

the devon school of yoga newsletter

AUTUMN 2018

welcome to autumn!

Welcome to the 2018 Autumn edition of the Devon School of Yoga's Newsletter. We trust that you will find many items of interest in this issue.

There are plenty of workshops, retreats and other events to choose from to keep you yoga inspired.

Thank you to everyone who contributes and reads the newsletter. Please feel free to share it with anyone you feel may be interested.

Namaste
Duncan, Jules & Sue
www.devonyoga.com/ info@devonyoga.com

DSY yoga courses

Postgraduate Yoga Therapy Course Starting September 2018 (2 PLACES AVAILABLE)

The Postgraduate Yoga Therapy Course is to enhance and develop yoga teachers' knowledge especially for working in small therapy orientated groups or for working with clients on a 1-2-1 basis and dealing with varying conditions. It is a 2 year course and provides more in depth therapeutic skill sets.

Foundation Course Starting February 2019

The Foundation Course is a 10 day course, spread over five monthly weekends of which two are full board residential (included in the course fee), and is aimed at yoga students who wish to deepen their practice, knowledge and experience. The course offers a broad base of practices from which yoga students can enrich and develop their yoga life skills. It is also a prerequisite for the Teacher Training Course (if the other requirements are not met). The course is 68 taught hours and comprehensive course manuals are provided.

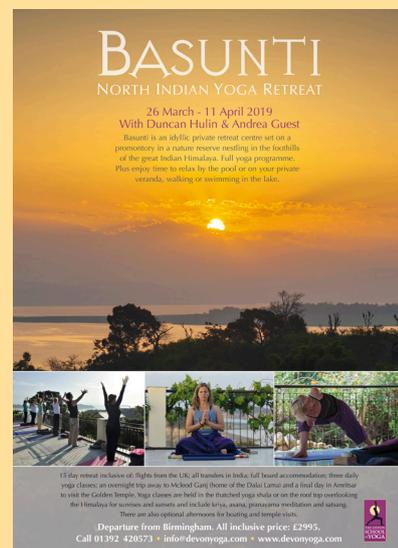
For further details about all courses, email the DSY office at: info@devonyoga.com



DSY Retreat to Basunti, North India

(3 PLACES AVAILABLE!)

26 March - 11 April 2019, £2995 (including flights, internal transfers in India, 15 nights full board accommodation, 30 yoga classes plus much more!) For further information see article on page 3. To book email: info@devonyoga.com
www.devonyoga.com/retreats-workshops/india-retreats



DSY Yoga Walking/Treking Holiday, French Pyrenees

13-20 July 2019, £895 (including transfers from and to Biarritz as well as transfers to and from the walk drop off and pick up points, 7 nights full board accommodation, 8 yoga classes) For further information see article on page 4 and for the schedule plus booking email: info@devonyoga.com



The Mirage: A Gateway To The Indian Himalaya

From Steve Bateman

We've come to India for Duncan's Spring retreat. It's the end of March and the Himalayas, known locally as the Dhauladhar mountain range, are bursting with rhododendrons. The air is cool, crisp and clean; Ideal for the deeper practice of yoga and meditation.

The National Geographic Traveller describes The Mirage as "a place for quiet introspection, set amidst the greenery of the Artists' Colony of Andretta," but, it was Duncan's account of The Mirage that sparked our interest in it, and firmed our decision to make it our base, from where to explore The Kangra Valley tea plantations, Hindu temples and Tibetan monasteries.

We followed our driver up the path, through the dense foliage to a landscaped garden, its terraces and verandas dotted around a large colonial house, and a series of smaller adobe cottages. All about us, the chit chat of birds, as tits and warblers went about their business.

Secret, Green, Enchanting and Elemental came to mind as the mystic of The Mirage unfolded.

Denis, the owner, who'd answered Anne's emails and helped arrange our transport, greeted us with a broad smile and offered us a choice of two rooms; both sizeable and tastefully decorated, with modern amenities. We opted for the rustic four-poster bed, and put down our bags.

Enveloped in this greenery, we were instantly at home in the ancient Woodland Artist Colony, once home to artists like the saint philosopher, painter, sculptor and poet Sobha Singh, the Irish writer and dramatist Norah Richards, and Sardar Gurcharan Singh, who founded the Andretta pottery studio.

Something in the lay lines reminded me of a poem I am fond of:

**We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning...
the intersection of the timeless moment.**

**- Little Gidding V, Four Quartets.
T.S. Eliot (1943)**

We were immersed in the authentic India that we had come to explore: disconnected from the hubbub of tourism, in the wooded grounds of a tranquil retreat, surrounded by native plants, through which we could contemplate the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas.

And off to the side, behind a curtain of bamboos, almost hidden from view, the hexagonal glasshouse that is the yoga shala; its bright mosaic columns glinted in the dappled sunlight.

Peaceful and tranquil, our shoes removed, we stepped inside, our feet welcoming the smoothness of the wood parquet floor. Above, four large fans dangled from the raffia ceiling; The glass doors retracted, open to the elements, we sat cross-legged on the floor, gazing out to the mountains, our minds stilled, and our bodies in symbiosis with nature.



Duncan had told us about Denis and how he engaged his guests in tales of travel and adventure. That evening, as we sat around a large dining table for dinner, Denis entranced us with his tales of Himalayan treks, sailing and paragliding adventures, whilst the many ethnic curios dotted about his home played testimony to a life of nomadic vagabonding.

