



Welcome to the winter 2018 edition of our e-newsletter.

www.oriy.org.uk

Dear Members,

Geetaji's death on Sunday 16th December has shaken the whole Iyengar community to the core. I sent the following message on behalf of ORIY to Charlotte at IY(UK) for their book of condolence but I know many of you will want to send your own more personal messages.



“Words cannot express how shocked and saddened we were to hear about Geetaji's death yesterday morning. It is as if we have lost a member of our family. She dedicated her whole life to the practice of yoga and to teaching us how to work with precision and intelligence, her wisdom and knowledge was unsurpassed. She inspired us all and will be so greatly missed. “

I will dedicate future editions of the newsletter to acknowledging her massive and immeasurable contribution to yoga and to how much we all loved her. Please get in touch if you have things you would like to contribute.

There is much to report - our AGM on 18th November (minutes attached), an account of the very successful Convention in Harrogate in September and the great ORIY workshop run by Sheila Haswell. Details of the amazing two week celebration in Pune at the beginning of December to mark Guruji's centenary will feature in future newsletters but sadly much is over shadowed by the loss of Geetaji.

Best wishes for 2019.

Mary ORIYI Chair and Newsletter Editor
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Events

The workshop with Sheila Haswell on Saturday 24th November was extremely well received. Her description and detail of the asanas helped us all to really deepen our understanding. Pointing out the triangular points on the shoulders, the arms and hands and the feet – the tripod of our feet as our foundation all helped us to work these parts with so much more insight. No matter how many times you do quite basic poses you can still find so much more when such a knowledgeable and wise teacher shows you the way. For this special event Sheila wanted to impart knowledge she had received direct from Guruji himself not teachings that had come via others. She included all kinds of additional information about Guruji, so valuable and poignant in this his centenary year. For example, she said that Guruji had so honed his knowledge and understanding of how his body worked that he could feel the blood flowing through his organs. With regards to our own practice she suggested that at times we do one pose ten times rather than ten poses once – keep working on something till you see some improvement. I liked her comment that you have to feel thin in the pose whatever size you are! Some photos below give a flavour of the session.



Helping students to work their knees correctly



Demonstrating ways to encourage correct alignment of the hips



Using props to do ustrasana



Sheila and Judith cutting the celebration cake

Sheila very kindly waived her fee for this event which has enabled us to top up our donation to Bellur.

2018 has been a very successful year for ORIY in terms of events due to the energetic and enthusiastic work of our Events Officer Evelyn Crosskey. 2019 promises to be even better!

Dates for your diary

24.2.19 – Julie Brown in Wantage

29.6.19 Sally Sullivan in Newbury

18 – 21. 7.19 World Yoga Festival in Reading (Iyengar Yoga Teacher to be confirmed)

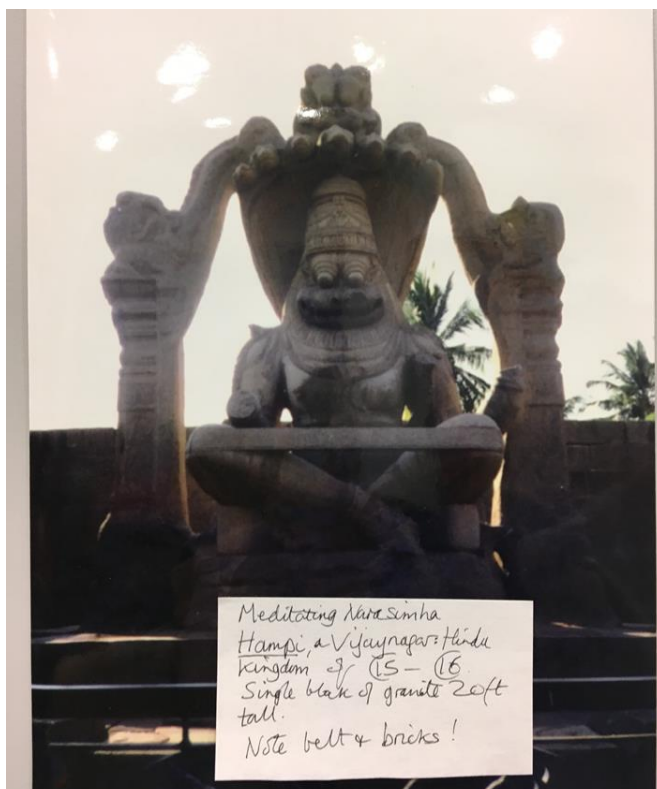
Autumn date to be arranged



The IY (UK) Annual Convention 15-17 Sept 2018 Harrogate Convention Centre by Ruth Denbigh

This year's convention was a celebration of 100 years of Guruji's birth and his work. The convention took a different format to previous years, led by some of the top UK teachers with breakout sessions on special subjects during the three days: it was a wonderful learning experience. We submitted our preferences in advance and everyone had been allocated 3 sessions to attend in smaller groups. There were lots more breakout sessions than mentioned here but as a newbie to yoga just starting out on my learning journey, I selected the sessions which appealed.

