

Dorset & Hampshire Iyengar Yoga Institute



Welcome to the 9th Edition Newsletter !

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lia Howard Hole	
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Message from your Chairman

Hello and welcome to the second newsletter of the year. On the April 25th, we welcomed Judith Jones to Bournemouth. This was the second time that she has taught here, and the day was well attended by 34 students. Our Annual General Meeting was held during the lunch break, and for those of you who were not present, I was able to report that the past year had gone well. As a committee, we held our regular meetings, plus extra meetings for organizing the Birjoo Mehta weekend. We held our first Professional Development Day for teachers last September, and celebrated Mr Iyengar's 90th birthday in December with some special local classes, proceeds from which were sent to the Bellur Trust. We welcomed Carol Batterson on the committee, as the Hampshire Co-ordinator, but have still to find a replacement for the position of Executive Council Rep. If anyone is interested please do come forward and make yourself known. Since the AGM, we have held our second Professional Development Day on the 4th of July. The theme this year was on Forward Bends, and the day was officiated by Penn Reed. It was attended

by 24 local teachers. On the 25th of July, we held a **First Aid Day for 26 teachers, primarily for those who needed to renew their certificate this year. On the 19th September Judi Sweeting came to teach our second yoga day in Hampshire. This edition of the newsletter primarily focuses on Dr Geeta S. Iyengar and her teaching, both in Cologne and London. The IYA Convention this year was held at Old Billingsgate, which is the refurbished market, situated on the river Thames. I think most who attended would agree that it was a great venue and was well organized, thereby creating a special atmosphere, where Geeta taught around 800 students for five memorable days. I hope you will enjoy reading the various thoughts from some of the DHIYI members who attended. Personally, it was wonderful to be totally immersed in those days of yoga, have a chance to meet new fellow students from all over the UK and abroad, as well as catch up with old friends. I left feeling recharged and quite inspired. There is much else to read about, which I hope you will enjoy, such as Mary's account of her time attending the Cologne Convention, and the fun

sounding beach event held earlier in the summer. This was organized by Elaine, and apart from everyone having a great time, they also managed to raise another substantial sum for the Bellur Trust....well done! We have a description of our recent PD Day, as well as a piece where a student gains a new lease of life and the ability to touch her toes with straight legs. I would also like to thank Shaun Hobbs, our Treasurer's husband, who has volunteered to help our webmaster with the running and maintenance of the DHIYI website. Finally, amongst the many pictures in this newsletter, we can all enjoy those of little Sam, doing an effortless couple of poses....!

Giulia Howard-Hole,
Chairman

(** the next First Aid Day will be in 2012 or earlier if there is sufficient demand. If you are interested then please email committee@dhiyi.co.uk)

Update from your Secretary ~ September 2009

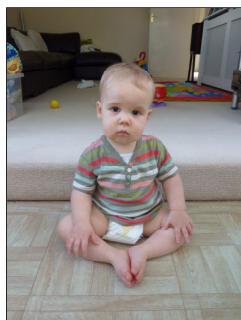
I'm pleased to say that 141 people have joined us this year. Of these, 15 are brand new members and everyone else has renewed. So, to 'old' and 'new' a big thank you for signing up and supporting the DHIYI!

Our members span several counties: Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somerset and Surrey which is most encouraging.

Life is always challenging for the Secretary. This year my challenge has been to get to grips with a new database set up by the main IYA office. If any of you have any difficulties with your membership or getting into the website, it could be the database operation cutting new teeth. Just drop either the IYA or myself an email and we'll do our best to help. I think it means more efficiency in the long run!

If you know of anyone who has either forgotten or would like to join the DHIYI, we are offering a half-year rate of £8.00. Just ask them to contact me on elaine-rees@europe.com or telephone 01202 483951.

Many thanks.
Elaine Rees,
Secretary



Baby Yoga !

Little Sam Trayford (our Editor's son) sitting in Baddha Konasana (Left) & Ardha Padmasana (Right)

We all had hips like this once !!





IYA (UK) London Convention 2009

At the start of the Convention, I was looking forward to a whole week dedicated to yoga, being with like minded people, a trip to London and more importantly being taught by Geeta Iyengar for the first time. I didn't know quite what to expect but thought it was going to be unique but gruelling.

