



## Renewable energy – it's the way forward!

**LAURA MCCARDLE**

AS I set off for a facial massage that was advertised as “the ultimate feel good experience”, I had very high hopes about what I was going to receive.

And, I have to admit, I was not disappointed.

RenewME combines Tui Na facial massage, a Chinese therapeutic massage that claims to improve blood circulation, reduce lines and tone skin, with QiGong energy work, which boosts and balances energy around the body.

Gerry O'Connor celebrated the launch of RenewME by offering taster sessions over the weekend of Saturday, August 6, and Sunday, August 7, to raise money for Children with Cancer.

He offered the 30-minute sessions in exchange for 10 of the charity's raffle tickets, which cost £10 and offered the chance to win the £20,000 prize.

The weekend raised £170 and Gerry, of Mayfield Drive, Caversham, still has one book of tickets left, which he hopes to sell at his birthday party and create a total of £260 for the charity.

Gerry, who turns 60 this week, is the energy awareness coach behind the experience.

Gerry started training in internal martial arts and QiGong more than 20 years ago and he gave up a 22-year career in IT in

2002 to teach them full time.

He has been giving massages for three years and doing energy work for more than 10, but it was only recently that he decided to combine the two.

My 30-minute RenewME taster session involved 20 minutes of Tui Na facial massage and 10 minutes of QiGong energy work.

The session took place in Gerry's garage, which has been transformed for the purpose of his work, while incense burned and soft music played in the background, which all added to the experience.

The massage, dubbed “a natural way to look and feel great”, was incredibly relaxing with Gerry working from the top of my head right down to my chin and neck.

After my RenewME session I sat down with Gerry to find out what had sparked his interest in energy awareness and why he had given up his long career to teach it.

He said: “I had a problem with my knee and they said my active sporting career was over.

“I sat at home feeling sorry for myself for a while and I decided to do Tai Chi and it all started from there.”

As a result of his knee problem, Gerry had to have a full knee replacement and he credits his energy work for him being able to walk properly just two weeks after his operation.

He said: “The clinician said himself he was amazed because everyone in the operating theatre said it was the worst knee they had ever seen.

“I said to him ‘I think it's my energy work that's done it’. He agreed. So we offer to help get people balanced before and after an operation.”

Gerry's passion for what he does was obvious when he said “martial arts changed my life” and he clearly believes that what he offers does help people.

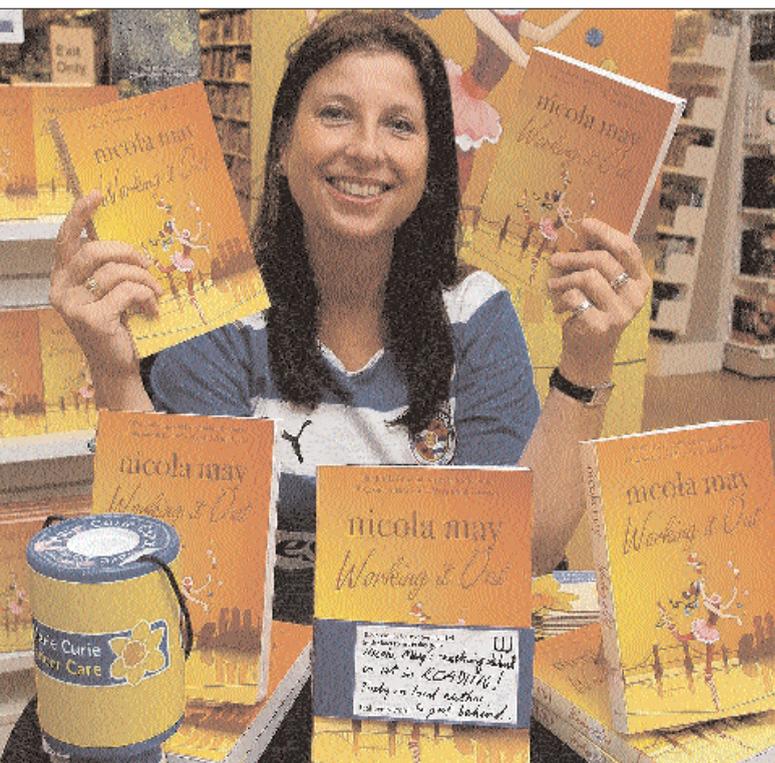
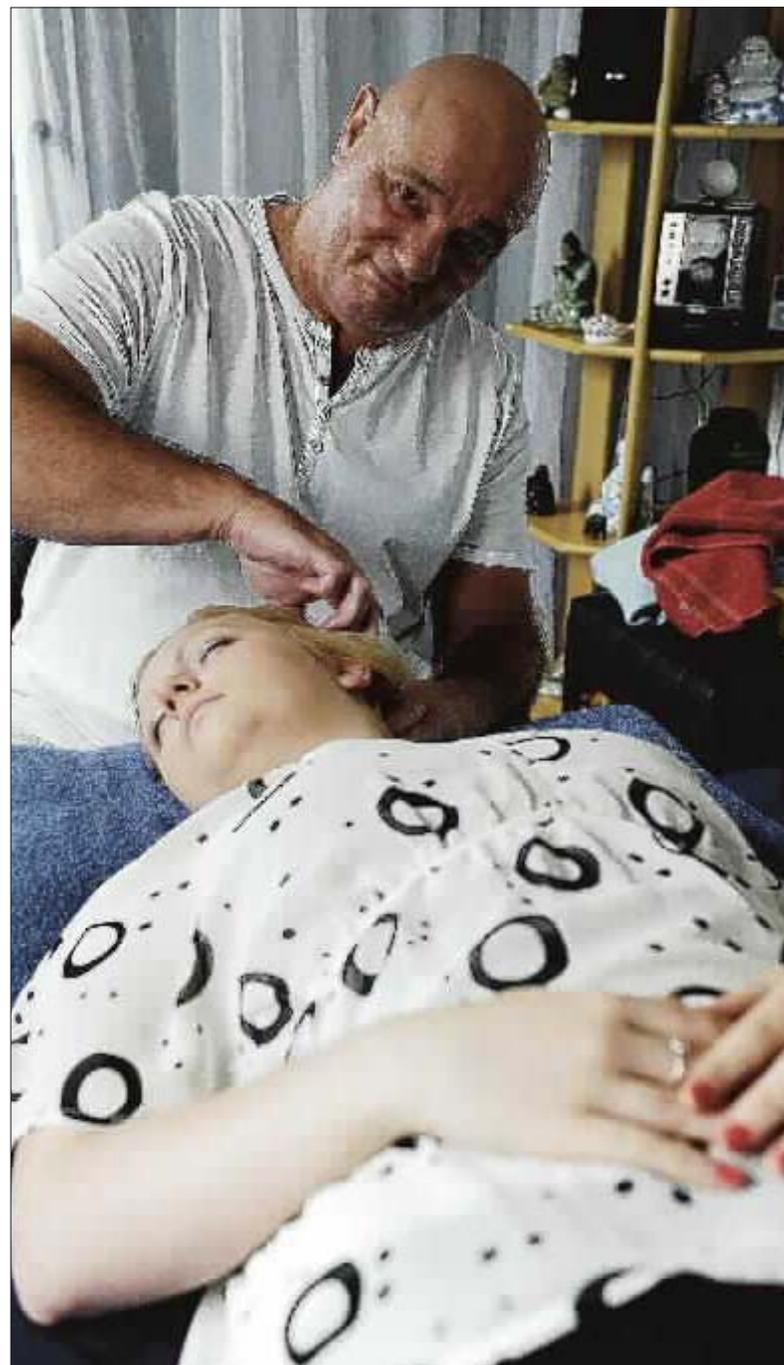
Despite not having any physical or mental ailments before having my facial massage – something Gerry claims the sessions help – I certainly felt better afterwards, as if my spirits had been lifted.

