



BWY

AT  
THE  
HEART  
OF YOGA

IN THE NORTH WEST

# WITH THE FLOW

Summer Newsletter 2023

<http://www.bwy.org.uk/northwest/>

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## PUBLISHING POLICY

Please send adverts to the Newsletter Editor, with all payments made via bank transfer. To take advantage of members' rates, please provide your BWY membership number. All adverts should be supplied as high-resolution jpegs.

Advertising Rates (inc VAT)	BWY / Accredited Price	Full Price
Half Page	£15.00	£30.00
Full Page	£25.00	£35.00
Back Page (Colour)	£40.00	£75.00

Issue	Date Sent Out	Copy Deadline (Adverts and Editorial)
Edition 3 - 2023	Late October	5 September
Edition 1 - 2024	Late February	13 January

Please note: goods or services advertised are not necessarily BWY accredited. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the editor or the committee. Advertisements are accepted at the discretion of the committee, and are included on a first-come, first-served basis as space allows. Advertising of courses that offer 'yoga teacher training' will only be accepted if the course is BWY or accredited to the BWY.

The British Wheel of Yoga is the Sports England recognised National Governing Body for Yoga. Disclaimer: Please note that the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the editor nor the British Wheel of Yoga. Any advertisements are accepted in good faith and no responsibility can be accepted for the contents.

## WELCOME

Hello Everyone

You may be surprised that it is Lucy here, the Yorkshire Regional Editor. Due to personal and work commitments Hollie has decided to step down as your Regional Editor. I've worked alongside Hollie for a number of years and in particular during the rebranding of the newsletter in 2020 which included the introduction of an updated newsletter template. Hollie was instrumental in ensuring that all the Regional Editors were kept up to date on developments, liaising directly with the person setting up the template and making sure we all received training on how to use it. Please join me in wishing Hollie all the very best for the future and thanking her for all her hard work.

Christine Royle, the Regional Training Officer & Deputy Regional Officer and long-standing member of the committee has also stepped down. We were all delighted that she received a Heart of Yoga Award. Congratulations Christine! There are more details about the Heart of Yoga Awards within these pages.

There are also plenty of fantastic events to choose from, organised by our hard-working Area Reps, as well as a couple of great articles by Marye Wyvill & Rajesh David and Mookaite Jasper.

Enjoy!

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Front Cover: Forest of Bowland

Back Cover: Puja at Jim Thompson's House, Bangkok, Thailand

**SAVE THE DATE –  
AUTUMN MEMBERS  
DAY**

We are planning a wonderful Members Day of Yoga this Autumn at Rixton with Glazebrook Community Hall, Cheshire.

It will be on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October with a variety of teachers and styles and more details will be announced soon.

If you're interested in teaching that day, please contact a member of the committee.

**COMMITTEE  
VACANCIES**

We're looking for volunteers to take on Area Representative roles around the region.

The role involves organising CPD Days and events for the area, liaising with Members and joining quarterly committee meetings.

For more information contact Janet Long, Regional Officer  
[northwest.ro@bwyregions.org.uk](mailto:northwest.ro@bwyregions.org.uk)

**WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PRACTICE OR  
SEQUENCE?**

Would you be up for sharing it with others? If so, please get in touch. We're still keen to find members who are willing to share their favourite asana, pranayama or mudra practices with the following themes: Wake up and feel great, Easing shoulder and neck tension, Face yoga, When time is short, Salute the Sun in a chair, letting go, going within.

Please submit your ideas to  
[northwest.editor@bwyregions.org.uk](mailto:northwest.editor@bwyregions.org.uk)

## REGIONAL OFFICERS REPORT

### JANET LONG



Well this year is certainly flying by, we are nearly entering the summer months and at this time of year we find things changing.

The spring flowers are dying back and the summer blooms start to appear. We have also had some changes here at the BWY in the North West. The AGM held on 4<sup>th</sup> May resulted in myself, Mel Guffogg Hornby (Lancashire rep), Kate Knowles (North Wales Rep), Jackie Hudson (Cheshire rep) and Lorraine Coxon (Secretary) being voted back into our roles.

Sadly Christine Royle (Regional Training Officer) and Sue Hargreaves (a committee member & former Secretary) have decided to retire after so many years of loyal service to our region. We will miss them and wish them well in their retirement.

Hollie Costigan, our Editor for many years is also leaving us, again we are sorry to lose her as she has made this Newsletter a really vibrant and interesting read as well as keeping our Facebook page updated. I am pleased to announce that our Student Representative Will Warrington has kindly agreed to be co-opted into this role and I know he has some exciting ideas for how we can move forward.

