

# VisionNews

Vision Education Centre

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## Dear friends,

I hope you enjoyed the beautiful fall weather we had this year!

Now that it's colder, it will be more challenging to get outside for Sunning practice. I have just ordered some of the 150-watt full-spectrum bulbs I use for Sunning, so if you are interested in buying one, please contact me.

While I was in England I visited Julia Galvin, a friend of mine who is also a Bates Method teacher. She showed me the introductory DVD on the Bates Method she made recently, and I highly recommend it. Her website is [www.happysight.co.uk](http://www.happysight.co.uk). You will find information on the DVD there, and on how to order it.

And if you should want a pair of pinhole glasses, you can now order them from our website:

[www.visioneducators.com](http://www.visioneducators.com). We recently listed them on the Books, Links and Other Resources page. There will soon be an article on Pinhole Glasses on our Vision Tips page, so keep checking. There is lots of useful information on the site.

My very best wishes to each and every one of you for a happy and healthy holiday season!

Elizabeth Abraham

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**'We can consciously think thoughts which disturb circulation and lower visual power; we can also consciously think thoughts that will restore normal circulation and thereby help to cure errors of refraction.'**

From: *The Cure of Imperfect Sight by Treatment Without Glasses* by William H. Bates MD

**'Whenever we direct our attention to an inner ideal, we foster a creative conflict between our daily habits or negative patterns, and our aspirations for ourselves. We can give in to the habits, or we can use our focus on our ideal to release the compulsive hold of those habits.'**

From: *The Art of Effortless Living* by Ingrid Bacci PhD

## BRITISH NATURAL EYESIGHT CONFERENCE

The focus of the Conference was on the basics of the Bates Method. Even though this was a national conference, people came from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Cyprus, Sweden, USA, and yours truly from Canada, as well as from all over Great Britain.

The Conference was opened on Friday evening by Aileen Whitford, a teacher from Scotland, and by Peter Mansfield, author of *The Bates Method*.

On Saturday, Richard Hobday talked about how, in the ancient world, the **sun was worshipped for its healing powers, and sunlight was used as a medicine**. He took us through the 'dark ages' in which we lost this knowledge, and up to the present when once again recent discoveries about light and health confirm that sunlight has a profound effect both on our immune systems and on our emotional stability. He has written two books on the subject, and was a very interesting and engaging speaker. His slides of people taking sun treatments for innumerable ailments immediately made me want to move to a sunny climate!

Margaret Montgomery was then scheduled to lead us in a session of **Sunning**. After a morning of rain, wonder of wonders, the clouds cleared, the sun came out, and we trooped outside. Margaret led us through closed-eyed Sunning while turning our heads from side to side, then Sunning one eye at a time, then nose-writing while Sunning. What a treat!

Next it was time for my session on **Palming**. The room was mostly filled with teachers who had been Palming for as long if not longer than I have, but there were also a number of people who had never heard of Palming. After an introduction to the many benefits of Palming, I asked everyone to notice how their eyes felt as they looked around the room, then to notice the difference in their eyes when they closed them. They then experimented with putting their palms around their eyes. People said that this really helped their eyes relax. Next I asked them to stand up and stretch, then to support their elbows, then to rub their hands before placing them around their eyes. It was obvious to everyone after all this that it helps the eyes to relax when the body is relaxed and well supported,

and that stretching helps deepen breathing. Finally, when they were Palming in a supported position, I took them through a guided visualization in order to focus and relax their minds.

After lunch Nina Hutchings, a teacher from France, talked about the **perception of apparent movement** in the visual field, and the role this perception plays in vision. We were instructed to shift from one point in the room to another, bringing our full attention to the apparent movement so that our mind and eyes did not fall into a stare. Next we stood up and did the Long Swing, experiencing the optical flow as the room around us appeared to move. She concluded by emphasizing the importance of the perception of peripheral movement, which requires relaxation, presence, and integration of the central and peripheral visual systems.

