

## MEET A MEMBER: Bram Williams

**What brought you to yoga?**

At college (age 19), studying mime and physical theatre, we were supposed to attend an Alexander Technique class but it was always oversubscribed so I ended up in the floor above in a the yoga room. I wasn't smitten from the off, in fact I found it rather hard work and tiring. But I did stick at it, partly for the course credit and partly as slowly some of the instructions began to make sense. After leaving college I went straight into a national tour and forgot all about yoga for several years! I didn't pick it up again until I settled in London. I began classes with a lady called Joy. 'Do yoga with Joy' was the message in a newsagents' window that got me back into a regular class.

**I heard you were a clown at one point?**

Yes. And a mime. And a puppeteer.

**What kind of yoga sessions do you enjoy most?**

I always tell my students there are only two kinds of yoga. There's yoga where there's a particular form to achieve - alignment, body mechanics, text book yoga, and then there's wriggly yoga. I'm a devotee of the latter kind - my own yoga practice favours feeling and sensation over body aesthetic. I think I've been blessed with some of the teachers I've learnt from - any strengths and benefits I share with my students now are directly attributable to them.

**Do you have a favourite yoga related book?**

That's easy: 'Babar's Yoga for Elephants' (De Brunhoff).

**Are you a morning or evening practitioner?**

Perhaps as a teacher I ought to say I aspire to be a 24/7 practitioner! But if you mean formal on-my-mat practice then I'm a morning meditator and an afternoon or evening asana practitioner.

**Do you have a preferred style of yoga?**

Beside the aforementioned wriggly you mean? I suppose some of the teachers I gravitate to now were influenced by Vanda Scaravelli, but my main teacher learnt with a Dutch Yogi called Robert Van Heeckeren - an approach that uses asana as a way of freeing the breath ready for pranayama, then pranayama as a way of preparing for concentration and meditation practices. I like the way it blurs the edges of the components of yoga practice.

**I've also seen you practising a very slow form of yoga - tell us about that.**

That's really more about meditation. It's a yoga form called Kum Nye. Kum is our embodiment and Nye means to massage or to wake up. It's taught in this country by BWY DCT Maarten Vermaase as Tibetan Healing Exercises.

**How long have you been a BWY member?**

About ten years. Later I did a BWY Foundation Course and several people suggested I do Teacher Training. I was resistant for a while, yoga had always been for my own



practice, but it proved a turning point and I can honestly say I haven't looked back.

**You're training as a Diploma Course Tutor?**

Yes. It seems like a natural progression. I've done many modules and workshops with the BWY (and with other organisations), I've studied in the UK, in California and briefly in India - it would be very selfish of me not to be sharing what I've learned! And the new Diploma with the Wheel is a very exciting challenge.

**Aren't there enough yoga teachers around?**

More teachers means more people practising yoga. You can't argue that the world doesn't need more people who practise yoga. Imagine if everyone did; imagine your morning commute on the bus or train if everyone practised meditation or relaxation!

**Is it true you're a lip reader?**

Yes. I'm hard of hearing, deaf to certain pitch ranges. Some sound is filled in with hearing aids but it's by no means perfect, so I attend weekly lip reading classes and have done for several years.

**What keeps you as a BWY member?**

My membership direct debit... Ha! The commitment of the team behind the scenes, the opportunities for support and for further training.

**Finally, do you have a joke to share?**

Mm, let's see. Two women in a post office queue chatting about their boys. Mavis says to Doris: "Is your Joe behaving these days? My Ashley, he's still lazing around without a job as if the world owe's him a living." Doris replies: "Joe hasn't been in trouble for ages, he goes to a class in zen meditation now on Tuesdays." Mavis: "Meditation? What's that then?" To which Doris replies: "I don't rightly know, but it's got to be better than him sitting around doing nothing!"

Bram Williams is a yoga teacher, living and working in West London. He is a Foundation Course Tutor and a trainee DCT. Details of his classes can be found at: [www.bodhi-yoga.co.uk](http://www.bodhi-yoga.co.uk)