

SOLE SEARCHING:

Foot reader Jane Sheehan
 PICS: JONATHAN GAWTHORPE



allows you to become run down and viruses to take over.

"Then I met a man who interviewed 5,000 people about their toes and personality – sounds odd I know. I started using it as a party trick.

"At parties, people would think it was a bit of a laugh but they left amazed.

"I once did a foot reading at a school fete and the queue was out of the door. When I did my first teaching job in 2003, the very next day I was on *This Morning*, so I thought that was a good omen."

As part of the interview, I asked Jane to read my feet and she gave a very detailed description of my life.

She said I was tired (the paler your feet, the more tired you are), that I had to deal with things very much in the moment whereas in the past I had much more time to analyse events.

She deduced this by comparing the third toe, associated with 'doing energy', on each foot and found that on the right foot (to do with 'the past'), it was turned more toward my big toe.

She also told me I have

inner strength (a high arch) and am a good listener (wide outside edge below your little toe).

It was all very uplifting, edifying even.



SEEKING OUT THE SCEPTICS: Gill Askam

Listening to this self-bolstering analysis of an unregarded area of my body was fascinating but it's sometimes easy to be overwhelmed with wide-eyed wonder.

While her description fitted my life (having two small children, sleep is often broken, problems

dealt with there and then), you could probably deduce as much by looking at the bags under my eyes.

In retrospect, perhaps I was merely hearing what I wanted to hear or maybe Jane was merely telling me what I wanted to hear.

She can tell you fascinating things, such as: "There's an area of the big toe called the mastoid process reflex, just off centre and diagonally towards the second toe, which is linked to the air gap in the inner ear and it becomes inflamed when you are going to get a cold."

But she admits: "There's a limit to what you can read on

the feet. I don't know people's backstory. I don't claim to be able to diagnose medical problems or treat them, we're not doctors and we don't act as such.

"People often come with questions about their lives, I can tell them things about their personality.

"At the end of each session, I ask them to choose a picture card from a pack and tell me why they chose it. People project their lives onto the picture and often end up answering their own question."

Valerie Roddis is a support worker for the deaf and blind charity Sense and a trained reflexologist.

She said: "We believe the body is mapped onto the feet, we work on the reflexes. People come to us for relaxation but also with certain conditions but we would never claim to be able to cure a condition."

Qualified midwife and nurse of 20-years Gill Askam said: "Sometimes sceptics are the best people to do it on because they have no expectations."

Like other cultural imports from the East, reflexology is grouped in the same section as

crystal healing and meditation and as such is easy to dismiss as flimsy pseudo-science.

It has its roots in Chinese meridian theory, the system which also underpins acupuncture, which is used routinely in Chinese hospitals.

While it has been the subject of serious study by a handful of Western academics and medical professionals, among them Dr William Fitzgerald (1872-1942), a US physician who helped pioneer the idea



TRAINED REFLEXOLOGIST: Valerie Roddis

of reflexology after he noticed patients gripping chair arms while experiencing pain and nurse Eunice Ingham (1889-1974), who published *Stories The Feet Can Tell* in 1938, it has yet to gain wider credibility.

Taken as a bit of fun, foot reading is a party trick to intrigue your friends.

Taken more seriously, it's part of a growing awareness in the West that there is perhaps more to complimentary and alternative treatments than was first thought.

Jane's website is www.findafootreader.com
neil.hudson@yepn.co.uk

Read your own feet

- Your right foot represents the past, your left the present.
- Bunions are a sign you are bending over backwards for other people – the degree to which the big toe is deformed towards the little toe shows the degree that you are out of balance. Ask yourself what you would do with more spare time.
- Wide feet equate to hard graft and being constantly on the go; narrow feet mean you are happy to sit and appreciate the good things in life.
- A high arch relates to strong inner resources, you enjoy time on your own, whereas flat feet means you like the company of others, you like to feel supported.
- If your feet grow a shoe size (even though you've stopped growing), it means the tendons in your feet have relaxed and you want recognition for your merits, you're much happier than you were; if they shrink, the tendons have tightened, making you more hesitant and cautious.
- Athlete's foot means you have developed a tendency to let things get under your skin (literally) - you experience extreme irritability, it annoys you that people constantly interfere and question your ideas.
- Smelly feet means you want more space and time and are often found on rebellious teenagers who are constantly being told what to do, or carers who have to look after a relative.
- A gap between the big toe and second toe means you have delayed reactions between your logical reaction and your emotional reaction and may need to take more time in making important decisions.



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