A qualified sea captain from New Zealand, Denis spent a career building stage sets for the international theatre and film world. A postponed film meeting with his festival buddies the following day unexpectedly freed Denis to accompany us on a day trip to Bir, the location for The Paragliding World Cup 2015.

As we snaked through the lanes of the Kangra Valley, it was evident that everyone knew Denis, including the local bus drivers, who honked and waved as we passed. On your way to Bir we stopped at ancient Hindu temples and Tibetan monasteries that dot the region. The spiritually charged atmosphere of these foothills was the perfect backdrop to our deeper practice of yoga, meditation and pranayama.

But the region is not purely for yogis, it has something to offer every traveller, from spiritually inclined souls to adventure seekers and nature-enthusiasts. The beauty of doing yoga in the Kangra Valley is the freedom to combine it with interests like trekking, paragliding, pottery and music.

The valley has a lot to offer; Andretta is the peaceful, quiet part, but further afield we visited the buzzing towns of Dharamshala and McLeod Ganj, home of the Dalai Lama and other refugee Tibetans. This drive to these towns had, once again, many places to please the eye and the soul: The Wha Tea Estate near Palampur, and the Norbulingka Institute, where Tibetan arts and crafts, like thangka painting, panel painting, wood carving and appliqué are kept alive by almost three hundred skilled Tibetan craftsmen and women, who work in the enchanting garden under flags, bamboo trees, and brightly coloured pillars that keep the self-sustaining community cool.

More curves and bends, and we were at Bir, where Denis pulled up beside a barber, where we had a wet shave, our eyebrows threaded and an invigorating head massage. A few metres down the road we shared beers and Indian food on a terrace that offered a spectacular view of the paragliders.

All too soon we were on the road again, watching the sun go down, the birds fly home and the tea stalls pulling down their shutters. It was on this drive home that we spotted a Puja: a group of women and children chanting and dancing beside their local shrine.

Denis pulled over in a heartbeat, and we spent a glorious 30 minutes in the delightful company of singers and dancers, taking photos of their celebration, Anne joining the ladies for a dance, and the kids eager to practice the English they'd learned in their English-medium schools.

The colours, the light and the festive spirit of this sundown community filled our souls with glee, and reaffirmed all the beauty in Indian rural life. Once again we felt our huge privilege as guests in this rich cultural district of India, absorbing its beauty, and appreciating the way this valley nourishes its people so well.

As we neared The Mirage, Denis pulled over for one final "authentic" experience. On Andretta high street, inside a blackened tea shop, the wife of Denis' gardener greeted us with a smile, sat us down, and served us a copious glass each of the local brew.

I don't know what it was, and Denis likely doesn't either, but I do know this: "What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from." We'll certainly be back for more, perhaps to combine our deeper yoga practice at The Mirage with a trek over the Indrahara pass.

Disclosure: Since visiting The Mirage, Stephen has helped Denis compile a Group Leader Program for teachers wishing to visit with a group. This can be downloaded directly from The Mirage website by typing <http://bit.ly/Teachers-Yoga-Pack> into your browser.

Chimes of Silence

Devon School of Yoga Retreat Basunti 2018

From Steve Bateman

It's 5:30 in the morning on the fourth day of my yoga retreat at Basunti, when I am woken, feeling discombobulated and resentful, by the shrill, piercing call of an extremely loud and persistent bird outside my window.

What creature can that be?

Looking out, I spot plum-headed, pistachio-green parakeets, nibbling nectar from bottle-brush flowers, which they discard, creating a carpet of pink debris all over the ground below.

But where is the shrieker?

Keen to learn what bird my assailant is, I wander across the gardens and meet David. He'd been busy baking loaves of bread since 4 am. With a knowing smile, he informs me that my assailant is the "brain-fever bird" (Asian Koel;) the very beast that drove the British colonials to distraction.

With a cup of tea in hand, I gather up my yoga mat, bolster and cushion and join my group on the rooftop. This is where our day begins, with meditation, stretching, cleansing, and the chimes of silence, the morning sun on our skin, the cool breeze in our hair, and the birdsong.

Like the stone Buddhas of Borobudur we sit silent, still. Kites circle overhead and sometimes swoop down through the trees to drink from the water bowls.

From here we can see fishermen rowing their boats silently across the lake.

The previous day Anne, my other half, had written to friends: "We're settling in to six hours of yoga a day at Basunti, some of it pranayama and meditation, wonderful food people and walks down to swim in the lake. Sometimes I get embarrassed by Steve, who does yoga in faded old black Thai fisherman trousers from 20 years ago, (Carrefour,) no pants, no top and the trousers unravelling and falling down! Not to mention the marijuana he picked from the side of the road and brought back to offer tea for everyone! Learning to let go!"

Indeed: "learning to let go," that's what we're here for.

On the lush green plains below we glimpse wild green-plumed peacocks, monkeys, deer, mongooses, and discover that there are 555 species of birds here. My favourite is the crimson or purple sunbird. Oh, and the giant kingfisher that visits daily to peer down into the fish pond by the yoga shala from his perch above.

Some days we walk down to the lake to swim there. There are periods of silence. Some days we do not talk until lunchtime, others until dinner.

In the distance, when the view is clear, we marvel at the soaring snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas, reflected in the water of the lake.

As if mimicking them, we stand tall in "tad asana;" conscious that we're in the birthplace of yoga.

