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HISTORY AND NEWS OF THE DOCTOR-HEALER NETWORK (UK) AND THE CURRENT STATUS OF HEALING IN THE UK

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Following recent changes within the Doctor-Healer Network (DHN) in the UK, this seems a good time and opportunity to communicate our activities to our colleagues across the 'pond.'

In 1987 Dr Daniel Benor first convened meetings of like-minded doctors who were interested in complementary therapies, and particular spiritual healing. At that time there were a few doctors working within the National Health Service who were on a quest to discover deeper causes of illness, and to look for less invasive treatments beyond the standard medical prescriptions. They realised there were missing factors about which they had not been trained, either at medical school, or in any post-graduate teaching. They were learning the importance of spiritual factors in their everyday work, which were not being addressed by the more orthodox churches. They were able to discover a few gallant souls who, despite holding down prestigious posts within the NHS, both in hospitals and general practice on occasions used unusual healing gifts consciously or unconsciously, on occasions in the course of their normal daily work.

Three of these early DHN members had employed trained healers into their general practices for many years. There was already in place a strong association of Spiritual Healers, some 5,000 strong, within the National Federation of Spiritual Healers, as well as other smaller groups. The NFSH was a break-away group from the older 'spiritualist healers', who had practised in spiritualist churches since the beginning of the 20th century. These doctors discovered that the healers had abilities to help the patients in unforeseen ways and a great deal of knowledge and experience to share with the wider community.

Dan encouraged the doctors and healers to share together at regular meetings around the country. He also established a magazine for short reports and news for everyone to share. By 1990, one of the doctors had completed a short pilot study of the results of 36 patients given spiritual healing in general practice by four employed spiritual healers. This study was presented to the local Post-graduate Medical Centre, where it was politely received. However, with the editorial help of Dan Benor this study was published in a Journal of Complementary Medicine a year later, which stimulated a wider interest in the subject.

The doctor involved experienced a massive and spontaneous kundalini rising experience the following evening. The next day this doctor found she only had to touch her patients and many had their long-standing pains removed. However, there was a down side, in as much as she also unconsciously altered, or fused all electrical and electronic devices that she touched. Dan was very supportive, despite the fact that each time they conversed on the telephone the whole surgery electronic system fused out of action. (in British understatement, I can share that his was not helpful in the overall efficiency of a busy group general practice).

Another GP, Dr Craig Brown, wrote a book on his general practice experiences whilst working with a spiritual healer in his surgery. He later trained with the NFSH himself and became their President for some years. He was to hold annual DHN meetings at his surgery on the South Coast.

Three doctors by this time had experienced official complaints for utilising complementary therapies not then acceptable to the state, and were investigated by the General Medical Council. They realised that they would in future have to work outside the NHS system of care. The fourth had to retire early with unstable kundalini problems.

Dan by this time had written his first great tome on the authenticity of research trials on healing energy, which remains a healers' bible to this day. He also ran a large conference in London with the help of DHN members. This was a great success and spread the word that healing through energy transfer had a scientific basis. Sadly for us Dan then returned to the USA.

The DHN took a while to unite into a functional network again. Healers Michael Dibdin and John Phelps took over the role of Secretary and Treasurer. In 2001, a new rising star appeared in London Dr Ellis Snitcher, a London University Lecturer with a particular interest in healing. He formed the London Branch of the DHN, whilst in Liverpool Dr Sheelagh Donnelly did the same in the north of the country. Ellis was bald, rather short, with an impish smile and a very clear mind. Meetings were held every 2-3 months in London with interesting guest speakers, often from within the University setting. Sadly Ellis developed cancer in 2005 and died within the year. He was much loved and is sorely missed. The vacancy of the London Chair was a problem and there were few takers, so I offered to do my best in the role.

Meanwhile the DHN had received an anonymous donation for £5000 for research. This was given to a small pilot study on the qualitative effects of healing patients with cancer in the community.