Finally, our Treasurer Sarah Peter is looking to move on too as soon as we can find a replacement.

So can you help? If you think you might have the skills and the desire to help on the North West committee, I'd love to hear from you. We can only be successful and serve the membership with the help of our volunteers. As well as the above mentioned positions we have vacancies for Merseyside and Greater Manchester & IOM representatives.

Wishing you all a wonderful Summer.

Namaste,

Janet x

## AREA REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – CHESHIRE

JACKIE HUDSON



Embracing Change as it is the only true constant.

During our asanas we are constantly changing from extension to flexion, from langhana to bramhana and from vinyasa to longer held postures. The way in which we transition between the postures is key if we are to enhance qualities of fluidity, flexibility and adaptability and prevent us from

becoming stuck, rigid, brittle and blocked.

A great place to increase awareness is with the breath. Each breath is a cycle of inhalation, pause, exhalation and pause and I find a lovely way to bring the internal focus in line with our natural habitat is to compare the breath to the changes in each day, each season and even in our own life cycles which can help bring us from the gross to the subtle. Each transition between these breath parts becoming more fluid and smooth.

The key to being resilient and navigating change is awareness. Then the wisdom and knowledge to be able to modify in order to move forwards and grow. This breath practice can give lots of cues for investigation or discussion.

The inhalation (puraka)– the new breath, the dawn, the spring, the potential the sap rising, the new born, child and teenager...  
The pause (antar khumbaka) – midday, the summer, the heat of the sun the fullness of the blossom, abundance and fertility of adulthood.

The exhale (rechaka) – the autumn, the gracious letting go of the leaves from the trees, the evening, the cooling, the slowing down of old age.

The pause (bahir khumbaka) – the winter, the night-time, coming to ground and back to the earth. Death.

If you have read this far I hope you have found something useful in my commentaries – as they are all from the heart and shared with love.

Hari Om Tat Sat  
Jackie x

## AREA REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – LANCASHIRE

### MEL GUFFOGG



Hello!

After what has felt like the longest winter, we are at last feeling the welcome warmth of the sunshine again. I find that I am at my most productive when the weather is warm and the sun is shining and I often wish that I could live in a perpetual summer. However, longing for the summer is an attachment like any other.

Sutra 2.7 tells us about Raga - the attachment to our desires. We naturally seek things we find pleasant and assume that our happiness depends on these external factors. These can be anything including our possessions, relationships, substances like chocolate, coffee or alcohol and even the weather! Whilst these pleasurable experiences initially feel good, they also have the capacity to create suffering once the experience is over if we allow ourselves to feel sad about it or wish for that pleasure to return.

Just like the seasons, everything changes, and we need to remember that nothing in life is permanent, all things, both good and bad, come to an end.

I have been busy arranging some really interesting events for Lancashire over the coming months and we are lucky enough to be welcoming Swami Krishna Premananda from the Mandala Yoga Ashram who will be leading two workshops in July and our very own Kate Knowles who has agreed to lead a Yoga for Menopause day in September. Everyone is welcome to attend these days so do check out the What's On section and book your place early to avoid disappointment!

Hope to see you soon  
Mel x

## AREA REPRESENTATIVE REPORT – NORTH WALES

### KATE KNOWLES



It's said that the only constant is change. Sometimes we have periods in life where things just tick along, with very little change to challenge us. Then BOOM! Everything can change very quickly. On an individual level we may experience relationship changes, employment changes, health changes or accommodation changes, either personally or affecting our nearest and dearest.

On a bigger scale, there may be external changes, with climate change being the biggest change facing, and uniting, us all.

There have been big changes in our BWY regional committee recently, which are proving a challenge to those of us left on the committee!

Regardless of the source of the change, our yoga practice might help us to maintain a degree of equilibrium through tricky times.

*"If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude." Maya Angelou*

I wish you all the best over the summer, and hope to meet some of you at some of the events that we have planned over the next few months.

Namaste  
Kate  
xx



## CONGRATULATIONS

Emma Berry who completed the Mindfulness Module with katie Scott in March 2023

Beata Iwona Butrymowicz who completed the Level 4 Diploma with Rosemary Bennet in March 2023

& Kate Knowles who completed the Gentle Years Yoga Module with Rosemary Bennet in March 2023

And to all the Winners of the Heart of Yoga & Wilfred Clark Bursary Awards

The Anthony Grover Award – Christine Royle and John Cain

Rising Star Award - Sandra Cook

Community Champion Award - Davy Jones

Ambassador of the Year Award - Ilkay Ozcan

Education Champion of the Year Award - Laura Le Feuvre

Event Volunteer of the Year - Jo Webb

Wilfred Clark Bursary – Sarah Gott and Jenny Loe

Sadly, our Regional Training Officer, Christine Royle, was not able to attend the AGM and awards ceremony. Here are quotes from the some of the winners who did attend:

**Sarah Gott:** I am really grateful to the BWY as it means I now have the money to complete the course which will help support the students I work with who have special needs. These students require a variety of strategies and anything I can gain from the training will be of great benefit to supporting the more vulnerable people in my community. I'm excited about broadening my toolkit and making my yoga sessions as accessible as I can.