During the seven days of *pranayama* and *asana* classes, Geeta gently guided us into *pranayama* with such subtlety that one particular session rendered me into such a peaceful, meditative and calm state of mind that I could have continued all day. And some of her analogies were so clever! For example her use of "having a cup of tea with the thigh" when aiming to bring your legs into *padmasana* very much helped to keep the pose quiet and I was consequently able to work much better in a pose which I find a challenge.

She has an ability like a doctor to diagnose a problem and demonstrated her ability to improve someone's condition virtually instantaneously. I especially was in awe of one of her diagnoses. There was a man who said he had one leg shorter than the other. Geeta examined him, asked him to do a couple of poses and discovered that he was over-using one leg compared to the other, causing an imbalance in muscle development. She strategically placed a weight on his thighs for 10 minutes while he was in *savasana*. When the weight was removed, the length and shape of his legs and even his toes appeared significantly more identical to each other. So the importance of the instruction "take the muscle to the bone" or "thighs back", for instance in *tadasana*, is now imprinted in my practice.



Geeta's *asana* teaching was inspiring and she had an uncanny ability to give the right instruction at precisely the right time to enhance and improve a pose. She even remembered an instruction she gave at the UK Convention seven years ago! Even with a class of 840 people, she could pick out anyone who needed correction and haul them up to the stage. However her approach, whilst sometimes severe, was imparted with compassion and humour.

This Convention week has given me a heightened sense of what yoga is about. I've often read that yoga is a combined knowledge of art, science and philosophy but I've felt that my own yogic understanding is scattered in bits of post-it notes or like having cooking ingredients but not having the recipe or experience to be able to bake them into a cake. I now have a better understanding of how these three yogic "ingredients" of art, science and philosophy once measured, blended and cooked make a cake with a balance and consistency, much like what we are striving for in our yoga practice! Whilst I'm very aware that I have a long path to tread in terms of baking and yoga, the experience of this Convention has certainly helped to hone my yogic cake-making abilities!

On a final note, I would like to thank "Eric and Ernie", my Convention housemates in crime at party central, for the breakfast routine, Miracle Bars, espresso coffee and of course the belly-aching laughs!

Catherine Otway (Dorset student teacher)

Being taught by Geeta at Convention was both an inspirational and humbling experience. After a week of morning pranayama sessions (wonderful !) followed by asana classes, I felt a new awakening and awareness which is impossible to put into mere words. Geeta is a truly knowledgeable and passionate teacher and I felt privileged to have received the benefits of her vast experience. As a teacher particularly, there was a great deal to inspire me and to aspire to.

Lyn Buckhy (Dorset teacher)

I was looking forward to the Convention but highly apprehensive - how would I cope ? The whole experience was amazing. There were so many people in the room but Geeta had everyone's full attention all the time. I especially enjoyed her remedial classes.

Julie Emery (Hampshire student)

A week with Geetaji, what an experience. I camped at Abbeywood, a 25-minute train journey from the convention centre, with 2 other girls. It was peaceful and rural, quite a contrast to the hustle and bustle of the city. Each day was totally amazing. We started with prayers, they got easier as the week progressed, then pranayama for an hour, which I loved. Each day I found I could go deeper into myself. The feeling at the end was total relaxation. After some welcome coffee and fruit, we did asana practice for 2-2 1/2 hours. The time seemed to go quickly. We built on the asanas each day and my body seemed to respond by completely opening up as the tension of normal living seemed to recede. She taught so exactly and encouraged total awareness that being present in the pose was possible. I also found the time she spent correcting people on the stage very interesting. The week was an absolute treat. I felt so good at the end, albeit exhausted. I made all sorts of resolutions about pranayama practice, but have not managed to maintain them ! I enjoyed all the camaraderie and going back to the peace of my tent in the evening.



