



# the devon school of yoga newsletter

AUTUMN 2016

## welcome to autumn!

Welcome to the 2016 autumn edition of the Devon School of Yoga's newsletter.

As you'll see, there are lots of wonderful yoga events happening throughout the school as well as with DSY graduates. Thank you to everyone who contributes, reads and shares the newsletter.

Duncan, Jules and Sue  
[www.devonyoga.com/](http://www.devonyoga.com/) [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)

## dsy courses retreats & workshops

**28-30 October 2016**

**Holistic Yoga Autumn Retreat  
Residential Weekend, 3pm Friday to 3pm Sunday  
with Duncan Hulin and Andrea Guest  
at The Rill Estate, near Buckfastleigh, Devon**

Experience a weekend of yoga, pranayama and meditation with time to relax and enjoy the beautiful surrounding countryside. Delicious and nourishing vegetarian cuisine, spacious light studio and hot tub. (NOTE - the price for the residential includes accommodation, all food and drinks, three yoga sessions per day, evening kirtan (chanting) on Saturday and use of hot tub). **£280. To book a place email: [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com) (Currently four places left available)**

**19 November 2016**

**Holistic Yoga Workshop with Duncan Hulin  
at The Forge Yoga Centre Totnes, Devon  
Bookings via James Russell: [jamer\\_russell@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jamer_russell@yahoo.co.uk)  
(Currently Fully Booked)**

**3 December 2016**

**10am-5pm  
Postgraduate Yoga Workshop with Duncan Hulin  
The Barefoot Barn, Chagford, Devon**  
Kriyas, asana, pranayama, chanting, DSY bodywork and networking plus TTC diploma presentations to recent graduates. Open to practitioners as well as graduates from other traditions. **£40. To book email: [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)**

**Note: The next Devon Yoga Festival dates are 14-16 July 2017  
Tickets will go on sale from the 21st November 2016  
[www.devonyogafestival.co.uk](http://www.devonyogafestival.co.uk)**

## Keep Yoga Free

If you value freedom and diversity in yoga then please read the article below and consider signing the petition at this web link: <https://www.change.org/p/skills-active-yoga-regulation-no-thanks-stop-the-nos>

**Important news!** Some of you are already aware that there are plans afoot to create a National Occupational Standard for Yoga. IYN (Independent Yoga Network - which Duncan is a founder of and the Devon School is a member) is completely against such an idea, believing that "Standards standardise"! Currently there are no laws governing the teaching of Yoga in the UK, other than the general laws that apply to all citizens. This allows for freedom and diversity in teaching and training and gives the jobbing yoga teacher a reasonably level playing field in terms of teaching jobs. Furthermore, peoples' personal spiritual practice and the right to share it gets little interference under the current conditions, as one would expect in a country with a Human Rights Act. We should insist on the liberty to practice and share our practice.

Skills Active, an organisation licensed by the government to deal with all matters to do with training in the active leisure and learning sector are wanting to create a National Occupational Standard (NOS) for Yoga which would set "the benchmark" for teaching and training. Currently there is no NOS for Yoga but there is one for Yoga Therapy. The Independent Yoga Network believe that a NOS would generate all sorts of issues and would inhibit the freedom and diversity that we all benefit from. It would also probably impact on employment opportunities for those of us who can't in conscience let bodies who know nothing of yoga determine what and how we teach. In short, we believe that standards standardise and yoga does the opposite!

A meeting has been called by Skills Active for October in London, where representatives from many of the UK Yoga organisations and Schools will most likely attend. We would like this to be a coming together to discuss and debate all this but Skills Active have presented us with a rigid timetable both for the meeting and for the completion of the NOS by next year. They are behaving with considerable arrogance as though the matter is done and dusted.

It is relevant that Skills Active is an 'employer led' organisation. But who are the employers? Mostly the corporate fitness industry - members of the Fitness Industry Association have reciprocal membership with Skills Active. We find this alarming and if the word 'Independent' means anything in the name of our organisation, we are duty bound to prevent corporate interests, mostly driven by the profit motive, to have any influence over yoga whatsoever.

Skills Active tried this before in league with an authoritarian British Wheel of Yoga twelve years ago and the initiative foundered. The British Wheel are again entering an authoritarian phase under new management and have demonstrably had a 'behind the scenes' input into this latest bid for power over yoga.

In the light of these considerations the IYN will accordingly be in attendance at the initial meeting and will strongly oppose the idea of a National Occupational Standard for Yoga. We would like to create a document to present at this meeting with the concerns of as many teachers and schools as possible.

