathetic system acts when the danger is over – (the calmer one of rest and digest). This major nerve, the Vagus, sends messages to the heart to speed up when we need energy to confront difficulties, and to lower the heart rate when that threat is over. That’s when we literally ‘calm down’.

Apparently, as muscles have ‘tone’ so we can apply that term to ‘Vagal tone’. So, here’s the ‘healthy’ part as promised above. ‘Heart Rate Variability’ (HRV) is a measure of our autonomic nervous system’s flexibility – the ability to move easily from fight/flight to rest/digest. The Vagus gives off high frequency (HF) electrical waves to the heart when in

parasympathetic mode (calming) and low frequency (LF) or very low frequency (VLF) when in sympathetic mode (activating). So, if we have more of the HF electrical waves to our hearts then we are 'balancing' our nervous system, and able to give our hearts a rest through better HRV.



How does Yoga come into this? Research by Inbaraj et al (see references) asked varied groups of yoga practitioners to chant OM for 5 minutes. They found that long-term yoga students had higher frequency waves at rest than non-yoga students, which proved a higher resting HRV. Long-term yoga students also showed fewer LF waves (activating mode). However, they also found some significant changes in those who did not practise yoga regularly.

My understanding of this is that chanting stimulates the Vagus nerve to a flexibility in HRV and we 'balance' the two parts of the nervous system response. Basically, we are able to deal with life's situations more calmly.....

Finally – no more technical terms – the researchers asked for the chanting to be done as follows: In a cycle of 6 chants per minute, with a longer exhalation than inhalation (so that works out to roughly 3 secs inbreath and 7 seconds outbreath). The effect of chanting is not just vibration on the Vagus nerve, but also the elongated exhalation, known to increase HF waves from the Vagus nerve to the heart. Of course, we all know that a slow outbreath calms the heart rate.

You can also do a wide range of other things to improve Vagal tone – cold water swimming – even a partly cold shower (brrrrhh!); humming, singing or gargling (Brahmari Pranayama of course); yoga itself – seen as a parasympathetic activation exercise; massage; socialising and laughing. 'However you stimulate the Vagus nerve, you are tapping into mindfulness and coming home to yourself when you do.' (Sarah Jeanne Browne).

Of course, we could argue that the science is handy to know, but many of us have always known that yoga helps with the ups and downs of life. However, I was really interested when I discovered the Vagus nerve (not that long ago) and could see how the science helped. As for me, you'll be able to hear me chanting OM from Sheffield which is where I'll be when you read this!

OM, OM, OM, OM, OM, OM.

References:

- 1) 'How does OM Chanting impact HRV?' (The Minded Institute).
- 2) 'How to Stimulate your Vagus Nerve for Better Mental Health' – Jordan Ellis. 3) 'What the Vagus Nerve is and how to Stimulate it for Better Mental Health' – Sarah Jeanne Browne.

## How Diverse-Aware Are We?

Joan Abrams

The world is changing around us rapidly - AI, geopolitics, climate – to name a few!

Yoga doesn't change – a bulwark in our lives, to anchor us to deeper, quieter depths and experiences.

However, how Iyengar Yoga teachers are assessed; how they keep up their knowledge and understanding of important issues in society is changing. Our teachers are required to attend an 'Exchange of Learning' day each year to maintain their study of yoga and their right to being an Iyengar Yoga teacher. These are set up and run by senior teachers. Each year follows a theme – and this year it is 'YOGA FOR ALL BODIES'.

If we look around a yoga class, it is very often a majority of ethnically white, able-bodied and middle-class women. As part of our commitment to yoga, we have an ethical duty to encourage everyone to experience yoga. So – that would involve questioning ourselves as teachers and as an organisation (MDIY and our national organisation) to understand why this is, and what we can change.

One important change at national level is our, fairly new, Equity Committee which brings issues of age, race, gender, ableness, neuro-diversity, religion to our attention. We have the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali to set our standards – 'ahimsa' (non-violence). If we ignore or have hidden biases towards 'different bodies', then we are guilty of 'violence' – ignoring the diversity in every person and 'every body'....

