



# The London Massage Company

## Newsletter 04

### What have we been up to?

Zoë flew in from Casablanca and Jane flew in from Turkey to run some workshops at CAM Expo. And what a great show it was. Our workshops on Effective Stretching and Soft Tissue Release were jam packed, with participants fully engaged and getting stuck into practicing all of the stretches and deep tissue work. (Hello to all those participants that we met. We hope you enjoyed the workshops as much as we did?)

We noticed however that the overall show was quiet compared to last year and wondered whether this was because this year, the organizers were charging £17.50 for each workshop. We know they need to cover their costs but felt this was rather a lot to charge and will certainly be feeding this back to them. Next year CAM Expo will be held in Earls Court on 25th and 26th October and we'll be there again, this time with some different workshops.

### It's not all just Jet Set!

Jane has just returned from four days on the Kas peninsula in Turkey where we'll be running basic massage and yoga courses. We had already secured the beautiful Hotel Club Phellos in Kas village for next year's *Workshops Week* and *Sports Massage Intensive* and this time

went to check out Hotel Aquarius, just outside the village of Kas, with its own private beach and large arrangement of patios. It's a tough job sourcing beautiful hotels around the world, but someone's got to do it and this is just the kind of 'work' we girls love :)

Jane wrote.....

On the last day there was a spectacular storm. I was sitting on the uppermost patio (writing sports massage questions believe it or not) glancing up at the Greek islands in the distance, wondering what might be a good question regarding the acromioclavicular joint (as you do). When suddenly the sky darkened. Hotel staff appeared from nowhere and began unwinding a huge mechanical canopy above, just as heavy drops of rain began splashing the flag stones. It was still warm, around 30 degrees, and guests quickly migrated from their beach loungers to beneath the canopy in anticipation of this change in weather. Then with a peal of thunder the Heaven's broke and we watched in awe as the tall-masted ships drifted across the horizon

and lightening shot out from the blackness and appeared to hit the sea.

"Tea time! Tea time!" called Dharsin, the head waiter, tapping a fork against a glass as though he was going to give a wedding speech.

"It's not tea time yet?" said one of the guests quizzically, "It's only 4 o'clock?"

"Manager says OK for tea because of rain," said Dharsin, helping the guest to a chair whilst simultaneously waving at his colleagues to bring out the cherry tart, chocolate cake and wafer thin almond slices. As the warm rain fell in sheets all around us, myself and a dozen or so other guests all sat around in our bikinis and swimming trunks drinking tea and eating cakes in a very civilized manner. "You don't get this in Berlin", said a German psychotherapist between mouthfuls.

"What," I munched, "Drinking tea in your bikini, or watching tall ships in the rain?"

"Dis cake," she said, pointing to it with a pastry fork, "very good".

And it was.

## Welcome!

### What's up?

//What have we been up to?

//It's not all just Jet Set

//Ones to watch

//The SportEx Conference write up

//Other stuff

//Hall of Fab Things

### Ones to Watch: More For your CPDs

As mentioned to our CAM Expo attendees, available on request are Jane's notes on the following:

- The Sacroiliac Joint, Dr Andry Vleeming
- Hip & Groin Study Day, Leyton Orient Football Club
- Muscle Tendon Symposium
- Dance Injuries, Royal Society Medicine
- SportEx Conference 2005 &/or 2006



As part of my own Continued Professional Development (CPD) in September I attended the 5th SportEx Conference in Bedfordshire, the focus of which was 'sports massage and sports injuries rehabilitation'. The conference covered three days, and sadly, I was only able to attend one, but still managed to squeeze in eight lectures:

- (1) Psychophysiology of massage
- (2) The massage therapists survival guide
- (3) Feldenkrais Method
- (4) The Evidence Base for Manual Therapies in Tissue Healing
- (5) Sports massage, mind or body
- (6) Ankle taping: styles or substance
- (7) Multiple intelligences, the work of Howard Gardner
- (8) Assessment and treatment of soft tissue dysfunction of the cervical spine.

As usual, I was impressed by the quality of the speakers and learned many new things.

The Psychophysiology of massage was presented by Professor Eyal Lederman, whose physiotherapy PhD was on the neurophysiology of manual therapy. As Eyal started his presentation I studied the image of a brain on the huge PowerPoint screen behind him and realized it was made of tiny crouching bodies. A testament to the mind-body link.