**Jenny Loe:** Thank you very much BWY and I am really looking forward to doing this course. It means a lot to me as I can now get the training I need to better support the people that I work with. I passionately believe that yoga is for everybody and if somebody has restrictions or special needs, it shouldn't stop them from accessing yoga and all the benefits it brings. Thank you so much.

**John Cain:** I am very honoured and surprised to receive this award. It possibly reflects some of the work I've done for the Wheel over the last 50 years. The best parts were probably my time on the Training Committee with Gill Lloyd where we started to build for the future and also my time as RO for Eastern

Region, where I was lucky enough to have a superb team of people, and I believe we really created a community feeling in our area. In the early 1990's, I started using statistics to visually show the various trends within the organization. I've met some brilliant people along the way like John Parry, Monica Burton, Yvonne Muir and Di Kendal and I still believe that the future of the organisation is in the strength and development of the Regions, as they're the people at the coalface.

**Jo Webb:** Having not attended an AGM in person before, it was lovely to meet everybody and put faces to names. I was surprised to win the award for event volunteer, as it isn't really about receiving awards but sharing the wellbeing benefits of yoga within our community. I enjoy meeting a variety of students from across the region and further afield to discover the nuances of practice with a wonderful range of inspiring teachers. Facilitating access to practice for both members and teachers and exploring a wealth of experience is very rewarding.

**Davy Jones:** The yoga community is at a bit of a crossroads now. On the one hand there is a huge corporate push from big business to get into yoga to make money. On the other hand, there are those of us who really want to take yoga back to its roots and help people who need it the most. If we can help stimulate people in other areas to emulate what we have achieved in Brighton that would be great. Having a community hub in deprived areas in every major city of the UK to promote and advertise accessible yoga classes would be great and I think BWY can help spearhead this. In Brighton, we are now working with others looking to broaden this work to encompass the full range of therapeutic and holistic activities as well as yoga to provide a centre of expertise for advice and training, so whether you are a GP, social prescriber, or a qualified therapist, you could come to us and we can help raise funds for those activities.

**Ilkay Oczan:** After three years of voluntary service, I was very astonished to be awarded the Ambassador of the Year Award. I would like to thank everyone in the Eastern Region and especially the Regional Committee members for being such a supportive and committed team. I joined the BWY purely to deepen my knowledge of yoga, particularly its philosophy, but I enjoyed my teacher training so much that I wanted to share this training with others. Being Regional Officer enables me to show my appreciation to BWY and share what yoga has brought me with the wider community.

## FIRST AID DAYS

First Aid training days are open to BWY Teachers, Student Teachers, BWY members and non-members where space allows. First Aid training is not mandatory to maintain your BWY teacher's insurance. However, it is widely recognised as best practice to renew your certificate every three years. To book your place, go to [www.bwy.org.uk/northwest](http://www.bwy.org.uk/northwest)

Please note that First Aid Training delivered via Zoom is only valid for one year. To upgrade your certificate to three years, please contact the Regional Officer, Janet Long.

DATE	LOCATION
30 <sup>th</sup> September	Lytham Assembly Rooms, FY8 5JY
12 <sup>th</sup> November FULL	Northop Village Hall, High Street, Northop, CH7 6BQ

## EVENT REFUND POLICY

If you have booked your place on a CPD Day and can no longer attend, please contact the event organiser as soon as possible. The organiser will either arrange to move your booking to another event (subject to availability) or offer you a refund based on the following:

Cancellation made:

- Two months or more before the event - 100% refund
- Between one - two months before the event - 50% refund
- Between one month and one week before the event - 25% refund
- After this period - 0% refund