As yoga teachers, we teach the whole person: how new or experienced they are to yoga; any underlying medical conditions, any other issues a teacher would ask to be aware of. Of course, we would also notice body shape, age, flexibility, stiffness, any physical disability and tailor our teaching to all. A great help in any class, of course, is the presence of 'props'. Used to encourage potential in the postures, they are a great boon. However, ongoing awareness of our own unconscious biases is key....ie that someone always needs a certain prop, or that flexibility is good, stiffness is not; some body shapes are more 'difficult' than others; men are stiffer than women, for example.

When teachers (of all ages, sizes, shapes, gender, ethnicity, religion) get together (as 35 of us did in January and March at MDIY) – then expect anything! Our backgrounds in education and life, aside from our commitment to yoga, are vastly different and the thoughtful discussion wide and fascinating. See some of us in action in photo.



## Marion Kilburn 27 September 1944 - 22 May 2025

Julie Royle

In January 1990 Jeanne Maslen, our teacher at MDIY, took a group of teachers to Pune on an intensive course with Guruji. Marion couldn't make the pre-trip meeting. I filled her in: the good news, we were staying at the Ajit Hotel; the bad news, she was sharing with me. She gave her hearty laugh and so began a beautiful and special friendship forged through our shared love of yoga and nature.

Marion loved to be on her mat. With Jeanne's encouragement her practice deepened and she achieved her Intermediate Senior Certificate in the 1990s. Marion was a dedicated practitioner and teacher of Iyengar Yoga. Yoga became her way of life. She was a very popular teacher, admired for her great energy, joyful spirit and warmth. She had a great connection with people, encouraging us to embrace our uniqueness and always reminding us to live in the present.



Marion was a great reader. She shared inspirational readings with her classes. When we were hiking, Marion often quoted beautiful phrases:

Be Yourself, be who you want to be, just be.

Live the life you love.

To be silly is to be free.

May you walk in love and dance in beauty.

Friends of Marion will know more and cherish her mischievousness.

Marion was very proud of her Irish roots. She shared her love of Irish dancing with her students and at many MDIY events. Marion had a strong yogic body but was so light on her feet when dancing. A delight to watch. I remember Marion being moved when Geetaji (at RIMYI celebrations) said "Yoga, dance and music are sisters". Many will remember the uplifting circle dance sessions that Marion taught at the IYA convention in Harrogate.

Marion was a giver. She was always grateful for what Yoga had given her and gave back to the Iyengar community: teacher training (Manchester, Ireland and first to train students in Sheffield), PD days/EOL. In 2005 she organised a village concert at MDIY with proceeds for Sri Lanka Tsunami fund.

The wind was Marion's element. She loved the beauty of Nature and being outdoors. Our yoga was always with us on our many treks and adventures. Ustrasana in front of camels in Mongolia, Urdhva Dhanurasana over hay bales and pack horse bridges, parigasana in front of old wooden gates... My mum got used to seeing photos of us in Vrksasana again and again...

A colourful personality, Marion always dressed in bright colours. A favourite poem was 'when I am an old woman I shall wear purple with a red hat that doesn't go and doesn't suit me' (Jenny Joseph). Red hats or party hats often came out on our walks.

Marion had great gratitude for her family, yoga and life. She was so proud when her daughter, Justine, qualified as an Iyengar teacher.

Marion touched the lives of so many with her positive outlook and zest for life. I am forever grateful for our special friendship and memories of her life well lived.



## Marion Kilburn

Lydia Holmes



Marion was unlike anyone I have ever met, and I feel incredibly grateful to have had the good fortune to meet her. She was the most influential person in my life, and without Marion, I don't know what path my life would have taken.

I first met her in a beginners' yoga class at the McDougal Centre at Manchester University in 1991. I had just returned from a transformative six months travelling around India. That trip changed me forever. I had wonderful adventures in the mountains, plains, and jungles, witnessing the extremes of breathtaking beauty juxtaposed with shocking scenes. India was technicolour - its smells, sounds, and tastes intense and unforgettable. Its religiosity, rituals, and cultural depth captured my heart, opened my eyes, and my mind.