Sheena Sutton (Hampshire teacher)



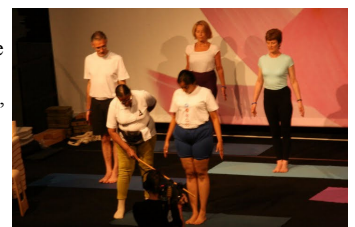
Now, a month after the convention, what has stayed with me the most are the instructions given on the first lesson. A huge emphasis in shaping the dorsal back. Shoulder bones back, shoulder blades in, trapezius muscles down, front body ascending. These points were made in words and actions - slaps in the back in *adho mukha svanasana*, followed in *uttanasana* etc. Obviously legs and arms were involved but it was the back that needed most persuasion.

These points laid the foundation for the rest of the week's *asana* work. They also provided the necessary strength and posture for the sitting *pranayama* practice. A gem from the *pranayama* sessions was the image that "the breath makes a sculpture from inside". I loved that. Altogether it was an excellent course of yoga. It all made perfect sense, everything linked, joined and progressed as you would expect in masterclasses given by the superb Geeta Iyengar.

Tarja Armitage (Dorset teacher)

One of my first and most lasting impressions of Geeta came from her stick. A tool that could have been used to intimidate was adorned and dignified by her compassion and commitment to yoga and to her students. No matter how many times she poked and prodded into Abhi's back, the intention was always clear. She was firm, clear, concise, fierce and above all, lovinga perfect mother of yoga. I am grateful for my week with her.

Cara Bowen (Dorset student teacher)



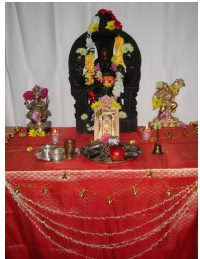
IYA (UK) London Convention 2009.....cont

Geetaji always brings the philosophy of Yoga to a level at which we can begin to understand, encouraging us to connect and relate yoga philosophy to our daily practice and our daily lives, and on the second afternoon, she gave a riveting talk about **samskaras** (subliminal impressions/imprints) which certainly left a lasting impression on me! This is an extract from my notes :-

"It is imprints from previous lives that cause you to gravitate towards *sadhana* (the practice/quest of yoga). But we will have mixed imprints which can pull us away from as well as towards yoga - *bhoga* (pleasure) *samskaras* v. *yoga samskaras*! When we first come to yoga, we may not be looking for liberation - the *samskaras* may be hidden as yet. A lot of purification and clarification is needed - a jump/leap cannot be taken to emancipation... Good imprints have to be made on the consciousness... The body, with its organs of action, organs of perception, consciousness etc., is the first instrument available to us. Adjustments/corrections are given not just to correct the physical body but to introduce new *samskaras* penetrating deeper. For example, being asked to observe where the right eye and the left eye are looking in an *asana* creates a tremendous *samskara*. As another example, Gururji will say to a committed chain smoker "Ok, you smoke but also do *Setubhanda Sarvangasana*", which will open up the chest and bring good *samskaras* which will make the bad *samskaras* take a back seat. Patanjali tells us that with *abhyasa* (the routine of practising) we can accumulate yoga *samskaras* through *yama*, *niyama*, *asana* etc. and go towards *kaivalya* (emancipation)."



Mary Heath (Dorset teacher)



In addition to Geeta's clear and philosophically-charged instructions in the asanas and the light she shed in the daily pranayama classes, I really enjoyed watching her perform puja at the beginning of each day. Ganesh, Hanuman, Patanjali and Vishnu were all honoured with various pastes, flowers and incense. The chanting was lengthy but went along well with the puja to create an ambience of reverence and humility. My thanks go to Geeta for a wonderful week where we were all encouraged to awaken the body, to remain inside ourselves and to go beyond the dualities.

Jenni Doohan (Hampshire Teacher)

I was struggling to find the word(s) to describe Geeta's teaching to my students and it was important to find the right words to do her justice, as they were very interested in hearing about the convention. I was talking to my teacher, Chrissie, and she described Geeta as 'extraordinary'. That's it, I thought, that is the only word needed! For me, this one powerful word sums up the convention perfectly.

Julie Fanciullacci (Dorset teacher)

When asked to write something of my impressions or teaching points from the Convention, it was so hard to know which bits to pick out. I finally decided to focus on the pranayama because in my opinion nobody teaches it better than Geeta. She has a way of keeping the students with her every step of the way, and it definitely was a progressive journey. We began the first day with lots of explanation and finer points of how to lie and how to sit and then very basic Ujjayi. Then at each daily session we were given more and more detail, leading to the teaching of Bhastrika and Kapalabhati and digital pranayama towards the end of the week. As always, there were the visualisations to help us understand, and I would like to share one or two which made an impression on me :-

Use the breath to 'sculpt' the shape of the inner body"

The sternum should be like a mirror which you hold in front of you to look in."