Eyal showed us many of the autonomic, neuroendocrine and motor changes that occur with massage, with research supporting this. Then he posed the question, 'what is the difference between a therapist touching a person and that person being

touched by someone on the bus?' and of course the difference lies in the intention of the person doing the touching. He explained an interesting exercise he does with his students: half are taken outside and told that when they return, they will massage their colleagues with a particular intention in mind (e.g. re-assurance, empathy, anger, indifference) and the recipient has to report back how they felt following the treatment. Of course, the client can always sense the intention of the therapist one way or another! A good reminder to us all to feel confident and caring when treating.

In the second lecture, The Massage Therapists Survival Guide, Rob Granter reminded us all about the need to protect our own bodies from overuse whilst working as therapists, as massage can load our bodies in potentially damaging ways. It was an interesting contrast to the first lecture (and to the lecture on the Feldenkrais Method that was to follow) as Rob admitted to being highly mechanical in his approach to treating clients.

As many of you reading this are probably already aware, Rob said we should protect ourselves by avoiding movement of our own joints when they are heavily loaded, maintaining lower trapezius stability and staying exceptionally fit. I hoped he was joking when he suggested taking cold baths and hot showers (contrast bathing) between massaging clients, the way athletes do to minimize micro-trauma in muscles! But perhaps he was serious he works in

Australia where a busy massage therapist might be more inclined to dash out back for a quick cool down, than those of us working in less favourable temperatures in the UK.

Rob also had some tips and tricks for therapists for when they experienced career slumps. These included:

- believe you are highly effective.
- be goal directed.
- use your language to convey purposefulness.
- model people you think are good.

I got the impression that he believed it was necessary to work at maintaining a positive attitude, not a bad approach at all.

The one thing I did not agree with was that Rob placed an extremely high value on the presentation of the therapist. His argument was that you may be working with doctors and doctors place a high value on their appearance. The implication was that we should be suited and booted in order to gain the respect of our peers. One of the things I love about massage (and sports massage in particular) is that it attracts people from all walks of life and they each find their own niche. I remember one therapist (now working in Kuala Lumpur) who was covered head to foot in tattoos. He was a perfectly competent and confident therapist and works with clients and other practitioners who are quite at ease with his appearance. I doubt he wears a suit and tie and yet is probably fully booked! I also recently met a therapist who is Buddhist. She wears a kind of patterned tunic,



quite different from the navy tracksuit bottoms and white air-text tops many sports massage therapists wear as 'uniform'. I love the fact that we are all such varied individuals and, when we are at our happiest, are likely to attract to us the kinds of clients we enjoy treating. Often the people who train in massage have been working in offices all their lives and want to get away from having to conform. Surely if you need to dress a certain way in order to gain the respect of your work colleagues, you're in the wrong place of work?

I didn't quite understand the Feldenkrais Method when it was explained to us in the next lecture, I have to say, but believe it involves the practitioner helping a client to recognize and improve movement patterns. What was good about this lecture was that the practitioner got us to practice moving our pelvis and thorax in order to identify subtle changes in the way our bodies were working. Feldenkrais practitioners believe that the limitation (that is, the client's physical 'problem') is all in the brain, 'You exaggerate the movement so that the mind can identify it. Then it can let go of it.' In physiotherapy this is known as 'movement analysis', or if referring to the way we walk, 'gait analysis'. The difference is of course, that in physiotherapy, whilst we acknowledge the importance and significance of psychological factors in the way our bodies function, we believe that problems can stem also from mechanical factors, such as tight hip flexors or protracted shoulders. If you happen to have been born with a downward pointing

acromium or upward pointing coracoid process, you are more likely to suffer impingement at the shoulder when soft tissues between these structures get squished. Surely such a condition derives purely from anatomical factors?

After typing this last sentence I sat and thought for a bit. How do we know that some of the mechanical factors are not the result of the emotions? OK, so we're not responsible for the shape of our bones, but we do know that emotions are derived chemically, and that chemicals affect the body. Muscle tension, as we all know, increases with anxiety. You don't have to be sitting at a desk all day to get increased tension in your shoulders. Overcoming mechanical factors using massage doesn't necessarily get rid of the 'problem' as many of you will have discovered. Often a client needs to address emotional issues for things to resolve. Interesting stuff.

If any of you out there reading this are both Feldenkrais and sports massage trained I would be interested to know how you assess clients to determine the underlying factors contributing to their 'problem'. Do you start with the emotions or with mechanical factors?