It was in India that I first became aware of yoga, so when I returned home, I decided to join a yoga class. This is what led me to Marion.

I didn't know what to expect, but I was hooked from the very first class. Marion was small, perfectly formed, a maverick, and a force of nature. I loved her voice and the cloud of auburn hair that framed her friendly face. I remember finding the yoga

challenging and painful - but I felt so good afterwards, I decided I wanted to feel like this all the time.

After my second class, I asked Marion how one became a yoga teacher. She gave me a knowing look, laughed, and said, "Ask me in a few years." I forgot all about that conversation- until three years later, when she said, "Do you still want to be a yoga teacher?" I answered: "Yes!"

I had met Edgar shortly before I met Marion, and I told him about her class. He started attending too, and we would sometimes discuss our impressions. By Easter 1992, Edgar and I were together, and we began cycling to Marion's Adult Ed classes in Chorlton. She would weave a spell around us saying: "Now we're just going to do this... and we're just going to do that..." And before we knew it, we were doing handstands, elbow balances, headstands, back arches, wrist balances - and then, after a sublime Savasana, we would help her to her car with the yoga kit. She would smile and ask, "Are you coming dancing?"

She took us to the Irish Club and, although we had no idea how to set-dance, Marion would say, "Never mind, we'll show you." We were spun around from person to person, until we were dripping with sweat and our legs were wobbling. Then we'd ride home on our bikes at midnight.

Marion had boundless energy. I remember her telling me she never hit a threshold when it came to walking - she would go on 20-mile walks with the Ramblers in the Peaks and said she wished she could just keep walking all night and forever.

Marion was not a stern Iyengar teacher. She was always welcoming, never turned anyone away. I remember one summer class where students just kept arriving until there was no room left. Marion said, "Let's go to the playground." So, about 60 people (some without mats) piled outside, and she taught a beautiful class in the concrete playground.

Marion was always cheerful, smiling and had a magical innocence and childish quality to her. I remember her strong hugs and her peals of laughter whenever we met. She took Edgar and me under her wing, inviting us to celebrate the Winter and Summer Solstices with circle dancing. She would often read quotes from B.K.S. Iyengar or her favourite book, *Anam Āra*. She always had words of wisdom and would start the class by asking "did we see the sunset last night, or had we seen the moon?" She would have a wistful look in her eye, as she had a deep connection with nature and the miracle of life

When Edgar and I began our teacher training, we didn't have a car, so Marion persuaded Jeanne to give us lifts to Dukinfield. We would also cycle to Marion's house, and she would drive us over - we munched on carrots freshly pulled from her allotment on the way home. She always laughed about this, and she once gave me a bag from Unicorn saying, "dirty carrots".

In 1997, Edgar and I became Iyengar yoga teachers. In 1999, we travelled to Pune for two months and asked Marion if she would marry us while we were in India for Guruji's 80th birthday celebrations. I had always dreamt of an Indian wedding, and we wanted to be married on a houseboat on the Ganges in Varanasi.

Marion was taken aback when we asked, and she said "I'll have to ask the Priest" I felt sure at this point that it would be impossible. However, she told me when she asked him and he said, "Whatever you want Marion..." and so it was agreed. Marion and Julie Royle made the journey from Pune to Varanasi to marry us.

We wrote our vows on the train enroute. The day arrived - 31st December 1999. It was freezing with thick fog. I was disappointed by the weather thinking we would be married in a cloud, but we did some very cold sun salutations on the rooftop where Marion was staying. But by 11am, the clouds lifted, and it was a glorious day. We decorated the houseboat with 50,000 marigolds, turning it from blue to orange, and went out onto the Ganges. Marion conducted our ceremony and blessed us with peacock feathers, reciting the beautiful Irish blessing:

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
The rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Marion adored her family and there was always fun, mischief and adventure to be had when Marion was around. Marion was an inspiring yogi who was at ease in the asana who completely adhered to the yamas and niyamas. She was so proud of Justine, Jason, and all their beautiful children.

