

Dr Alan Lakin, 1933-2019

Sadly, Dr Alan Lakin died on 1 July 2019, after a long struggle with his health. Many herbalists will remember Alan, as he was a great fan and supporter of phytotherapy and of all things herbal. When he was more able, he attended many of the herbal gatherings and seminars. As he got older he reckoned that he had taken more herbal medicine in his lifetime than anyone else in England. He was 86 years old when he died, but he started his career in a much more conventional way. He first arrived at the University of Reading with his ration book in the 1950's as an undergraduate to study Animal Nutrition in the Department of Physiology and Biochemistry. Shortly after graduating he joined the staff of the University of Reading – in the Department of Food Science - specialising in food chemistry. He was an inspiring teacher and retained contacts with former students until he died. He played a big part in the design of the laboratories and varied amenities of the Food Studies Building, which opened in 1981.

Alan married Dr Ann Walker in 1984 and together they ran a successful consultancy for the health food industry for 10 years following Alan's retirement. On the recommendation of his Chinese PhD student, Alan consulted a practitioner of TCM for several years for his chronic fatigue. Later, when Ann discovered that such a thing as western herbal medicine existed, Alan whole-heartedly encouraged her to take up a late-life professional career in herbal medicine. Just as well, as in 2005 he suffered a very severe toxoplasmosis infection (from tick bites from sheep in New Zealand) causing loss of his left eyesight and brain damage. The latter became more evident as he got older, but, again, nutrition and herbal medicine were undoubtedly helpful in ameliorating and slowing symptom onset. He leaves two children and four grandchildren from a former marriage.

Dr Ann Walker MCPP