David and Izzy work tirelessly to make our stay memorable: The gardens are tended, the food is healthy and delicious, and the clusters that gather to eat in companionable silence on the verandah are relaxed, happy and content with their daily schedule.

Breakfast consists of fresh papaya and curd, porridge and toast and, for those that want it, an omelette. Lunch and dinner are copious servings of soup, hummus, samosas, pakoras, dal, salad, beetroot, and so much more delicious food. The "piece de resistance" is David's supreme mango crumble and cream. It's to die for!

We love being here. The lake and pool are welcome respites from the searing heat and the effort of daily asanas.

The sunrises and sunsets are spectacular, and we face up and down, rising in the morning and bending in the evening, to their calming cadence.

Half way through our first week we breakout to McCleod Ganj, where we explore bustling market streets, stalls, vegan eateries, and witness bad driving and traffic situations that are twenty times worse than anything back home.

Into our second week I notice that my yoga practice has changed me: My shoulders, chest and pelvis can now unfurl without the usual stiffness, a bit like the petals of the pink lotus flowers that adorn the Basunti water ponds.

On the rooftop, during pranayama, my legs and feet may go to sleep, but I no longer pray for release. When a part of me is aching, I refocus my attention on my "ujjayi" breath, thus ignoring the part of my brain that is begging me to give attention to the pain. I remind myself that my pain is temporary, and that nothing significant will come of it.

When I lead with breath coordination my postures feel light and effortless.

It's been a great lifetime experience and here are some of the lessons I've learned:

Stillness is conducive to accurate perception, and I am able to affect what my breath does, and how my breath affects my mind.

Pranayama is a tool I can use to slow myself down and cease unproductive mental activities (citta vrtti nirodhah.)

My lifetime energy is finite. To conserve energy and live a full life I must slow down, or I else expire early.

To remain still and stable when life goes awry is a happier result than grasping for straws or for whatever society tells me will make me happy.

Being silent in a group has toned down my impulse to fill pauses in conversations. I'm a happier listener.

Lifelong grudges and animosities I had toward people who offended me in the past have all but evaporated, perhaps in part due to the cleansing effects of the full moon "Agney Hosta."

I am grateful to Anne for choosing me to share this retreat with her. I am grateful to Duncan and Andrea for their instruction and good humour, and to David and Izzy for their hospitality and for having created Basunti, a slice of serenity and paradise on Earth, and to each person in our group for their companionship.

I hope this account will give readers a flavour of the delights and benefits of the Devon school of yoga yoga retreat at Basunti, and the mesmerising district of Pong Lake in Himachal Pradesh, India.

Namaste Stephen





Pyrenean Yoga Walking July 2019

NEW

DSY Pyrenean Yoga Walking Holiday July 2019

This seven-day yoga walking holiday in the French Atlantic Pyrenees is for keen walkers, with daily yoga classes led by Duncan Hulin and walks/trek led by Stephen Bateman.

The holiday includes morning and evening yoga, daily mountain walks/treks, creative vegetarian food and packed lunches each day.

The holiday builds up to a three-day (two-overnight) trekking excursion into the Pyrenean National Park, where we sleep and eat under the stars, in modern, well-equipped mountain refuges.

During the first two days of the holiday, we will prepare body, mind and spirit for our adventure through yoga classes and local strength-building walks.

On the third day we will begin our three-day (two-overnight) trekking excursion into the high mountains, where we will discover hidden places and secrets of both ourselves and the mountains, at every step.

With Stephen leading the treks and Duncan shepherding from the rear to be sure no-one strays, we will enjoy three days and two magical nights in totally breathtaking scenery, sleeping and eating in refuges.

On the fifth day we will descend and return to our base in the Pays Basque for an afternoon chill and restorative evening yoga session.

On our final day the group will visit the local market town, to shop for local produce with an afternoon option to relax at the local thermal spa baths.

Accommodation is “rustic French” with shared bathrooms at The Bar House, in the small picturesque village of Roquiague, near Mauleon and the larger market town of Oloron-Saint-Maria, Pays Basque.

The program is full-on, with early starts, hearty breakfasts, ascending walks, nutritious vegetarian food and packed lunches.

This is a yoga adventure holiday that will leave you feeling renewed, full of energy and vitality. Participants should expect limited Internet and mobile access, with some silences.

Dates are: 13-20 July 2019. Price is: £895

This includes:

- 7 nights full board (including all meals and hot drinks)
- airport transfer from/to Biarritz
- all guided walks/treks
- transportation to and from all walks/treks drop-off collection points
- 8 yoga classes

This excludes:

- flights to Biarritz
- any single room supplements which are available

Group size is limited to 12 persons.

For further enquiries including daily schedule, please contact Duncan - info@devonyoga.com



Devon Yoga Festival 2018

Beautiful People - The 2018 Devon Yoga Festival

From Steve Bateman

When gathering with like-minded people, I am reminded of The Beatles lyric

*How does it feel to be
One of the beautiful people (..)
What do you want to be
And have you travelled very far...*

This year's Devon Yoga Festival was the perfect occasion to reconnect with friends, and to meet new like-minded yoga practitioners from all over the UK and Europe.

Despite the vast and varied workshop programme, Duncan, James and Jules had planned for ample time between sessions for people to congregate in small groups, to have conversations about what they'd learned, retreats they'd been on and to sing, dance and chant together, and generally discuss new yoga variations and combinations, like Neurogenic, Ayurvedic, Kum Nye, and Acroyoga.