If you have any comments, questions or feedback then please email or contact Ellen Lee/ [ellenleyoga@hotmail.com](mailto:ellenleyoga@hotmail.com)



# The Devon Yoga Festival Summer Sangha - a tutor's perspective

by Tanja Bartlett

So I think this is the fifth Devon Yoga Festival, in one form or another. After four years, Duncan & his team have figured out what really works and, of the 3 festivals I've attended over the years, 2016 was definitely the best!

The Rill Estate is a lovely setting, peaceful, smaller & more intimate than Seale Hayne, and devoid of sleep-sabotaging chickens. I didn't stay over this time but from what I saw of the rooms, they were positively luxurious compared to what I'd experienced before...Very plush & cosy looking. The food...well, have you ever been on one of Duncan's residentials where Andrea does the catering? This was...(whisper)...almost as good as Andrea's food! (That's praise most high).

My festival experience was different this time as, for the first time, I was attending as a teacher– a treat and an honour to be sharing my own yoga offering this time, and mostly with people I hadn't taught before – lovely groups! But I did get to go to workshops on the days I taught, and I felt the schedule worked so much better: just 3 options to choose from in each time slot, and smaller group sizes (small is beautiful at the DSY festival), and more time in between workshops made this a much less frenetic rush to cram in as much as possible, and less being torn between this or that workshop... This festival had more of a focus on Devon yoga teachers: DSY tutors Alice Chapman, Andrea Durant, Barry Elms, Helen Humble, Sally Ornellas, James Russell, Jules Yount and of course Duncan Hulin were all present; but there were also some excellent visiting teachers.

I didn't get to attend some of the sessions I would have liked to e.g. Kara Hulin's freestyle movement & dance session, Alice's restorative class or Uma Dinsmore Tuli's two workshops - but I enjoyed her husband Nirlipta Tuli's Yoga Nidra session massively – I think several of us came away still in a bit of a trance, feeling we needed to do more yoga nidra ...He had a lovely, very quiet but deeply grounded energy about him, and spoke in a very illuminating way about how yoga nidra works on different levels of our consciousness. Fascinating & delightful to experience.

Once again, Mik Burley's philosophy session was a personal highlight of the festival – there just wasn't enough time to begin to cover all he'd planned to cover, and I'm hoping Duncan can convince him to come and do a full day sometime! The theme was recent research into early Hatha Yoga; just a couple of the insights I took away were that "hatha" unequivocally meant "forceful" in the sense of "exertion", "extreme or strenuous discipline" – which is interesting considering people often now describe their classes as Hatha to signify a gentler style of asana practice; and that, originally, the solar, active energy referred to the feminine, Shakti energy, and the lunar passive energy referred to the masculine energy of Shiva – again, funny how these meanings have now been reversed and solar, active energy is regarded as masculine while lunar, passive energy is feminine – how and when did that happen?

I tried to pace myself a bit more this year to avoid burn-out, so didn't go to absolutely as much as I could, but did enjoy a session with Andrea Durant whose beautiful compassionate energy and Buddhist-infused teaching is always so nourishing to be around. I also tried out some Kundalini with Hilary Bee – the best bit for me was lying on the floor while massive cosmic gongs washed huge crashing waves of sound over us... I did make it to Saturday's kirtan but having been up since 5am, was horizontal on the floor by about halfway through – one of the few who weren't dancing around the big hall in a bhakti frenzy of joy; the entire Hulin clan were on fine form that evening!

Once again, a good sum was raised for Ganga Prem and also the Glacier Trust, and I hear the 2017 festival is already booked so well done & good luck to Duncan, James & Jules!



## Devon Yoga Festival - Bathing in the Afterglow!

by Nicky Hayes

We are still bathing in the afterglow of yet another beautiful and inspirational Devon Yoga Festival. It feels like coming home each year to our Devon School of Yoga family. This was our fourth festival and by far the best. The Rill Estate really does provide the perfect accommodation, with its stunning studios and lovely bedrooms.

This year we came with two more friends to share the experience with us. It was a beautiful thing to watch their faces as they experienced the festival. The sessions offered a wide choice of different styles of yoga. The teachers are world class. Providing an excellent opportunity to experience something that you don't usually get at your weekly yoga class! The only difficulty being making up your mind as to which session to attend!