Over the three days the whole group came together for 4 main classes. Each class was led by a different teacher but built on the last class. The lead teachers were Jayne Orton, Tricia Booth, Margaret Austin and Julie Brown. They covered standing poses, back bends, forward bends and pranayama. Every teacher sprinkled their class with anecdotes from their own experience and how they had learnt directly from Guruji. Experiencing multiple teachers in quick succession reminded one of how individual we are, how we can carry out the same asana yet each person's experience is different. A different instruction or explanation can sometimes lead to a light bulb moment connecting to a new area of one's body never accessed before. In the very last class Julie spoke about her own experience in a class with Guruji where she had practiced Sirsasana and he had mentioned that her pose was full of fear. I took stock of my own and yes mine was full of fear too, where it came from, I'm not sure. A great reminder to be in the moment and to discover, experience and explore on our own journey of discovery.



Sallie Sullivan - Asanas as described in historic text

Sallie gave a very informative and engaging session. We looked at the asana descriptions in many of the historical texts. Reading aloud the descriptions from the texts we were encouraged to physically attempt the asana from the description and guess the asana being described. We soon found the written descriptions to be lacking and very hard to follow. A great example of the hard work Guruji carried out, providing us with such detailed and specific instructions so that we might learn further. Another very interesting side note related to the use of props such as belts and blocks. Guruji is often attributed to bringing props in to our practice. But this

can be traced back to 15th or 16th century, seen in large granite sculptures of meditating gods in the Hindu kingdom.

Brenda Booth - How to develop your daily yoga practice

This was a great session, Brenda took questions and queries, building her advice with practical hints and tips. Encouraging us to explore and experiment using the things we have around us. No sandbags? How about a double oven glove with two bottles of water one in each pocket this can be hung over a leg to help open up the backs of knees. No wall space? How about laying on the floor. Not sure where 90 degrees is in supta padangusthasana? Find an outwardly projecting corner in a room to support you and provide the 90 degrees whilst your other leg lays flat along the floor, keeping your sacrum and pelvis flat on the floor. No ropes? For two high ropes open a door, create two loops using two belts, hang the loops over the door place a rolled up mat in the loops so that the belts won't pull all the way through when trapped in the door, close the door (the mat should be on the other side of the door to you!) high ropes to practice with. Need help to get up in to Sirsasana or Adho Mukha Vrksasana ? Try using a door frame, position yourself inside the frame using one upright as your wall equivalent and then use your feet on the opposite side to walk yourself up to the vertical.

Finding time difficult? Start your personal practice as 10 minutes a day and work up slowly, 6 days a week (1 day a week should be for your family). The suggestion was to keep it simple do the 5 basic standing poses quickly, then choose 3 poses from class that week to develop work, explore, investigate and experiment with. Following with your choice of inversion or Prasarita Padottanasana

Sheila Haswell - Explored the mother and father of all asanas - teachings from Geetaji's teaching in Pune, Nov 2016

This was a truly interesting class, a reminder that everything we do in preparation for an asana is equally important as the final pose. We can become focused on the future, heading for what we believe to be the final pose and neglect the control needed to actually carry out the asana. The journey to get to the final pose is never ending. Flinging oneself up rather than paying the necessary attention and control needed to get to that point. This was an action packed class and left me with a lot to ponder.

Chanting with Kirsten Agar Ward this was a lovely introduction into chanting. Kristen started by explaining the effect of vibration on our body. It's easy to understand that words can hurt and when you hear them, but the sound we make ourselves impact on our own bodies. She illustrated this perfectly with Om taking the three syllables individually and asked where in our bodies we felt each. A beautiful resonance which moves through the body as a wave. A lovely reminder that everything we do or say affects us and that whilst Sanskrit can feel a struggle for a European ear perseverance is important as every sound has meaning and effect. Kirsten then led the chanting, the traditional way of learning Sanskrit by ear. A great, interesting and inspiring session.



ORIY Annual General Meeting

As stated earlier the minutes are attached to this newsletter so you can read for yourselves what went on. On behalf of you all I would just like to thank Emily Davies for her work as Membership Secretary and wish her all the best for her forthcoming wedding. I'd also like to thank Toby Lockyer for his work as our ORIY Representative. As you will have noted this position is now vacant so we are looking for someone to take on this role. Toby is very happy to discuss what the job entails – without doubt it will be very interesting so if any of you are keen to get more involved please contact me.



Simple Coleslaw

(A versatile dish I serve with everything – it's the fresh ingredients and the dill and wholegrain mustard that set it apart from the shop bought variety)



Ingredients

450g/1lb white cabbage (you can use red cabbage too or a mixture of both)

1 small red onion (optional)

1 small carrot (optional)

3 large table spoons of good quality mayonnaise

1-2 tsp wholegrain mustard

A good tablespoon of chopped dill

Method

Grate or shred the cabbage and carrots and onions (if you're using them). Put them in a big bowl.

Add the mayo and mustard and stir/toss then finally add the dill to taste

Serve immediately or leave, covered, in the fridge, for 1-2 days.



Happy Christmas