I consider Marion to be my "yoga mum." She brought me into the Iyengar Yoga world and was always there for me. Edgar and I treasure these memories and are forever grateful for the love, blessings, and well-being she brought into our lives.

## DEITY WORDSEARCH



FIND THE FOLLOWING DEITIES HORIZONTALLY, VERTICALLY & DIAGONALLY

- |               |                 |                |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. KRISHNA    | 12. PARVATI     | 23. BUDDHA     |
| 2. RAMA       | 13. KALI        | 24. BALARAMA   |
| 3. DEVA       | 14. GANESHA     | 25. PRITHU     |
| 4. HINDU      | 15. DURGA       | 26. YAJNA      |
| 5. SHIVA      | 16. PRAJAPATI   | 27. DATTATREYA |
| 6. MANGANESE  | 17. VAMANA      | 28. KALKI      |
| 7. TRIMURTI   | 18. KURMA       | 29. NATARAJA   |
| 8. BRAHMA     | 19. MATSYA      | 30. HANUMAN    |
| 9. VISHNU     | 20. VARAHA      | 31. DURVASA    |
| 10. LAKSHMI   | 21. NARSIMHA    | 32. ADITI      |
| 11. SARASWATI | 22. PARASHURAMA |                |

## **Minutes of the MDIY Annual General Meeting**

**Held on Saturday 15th November 2025 at  
Manchester and District Iyengar Yoga and online via Zoom**

There were 34 members present (9 online via Zoom and 25 were present in Reid Hall).  
Apologies: Kim Skinner, Vanita Mistry, Caroline Clegg, Julie Royle, Janice Yates

### **Minutes of the 2024 AGM**

The minutes from last year's AGM were printed in the 2025 Journal and were proposed by Debbie Bartholomew and seconded by Valerie Judge.

### **Chairman's Address (Charlotte Everitt)**

Welcome to our 2025 AGM, as we draw closer to the end of another busy, yoga-filled year.

We had a very significant blow this year, with the loss of Marion Kilburn, who was at the heart of MDIY for decades. We will all miss her, and her zest for life.

MDIY is a mutual membership organisation, which means that we are basically a group of like-minded people who get together and contribute towards experiencing the benefits and the joy of yoga. One of the points in our constitution is that as members, we each own a share of MDIY's assets – from the bank accounts, to the building, to the blocks and belts! From a legal point of view, sometimes we need a formal structure; and therefore we have always relied on a small group of trustees, who are named as effectively the administrators of our building on behalf of MDIY. Recently we needed to update the trust as Jeanne Maslen was one of the trustees; and on speaking with the other trustees (Tricia Booth, Janice Yates and Margaret Ellison) we agreed that we would update all the names. Therefore, we've started the process with our solicitors to replace the existing trustees with three current Executive Committee members – me, Tracey Ashton, and Clare Tunstall. Thanks to Tricia, Janice and Margaret for having held this responsibility for so many years.

As I mentioned – our members own our building. At a recent Executive Committee meeting, we discussed whether there are upgrades we should consider to make certain areas more practical – for example, redesigning the kitchen to improve breaks at events, and remove the bottlenecks. As this would be a significant spend, we wanted to get your input – and potentially help, please do get in touch with your thoughts and ideas.

Another potential change the EX is considering is introducing a new booking system including some form of registration or check-in, so we have a clearer idea of who's going to how many classes, how often. Currently, setting up online booking through the website

is a largely manual job, and class registers are held on paper – so we can't tell if members are attending multiple classes in a week, for example. Not all our members use mobile apps though, so again it would be helpful to hear your thoughts on this idea.