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TYPE	CONTACT
23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Flyde & District Yoga Teachers Network	The Clifton Arms Hotel, West Beach, Lytham, FY8 2TR	Karma Yoga	BWY North West
24 <sup>th</sup> June	International Yoga Day – afternoon celebration	Westbourne Hall, West Kirby, Wirral	Yoga afternoon	BWY North West
25 <sup>th</sup> June	FREE Wellbeing Day	North Beach, St Annes on Sea, FY8 2TR	Yoga and Wellbeing	BWY North West
1 <sup>st</sup> July	The Healing Dimension with Philip Xerri	Holy Cross, Timperley, Cheshire	CPD Day	BWY North West
29 <sup>th</sup> July	Mudra with Swami Krishna-premananda	Lytham Assembly Rooms, FY8 5JY	CPD Day	BWY North West
30 <sup>th</sup> July	The Bhagavad Gita with Swami Krishna-premananda	Lytham Assembly Rooms, FY8 5JY	CPD Day	BWY North West
16 <sup>th</sup> September	Yoga for Menopause with Kate Knowles	Lytham Methodist Church, FY8 5LU	CPD Day	BWY North West
23 <sup>rd</sup> September	Chair Yoga with Richard Kravets	Rixton with Glazebrook Community Hall, Warrington	CPD Day	BWY North West
30 <sup>th</sup> September	First Aid Training	Lytham Assembly Rooms, FY8 5JY	First Aid	BWY North West

14 <sup>th</sup> October	Autumn Members Day	Glazebrook Community Hall, Warrington	CPD Day	BWY North West
21 <sup>st</sup> October	Post menopause bone, brain and heart health	St Bridgets Centre, West Kirby, Wirral	Yoga Day	Kate Knowles
12 <sup>th</sup> November FULL	First Aid Training	Northop Village Hall, High Street, Northop, CH7 6BQ	First Aid	BWY North West
2024				
03 <sup>rd</sup> March	What yoga can do for the hands and feet with Audrey Blow	Northop Village Hall, High Street, Northop, CH7 6BQ	CPD Day	BWY North West
18 <sup>th</sup> May	Yoga therapy for grief and loss with Judy Sampath	Westbourne Hall, West Kirby, Wirral	CPD Day	BWY North West

There will be another informal meetup at The Clifton Arms Hotel, West Beach, Lytham, FY8 5QJ on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> June from 2.00pm.

This is a regular bi-monthly social meetup for yoga teachers in Blackpool, Fylde, Preston and surrounding areas to come together for a cuppa and a chat. We recognise that teaching yoga can sometimes be a fairly solitary profession and have found that these regular meetups provide an opportunity for teachers in the area to get to know one another and offer each other informal support and advice. All yoga teachers welcome. Contact Mel Guffogg (Lancashire Rep) at [northwest.lancsrep@bwyregions.org.uk](mailto:northwest.lancsrep@bwyregions.org.uk) for more details.

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### Venue:

Westbourne Hall, Westbourne Road, West Kirby, Wirral, CH48 4DQ

### Cost:

BWY Accredited Price: £10

Full Price: £20

### CPD Information

One point per hour

### Booking

<https://www.bwy.org.uk/northwest/event/2440/>

### Organiser

Kate Knowles, North Wales Area Rep, contact details on page 2

## INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY CELEBRATION

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June

Join us for an afternoon of yoga to celebrate International Yoga Day, between 1 - 5 at Westbourne Hall in West Kirby, only 10 minutes walk from the beautiful beach and marine lake.

There will be sessions with Rosemary Bennett, somatics with April Bradbury and a crystal singing bowl soundbath with Katy Shay

There is a small carpark at the venue, and on road parking.

The hall is a short walk from West Kirby train station, and the bus routes into Liverpool and Chester.



NEW! BWY FOUNDATION COURSE 2  
STARTING SEPTEMBER 2023



Are you looking for a way to further your understanding of Yoga and develop your personal practice without necessarily becoming a teacher?

If so, then my new Foundation Course 2 may be the perfect next step for you helping you to widen your practical experience and encourage your personal growth and development through the practice and study of Yoga.

Over the course of 10 monthly sessions to be held in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire you will have the opportunity to explore how Yoga works on all aspects of the person: the physical, energetic, mental, emotional and spiritual and how, through the practices of asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha and meditation, it can bring balance and harmony.

I welcome applications both from students who have completed FC1 as well as serious students and teachers looking to refresh or further their knowledge.

Total cost - £760 inclusive of deposit and BWY registration fee (payment options are available).

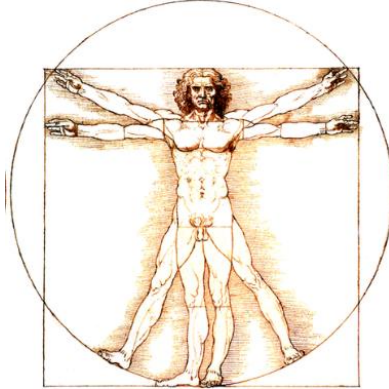
For more information and/or a booking form please contact:

Brenda M Ward

[brendayoga@mail.com](mailto:brendayoga@mail.com)

[www.brendayoga.co.uk](http://www.brendayoga.co.uk)

# Pete Blackaby Teacher Training



January - June 2024  
Sheffield, £690

What do we teach and how do we teach it?  
An approach to teaching yoga with Peter Blackaby

- 8 full days in person training
- Online sessions
- Full Course outline on our website

A brand new course, for teachers & student teachers who know Pete's work and want to integrate his ideas into their own practice and teaching.

