



■ Acupuncture can reduce wrinkles

# Point taken

AS MY face is beginning to resemble Melanie Griffiths' knee, the offer of an acupuncture facelift at a new Lymington clinic was both welcome and intriguing.

Especially as the treatment is to be given by Alex Maas, New Forest Acupuncture, named as one of Tatler Magazine's '150 best private doctors', who has re-located his prestigious north London practice to the south coast.

I've never had acupuncture before. Would it hurt?

Would it even work?

Well, Alex, who is a member of the British Acupuncture Council, the country's largest recognised body of acupuncturists is a remarkable advert for his own therapy – I couldn't see one line on his face.

In his soothing consulting room, in an ancient house that once belonged to Henry VIII's brother-in-law, he explains that the Acufacelift works by targeting key areas of blocked energy in the neck, face and ears.

A course of 12 is recommended with monthly, then seasonal top-ups, but results can be obtained from just one session.

Like every acupuncture treatment the consultation begins with a lengthy health inquiry into childhood diseases, medication and any on-going complaints.

## Faith Eckersall sees the point of a facelift with a difference

Then, explains Alex, he'll be sticking the needles into my feet, legs and face.

"The acupuncture on the face will draw heat and energy to that area," he says.

"The feet and leg points help to keep it balanced."

The needles work on the Chinese principle of chi, the energy flow that follows invisible pathways along the entire length of the body.

Certain points correspond to organs in the body and the placement of the needles can help get them working more efficiently again.

Before he starts he shows me the needles; sterilised, Japanese and slimmer than a cat's whisker.

When they go into my legs their either tickle or feel like a tiny electrical charge.

Then it's time for my face. In they go round my nose and mouth. And yes, one, in the dead centre of my chin,

really hurts.

Feeling like the bloke in Hellraiser, I ask Alex about his work. He explains that he discovered acupuncture while travelling in the Far East and studied it after discovering its effects on himself.

After half an hour the needles are ready to come out. The difference is imperceptible but there definitely seems to be more lift on the right side of my mouth.

While the treatment was taking place Alex added a series of minuscule gold spheres to acu-points on my ears.

They have to be massaged three times a day to stimulate energy flows and he also dispenses interesting advice for dealing with stress and fatigue.

"I don't try and change people's lives," he says. "I teach them techniques to preserve their health and well-being."