We asked our members this year to feed back to us about what you want more of from us; 60 of you took the time to tell us. Your feedback told us that weekly in-person classes are the most important aspect of what we do; and that weekend workshops with local teachers are as important, if not more so, than visiting teachers. We've tried this year to do some things a bit differently; we've started dedicated therapy workshops, which have had a mixed response. But we also recently held a series on anatomy, with a mix of online and in-person, which was incredibly popular (I think organising it might have given Clare a few grey hairs, but hopefully she's recovered by now!). Several people over that weekend commented on how great it was to see the hall full again; and we had visitors travel for the weekend, showing that we are an important centre for Iyengar yoga and should all be proud of that. If you have any ideas that you are reluctant to suggest in case they're a bit out of the ordinary – please do speak up! We're keen to try new things and see what works.

And we also welcome any ideas about how we can improve access to Iyengar yoga. Earlier this year, the committee recognised that some students, and would-be students, simply cannot attend a class or an event without the support of a carer. This is something you may have seen in places like theatres and sports venues, where someone can book a free or discounted seat for an essential carer. We have therefore introduced a free carer's place to ensure that no one is excluded from class because they are having to effectively pay twice to be able to attend- you may have noticed that this now appears on all our class and event booking pages. We hope that this will help to improve access to the benefits and joy of Iyengar Yoga.

One of the joys is in being truly involved in helping to support our members. Clare does loads for us but she is only one person, and we pay her for 12 hours a week even though she's at the centre regularly, attends most of our events, liaises with teachers before their workshops to make sure we're helping them deliver their best teaching, is constantly reminding our own teachers of things they need to know, and even drives visitors around trying to find a hotel when their pre-booked accommodation falls through... We have a lot of very involved members, who help with everything from gardening and building projects, to organising events, to answering the door at an event... If you're interested in lending a hand to help all our membership, please do have a chat with one of the committee. We simply could not run MDIY without our volunteers, whether that's organising events with teachers like Dr Rajlaxmi and Herman Traitteur, taking the register or buying milk for those events, writing for and compiling our annual journal, or doing some weeding in our lovely garden – and we're all grateful to all of you!

Members can now borrow from our library, downstairs opposite the kitchen – just fill out

the lending book so we can keep track of where books are. We've also acquired a new coffee machine, and have decided to ask for a donation for hot drinks in future so we can keep the kitchen well-stocked.

I'd like to thank our journal team for another great issue – and everyone who contribute, if you have something you would like to share with all our members then please do get in touch.

## **Secretary's Report (Tracey Ashton)**

Thank you for attending the AGM this year. These meetings are important and offer all our members a unique opportunity to better understand the running of the centre and help shape the current strategies and plans for the future.

So what has been happening this year at the MDIY? Well, Julie Brown kicked off the year in style with a general workshop designed to leave us feeling energised for the year ahead. Some of our favourite teachers from the UK have also visited this year; these included Sue Lovell, Edgar Stringer and Lydia Holmes and Jayne Orton. In August we were lucky enough to have a very special guest. Dr Rajlaxmi came to the centre to teach at our summer school.

Back by popular demand, a range of student-only workshops were taught by our favourite teachers – Nicky, Sarah, Clare and Debbie.

Our specialist classes also continue to be popular and we have recently added a back and neck class to the weekly programme.

This year has also seen some sad news too with the passing of our dear friend Marion Kilburn. Marion was very involved with the running of the MDIY. She was a teacher trainer and taught many of the current MDIY teachers. We have valued and benefited from her time and commitment to the centre and mostly the sheer joy and exuberant way in which she not only approached yoga, but indeed life.

MDIY is run for yoga students by a range of volunteers. It is this sense of community is what makes MDIY so unique. We are always in search of volunteers. The volunteer roles do not take much time and yet they make such a difference to the success of the centre. There are so many benefits to volunteering too. Every volunteer gets something different from their volunteering experience. Just some of the benefits include making a positive difference to people's lives, gaining invaluable work experience, developing new skills, using your existing skills and knowledge to benefit the local community and meeting new people from a range of backgrounds.

One of our volunteers retires this year. Verena Huber is standing down from her role on the Executive Committee. I would like to take the opportunity to thank her both for her hard work and the time that she has given to support the centre.

