



ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN LANCASHIRE EVENING POST Monday 16th February, 2009

Hands-on approach to helping mums-to-be
30-weeks pregnant community reporter JOSIE HILL visits Louise Oliver,
trained nurse, holistic therapist and pregnancy masseuse

Visiting Louise Oliver's pregnancy massage clinic in Broughton, at that stage in pregnancy when tying your shoelaces becomes a contortionist's act, I had just one thing in mind – taking the pressure off my back. And after going through the obligatory safety checks, I had the novelty of being able to choose which position I would like to adopt before the real work began. I chose to lie on my front. As anyone who's ever been pregnant will know, lying on your front is not usually an option during pregnancy so for me – for the first time in four months – this was too good an opportunity to miss.

This was achieved by lying on an oversized beanbag with a bump-sized hole in it, which can be filled or emptied to accommodate your size and shape. And sure enough, once in position, I experienced that "aah" moment of total comfort I had been longing for.

The touch of Louise's hands made "aah" moment number two. She has big, strong, yet incredibly soft hands – another prerequisite to a good, no, a great massage. No offence to those in the industry with wiry little fingers, but it definitely does make a difference. I also noticed that because I was lying on my front with my back flat and in a straight line, as opposed to on my side, as in a previous pregnancy massage, Louise was able to work symmetrically on all of my back.

Suffice to say it worked – and I felt that release you get when you are properly relaxed, something that modern day living makes a rarity. Louise had tailored the massage to me and had chosen reflexology to follow (*actually it was zone therapy, not reflexology L.O.*). Reflexology may not be everyone's cup of tea. In a way, it is a quite intimate thing as your feet contain thousands of nerve endings and it can be both pleasurable and painful as the therapist works on removing the toxins from the soles of your busy feet. But having had a few sessions to date, I would recommend it to anyone wanting to relax, or even to encourage healing – it is said to restore the balance to the body and unblock energy pathways. It is also purported to aid pregnancy by stimulating the liver, endocrine glands and lymphatic drainage, and can help bring on labour in full term pregnancies.* Having had about eight professional massages, and nearly as many reflexology treatments in my lifetime, this would probably be up there with the best.

And as I am continually told during pregnancy to take a load off, relax and de-stress, surely there can be no better way than this? Louise Oliver is a trained nurse, qualified holistic therapist, and has trained in pregnancy massage on the Childbirth Essential Programme. Her experience working as a psychiatric nurse led her to believe in the value of holistic therapies and massage treatments for all

sorts of illnesses and ailments, stresses and anxieties.

Louise also offers a post-natal massage to help mums relax and return to full mobility.

Visits www.lopmpm.co.uk or call 07794 001631 for a chat or to book an appointment.

*As with all medical, holistic or alternative treatments, always consult trained professionals before undertaking any course of therapy.