With three sessions to choose from at any given time, the festival didn't rely on participants pre-booking sessions, but instead gave us the opportunity to spontaneously decide which class to join, depending on our disposition, curiosity and energy levels.

As well as the Asana, Nidra and Meditation classes, there were a scattering of special knowledge workshops, like "Pain - is it all in the mind?", "Samkhya Philosophy", and the Yogic Dance workshop to choose from. To attend a single workshop like one of these at home would cost a handsome amount, which made attending the festival great value for money.

Two or three workshop leaders and teachers travelled from afar, which made attending and gaining a lot of

new knowledge from these workshops in a short period of time, and exercising the mind, as well as the body, extra special!

The evening Kirtan with Barry Elms, et al, on Saturday night, which people had raved about from previous festivals, provided a wonderful opportunity to come together as one big group in the Studio, to sing, chant and dance the night away.

The entire festival took place on Rill Estate, where we enjoyed superb views over the Dart Valley from its commanding position on Bigadon Hill. The sun shone the entire time and we ate out on the lawns in small groups, our plates of wholesome food balanced on our laps, enjoying the Prana and the tranquility of the green scenery.

This sixth not-for-profit yoga festival was once again meticulously organised by Duncan, James and Jules, raising a combined contribution of £10,566 mostly for it's two chosen charities The Ganja Prem and Glacier Trust.

The Festival was completely booked, the weather was perfect and the food was great - what more could a dedicated yogi ask for!

The DSOY team will have a break from organizing the summer festival in 2019, to concentrate on other key tasks, returning in July 2020. Other smaller yoga events like The Pyrenean Yoga Walking Holiday are being offered in the meantime. See previous page for details.

Article written by Stephen Bateman, partially adapted from "Ganga Prem - 2018 Devon Yoga Festival" by Swami Saradananda.

The next Devon Yoga Festival is scheduled to take place 17-19 July 2020

DSY Events

Devon School of Yoga Seasonal Sangha. A seasonal meeting for DSY students past and present.

Reconnect with DSY, the lineage, old and new yoga friends. The evenings will be an opportunity for chanting, kriyas, pranayama, meditation, talk and discussion followed by tea and biscuits.

The next FREE DSY Sanga is: **Friday 14th September** at Derek the Dog yoga studio, 3rd floor, Queens Walk, 83-84 Queen Street, Exeter EX4 3RP Time: 6pm-8pm

Talks to be announced closer to the time so keep an eye on our Facebook page for information.



DEVON SCHOOL OF YOGA
Seasonal Sangha
A seasonal meeting for DSY students past and present...

2018
SPRING - 9th MARCH
SUMMER - 29th JUNE
AUTUMN - 14th SEPTEMBER

6pm - 8pm
derekthedog yoga centre
3rd floor, Queens Walk,
83-84 Queen Street,
Exeter,
EX4 3RP

Reconnect with DSY, the lineage, old and new yoga friends. The evenings will be an opportunity for: chanting, kriyas, pranayama, meditation, a talk and discussion followed by tea & biscuits.

Free event with suggested £5 donation to cover costs. Further info on talks to be announced closer to the time. To offer a talk, please email: info@devonyoga.com Website: www.devonyoga.com



This is a free event, donations accepted to cover hall costs. Suggested donation of £5 per person. Please confirm if you are coming as it would be helpful to know numbers.

9-11 November

Autumn Yoga Retreat
3pm Friday to 3pm Sunday, £310
Rill Estate near Buckfastleigh
For further information including how to book email: info@devonyoga.com
www.devonyoga.com/retreats-workshops/residentials-uk

24 November

Postgraduate Yoga Workshop with Duncan Hulin
10am-5pm, The Barefoot Barn Chagford, Devon.
£45. Deposit to hold a place = £20.
To book email: info@devonyoga.com
www.devonyoga.com/retreats-workshops/workshops

Yoga and Poetry Inspiration

From Anne Bateman

In June last year, I took myself to a 'retreat', alone in our house in the French Pays Basque. I was recovering from some treatment for cervical cancer. I counted on at least 3 weeks of intensive yoga practice and the time and inclination to write.

My first attempts at yoga were thwarted by the reek of mould in the house...the result of being closed up and un-lived in. So, I spent the first week cleaning but thought of this as Karma yoga practice and creating a clean orderly base for my practice.

Then for 2 weeks I practised the Devon School of Yoga Kriyas every morning, followed by a gentle yoga practice and as the weeks went by, I got stronger. There was a heatwave so some days I escaped from the house early to get to a river bank where I could keep cool during the unbearable noon heat. If I didn't get out of the house early, I was trapped in the blessed cool of the house, unable to get out. So sometimes my main asana practice was late afternoon or evening.

At the river bank I wrote my first poem. I felt alive and in the moment and was really looking and feeling what I was seeing.

There is a waking dream state half way between sleeping and waking where I used to write poetry in my teens...in those days it just bubbled up.

Yoga and meditation helps me to reach this same place, where words syntax and images become less precise and you can play with them, or maybe they play with you, smudged, juxtaposed, creating effects which get closer to a catharsis of feelings and emotions. The words well up from the subconscious to the conscious mind and I felt a wholeness; scattered fragmented, bits of me, reintegrated and complete.

