

Experience of Yoga Scotland's Teacher Recognition Scheme **by Fiona Smith**

When I was a little girl all kinds of fascinating people came to our house. I remember one particular friend, a humorous raconteur, who told us of a trip he took to an island in a light aircraft. He sat waiting with another man who suddenly looked at his watch then sprang off his seat saying, "It doesn't look as if the chappie is going to turn up; I'll just fly us there myself." Imagine the consternation! Quite soon the pilot laughed and reassured his passenger that he actually was the pilot but he did enjoy his practical jokes.

For a long time I was perfectly happy with the yoga world. If it hadn't been for the calls I began to receive concerning a person teaching yoga whose notoriety was spreading and who was claiming to have trained with me (I don't do teacher training) I might have carried on in my gentle, polite way of live and let live. For years I was mindful of the growing concerns and finally Yoga Scotland gave me the chance to do something about it. And so the Teacher Recognition Course came into being after many months of hard work and attention to detail for which I thank all the tutors and teachers who gave freely of their time, expertise and support to make this possible.

It is still the case that yoga teaching is not regulated and there are many fine teachers out there doing a great job without having had a formal training. However, we live in a society that has safeguards in place for good reason. You wouldn't sit happily in a plane and take off into the skies if you thought the pilot hadn't earned his/her license so why would you pay someone with unverifiable experience to take you through the vast expanse of yoga? You may be supremely fit both physically and psychologically with scant danger of coming to harm, but you still want to learn from someone who, at the very least, knows their subject.

The word that pops into my head when I think of my experience of the scheme is 'privilege'. I have a new respect for those who have already done their training with Yoga Scotland and other first class organizations. There is an enormous gap in competency between those who have picked up a magazine and decided on a whim to teach a few postures calling it 'yoga' to earn a few extra pennies, and those who have dedicated their time, effort, and invested their money in training to become a yoga teacher. It has been a privilege and a positive step. /