In October 2007, the London Branch of the DHN joined the NFSH and put on a day's conference on "Healing and Spirituality in the 21st Century" in London, which proved very successful.

At the same time there has been much governmental activity looking at the role of complementary medicine therapists, seeking regulation. There were many protagonists led by Professor Ernst of the Peninsular University, and other significant consultants who have been actively campaigning over the last three years against any state funding being offered for Complementary Medicine. Two therapies, Acupuncture and Chiropractic chose to take the route of 'statutory government regulation,'

Prince Charles has been supporting complementary medicine, particularly through the 'Foundation for Integrated Healthcare. This institute has now been functioning for about eight years, and helps to promote Complementary Medicine within group settings and the state

system. It has been attempting to promote and organise self-regulation for the different therapies. The government gave a small grant for an 'Independent Chair' to develop this idea further, and called the group "The National Health Care Council." Twelve therapies were involved, but three pulled out. Spiritual Healing was not one of these therapies, as it already has a good self-regulatory body within the UK Healers, which is an umbrella body of the 30 healing organisations within it. This body is working closely with the NHCC. There are many details [of the UK Healers code of conduct]still to be clarified, so meanwhile, individual healers are still required to adhere to rules of their own association. (Details of this may be found on www.FIH.org.uk)

These changes are now becoming significant for UK Healers, as there are increasing numbers of them working in state hospitals and hospices. Some are even being paid for their work. The word 'spiritual' has found disfavour by many, but the term 'Reiki,' has been better accepted. Thus, many professionally orientated healers are training in both Spiritual Healing and Reiki, but are working officially under this last title, although in practice they probably work with a mixture of the two.

Two pioneers in this field are healer Ruth Kaye, working at the Oncology Unit in Leeds, and Angie Buxton-King in the Cancer Unit at University College Hospital London (UCHL). Both healers are paid by the state NHS to work in the hospitals. Angie, in association with her husband Graham, has also formed a Charity – The Sam Buxton Sunflower Trust. (Sam was Angie's 10 year-old son who died of leukaemia, and had found regular healing therapy of great benefit.) This Trust has now grown to allow 5 selected healers who have been accepted by the NHS to receive payment for their services. Graham is also now employed to work as part of the complementary therapy team at the UCHL, with his wife as "On-line Manager.' Details of this work, with the supporting views of nursing administrators and doctors can be seen on a YouTube presentation (www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVYsoi3PT2U). Angie and Graham are also running courses around the country for healers who wish to train professionally and require to learn the problems of working within the hospital/hospice setting.

Here it may be helpful to explain to readers from abroad that hospitals in the UK are nearly all part of the NHS system, which is free to all UK citizens, and paid by central taxes. We may also wonder whether the UK is more secular/ multi-faith than parts of the American continent, thus allowing a different approach to healing matters.

The Doctor-Healer Network now needs to integrate these changes. It is highly regarded but remains a small organisation, with only about 180 paid-up members. Modernisation was an urgent requirement with a constitution, and elected members, and an updating of information on the DHN web-site (www.doctorhealer.net). In April, 2008 an AGM was arranged in London, when 33 members attended, which included one representative from Norway, and another from Finland. The constitution was approved, and at the same time our founder member Dr Daniel Benor was elected unanimously as Honorary President, with Michael Dibdin as Vice-President. A new committee have been voted into Office. The new Chair is dynamic Mrs Angie Buxton-King, with vice-Chairs Dr Tim Ridge and myself. John Phelps, Graham King , Katrina Brook, and Dr Michelle Langdon are committee members.

The DHN UK has changed over the years of its existence. There are fewer working doctor members, but a growing group of healers being welcomed into hospitals and hospices. There is a slow increase of hospital Consultants who are prepared to work quietly with us as they have seen the evidence of the good effects of healing. The future could be exciting. The DHN is preparing itself to support doctors and healers in the challenges that lie ahead.

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