Pete Blackaby has been one of the most influential figures in the development & understanding of movement & asana in Yoga in recent years. This course is an opportunity to explore his ideas & approach from a teaching perspective.

[www.sheffieldyogaschool.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldyogaschool.co.uk)

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**2023**

**6 Saturdays  
9<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Sept  
14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Oct  
4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Nov**

**ONLINE VIA ZOOM**



## TEACHING YOGA TO CHILDREN & TEENS BWY ACCREDITED MODULE

Do you want to inspire and empower the next generation of yogis?

On this module you will gain the skills and confidence to safely teach yoga to young people from ages 2 1/2 to 18.

This module is run fully online and combines the connection of live Zoom sessions with the convenience of self-paced learning through pre-recorded material available on our course learning platform.



The module will include:

- ✘ Anatomy and physiology for each age group.
- ✘ Social, emotional and cognitive development of children and teens.
- ✘ Simple neuroscience.
- ✘ How to adapt asanas for safe teaching practice.
- ✘ Breath awareness and simple pranayama exercises for young people.
- ✘ How to teach meditation, mindfulness and relaxation.
- ✘ Ways to plan, structure and manage your children's yoga classes.
- ✘ Creative ways to engage each age group with yoga.
- ✘ AND MUCH MORE

The course is suitable for yoga teachers and trainees from all traditions.

The module tutor is Christiane Kerr of Calm for Kids, a senior yoga teacher with over 25 years of teaching and training experience. Christiane is also a qualified mindfulness teacher and author of six children's yoga books.

**"I wanted to say a massive thank you for the online course. I loved all the material and teachings, particularly the games, practicals and watching the educational videos."**

Donna Ward, Yoga Teacher



Next module starts on September 9th 2023  
Time commitment, approximately 52 hours



[www.calmforkids.com](http://www.calmforkids.com)  
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calm  
for kids

# FIRST AID TRAINING



## Emergency 1<sup>st</sup> Aid at Work 3 year certificate

18<sup>th</sup> November 2023  
& 19<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Sheffield Yoga School, Sheffield, S6 3TA

OFQUAL regulated. Days are 10.00 – 5.00pm. Cost: £65  
for the day (includes certificate & 1<sup>st</sup> Aid manual)

[www.sheffieldyogaschool.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldyogaschool.co.uk)

# Releasing the Breath



## Bill Wood

23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> March 2024  
Sheffield £140

Somewhere in our yoga practice we arrive at a place where the ways we control our breath can start to let go; by nurturing this release, we invite a deeper, more complete relaxation, for body and mind.  
Scaravelli inspired Yoga practice.

[www.sheffieldyogaschool.co.uk](http://www.sheffieldyogaschool.co.uk)

## Just be – Yoga Weekends

27 -29 October @Cober Hill Hotel, Scarborough

2-4 February 2024 @Raven Hall Hotel, Ravenscar

Relax, refresh, restore, take time for yourself in beautiful surroundings, explore yoga practices whilst I guide you and hold the space to just be.



## Coniston Yoga and Walking Holiday

17 – 22 March 2024 – Helena Turner, Debbie Farrar, Philippa Wade

A holiday to nourish and bring joy in the stunning surroundings of the Lake District. Comfortable ensuite single, twin, double rooms, 3\* HF Holiday Hotel, freshly cooked food. Choice of over 40 hours of yoga workshops from guest tutors, plus Jayadhara, Minker Chang, Cheryl Lee-Appleby and two guided walks daily led by experienced guides.



**in-person, online classes, Zoom library**

[janecluley@gmail.com](mailto:janecluley@gmail.com)

07906 652669

[moonriseyoga.co.uk](http://moonriseyoga.co.uk)

## CALLING WELSH SPEAKERS

The Harmony Institute is running a weekend on yoga and ayurveda, and the BWY Chair, Di O'Reilly is keen for any Welsh speaking BWY members to get involved. Here's the link if you'd like to find out more.