Watch the skin of the chest expanding with the inhalation like milk boiling in a pan."

Carol Batterson (Hampshire teacher)



'Great venue, lovely to be part of a such a large IYA event and to see and meet so many people, and a privilege to experience Geeta's teaching. Her pranayama was just wonderful. Memories of Abhi's expressive demonstrations, Geeta's dry humour, a colourful sea of yoga mats and swathes of wet coats draped across the equipment area will stay with me for a long time. Many thanks to all those who organised and ran this convention.'

Carolyn Ryan (Hampshire teacher)

An amazing week. Geeta was so astute, her instructions so clear and her energy during classes quite astounding. Her ability to see a problem and immediately deal with it is incredible. She has an ability to give, give, give and demonstrated a huge amount of compassion. On the last day her week of teaching all came together for me and I left feeling full of joy. Though happy, my head has come back absolutely stuffed and now I need time to digest it all. The organisation of this huge event was excellent and I feel privileged to have been there.

Elaine Rees (Dorset teacher)

Geeta's visit was a wonderful experience. I liked her simple, basic instructions. My favourite classes were the question and answer sessions, where students had written their health problems, and Geeta invited them onto the stage to show them which asanas to practise and how to do them with props and support. She could just look at a person and know what to do for them. It was a huge privilege to be there. I will never forget her wonderful smile as we said our goodbyes on the last day.

Kathi Vaile (Dorset teacher)

How privileged we were to receive such wonderful teaching from Geeta in London in May. She taught with compassion, clarity and depth. All of the 800 or more people attending from all over the world could believe that they were being taught individually. We all went our separate ways a very great deal richer for the experience. Thank you ~ dear Geetaji.

Beth Perrior (Dorset teacher)

I felt very privileged to be part of this special Convention. Before the event I felt very excited, and was so looking forward to seeing Geeta for the first time. The whole week proved to be amazing. Geeta gave so much to us all - her knowledge, determination and compassion, her depth of understanding and desire for us to understand all combined for me to make a very inspiring week. At the end of the Convention, we felt sad to say goodbye to Geeta. She certainly reached my heart and I found myself shedding a few tears. I just want to say Geetaji, thank you very much."

Pauline Collison (Dorset student)



Beach Yoga for Bellur ~ Bournemouth

The met office said thunder and lightning at 7pm that evening. With a churning in my stomach, I struggled to think of a contingency plan. "For what?"I hear you ask.

For fifty Iyengar yoga students, a dozen spectators and a very large pot of curry! Essential ingredients for a 'Yoga on the Beach' class – to be held on the golden sands of beautiful Bournemouth!

The idea was mooted one day by one of our members and a student of mine, Chris. "You arrange the class, I'll cook the curry" he said. And so the deal was done. Invites went out to all the students in my weekly classes and the enthusiasm was infectious.



*"We thought into yoga we'd inject lots of fun
And take it onto the beach and into the sun
So do come and join a class on the sand
And if you lose balance so soft you will land!"*

*Leave your blocks, belts and mats in the boot of your car
And on Mother Earth we'll stretch very far
A half hour of yoga to take out of life the flurry
And for afters, Chef Chris, will cook you a veg curry!*

*A small donation for food and to the Indian Charity Bellur
Is all I suggest and hope you concur
I'd really like you to come and let troubles melt away.
So please let me know and confirm without delay!"*



The evening arrived, the forecast happily wrong in our part of the beach and fifty yogis gathered under a hazy sky. The only 'props' we had were ourselves, a beach towel and the sand. Yoga on sand is an interesting experience. When you jump you land a lot deeper than normal. Balancing can be a bit tricky – especially on one leg! And, your buttock bones tend to sink more heavily than your legs when sitting down. Savasana (Corpse Pose), however, is bliss...the sand softly contouring to your body.