Since then, I have continued to write poems which I feel as a catharsis, about both wonderful (in Basunti) and also difficult times (my mother's aging).

Bank Holiday Monday

The world is falling away
Step by step
No books, no films, no questions
No more preparing the face to meet the faces
Sunk in your chair, hiding in blankets
Your apple pie making hands
At rest in your lap
Synapses cauterized by rage and despair
Watching reruns, lulled by the familiar
"I am content", you tell me.

I am a child again
Tugging impatiently
At your skirts
Trying to pull you away
From your conversation with death.

Your slight weight on my arm
We negotiate the uneven path
Rising up to the bluebells
Stopping to breathe in
The strength to continue
Spring birdsong
Filling the comfortable silence
Between us.

Standing in Vrksasana
Prana flowing through upraised arms
Into my aching heart
Balancing on the turning earth
Learning to let go
Oh Mama of mine.

In Basunti

This IS the real world
Letting go, closing your eyes
The early morning sun warming your skin,
The dawn birds, a wall of sound, pulsating energy.
Follow your breath, allowing yourself to love yourself,
It's the best you can ever do for yourself
Sitting, breathing, stretching into your best self,
To the still centre at the eye of the storm,
Our chorus of Oms vibrating through all our hearts

The lake sprawls at the edge of our vision.
Rowdy crows and kites, vultures riding thermals,
Swoop to drink at the ponds.
Hibiscus, cactus, amaryllis, water lily, bouganvillia.
Torpedo shaped fish skulk in the dark ponds,
Rising, turning in the air and slapping back through the water
As we share our Oms,
vibrating through all our hearts.

Later, when we are facing
the uncharitable, the dull,
A deadline, the enervating,
the tragic,
Like a good summer can be
read in a tree ring
We shall close our eyes and find our breath,
Feel the prana ease our anxious hearts,
Find the vastness behind our closed eyes
And remember, the love is always, always here,
In us.



First Aid for Yoga Teachers

From Deborah Cox

Have you ever wondered what you'd do if you had an emergency in your class? All Yoga practitioners have a duty of care to the health and wellbeing of the students and undoubtedly you will have obtained health backgrounds from all of your class members and obtaining health back grounds. But what do you do next?

We cannot predict when an emergency may occur or when someone becomes sick suddenly. It would be a devastating experience not able to help because you do not have first aid knowledge.

First aid training can save lives and prevent minor injuries from becoming major ones. People can have underlying conditions, suffer injuries or fall ill at any time. When this happens, it is important that they receive immediate attention. First aid training will make you confident and comfortable and therefore more effective and in control when you need to be. There are so many simple things that we can all do to help someone in an emergency which could make the difference between life and death.

As discussed in Amber Burke's article in Yoga International 'Who wouldn't want a magic formula to ward off injury on the mat or protect our yoga students from harm? That wish for safety, however, may have given rise to a host of misconceptions about yoga injuries. Yoga teachers may believe we can avoid injury if only we're sufficiently mindful. Or that if we just move slowly enough, or do a pose perfectly enough, we will never be hurt.'

<https://yogainternational.com/article/view/10-myths-about-yoga-injuries1>

Yoga teachers may come across in an everyday class conditions such as strains, sprains, fainting, epilepsy, asthma, heart conditions, diabetes. Giving appropriate first aid immediately can help to reduce a person's recovery time and make the difference between the person having a temporary or long-term disability. In some situations, if a patient doesn't receive basic first aid care immediately their situation will deteriorate – often rapidly. By being able to provide basic care you can stabilize a patient until emergency medical services arrives.

First Aid teaches how to remain calm in emergency situations, simple acronyms help you recall the steps you need to take e.g. PRICE for strains and sprains

- Protect
- Rest
- Ice
- Compression
- Elevate

Yoga teachers and student teachers are advised to hold a valid first aid certificate and many accrediting bodies require it as do insurers.

Everybody has got somebody in their class who suffers with an illness or injury. How reassuring for your class members to know that you are aware of exactly what to do in an emergency.

Deborah Cox. Amplio Training.
info@ampliotraining.co.uk/ www.ampliotraining.co.uk
01395 542220/ 07950 353 133

Pregnancy Yoga

From Lucy Holtom

When I was asked to write about Pregnancy Yoga, I thought, great, yes, I can whizz this out in no time sharing my love of Yoga and my fantastic experience of pregnancy yoga, why it's so good to attend classes and teach them! But actually, when I started to reflect on where to begin, my mind uncovered the difficulties, exhaustion and complete trauma that I had experienced whilst carrying and giving birth to my first child.

Prior to becoming pregnant with my first, I had practised yoga since I taught myself at the age of 15. However, the self care and my practice disappeared when I became pregnant as I suffered with anaemia, sickness, isolation and exhaustion. I didn't know how to cope with the symptoms, the changes in my body and mind and the sense of isolation I experienced, despite being excited about growing a baby inside of me, there was a part of me that just didn't know how to deal with everything, leaving me overwhelmed.

The labour was 30 hours long, with sickness and every drug under the sun pumped into me, my legs straddled uncomfortably wide for all 15 or so people to deal with, creating a completely traumatic experience. I was obviously relieved when it was over and had my healthy baby safely in my arms... I immediately put this trauma behind me and fell in love with motherhood. What I did recall though is that it felt like I didn't know how to manage anything during the labour, I went into "flight or fight" mode. Having realised this, I put this feeling to the back of my mind, got back on my mat and rediscovered my yoga practice, so much so, that I decided to train to become a 'teacher.'