Highlights include: Uma Tuli and Shakti Yoni which completely blew our minds; the Kirtan with dear Barry Elm's, provided an opportunity to connect with our Bhakti practice, re-tuning our Om's; Alice Chapman's divine restorative practice and the amazing Gong bath; we also loved the acro-yoga with Chris Clayton Jones and Jules Yount!

As a teacher I find the festival a great source of inspiration for my teaching. More than that though, it feeds my soul, so that I can continue to nurture and feed my students.

Rarely do you get an opportunity to immerse yourself into the full range of yoga practices in an environment so conducive to creating the bhava. It truly is sangha - a community, a group of likeminded individuals coming together to explore the possibilities of yoga together. Yoga isn't something that you do, as in "I'm doing my yoga practice" on a sticky mat, but a way of being, a state of mind. The festival allows you to feel this - if only for a few days, you are in the state of yoga - unison of mind, body and spirit. I have learnt so much from the festival over the years, too many things to list. The overarching feeling though is of love.

We humbly offer our thanks to our friends at the Devon School of Yoga for this wonderful opportunity to connect with other yogi's and yogini's. Love and blessings to all. Namasté. *Nicky Hayes, Helen Kenworthy, Sue Huggins, Laura Byatt*

## DSY Events

### DSY Announcement

As the DSY logo is strictly for the use of the school only. The DSY is pleased to announce to graduate students of both the teacher training course and the postgraduate teacher training and yoga therapy course that we now have 'graduate DSY logos' which you can use on your own promotional material. Here is what they look like. If you wish to have a copy to use, please email us at: [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)



### Stop Press!

A twin room has become available on the school's 2017 North India Retreat at the Basunti Private Retreat Centre. This full board 10 day retreat at the unique "Basunti" is from the 30 March to the 10 April 2017. For further details, please see the following link: <http://www.devonyoga.com/retreats-workshops/india-retreats> Or contact the DSY office at: [info@devonyoga.com](mailto:info@devonyoga.com)



# Ishwara Pranidhana

by James Russell

Samadhi-siddhir Ishwara-pranidhanat  
“From devotion to God, Samadhi is perfected”  
- Yoga Sutra 2.45

In Patanjali's yoga Sutra, the final stage of yoga is Samadhi - 'clear perception.' In the second part of the sutra, Patanjali outlines two methods by which to accomplish Samadhi:

Kriya Yoga - the yoga of action and Ashtanga Yoga - eight limbed yoga.

A vital component found within both methods is the observance ('Niyama') of Ishwara Pranidhana. Most traditional commentaries define Ishwara as 'Lord' or 'God.' Pranidhana means 'surrender', and can also be translated as 'submission' or 'devotion.' So Ishwara Pranidhana then is 'surrendering to God.'

Patanjali's inclusion of Ishwara Pranidhana in both Kriya and Ashtanga Yoga indicates that he felt it was particularly significant: so much so that, within the framework of eight limbed yoga, Patanjali states that through the practice of Ishwara Pranidhana: Siddhi(r) - 'perfection' of Samadhi is attained. The implication thereof, is that this one practice alone can lead us directly to Samadhi.

Patanjali thus offers a theistic doctrine, albeit in a very non-dogmatic way. The sutra doesn't elaborate upon the way in which God should be interpreted and the practitioner is apparently free to find a form of their choosing. The traditional commentarial interpretation of Ishwara is an archetypal Deity residing as the 'Lord of Yoga' - usually represented as Shiva or Krishna, and devotion to whom, by extension, involves a firm commitment to the practice of Yoga. However, relationship with God is an intensely personal, subjective experience and in India we find the idea of Ishta-Deva, meaning 'preferred (or cherished) Divinity.' Within the broad scope of Ishta Deva, there is freedom to choose from a variety of Deities or even to worship a formless, non-personal interpretation of Divinity. There are said to be 33 million Gods and as many ways to worship God as there are people. So for western yoga students there is no need to abandon an existing belief system or convert to an unfamiliar concept of God. Each is free to cultivate their own faith and unique understanding of the Divine.

In the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, Ishwara is interpreted as a universal absolute that is oneness, and with which all things are connected. So again, Ishwara isn't necessarily an idolised form, and can also indicate an abstract - Nirguna ('without quality') concept of the absolute.

Belief in a religious doctrine isn't a mandatory prerequisite for the observance of Ishwara Pranidhana.

Some of us may not be entirely comfortable with the concept of God. We may have had unpleasant experiences of religion at school or find it difficult relating to the idea of an archaic, authoritarian figure from another time and culture. We live in a materialistic society in which objective science refutes the metaphysical and anything which cannot be empirically measured and verified.