Sitting cross-legged overlooking the sea, a gentle breeze and clear sky, listening to fifty people chanting the invocation was strangely touching. Standing on one leg in Vrksasana (Tree pose) and Garudasana (Eagle pose) is largely comical. Elongating into the Virabhadrasanas (Warrior Poses) was wonderfully uplifting.

Clearly our antics provoked interest from passers-by who stopped to ponder, rang cycle bells and even joined in! I believe we may have recruited some local 6th formers who performed Trikonasana (Triangle Pose) remarkably well.

While we were all stretching, Chris steamed over his curry pot and Tim stirred up a pot of Pimms! Right on cue, out of Savasana and straight into a delicious feast.

Watching representatives from every one of my nine classes enjoy their yoga, chat happily to each other and greatly appreciate their curry and Pimms was joyful. Patanjali had responded to my prayers for a perfect night.

And the bonus to all this was that we raised £269 for Bellur – the rural home village in India of Mr Iyengar – where funds are being raised to improve conditions for the villagers living there.

By
Elaine Rees



How Yoga helped me.....



"Did you know you have been coming to yoga for 5 years?"

This was the opening remark made by my Yoga teacher a few months ago at the beginning of our phone conversation.

I started yoga classes out of desperation in 2003 after being told by the consultant who studied my MRI scan results, "I'm sorry there isn't anything we can do for you, unless you lose control of your bladder, when you will need an operation"I don't think so!

So off to yoga classes I limped every Wednesday combined with seeing an osteopath each week. My teacher gave me her time to show me some specific exercises for backs at home using a corner wall and my daughter's bed frame, we were off.

From not being able to walk the length of South Street without having to stop and rest at every bench to now having the occasional twinge when I am vacuuming or gardening; I even played rounders at my nephew's

birthday party without any ill effects and I didn't even think about not playing.

So I would recommend Iyengar Yoga to anyone with a bad back. (I don't think my teacher really knew how bad I was and probably wouldn't have touched me with a barge pole) – It has given me a new lease of life and my goal - to touch my toes with straight legs.....easy!!!

By
Bridget Legg



European Iyengar Yoga Convention Koln ~12-16th May 2009

The plans for a Convention of Iyengar yoga teachers in Europe were laid in Pune when Rita Keller from Germany, Lydie Driviere from France and Judith Jones from the UK jointly put a request to Geetaji, to which she graciously agreed.

I have so many happy memories of my week in Cologne: our cruises on the picturesque Rhine, the excitement of the last-minute preparations, the camaraderie of 5 teachers living and laughing together - Germany, France, the USA and the UK united by the universality of Iyengar yoga - as well as meeting or reuniting with around 450 teachers not just from Europe but from all over the world, and of course 5 whole days of Geetaji's inspired and inspiring teaching !

The Convention was held in the atmospheric setting of the beautifully restored Gurzenich building, right in the heart of historic Cologne/Koln. Each day started with pranayama, and we were required to remember the imprints on the body from the pranayama session - for example, moving the back ribs in like an arrow piercing, then opening the chest to the sides - so that in the later asana class we had the necessary intelligence in the back of the body. *Virabhadrasana I* was practised first in the normal way, and then with the arms down level with the back of the hips, and *Virabhadrasana II* in the same way or with the arms clasped behind (if no trapezius problems). *Adho Mukha Virasana* was practised (before *Sirsasana*) first in the normal way, then with the forehead on a brick and the arms folded in front (*Baddha Hastasana*) and lifted, and then with the chin on the brick and the same lift of the arms.....try it !

In '*Eka Pada Uttanasana*', with the feet wider than the hips but narrower than *Trikonasana* and taking the trunk down over the right leg, we had to lose the hump on the left side of the back, and take this imprint into *Parivrtta Trikonasana* to the right, and vice versa. This was followed by *Ustrasana*, before coming back to repeat *Parivrtta Trikonasana*. All of this served to make each class a penetrative and profound experience - and an uplifting and joyful one. There was laughter all around when on one occasion Geetaji showed, with a deft downward-slicing action of her hand (oh alright then, a slap !) on a teacher's shoulder blades, the movement required and declared "*Count your age by the thickness here (trapezius) not by the number of (birthday) cakes you have cut !*"

On the last day, during the morning tea break, a teacher with a medical condition came over and introduced himself to me and we talked about the help and advice Geetaji had given him not just at the Q&A session but in the asana classes. He told me that before coming to the Convention he was on the verge of giving up teaching his yoga class, but that because of Geetaji's guidance he felt encouraged to carry on teaching and more able to manage his condition.