I thoroughly enjoyed it and it is definitely something that I would recommend to everyone, whether you want help healing physically or just want to feel relaxed.

RenewME sessions cost £45 per session, but anyone who books a session at Gerry's home in Caversham during the rest of this month and September can receive a third off.

For more information about RenewME, call Gerry on 07810 408881 or visit [www.geoconnor.com](http://www.geoconnor.com).

**HEAD MASTER:** Gerry O'Connor gives *getreading* reporter Laura McCardle a soothing facial massage  
Picture: KATIE LAMB (Ref 111323)



**WRITE STUFF:** Nicola May's novel about football and romance is getting rave reviews  
Picture: STEVE SMYTH (Ref 111289)

## Royals and romance – a winning team

**VICTORIA WATERFIELD**

PEOPLE talk about the romance of the FA Cup, especially when teams like Reading manage to topple Premier League sides such as Liverpool and Everton.

But can football ever bring about real romance?

Ascot-based Nicola May's chicklit novel 'Working It Out' tells the story of Ruby, a huge Reading FC fan and regular visitor to Madejski Stadium where she cheers on her favourite player David Kitwell.

But football isn't the only thing that's going on in her life. She is planning on getting her dream job by working through 12 jobs in 12 months.

These include nannying in the south of France, waiting tables in Soho and working in a retirement home for ageing celebrities.

It's not all work, work and football, though – Ruby is also busy sorting out her love life

too. Will there be a happy ending?

“I wrote the book to make people of all ages laugh,” says Nicola. “I think we could all do with it at the moment.

“Also, it highlights the fact that you can follow your dreams where your job is concerned.

“Too many of us stay in a role we are unhappy with and I really hope reading about Ruby's exploits will change a few mindsets at least.”

Nicola launched the book with a signing at Waterstone's in The Oracle, where she collected money for Marie Curie Cancer Care, and is now touring the nation meeting her fans and sharing her love for the Royals.

The 45-year-old once worked for the team back when they were a second division side so fitting the team into Ruby's life was a piece of cake.

“Ruby's family come from Reading,” Nicola explains, “and a lot of quite humorous things

happen when she goes to the games.”

Nicola has been delighted with the reaction so far. “It's selling really well,” she says.

“It's also getting really, really good reviews on Amazon.

“It's really gratifying – I've been trying to get published for nine years, so it's great that people like it.”

If, like Ruby, the author's career starts taking off, getting hold of a signed first edition could be a wise investment for the future. Thankfully Nicola is only too happy to oblige.

“If you want signed copies, go to my website and order it through there,” she says. “I'll dedicate a copy to anyone.”

That sounds like a result that Brian McDermott's blue and white army will be proud of. ■ Working It Out by Nicola May and published by Nowell Publishing is available from [www.nicolamay.com](http://www.nicolamay.com) and costs £7.99. ISBN: 9780956832306.