<https://harmonyinstitutehealth.com>

## MAKING SOUND FINDING HARMONY – BRINGING NADA YOGA AND BONES FOR LIFE TOGETHER

By Marye Wyvill and Rajesh David



Siamang gibbons, who mate for life, jointly defend their territory. Every morning they sing together, building ever more spectacular, complex sequences. The couple's song reflects the strength of their bond. Other siamangs pay close attention. The more harmonious their duet, the stronger will be their defence. If their vocalisation is discordant, neighbours sense an opportunity to move in. In this context, harmony is a matter of survival.

And harmony is what links the seemingly separate disciplines of Nada Yoga and Bones for Life. Nada Yoga encompasses a philosophy, and a series of techniques which utilise sound with the aims of developing inner harmony, and deepening spiritual practice. Bones for Life consists of simple movement processes designed to strengthen bones through a harmonious coordination of all the parts of the body. By combining sound work, reflections on philosophical texts and physical movement, both left and right sides of the brain are drawn on, enabling participants to experience the texts' meaning at a level far deeper than that of intellectual discourse.

Both Nada Yoga and Bones for life focus on refining perception and heightening awareness, for without awareness there is no possibility of meaningful change. We train and discipline body and mind through a variety of practices, but ultimately change occurs spontaneously. In Nada Yoga, the intention to be open to a divine inner presence is cultivated through the gradual withdrawal of the senses as the practitioner moves from sound to silence, passing through the portal to inner realms. In Bones for Life, we are invited to follow our sensations, and realise how some of the movement habits we have accumulated over a lifetime are less than helpful. We awaken the body's innate intelligence and ability to choose better ways of sitting, standing and walking.

While Bones for Life is a safe and effective stand-alone movement therapy, it also enriches yoga practice and teaching. The programme, consisting of 90 movement processes, focuses on the enhancement of natural movement in order to develop the postural integrity, flexibility and stability that support strong bones. Movement reinforces whatever posture we adopt, and can therefore either heal or harm. For example, bouncing on the heels, used extensively in Bones for Life, powerfully directs bone-building pressure upwards through the skeletal system. However, if the vulnerable curves of neck and lumbar are misaligned, that pressure is dissipated, and the misalignment is reinforced. So first we learn how to secure those often weak links in the spine's chain.

The same attention to detail, and the ability to differentiate parts within a whole, is brought to the practices of Nada Yoga. For example, within a structure of Indian music scales, the practitioner focuses on chakra points, each chakra location reflecting a different aspect of harmony, whether it be a strategy for survival, as in the case of the siamang, or a deep sensing of the interconnectedness of all life. This is the first step towards developing a practice of meditation with sound.

One of the best ways of experiencing the complementarity of Nada Yoga and Bones for Life is in the spacious schedule of a retreat framework. Marye and Rajesh run a regular Making Sound Finding Harmony retreat in different locations. Their next retreat is in August this year, at Shepherds Dene Retreat Centre in Northumberland.

For more information about Rajesh, see [www.rajeshdavid.com](http://www.rajeshdavid.com)  
For more information about Marye and Bones for Life, see [www.movementintelligence.co.uk](http://www.movementintelligence.co.uk)



## INTRODUCING VEDIC CHANTING

*Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ.* If you chant these words in your Yoga class or as part of your own yoga practice you are, in fact, already doing Vedic chanting.

Vedic chanting is, as the name suggests, chanting the Veda-s. These ancient spiritual teachings are the basis of the six classical Indian philosophies - yoga being one of them. The Vedic texts are presented in the Sanskrit language and contain the most ancient teachings on yoga, which are still relevant to the challenges we face today.

Chanting in Sanskrit is said to have powerful effects at a vibratory level and so we receive its healing effects, even when we do not know the exact meaning of what we are chanting. The act of chanting brings life to the ancient Vedic texts as well as to the person listening and reciting.

*'By chanting Sanskrit, you can put your whole body and mind into such a state of vibration that you begin to experience yourself as energy rather than a solid physical form, with boundaries and definitions.'*

Vyaas Houston, Yoga International, May/June 1992

Many of the chants are about health, some are stimulating, some are calming. Vedic chanting is a powerful tool for discovering, expressing and influencing all dimensions of the human system. It may improve focus, support memory and mental discipline; improve listening and communication skills, improve breathing capacity, reduce mental and emotional agitation or energise and activate. Many people find their voice by practising it and feel empowered.

The Sanskrit alphabet is much larger than our 26-letter alphabet and, therefore, many more combinations of letters may be produced with their corresponding sounds. Traditionally, the Vedic teachings were transmitted orally. The teacher would chant while the students listened closely and then repeated the chant in exactly the same way. This form of teaching still continues in India today and means that the texts are accurately transmitted over successive generations. We use Romanised script transliterated from Devanāgarī (the Sanskrit script) with pronunciation marks so that we can achieve this same precision when we chant the texts.