We therefore need your help! We have volunteer roles for the Executive Committee and also as Editor of the MDIY Journal. Please do contact us if you are interested in giving a small amount of time to ensure the success of the centre. To use a quote from BKS Iyengar “Words cannot convey the value of yoga, one has to experience it.” So why not experience the value in volunteering!

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for supporting the MDIY throughout the year and hope that you will continue to support the MDIY on its remarkable journey.

## **Treasurer’s Report (Kathryn Duffy)**

Thank you again to Michelle for doing our audit.

Membership income is recorded with a small reduction (4%) although this is likely due to timings of members re-joining. The IY(UK) numbers as at December 2024 state member numbers are at 354, a slight increase from 348 recorded last year.

Net income from events has increased again this year, this is reflected by the increased number of workshops and events that have taken place, combined with the improved attendance. Ordinarily all event income is accounted for at the point of receipt, this year almost £8,000 was received before the 31st July in respect of future events, Rajlaxmi and Hermann. To provide better accountability, this £8,000 has been deferred and is reported as deferred income on the balance sheet.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Income</b>	35,427	28,584	25,378	16,518	30,355
<b>Cost</b>	(20,261)	(13,197)	(24,284)	(11,021)	(25,308)
<b>Surplus</b>	15,166	15,447	1,094	5,497	5,047

During the year, class prices were increased, this is reflected in the increased income from classes. Similarly, to event income, all receipts for class bookings are accounted at point of sale and may not yet have incurred a teaching fee to off-set against them. As an example, class income for the second half of July exceeded £1,000 for block bookings where the teachers have not yet been paid as the classes have not yet taken place. Online and hybrid classes continue to be well attended.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>Income</b>	77,000	66,000	63,883	63,543	48,116
<b>Cost</b>	(46,306)	(50,782)	(43,596)	(45,782)	(32,962)
<b>Surplus</b>	30,694	15,218	20,287	17,761	15,154

It is worth noting that costs for both events and classes now exclude card fees, this provides improved transparency, and all card fees are grouped as one (see administration table below).

Merchandise sales were £1,364, with a £939 cost of sale, therefore a net income of £425 is reported on the income and expenditure statement.

Rental income of £530 is for room hire from teachers that have hired the halls to facilitate various workshops throughout the year.

Donations income includes a generous legacy receipt of £5,005 from one of our members which with her agreement we are using to further equip Booth Hall with props and equipment for use in our remedial classes. The remaining £1,602 being fees payable to teachers for the delivery of events/classes which they have kindly donated back to the MDIY.

Administration costs of £31,974 have increased by £10,800 compared to 2024. Included in the £32k are one-off costs for the website at £1,185, deep cleaning costs of £2,200 and equipment wash / jet wash of £321. PayPal and Sum-up charges are included in full, totalling £4,410. General costs have also seen an uplift, impacted by usage and inflation; advertising costs increased by £790 to £3,820, subscriptions for Vimeo and Zoom at £850, hygiene services £416.

Property costs are slightly down at £14k versus the previous year of £18k.

The results for the year show a surplus of £10,175. As such, a transfer of £10,000 has been made to the building fund.

The net assets as per the balance sheet are £373,633 (2024: £355,472); this includes £65k (2024: £54k) cash in hand at the bank. Overall, MDIY continues to meet its financial commitments and remains in a stable financial position.

This, as always, is due to the efficient dedication of both the Classes & Events Working Group and the Executive Committee and their members, our excellent management team, our dedicated group of teachers, and subsequently the students they bring through our doors.

## **Membership Secretary's Report (Jayne Wilson)**

As many of you may know, we are changing the non-teacher members to a 'rolling membership year'. This will mean that you will receive a full year of membership no matter when you join. However, that said, the majority of our members will still be renewing from 1st April, as this was the annual renewal date for all members previously.

If you are uncertain of your renewal date, do log-in to your account to check your last renewal date and make a note of it in your diary. Renew before the last day if possible. Do

also check if you have opted IN or OUT to receive a hard copy of the annual MDIY journal and the IY(UK) magazines.

