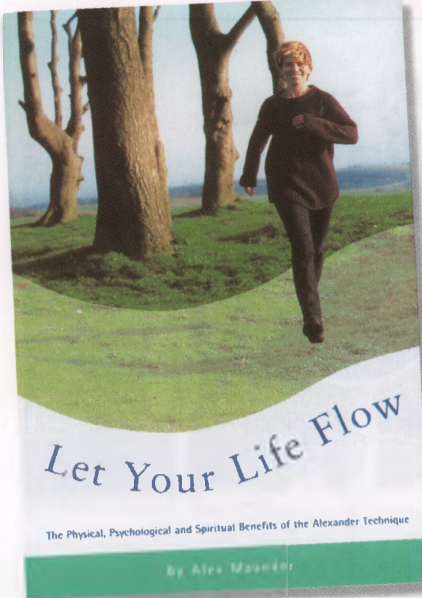


## Let Your Life Flow



technique is still an ambiguous issue in the minds of many.

Alex Maunder from Brookland Rise, a full-time practising Alexander Technique teacher, has written a comprehensive, understandable book to change that on the subject, 'Let Your Life Flow'.

The book, published in June 2002, describes from a variety of spiritual, intellectual and emotional angles what it is all about, making the technique available for anyone.

Maybe you have been suffering with back or shoulder pain and can't find the right treatment, or maybe you feel that life is getting on top of you. Whether you see life from an intellectual or scientific viewpoint, the technique, and indeed this book, could appeal to you.

'Let Your Life Flow' updates the original 19th Century Alexander Technique and enables anyone to

Alexander Technique: 'a technique that makes you look taller'; 'an exercise programme for a healthier well-being'; 'something that extends your toes'; there are lots of ideas that people have about Alexander Technique.

Though none of these ideas are technically wrong, this

use it in every day life. Flowing through 234 pages, with easy-to-understand body drawings and a useful index, the book sets out how the technique, which aims to restore a person's mental and emotional harmony, can be applied to various aspects of everyday life.

In clear language, it explains how muscles work, and how the mind and body are connected; as we are all "psycho-physical beings," says the writer.

"Alexander was the first to introduce the idea of psycho-physical unity. At the time it was a revolutionary concept, now a lot of people agree with it. But most people don't know how to use that knowledge. That's one of the main reasons I wrote the book; to explain those subtle concepts in clearly understandable language. I want people to use it and understand what it can do to their lives," explains Mr Maunder.

The reader is taken into the core of the Alexander technique as a posture-improving, tension-releasing way of restoring balance in the body and lengthening the spine as a result.

The book also explains how the choice of words in tension and bad habits should be replaced with more positive and less judgemental words you can find, "We tend not to realise there is a resonance in words. If you can use words that resonate with a positive body experience you are going to set up a positive habit pattern more easily than an intellectual or posture idea could."

"In the last 30 years there has been a lot of scientific research which can measure thoughts and emotions as an immediate effect on the chemical balance in the brain and into the cellular level of the body. I find it fascinating that science caught up with Alexander's technique," reasons Mr Maunder.

This book should be useful to most people, at whatever level, "I think it is for a whole range of people; the complete beginner; it is useful for the student who wants a clear frame-work within lessons; and for teachers because it provides new insights, ideas and a new energy model."

FEMKE VAN IPEREN

'Let Your Life Flow', the Physical, Psychological and Spiritual Benefits of the Alexander Technique, written by Alex Maunder. The C.W. Daniel Company Limited. £16.99 from most bookshops and from book websites.

## The Taming of the Shrew

A brawling, loud-mouthed, arrogant thug marries a spirited and wilful woman against her will, and starves and bullies her until he's made her slavishly obedient to him. How do you turn this horrible story into an amusing, uplifting evening's entertainment? *The Taming of the Shrew*, despite being witty and fast-moving, is one of the hardest of Shakespeare's to make enjoyable, or even acceptable, to a modern audience, but the Garden Suburb Theatre managed it.

They managed it partly, of course, because it's hard to spend an evening in their magical tree-lined theatre in Little Oak Wood and leave feeling cross. But it's also because this was a careful, thoughtful production, in which every joke was identified and milked, and for which David Lane designed a beautiful set, full of Elizabethan dwellings and ale-houses.

It's partly, too, because no part was too small for director Richard Kinder to worry about motivation, and the way they moved, and how they timed their jokes or reacted when someone else was speaking. It wasn't just central characters, like Jessie McPhie's scheming, winsome Bianca, or Fred Griessen's baffled and frustrated father, or Tim Messom's aged and decrepit suitor, painfully aware that all he had to attract a pretty girl with was his wealth. Just as much thought went into John Colmans's splendidly hopeless drunk, or Andrew Craze's tailor, all camp flouncing and infrangible dignity.

But in the end, any production of this play is made or marred by the principals, Petruchio and Katherina. Somehow they have got to make you believe in Katherina's abrupt transition from shrew to doormat, without making you sorry for her. It's a tall order, but in this production the secret lay in the sparks that Andrew Farrer and Vikki Scott struck off each other.

Farrer managed the boorishness of Petruchio and still left you enjoying his company. I suspect he was more comfortable with this challenge than he was last year, when he played the hero of *As You Like It*, who was a straightforward good guy. He thrives on lights and shades. It would be so easy to dislike Petruchio, but Farrer, with just the right mixture of forcefulness



Andy Farrer and Vikki Scott



Charlotte Balazs and Andy Wilson



David Brown and Jessie McPhie

and humour, managed to make credible the difficult idea that Katherina in the end falls in love with him. You have to achieve that, for if she doesn't, the play is tragedy, not comedy.

Scott looked so pretty, moved so fluently, and spoke with so much conviction, that she made everything credible. In a programme note, the director tries to suggest that all Petruchio is doing is showing her that there are better ways of getting what you want than by throwing a tantrum. Personally, I don't

think the idea is supported by the text, but listening to Scott's knowing, ironical delivery of her final speech, with lines like:

"Such duty as the subject owes the prince,

"Even such a woman oweth to her husband"

and:

"Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,

"And place your hands below your husband's foot"

it seemed, for a moment, almost believable.

FRANCIS BECKETT

## Oxfam's Jubilee window



Our local Oxfam's contribution to the Suburb's Queen's Golden Jubilee was a fifties window.

Jeanne, one of our volunteers brought in her collection of wonderful fifties clothes. The display lasted five days and was of great interest, to such an extent

that many media and art students came to see it from different parts of London. At 7pm on the first day it was noted that more than 20 people stood gazing into the window. Sadly, none of the collection was for sale.

FRANCES HAYNES

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## Hospice volunteers

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