Yoga Teacher Training

During my second year of Yoga Teacher Training, I fell pregnant again with my second child. I knew that I wanted a healthier pregnancy and a less traumatic labour than I had with my first baby – fortunately I was in the perfect place to learn about techniques that would help me and my unborn child on this journey. Thanks to some wonderful teachers at my yoga school, I was advised on books, diet and, the most useful of all, postures and breathing techniques for relieving discomfort in both pregnancy and labour. I also had the opportunity to study my pregnancy for my yoga project and benefited tremendously from combining the two: Pregnancy & Yoga. My second pregnancy was more manageable than my first and my labour was the most mind-blowing, grounding and spiritual experience that I could have ever imagined. I was relaxed, confident and focused and gave birth using all of my newfound practises. I know that it was these tools that supported my very straightforward home birth – something I never would have dreamt I'd have the confidence to do.

Pregnancy Yoga Training

Due to my positive pregnancy and birth experience, I went on to study to become a Pregnancy Yoga Teacher with Uma Dinsmore-Tuli. I wanted other women to have positive, empowering pregnancies and births, rather than the horror stories that we often hear, and was encouraged by other yoga teachers to train with her. I found Uma to be a hugely creative and compassionate woman who inspired me completely – she opened the door to a completely different approach to yoga for me, deepening my understanding of pregnancy yoga. Many of the techniques she taught still inspire my non-pregnancy yoga classes today.

continued on next page...

Pregnancy yoga in my experience, and teachings, has a distinct design to nurture your body and mind and your baby's; this is completely unique. It is not about "keeping the weight off" or about transforming into a temporary "hippy" (though at times, I did lean in this direction if I'm honest!) Pregnancy yoga combines a series of practices that are useful for your body and mind to help cope and find comfort with the continual changes that you have little control over... yoga gives you the power to manage them.

It provides you with tools to cope with the emotional upheavals, mood changes, natural anxieties that occur before, during and after the arrival of baby. How to cope with exhaustion, discomfort, breathlessness, indigestion, aches, pains, changes in your pelvic floor and bladder control, Braxton hicks, labour and how to manage postnatally.

Pregnancy yoga helps you connect with yourself on a completely different level whereby you are able to respond to your body's needs without others necessarily telling you how to. It teaches you to trust that your body does actually know what it's doing and to have faith in yourself...women's bodies have been carrying and birthing babies for ever, after all. It doesn't promise you the home birth of your dreams, but the practice does arm you with tools to help you cope with the unexpected.

So what are these practices?

They're a combination of:

Asana (posture) designed and adapted to suit your body's needs wherever you are in pregnancy;

Pranayama (breathing practice) to help make space in your body (especially around the ribs in the final trimester), to calm your mind, to nourish you and your baby, to assist in pre-labour pains and labour itself;

Meditation & Visualisation to help you focus, create a positive headspace, learn how to release and let go of worries; adopt your own positive mantra, affirmations or visual imagery that suits you personally;

Yoga Nidra to completely relax and refresh you, to help settle or release discomforts both mentally and emotionally. For some, Yoga Nidra is the most nourishing part of their actual pregnancy, especially for those that have trouble sleeping.

Some may say that this is what the essence of all yoga practices offer, yes, I would agree. But pregnancy yoga encapsulates the practices and adapts to look after both of you and the immense changes that a mother-to-be has little control over, from the newly found softness and elasticity of muscles to the absolute and utter exhaustion. Pregnancy yoga creates an even deeper connection to the self...it connects to another living being deep inside. A variation on a regular yoga practice is absolutely essential for this to happen.

Pregnancy is transformational. Pregnancy Yoga is designed to assist with this transformation, to help create a journey that is positive, beautiful and accepting. Pregnancy Yoga classes also unite women and create a supportive environment at a crucial time in life, when women will possibly need it the most.





Top 5 Tips for Practising Yoga Outdoors This Summer

From Paula Kaminska

It's Summer time, the season of warm days' worth spending outdoors. Whatever your favourite activities in the open air are we hope your yoga practice is on that list too. If not, we will help you start.

Now when the Summer is in bloom we thought you might need a helping hand with moving your yoga outdoors. For that occasion we have compiled for you the list of top tips which briefly summarise what we have learnt from running our Holistic Yoga sessions outside of studios – either during our favourite Yoga & Sailing Retreat in Croatia, where every day we were rolling out our yoga mats in a new breath-taking location, or locally in Plymouth, where our famous bi-weekly Yoga on the Hoe classes ran all the way to November last year, thanks to sheer enthusiasm of our attendees despite moody weather.

1. Find the right spot

Your surrounding has a big impact on your wellbeing as well as your ability to focus, especially in your yoga practice. Choose a quiet a bit isolated flat spot where you will have enough freedom to be yourself and connect with the nature without judgement. You can consider anything from sparsely attended parks, lake and river banks to beaches and meadows. Or take the chance to rediscover your own patio, balcony, garden, or even conservatory?

2. Choose the right time of day

Every time spent exercising outdoors is worth the effort. But certain time of the day might be more suitable than other. Make yourself familiar with the weather forecast – on a hot dry day you may prefer to roll out your yoga mat during a bit cooler morning or evening, ideally before meals. At the same time however avoid late evenings as you may become an easy target for mosquitos, and other insects!