Teacher members will still follow the usual annual renewal for 1st April each year. However, do try to renew as soon as you receive your notification, usually several weeks before, as there is an admin fee for not renewing on time! Also I would really appreciate this, as after the teacher renewal window our non-teachers will be starting their renewals.

Current MDIY members (January 2025 to 11th November 2025):

Honorary	4
Teachers	117
Non teachers	284
<b>Total members</b>	<b>405</b>

There was a question about the magazine and how do members get a copy.

Jayne explained that if you are a teacher member you are automatically opted in to receive a copy of the magazine.

There was a question as to whether all memberships should fall into line at one fixed point in the year rather than having students on individual 12-month membership, this means that students all renew at different times of the year.

The committee explained that the system at the moment was very efficient. The vast majority of students renew in April. There is only a small number of students whose membership renewal falls at a different time of year. In addition, the committee explained that most of our membership comes through our online system. The online system does not allow for a pro rata payment when students first join the MDIY.

There was a question regarding what was a secondary membership.

Jayne explained that as a teacher you need to renew through IY (UK). As part of this process you select the centre that you wish to be a member of. However, many teachers from elsewhere in the UK attend classes and events at the MDIY. If they wish to gain the benefits of being a member, they take out a secondary membership directly with the MDIY.

## Election of Officers

The Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer retire. The Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary are willing to stand again. The following members wish to stand for election:

	Proposer	Secunder
Charlotte Everitt (Chairman)	Sarah Pettitt	Susan Halliwell
Tracey Ashton (Secretary)	Silvia Dalla	Valerie Judge
Kathryn Duffy (Treasurer)	Janice Yates	Kim Skinner

The officers were re-elected unanimously.

## Election of Members

In accordance with our Constitution, three members retire annually. The following members retire and are willing to stand for re-election.

	Proposer	Secunder
Anil Singh	Colin Higgins	James Harvey
Clare Tunstall	Rita Mori	Jacqui Naraynsingh

Verena Huber retired and does not seek re-election.

Vinnie Xie would like to stand for election to the Executive Committee.

	Proposer	Secunder
Vinnie Xie	Sarah Pettit	Geoff Wolstenholme

Verena Huber retires and does not seek re-election. The committee thanked her for all her hard work and support.

The officers were unanimously elected.

## Any other Business

Clare Tunstall explained that although Verena Huber had resigned from the Executive Committee she was still very much involved in a volunteering role within the centre.

Joan Abrams offered thanks to the committee for their hard work.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 10:40am

**MANCHESTER & DISTRICT IYENGAR YOGA**

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 July 2025

<b>2024</b>		<b>2025</b>	
£	<u>INCOME</u>	£	£
8,700	Subscriptions	8,346	
15,447	Net proceeds from events	15,166	
15,218	Net proceeds from classes	30,694	
2,561	Rental income	530	
62	Net sale of publications and goods	425	
400	Donations	6,687	
<u>42,388</u>		<u>61,884</u>	
699	Bank interest	727	
<u>43,087</u>			62,611
	 <u>LESS EXPENDITURE</u>		
21,158	Administration expenses	31,974	
18,669	Property running cost	14,006	
-	Donations	172	
-	Purchase of yoga equipment	797	
5,394	IY(UK) Subscription	5,487	
<u>45,221</u>		<u>52,436</u>	
<u><b>(2,134)</b></u>	Surplus/(deficit) for the year		<u><b>10,175</b></u>

Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2025

	<u>GENERAL FUND</u>		
9,506	Balance brought forward at 1st August	7,372	
<u>(2,134)</u>	Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>10,175</u>	
7,372		17,547	
-	Less Transfer to Building Fund	<u>10,000</u>	
<u><b>7,372</b></u>			<b>7,547</b>
	 <u>BUILDING FUND</u>		
348,100	Balance brought forward at 1st August	348,100	
-	Transfer from General Fund	<u>10,000</u>	
<u><b>348,100</b></u>			<b>358,100</b>
-	Deferred income		<u>7,986</u>
<u><b>355,472</b></u>			<u><b>373,633</b></u>
	 <u>Represented by:</u>		
54,346	Bank Accounts		65,332
-	Current asset		5,983
1,715	Stock of goods held for resale		2,907
<u>299,411</u>	Property at 134 King Street and Cottage at cost		<u>299,411</u>
<u><b>355,472</b></u>			<u><b>373,633</b></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  
9th November 2025