Vedic chanting is for anyone. You do not need to be able to sing well in order to practise chanting - there are only three notes.

Adapted from <https://www.tsyp.yoga/yoga/introducing-vedic-chanting/>

If you are interested to explore Vedic Chanting, Vedic Chant Teachers Michelle Bowie and Michelle Tarling are holding an Introduction to Vedic Chanting workshop in October 2023 in Yorkshire. Please contact Michelle Bowie ([michelle.bowie1@btinternet.com](mailto:michelle.bowie1@btinternet.com)) for more details.

## RENEWING OUR PRACTICE

By Swami Krishnapremananda, Mandala Yoga Ashram

Life is continually renewing itself. A new year, a new day, a new experience, a new moment. Nature lives in the moment, as do animals. We human creatures are seemingly unique in that we have a mind which fashions for us an inner creation of past and future, governed by habitual patterns.

Even our yoga/ spiritual practice<sup>1</sup> is often governed by habits. Some of these are useful, such as regularly attending a yoga class, getting up early to practice, or having a favourite yoga mat, cushion, or shawl. Other habitual patterns however may not be so helpful, including those that distract us from our practice or from what we need to do. Our practice at times can become stale; we can find ourselves avoiding our practice, or simply going through the motions - practising while being somewhere else internally. One of the great challenges of spiritual life is excessive comfort or complacency, blunting the edge that brings our practice more alive, being lost in the form while disconnected from the spirit of practice.

Hence the value periodically of renewing our aspirations and thereby the spirit of our practice. This can happen at any time, although certain key dates can be helpful, such as the new or full moon, the new year or one's birthday. Times in which we can cultivate what is often called, the 'beginners mind', bringing an aliveness, curiosity, and open-hearted presence to our practice

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<sup>1</sup> In this article 'practice' can refer to any of asana (postures), pranayama (breathing techniques), meditation, chanting, yoga nidra (deep relaxation), service and so on. Or on a wider level, practice can also refer to whatever brings us meaning and joy in life.

once again, whether on the mat, or cushion or in daily life. Whatever has happened previously, recognise that we can align ourselves with the immediacy of life and start again, afresh. It is in the here and the now, this very moment, that the potential for real positive change exists.

Remembering and acting on this becomes easier when we can stay in touch with inspirational sustenance; whether in the form of an uplifting teacher/ mentor, a yoga class or seminar, visiting an Ashram or similar retreat centre, and through quality online teachings. It is also true that suffering or adversity, although virtually always unwelcome, can be a catalyst to clarify our aspirations and purpose once again.

Such renewal of our practice periodically helps to keep us 'on track' spiritually, and more aligned with the present moment and the vitality of life around us.



Mandala Yoga Ashram is an internationally renowned centre of yogic knowledge. They offer residential retreats and online courses based on the authentic teachings of yoga, advaita and tantra.

Their approach emphasises meditation, transformation, and the cultivation of direct insight through practice and personal experience.

## INCLUSIVE YOGA AND THE LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY

By Mookaite Jasper



We're a long way from Brighton, the home of England's \*LGBTQIA+ community, but that hasn't stopped us from coming together in Yorkshire to create our own network of queer yogis.

As a non-binary person, yoga has helped me peel back the layers to come closer to my true self, my true *queer* self, and I wanted to bring the joys of yoga to other LGBTQIA+ people across our area. I set up Queer Yoga North last year locally with fortnightly classes in Middlesbrough, Saltburn and York exclusively for the LGBTQIA+ community. There are now monthly Queer Yoga North classes as well in Leeds, Newcastle, Durham, and Scarborough.

It's important to have 'queer-only' safe spaces for LGBTQIA+ people to come into their bodies because there's a particular kind of magic in being in a room full of people knowing that everyone is queer and everyone gets it. It's like you can breathe more easily, which is obviously essential for yoga. We also have a chance to focus on themes which are specific to our community, like 'transformation' or 'renewal'. In the Queer Yoga classes, we embody these themes

through the postures, and draw on poems from LGBTQIA+ writers, alongside texts like the Sutras.

The UK has changed a great deal from the bleak days of the AIDS crisis, or the ban on 'promoting homosexuality' in schools under Section 28, which was lifted in 2003. While the LGBTQIA+ community in the UK does enjoy a relative amount of freedom, compared to the past and compared to many other countries around the world in 2023, the day-to-day reality for many queer people is still challenging, especially among the transgender (trans) community.