3. Be creative with your props

Are you feeling a bit spoiled by the abundance of accessories available in your local yoga studio? Eye bags, straps, blocks, blankets, bolsters, and... walls. Then one day you go into the wild and at first you feel that all the poses you have been trying out with props have to be eliminated from your sequence. Nothing could be further from the truth! Be creative, play with the environment. Make use of rocks, tree branches and leaves. In our most recent outdoor yoga session students even used their water bottles for support.

4. Find your pack

If solitude is not your thing find a local group that enjoys exercising in lovely natural surroundings. Perhaps there's a walking or cycling group in your area? You might even find yoga teachers running weather-dependant bi-weekly classes! Start by browsing Meetup, Facebook Events and Google Search. You will be surprised to discover how many events in your area run completely free of charge!

5. Enjoy silence... or play music

The only thing better from music is silence... and the sounds of nature. The sound of cascading water, gentle ocean waves, deep forest rustle, birds and crickets singing... The sounds of nature have a powerful therapeutic effect on our body, mind and spirit. They naturally support us in letting go of stress and rooting ourselves in the here and now without stressors of our daily life. However, if for whatever reason you would prefer to change the original setting why not to bring a small speaker or smartphone with you? Our top recommendation is the official Yoga & Meditation playlist by Spotify UK.

The International Macrobiotic School's new educational retreat centre just south of Totnes

From Oliver Cowmeadow

As I think you know I am building a brand-new purpose-built macrobiotic teaching kitchen at Murtwell House, the International Macrobiotic School's new educational and retreat centre just south of Totnes. Having spent everything possible on buying the property and building the new kitchen space, we are fundraising for some much-needed help with equipping the kitchen with workstations, hobs, ovens and cooking utensils to make it a wonderful place for thousands of people to come and learn to create balanced, health-promoting meals.

Having committed everything i own to this project and borrowing to the max, it feels right to ask the wider community for support with this project. If you would like to give some support, there are a number of ways you could help.

Seeds, plants and tools: There is a big garden including a polytunnel and fruit cage, if you have any spare vegetable seeds you could send, or garden tools or plants you can get here they will be put to use!

Volunteer weeks/weekends: To help with gardening, building, making new vegetable beds etc. Look out for these in our newsletters!

Make a donation: It would be wonderful if you wanted to offer any amount, big or small, towards equipping the kitchen. We are offering rewards for different levels of donation from an 'Eat Macro for a Day' booklet, vouchers to put towards our courses, a free night's Bed & Breakfast at Murtwell, to a weekend's Healthy Break - check them all out at:

<http://macroschool.co.uk/news-details/help-us-build-our-new-kitchen/45/0/0>

There is also an easy way for you to make a donation on line. Pass on news of our fundraising to other people

If you know of anyone who could be interested in any of the above, I would be very grateful for you forwarding this email to them. The more people who know about this project the better, so we can reach as many people as possible who would like to come learn, heal and recuperate their life energies at this very peaceful and healing place.

If there is anything else you would like to contribute, or any ideas you have for fundraising for the kitchen, it would be great to hear from you.

With many thanks for reading this, and for any help you are able to give. In peace and health, Oliver

oliver@macroschool.co.uk
International Macrobiotic School
The Coach House, Buckyette Farm
Littlehempston, Totnes
Devon TQ9 6ND
www.macroschool.co.uk/ www.facebook.com/Macroschool



Yoga Events

7 October 2018 and 4 November 2018

Sunday Morning Ashtanga Vinyasa
With Andrea Durant
(Not suitable for beginners)
7:30-9:30am
contact: andreaclairdurant@gmail.com, 07894-301019

27 October 2018

Unwind the Spine – Yin Facial Yoga
With Dominique Preston
Contact: Dominique_100@hotmail.com

15-16 September 2018

Yoga Weekend with Doug Swenson
The Forge Yoga Centre, Totnes
Contact James Russell: jamer_russell@yahoo.co.uk

17-18 November 2018

Acroyoga Workshop in Exeter
With Erica Montes & Jesse Saunders
Prior acroyoga experience essential
Contact Jules: yogawithjules@hotmail.co.uk

23-25 November

Women's Yoga and Shiatsu Wellness Weekend
£300-£350
With Leif Olsen & Kate Burford
Lamorna Cove, Cornwall
Contact Leif: leifolsenyoga@gmail.com

25 November

Acroyoga Same Size Flows
With Penny Dye & Jules Yount
Suitable for all levels.
Contact Penny – pennydye@yahoo.com
Or Jules – yogawithjules@hotmail.co.uk
07446-968994

23-27 December

Nurturing Yoga Retreat on Dartmoor
With Jules Yount
Bala Brook
Contact Claire at Whollyyoga2018@gmail.com

If Not Now, Then When? ...Working with your Sankalpa

From Rebecca Ellis & Giusi Pezzotta

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight as a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom” Anaïs Nin

We arrive at the mid-point of this calendar year - the daylight hours are long, temperatures rise and growth in the natural world is at its peak. This time in Chinese medicine represents the height of yang, manifesting as a period of maximum productivity, vitality and creativity. Therefore, in harmony with the rhythms of nature, now is the ideal time to focus on what serves us and what needs to be released.

In yoga, sankalpa is a practice to give life direction, understand one's purpose (dharma) and to overcome unhealthy habits.