## MDIY Yoga Shop

Our shop is an excellent place to buy your essential items of yoga equipment. We stock sticky mats, blocks and bricks, as well as belts and blankets. We also keep a number of yoga publications. We are always well-stocked and our prices are very competitive. For enquiries, contact the MDIY administrator Clare Tunstall on [clare@mdiy.org.uk](mailto:clare@mdiy.org.uk) or 0161 339 0748

Equipment	£
Belts	6.00
Blocks – blue EVA	6.00
Bricks – cork	10.00
Bricks – blue EVA	6.00
Blankets – cotton	20.00
Mats –	15.00
Posture Sheets	0.50
Practice Memo	1.50
Invocation Tape	2.00
Double buckle belts	10.00



Books and DVDs	£
Light on Yoga	15.00
Light on Pranayama	12.00
Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali	15.00
Light on Life	17.00
Yoga in Action – Preliminary Course	15.00
Yoga in Action - Intermediate Course	15.00
Yoga a Gem for Women	15.00
Illustrated Light on Yoga	20.00
Tuesdays with Prashant	13.00
Practice and Enjoy (Julie Brown) Video or DVD	13.00
DVD of Geetaji's visit to MDIY	10.00
Beginners guide to Pranayama - Geeta's transcripts	10.00
Yoga and Ayurveda - Geeta Iyengar	10.00
Geetanjali	10.00
John Claxton - Elements of the subtle body	10.00
John Claxton - Quest for Clarity	20.00
Interview Tape (Mr Iyengar)	2.00



## Upcoming Events

### 2026



25 <sup>th</sup> Apr	Workshop for all with Clare Tunstall
3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Peer Mentoring
8 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> May	Hermann Traitteur
16 <sup>th</sup> May	Level 4
23 <sup>rd</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup> May	IYUK Convention – Glasgow – Birjoo Mehta
6 <sup>th</sup> Jun	Student only workshop – Susie Savage
7 <sup>th</sup> Jun	Peer Mentoring
12 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> Jun	Garth McLean
20 <sup>th</sup> Jun	Syllabus workshop with Deborah Wilkinson - hybrid
5 <sup>th</sup> Jul	Peer Mentoring
18 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> Jul	Sushama Chitale
7 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Summer School with Debbie Bartholomew
5 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Level 4
6 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Peer Mentoring
12 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Knee workshop – Nicky Wright & Susie Savage
19 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Syllabus workshop with Debbie Bartholomew – The art of adjustment 10 -1
19 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Student only workshop with Sarah Pettitt
25 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> Sep	Firooza Ali in person
4 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Peer Mentoring
10 <sup>th</sup> Oct	EFAW 9 – 4pm -Booth Hall
17 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Syllabus Workshop with Debbie Bartholomew -The Classical pose and Different Ways of working towards the Classical Pose
17 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Student only workshop with Rita Mori
23 <sup>rd</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Jayne Orton – Fri afternoon and evening. Sat 10-3.30 pm
1 <sup>st</sup> Nov	Peer Mentoring
7 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Syllabus Study with Debbie Bartholomew Covering the Level I, II and III Inversions
7 <sup>th</sup> Nov	Student only workshop with Anil Singh
14 <sup>th</sup> Nov	AGM – & workshop Debbie Bartholomew
6 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Peer Mentoring
13 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Festive gathering
<b>2027</b>	
9 <sup>th</sup> Jan	Kick Starting the New Year
23 <sup>rd</sup> Jan	EL Day with Debbie Bartholomew
6 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Ayurveda and Yoga Asana Workshop looking at Digestive Health
26 <sup>th</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Christian Pisano