Research by Stonewall, the UK's main LGBT charity, suggests that half of LGBT people have experienced depression, one in eight LGBT people aged 18 to 24 have attempted to take their own life, and that rises to 46% among the trans community.

Personally, I have bipolar disorder and yoga helps keep me sane and grounded. I think everyone who teaches yoga knows how beneficial it is for mental health. The LGBTQIA+ community is massively affected by mental health issues, but for many queer people places like gyms and yoga studios do not feel like safe spaces. Hopefully this will change in time, as the yoga industry in the UK starts to become more inclusive.

We know there is a lot of work to be done in the yoga community around inclusivity, whether it's related to racism, ableism, class and economic privilege. These issues are not separate to the challenges facing the LGBTQIA+ community. Of course they intersect, and there is little value to establishing Queer Yoga classes if they are not inclusive. It is also worth noting that higher numbers of neurodivergent people are LGBTQIA+, which for me as a teacher of Queer Yoga has meant learning about how best to make the classes accessible for my students with ADHD and autism.

For teachers of regular classes, who might be lucky enough to have some students in their classes from the LGBTQIA+ community, my top tip would be to avoid making any assumptions. For example, don't assume someone's gender by the way you think they look. Perhaps consider changing your intake form to include a space for people to write their pronouns (as in, she / he / they etc). Language is important. It makes people feel seen, accepted and respected. Try not to get too panicked about pronouns. There's more to inclusivity than pronouns! But it is a starting point in terms of showing respect for the huge struggles that most people in the LGBTQIA+ community face.

My pronouns are they / them, but I'm 39 so I didn't grow up with this kind of language. I'm learning too, and I have also misgendered other non-binary people (which is embarrassing!). But there's a difference between a slip, as in, a mistake in fast spoken language when the wrong word pops out, compared to people who just don't try at all. For example, if I attend an expensive five-day yoga training course on Zoom, where my pronouns 'they / them' are written next to my name on screen, visible at all times, it does feel offensive when the trainer misgenders me every single day without correction and without apology (i.e. refers to me as 'she'), without ever once using 'they', even after requesting in writing and twice in conversation that people on the course use 'they' when they talk about me. It's hard to describe the effect of persistent misgendering like this, but the best way to summarise is that it negatively impacts my mental health. It's sad to come away from five days of yoga in a worse state of mental health, but that's the reality. Have you ever wondered why there are so few trans and non-binary people in our yoga classes and on our training courses?

If you find yourself talking to a binary trans person - a trans woman who uses 'she', or a trans man who uses 'he' - or talking to a non-binary person who might use 'they' (but not necessarily, or might use a combination of pronouns), and you realise you have made a mistake, firstly apologise and correct your mistake. Then later in the conversation, perhaps try engineering a sentence which you've prepared in your head using the correct pronoun, which shows the person you're trying and that you respect them. With 'they', because it's linguistically trickier than 'she' or 'he', it can *really* help to plan a sentence in your head, even if it sounds a little forced. If you are unsure how 'they' works in a sentence, I can give you an example:

"Where is Mookaite?"

"They've gone to the car to get their yoga mat."

Language is in the process of evolving, and it does feel strange at first to use 'they' to refer to a singular person. But the more you practice, the easier it will get. If you do meet a non-binary person who uses 'they / them', don't avoid using pronouns all together. Not only is it really obvious that you're avoiding pronouns (the English language doesn't work without pronouns), but it's also a missed opportunity. It's a great chance to practice and make those mistakes, correct those mistakes, and hopefully be better prepared so that the day a vulnerable young person with serious mental health issues walks into your class, you'll be able to take a deep breath and

confidently use the pronouns they've asked you to use, and make them feel welcome in our yoga community.

Check out Mookaite's Facebook page at Queer Yoga North or on Instagram @queeryoganorth

### Author Bio

Mookaite completed their 200 hours training with YogaCampus in York and went onto complete their Yin training also with YogaCampus, as well as a course in inclusive yoga training with the Accessible Yoga School. They are currently studying the British Wheel of Yoga's Gentle Years course and are hoping to start teaching yoga in care homes later this year.

Mookaite came to yoga from a mental health perspective and is passionate about inclusivity in the yoga industry. They started practicing nine years ago whilst living in Thailand. They deepened their meditation practice while living in Japan and are currently a member of the Plum Village Sangha in Guisborough. Mookaite loves to dance and attends a weekly Modern Jive class. They recently began leading Rainbow Dance sessions in York, which is meditative free movement for the LGBTQIA+ community.

\* LGBTQIA+ = Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual

### References:

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<https://www.thebraincharity.org.uk/lgbtqia-neurodiversity-neurodivergent-lgbtq/> [Accessed on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2023]