Lecture 4 was amazing. Professor Tim Watson wrote his PhD on The Bioelectric Correlates of Musculoskeletal Injury and Repair. He spoke to us about the evidence base for manual therapies in tissue healing. The take home message was that yes, manual therapy certainly effects

tissue healing. If tissue healing and repair is something you are interested in, take a look at Tim's website, [www.electrotherapy.org](http://www.electrotherapy.org) for an excellent report on the subject. (I've also written a list of questions based on this section of his site to help readers get the most from it. Please ask and I'll be happy to send it).

Tim was keen to stress that tissues are brilliantly designed to repair themselves. He reminded us that whilst we have categorized the stages of healing into bleeding, inflammation, proliferation and remodelling, in fact the body is a lot more messy: there is a cascade of events taking place, lots of overlap, and different people respond differently to different things. His take home message is that you cannot mend tissues without an inflammatory event. You don't need bleeding to precede inflammation, you could simply have ongoing irritation of tissues (as with chronic overuse injuries). He urged us to avoid trying to change what the body is doing during the repair process, but to enhance these events. Transverse frictions are one way to deliberately provoke inflammation in cases of some chronic conditions, a good thing to do as the sports massage therapists amongst you will know.

In the lecture on Sports Massage: Mind or Body, exercise physiologist Stuart Galloway, of Stirling University shared some of his findings with us. He has been assessing the effect of massage on athletes and is looking for people to help continue this research. One of his findings was that mean peak power of muscles was



reduced after massage: following massage there is a decrease in force (at slower velocities) and a decrease in contractile ability. Why might this be? Those of you interested in doing research into massage might want to contact Stuart as a starting point.

Paul Fiolkowski's lecture on ankle taping was well above my level of knowledge on the subject, though no doubt enjoyed by those members of the audience enthusiastic for its usage. I could think of several therapists for whom the lecture material was valuable, especially those working with rugby teams. I knew that taping decreased postural sway and increased proprioception. I didn't know that peroneal stretch reflexes improved following taping.

I was much more familiar with the 7th lecture, Multiple Intelligences, as this was all about different learning styles and being a teacher I had already learnt about these in some depth. Although not mentioned during the lecture, the basis of the argument put forward by proponents of Howard Gardener is that we all learn in a variety of ways, and no one method is better than any other. Delivering teaching material using different methods helps students learn. Too much of any one method is not good. For those of you thinking of going on to study another course in any subject, I have a list of questions that may help you identify the ways you learn best. (Please ask and I'll be happy to send it to you). The final lecture was on the assessment and treatment of soft tissue dysfunction of the cervical

spine. Overall, this was a really good lecture but far outside the remit of most UK-trained sports massage therapists who rarely assess individual vertebrae of the cervical spine. I think it highly unlikely that this sort of assessment and treatment would be covered in the insurance policy of a UK sports massage practitioner unless the practitioner were able to show considerable training in this area. The material however, was accurate and clear and the accompanying photographs helped the audience understand the procedure. Rob had obviously gone to a huge amount of work to put his lecture together and was clearly a very proficient therapist himself. He was clear in pointing out that problems stemming from non-soft tissue dysfunction should be referred.

Overall, I really enjoyed this first day of the conference. On the way home on the train back to London I made a list of all of the good and not so good points about the conference and about each lecture, by way of self reflective practice. Besides reading this, what have you done recently that has added to your own ongoing learning? What learning goals have you set yourself for the next 6 months?

Jane

### Other Stuff

Attached to August's newsletter was a project written by a sports massage student, Angela Watson, for her sports massage diploma. The project explores 'Voluntary And Paid Massage Opportunities At Sporting Events.'

Next month we'll be sending you a new project by another student. If you missed Angela's project and would like to read it just let us know.

### Hall of Fab Things: We're loving.....

- 1) Eating tea and cakes in warm rain in a bikini
- 2) Tailored shirts from Hawes and Curtis in Jermyn Street, London. They have great sales on men's and women's shirts and sell a small range of fantastically sparkly cufflinks if you like to wear some bling on your wrists. And the beautiful duck egg blue paper carrier bags are worth the trip.
- 3) LUSH the toiletries. Don't you just want to eat the whole shop?! (p.s external use only recommended!)
- 4) Stepping outside on an Autumn morning when the sun's shining but there's a nip in the air.

Thanks again for listening. And as we always say, if there's anything you'd like to say or share with your fellow therapists send us an email, a postcard, a carrier pidgeon. We're sure you've got something worth saying.

Have a good month.

Zoë and Jane