Anthony Attenborough, the most senior of the British teachers, spoke on the subject of **Mind and Vision**. His opening quote was from Bates: 'We can consciously think thoughts which disturb circulation and lower visual power; we can also consciously think thoughts that will restore normal circulation and thereby help to cure errors of refraction'. I found the talk moving and inspiring. The words he used, and the sense I had of the depth at which he lives what he is saying, encouraged me to put more awareness into how I pay attention in my life. Where am putting my attention from moment to moment, how am I attending, and am I also aware of the environment in which my attention is occurring? Am I aware of myself, my own body sensations, my own thoughts, and the prejudices and filters of interpretation which are constantly in operation? Can I come back to renew myself in silence, the stillness, the nothingness, that underlies everything, including myself? This is a challenge and a life-time practise. I need to accept that I will keep falling off the wagon of relaxed attention and scrambling back on again, that this is the nature of the process of being on the wheel of life. Anthony said: 'Behind the mind is silence', and talked about this silence as the same thing that Bates meant when he talked about seeing black. I felt I had come to a deeper understanding of 'the darkness out of which sight arises, and the silence out of which sound arises'.

Next day there was a very interesting presentation by Kevin Wooding on the **similarities between the Bates Method and the Alexander Technique**, and a talk about **Nutrition and Eye Health** given by Alice Bradshaw.

There were pre- and post-Conference workshops as well, so the whole time was very rich.

I connected with many friends I had met at International Holistic Vision Conferences in Europe and Britain over the years, and also met many new people. The next International Conference will be in Belgium in October 2009. Mark your calendars!

## HELP FOR CHILDREN'S EYES

Healthy eyes are relaxed, love movement, and enjoy focusing on one thing at a time and moving rapidly from detail to detail. Here are a few things you can do to encourage your children's good vision habits.

- ♥ **Ball Games** - Non-competitive ball games are a great way to get eyes to move freely. If your children wear glasses, see if they can play without them.
  - If your child is very young, you can both sit on the floor with your legs apart, and roll balls of different sizes and colors back and forth between you.
  - Older children can throw colorful balls to each other, or bounce them against a wall and catch them.
  - Tennis, hockey, soccer, basketball, or any game done in a relaxed, fun way can be great for the eyes.
  - Learning to juggle is lots of fun and, at the same time, it gets the eyes moving.
- ♥ **Drawing** - Encourage your child to watch the tip of the pencil or paintbrush while writing, drawing, painting and coloring. This stimulates the eyes to move, and helps the ability to track moving objects.
- ♥ **I Spy** - 'I spy' is a great game for children. One person says: 'I spy with my little eye something yellow' (or, if the child is older, you can use the first letter of the object instead of its color). The other person then gets to search the environment until the correct object is guessed. Choose objects both close up and far away.
  - Farsighted children also benefit from looking for objects in books like 'I Spy' or 'Where's Waldo' - without the help of glasses if possible!
- ♥ **Story time** - Make bedtime a special story time. You and your child can lie or sit comfortably with your hands gently cupped over your closed eyes. Take turns telling a story while you both imagine the story in your mind as it unfolds. Activating the visual memory and imagination is a tremendous aid in clearing vision.
  - You can also play Pass the Story. One person starts a story then stops in the middle of a sentence, or right at an interesting part, and the other person continues with whatever comes to mind. This can result in lots of eye-watering laughter for all!

## COMMENTS FROM STUDENTS

*It has been several years since I took your vision class and follow up. Here's a little update. I have been doing the eye exercises you taught me everyday as part of my yoga/calisthenics workout and I have gone to improved distance and night vision (no more glasses) and if the light is good - particularly natural light - I do not need my reading glasses which were first prescribed for me 16 years ago when I was 50. I attribute your teaching to my improved vision. Thank you for your inspiration. Eye health is so vital to overall quality of life.*

G.P.