

# Coming together

## The Faculty Congress 2018

Over the years, I've attended homeopathic conferences and congresses of all shapes and sizes. Although most could be described as informative, even enjoyable, there was something extra special about the Faculty of Homeopathy's Congress, which took place in Liverpool from 11 – 14 October 2018. That 'something' is quite hard to define, but it definitely transcended a simple description of 'well organised and informative'; it felt like a 'coming together' of our embattled profession at a deep, even profound, level.

The theme of the Congress was 'Homeopathy: Connecting our Global Community', and every faction of our profession was represented. Delegates came from all over the world, and included doctors, dentists, non-medically qualified homeopaths and homeopathic veterinary surgeons. It felt really good to be able to offer our UK vets both moral support and encouragement in their battle to retain their right to treat animals with homeopathy. Back in November 2017, this right was compromised by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS), when they chose to issue a totally unacceptable position statement, in which it was implied (without one shred of supportive evidence) that using homeopathy as a first line of treatment for animals could result in animal welfare issues.

The Congress gave us the opportunity to collectively pay tribute to Dr Peter Fisher who died so tragically in a cycling

accident earlier this year. His many achievements, including acting as the Queen's homeopathic physician for the last 15 years, were remarkable, and he was well respected by the scientific, medical and homeopathic communities but, above all, he was a fearless champion of homeopathy, and he will be sorely missed. Acknowledging Peter's legacy seemed to bring us all closer together; we will, indeed we must, follow his example, and continue to both develop and extend our homeopathic knowledge base.

The presentations covered a wide range of topics, with some arranged in parallel sessions, which made selecting the one to attend quite a challenge. I shall not attempt a blow-by-blow account of the many excellent presentations on offer. For me, this Congress excelled as an exercise in sharing knowledge and expertise, and networking with people we might otherwise never meet. Most of us run our own practice, and work in relative isolation from other healthcare professionals, so to spend several days in the company of like-minded people was a positive luxury.

In a year when the NHS chose to decommission the prescription of homeopathic medicines, it was hugely encouraging to hear Dr Elizabeth Thompson talking about the newly-fledged National Centre for Integrative Medicine (NCIM), which is based in Bristol. There, liberated from the constraints, restrictions and prejudices so often apparent in NHS healthcare delivery, patients are offered a diverse range of approaches,



From left to right: Kulwant Uppal (India), Prof Aaron To (Hong Kong), Faculty President Dr Gary Smyth, and Dr Helen Beamont

including homeopathy, to support their return to health. The NCIM also offers accredited training for healthcare professionals and CAM practitioners. This provides those interested in extending their professional skills with the opportunity to learn about a holistic approach to health, in a busy and well-supported clinical setting. We need centres like this to seed in every city in the country; it would be good to think that the establishment of the NCIM could move us one step closer to delivering meaningful patient-centred healthcare in the future.

Another thing to look forward to, albeit in a few years' time, is the publication of a 'New Nosodes Repertory', currently being compiled by Dr Russell Malcolm. Russell, who graduated in medicine in 1983, is a speciality doctor in Medical Homeopathy within the Scottish NHS, and a Fellow of the Faculty of Homeopathy. He has already been working on the repertory for some time and sees one of the key challenges in creating a system which is both flexible and user-friendly. The information must be reliable, and include the experiences of the original provers (where available), plus the more objective data gathered from patients following

clinical investigation. If you add to that mix the wealth of useful information which exists from conventional studies of bacteriological models for infection and colonisation, you quickly realise that you need to have a very clear structure in place to ensure that all the information is accessible in a repertory format.

To achieve this, Russell has developed a 'triangulation method' for nosode selection, which combines symptom-based information with knowledge-based information, and the concept-based information already established within traditional homeopathic methodology. Once published, I suspect this repertory will become an essential addition to our homeopathic toolkit, and we'll probably wonder how we ever managed without it.

The Faculty Congress is a bi-annual event, so the next one will not take place until 2020. If you missed this year's event, I strongly recommend that you plan to attend the next one. It's good to come together as a profession anyway and, whilst we're still having to fight our corner, it is even more important to share, care for, support each other, and enjoy each other's company. Thank you, Faculty team, for organising an excellent event.

*Karin Mont MARH*