What better tribute to the compassion, the generosity and the wisdom of Dr. Geeta S. Iyengar.

By
Mary Heath

DHIYI Professional Development Day~July 2009

July 4th 2009: Independence Day in America; Professional Development Day in Dorset, a significant day for Iyengar yoga teachers.

Pen Reed was our moderator and, after welcoming us all, she expressed the hope that those who were teaching would be able to do so with confidence, knowing that they were not being assessed.

The programme used for the day was one based on forward extension asanas, which had so impressed Judi Sweeting when she had worked with Geeta in Pune, that she felt we would all find it a valuable learning experience.

Those who taught did so with clear instruction and all made relevant links with the previous poses. Group discussion was left until the end of the day rather than at the end of each pose, which tends to

interrupt the flow of the sequence of postures. There was a question about leading with the chin in some of the forward extensions: Pen verified that this did not just mean an extension of the neck but that this action must come from the dorsal spine, and the throat must be relaxed and the eyes passive.

The sequencing of the asanas was interesting in that sometimes the more advanced version was performed first and then a more preparatory stage, as in *Akshana Dhanurasana*, and finally it was done with flow, helping us to experience the pose from all angles. I am sure we will all be referring to the programme time and time again and reminding ourselves of the teaching and sequencing points made.

By
Julie Smith





D.H.I.Y.I. ~ Dorset and Hampshire Iyengar Yoga Institute

Upcoming Events 2009 / 2010

DHIYI EVENTS

Saturday 16th January 2010

Yoga workshop with Debbie Bartholomew at Trinity Methodist Church in Southbourne, BH6 5AQ ~ 10.00AM—4.00PM

Cost ~ DHIYI Members £21 ~ Non-members £23.50

Saturday 24th April 2010

Yoga workshop with Genie Hammond at Trinity Methodist Church in Southbourne, BH6 5AQ ~ 10.00AM—4.00PM

Cost ~ DHIYI Members £21 ~ Non-members £23.50

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ANNUAL AGM WILL TAKE PLACE DURING THE LUNCH BREAK @ 1.15PM

OTHER EVENTS

Saturday 7th November 2009

Yoga workshop with Marion Kilburn at Trinity Methodist Church in Southbourne, BH6 5AQ ~ 10.00AM—4.30PM

Cost ~ DHIYI Members £25 ~ Non-members £27

*Saturday 13th February 2010

Teachers' Yoga Class with Mary Heath (*for certified Iyengar Teachers only*) at St Catherine's Hill Community Hall, Marlow Drive, Christchurch, BH23 2RR ~ 1.30PM—4.30PM

Cost ~ £13.50 payable by the 4th January 2010

*E-mail mary@maryheathyoga.co.uk or ring 01202 250441 to reserve a place

Saturday 20th March 2010

Yoga workshop ~ Teacher TBC ~ at Trinity Methodist Church in Southbourne, BH6 5AQ ~ 10.00AM—4.30PM

Cost ~ DHIYI Members £TBC ~ Non-members £TBC

Friday 28th May 2008

Teachers Workshop with Margaret Austin at Trinity Methodist Church in Southbourne, BH6 5AQ ~ 10.00AM—4.30PM

Cost ~ DHIYI Members £TBC ~ Non-members £TBC

Saturday 29th May 2010

Yoga workshop with Margaret Austin at Trinity Methodist Church in Southbourne, BH6 5AQ ~ 10.00AM—4.30PM

Cost ~ DHIYI Members £TBC ~ Non-members £TBC

For more information on any of the above events or to reserve a place:

Please contact Kim Trowell on 01202 558049

Other Yoga Events

Teachers, if you are organising an event, please let me know. Email me at "webmaster@dhiyi.co.uk" for inclusion in the next newsletter. Please note that **only** Iyengar yoga events will be included.

We're on the web
www.dhiyi.co.uk