Chinese Medicine sees 'man' as a bridge between heaven and earth both literally and metaphorically: our lives require material as well as spiritual fulfillment. For this reason, our sankalpa should reflect those needs and desires that guide us on our dharmic path.

Unlike new year's resolutions which come from a place of lacking, in working with our sankalpa we are utilising our set of unique talents and abilities to live fully and meaningfully.

Our sankalpa is a personal commitment and like any long term vow it requires effort and dedication for it to manifest in our lives.

Now is the time to tap into the natural abundance around us, instead of postponing until the dark depths of winter and too many Christmas puddings! Here, the seed of sankalpa should be gently nurtured in the quieter yin embrace.

If you are interested in truly developing your sankalpa, we found the book below to be a constant source of inspiration and understanding. It is not just one to be read but includes (at times painfully revealing) practices to align our lives with our dharma.

“The Four Desires” by Rod Stryker

Om
Rebecca Ellis & Giusi Pezzotta
www.trailingpebbles.com

Yoga Events

10 February 2019

Neurogenic Yoga and yoga Nidra
Workshop 2.30 - 5.30
Price:£35.00
Lotus Loft Exeter
Contact: Jo Hamilton 07714253992
jopureyoga@gmail.com

10 March 2019

Neurogenic Yoga and yoga Nidra
Workshop 2.00 - 5.00
Price:£35.00
Lotus Loft Exeter
Contact: Jo Hamilton 07714253992
jopureyoga@gmail.com

4-7 May 2019

Embodied Heart Yoga and Meditation
Retreat With Anne Marie
amleesev@hotmail.com

8-18 May 2019

Essence reconnecting with the heart
of yoga Andretta, Northern India
mirageandretta.com
Contact Alex Giffoni – breathingyoga.
co.uk or Sally Ornellas – yogabreath-
ing.co.uk

18-25 May 2019, £700 = Date #1

24- 31 Aug 2019, £790 = Date #2

Holistic Yoga & Sailing Retreat
With Paula Kaminska
North Dalmatia, Croatia
Sukosan, Marina Dalmacija
Contact: +43 681 814 033 13,
hello@naleyachting.com

15th - 17th June 2019

7th - 9th September 2019

Release Relax Renew Neurogenic
Yoga Retreat
From £285 early bird
East Down Dunsford Devon
Description: [http://itsallaboutfeeling-
better.co.uk/east-down-retreat/](http://itsallaboutfeelingbetter.co.uk/east-down-retreat/)
Contact: Jo Hamilton 07714253992
jopureyoga@gmail.com

29th September - 6th October 2019

Title: Neurogenic Yoga Retreat Slow
down....Step Back...and Meet Yourself
From: £875
La Serrania Mallorca
Description:[http://itsallaboutfeel-
ingbetter.co.uk/la-serrania-mallor-
ca-retreat/](http://itsallaboutfeelingbetter.co.uk/la-serrania-mallorca-retreat/) Contact: Jo Hamilton
07714253992 jopureyoga@gmail.
com



Yoga for Bhopal – A Project of the Bhopal Medical Appeal

From Georgina le Clercq, via Sue Pitt

Yoga for Bhopal was conceived after an initial event, hosted by our supporter Meaghan Delahunt in Edinburgh, on the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of the Bhopal Disaster. Meaghan is an accomplished novelist, short story writer, and a qualified yoga teacher and inspired the creation of Yoga for Bhopal which we hope will not only serve as an ongoing fundraiser but will also act as a vehicle to disseminate knowledge.

The Sambhavna Trust Clinic in Bhopal, funded by the Bhopal Medical Appeal, uses yoga as one of a range of treatments for the survivors of the Bhopal Disaster. Yoga is used to treat chronic diseases involving the respiratory, musculo-skeletal, neurological and endocrine systems; whilst women survivors suffer additional, serious gynaecological problems which Sambhavna has also been treating, to great success, using Yoga.

At the World Conference of Asthma in Buenos Aires in 2009, yoga techniques used at Sambhavna were hailed for their success. Yoga therapy was seen as an effective means to provide sustained relief to persons suffering from chronic breathlessness. The study presented showed that after six months of practicing yoga, all participants found significantly increased lung function and decreased use of medicines.

Our hope is that, through Yoga for Bhopal, we can build a network of individual teachers and organisations that can, not only benefit from the techniques developed at Sambhavna, but equally impart the benefit of their own studies. To mark the 33rd anniversary of the Bhopal gas disaster, in December 2017, yoga studios around the UK held classes designed to raise awareness of ongoing Bhopal disaster-related issues, and the work of Sambhavna, as well as to raise vital funds to help support the work of the Clinic.

In 2018 we hope to generate even wider interest in the Yoga for Bhopal project inviting Yoga practitioners to get involved around the 34th anniversary of the Bhopal disaster on December 2nd.

We would like to reach out to as many people as possible; if you would like to get involved or host your own event please visit our website www.bhopal.org/ YogaforBhopal and click on the links for more information.

You can also order YogaForBhopal T-shirts via our website. These are ethically produced, responsibly sourced, organic Indian cotton T-shirts made in a wind-powered factory on the Isle-of-Wight

For more information, or to speak to a member of our friendly team in Brighton, please telephone 01273 603278 or send an email to Georgina at admin@bhopal.org we'll be delighted to answer any questions.

Namaskaram

Namaskaram is the online magazine and newsletter of The Independent Yoga Network.

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