For some it may therefore be easier to interpret Ishwara in a more liberal way. Ishta Deva is limitless in possibilities and could take the form of any number of transcendent experiences: the smile in someone's eyes; light reflecting upon the ocean; the view from a mountain peak; a starlit sky or the sunset on the beach. For the objective materialist it might be an appreciation of the all pervasiveness of quantum particles, by which the entire universe is bound, (a similar idea to the Advaita Vedantists' universal absolute).

In as many ways as there are to recognise Ishwara, so too are there myriad ways to practice surrendering. It could be through the recitation of prayers and mantras, or making offerings such as flowers, food and incense. Surya Namaskar can be practised as a form of Pranidhana and originates in offering prostrations before the rising Sun. Some yogis connect with Ishwara through Kirtan: ecstatic singing, dancing and chanting of the Holy names. For others, Ishwara Pranidhana takes the form of spending quiet time in nature, going for long walks, or contemplating the big questions of life.

However we choose to acknowledge and revere Ishwara, the ultimate effect is that we are humbled. We experience a sense of being a part of something much greater than ourselves and begin to let go of constantly trying to control the universe around us. When we realise our relative smallness in relation to the whole we begin to relinquish our ego ('asmita') and sense of self importance. In so doing, we are freed from the bonds of our self constructed prison and can experience a greater sense of connection with the whole - a deep seated feeling of trust and acceptance that all is as it should be.

The one who has surrendered all to Ishwara has no need of any further yoga practices: no need of asana, pranayama or even meditation. He or she is content in the reciprocal exchange of Divine love: Bhakti yoga.

# Three Poems

by Paula Kaminska

## "The Choices"

Never before it felt so real  
Never before I was so still  
The lights of possible choices  
Were dancing around me  
And I was there  
Admiring the dance of light  
All the sorrows,  
All the wishes,  
All the loves,  
All the chances  
The dancers passed me by

## "Flow of acceptance"

I wake up and my mind is clouded, the earth  
of my body – tensed.  
I must exercise on those mornings,  
so that the inner sun appears.

Only then the sun will show me my brightness  
and my shade.  
But I will see the clouds again  
– when nothing grows I need rain.

## "Yoga, cycling, rain..."

No barriers for my body  
No bounds to tie my soul  
No ego to grasp my thinking  
No questions. No doubts. I am whole

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## Poem from Amanda Levett

On the current Postgraduate Yoga Therapy Course

**Be in the present moment**

**Receive with gratitude**

**Encourage confidence and self-worth**

**Awareness of the inner journey**

**Total commitment to your goals**

**Heal with compassion and empathy**

**Evolve into the authentic you**

## Notice Board

### Saturday 29th October 10am-5pm Women's Workshop

'Liberate your pelvis and tone your pelvic floor, including lower back and psoas' at Otterford Parish Hall, Bishopswood (1 mile off A303)  
£60 including vegetarian lunch & Tea  
A day of yoga, meditation, relaxation and cake. Contact Helen 01823 602702 or text 07763802610 to book your place

### 18-19 November 2016

#### 'Winter Wind Down Retreat'

at Middle Coombe Farm  
Laura Priestly with freshly prepared vegetarian food by Virginia Compton  
Both DSY Graduates  
£250.00. To book contact: lara.priestley@gmail.com

### Used Yoga Mats Request for a North Devon School

Dear All,  
Emily Love, a school teacher in Braunton contacted the DSY office recently because their school has decided to begin introducing yoga to their students. However, even though they have initially around 30 children in the class for whom they have the opportunity to share yoga with, there is no budget for this and the classroom floors are incredibly hard and not ideal for yoga. Likewise, they are unable to use the school hall for the yoga sessions. Therefore, we wondered if you might be interested in very kindly donating any of your older/unused yoga mats to them to use for these sessions.

We'd be incredibly grateful if you could help them out. THANKS!  
If so, you can contact Emily directly at: [elove@southmead.devon.sch.uk](mailto:elove@southmead.devon.sch.uk)

## Namaskaram

Namaskaram is the online magazine and newsletter of The Independent Yoga Network. Here you will find news, views, and authoritative articles on all matters Yoga, plus an up-to-date list of workshops, retreats and seminars put on by Independent Yoga Network members. If you are an Independent Yoga Network member you can list your classes, workshops and events - go to the 'what's on' page to find out how to add your listing. For more information: [www.namaskaram.co.uk](http://www.namaskaram.co.uk)