

# Obituary – Peter Richard Bradley

*15<sup>th</sup> June 1937 – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021*

It is with deepest regret that the British Herbal Medicine Association (BHMA) has to inform all members, friends and colleagues in the field of herbal medicine that

**Mr Peter Bradley**, Board Member of the Association, passed away on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2021 near his home town of Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, UK.

A Chemist by training and Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, Peter completed a Masters Degree in carbohydrate chemistry at Queen's University in Kingston Ontario, Canada, before returning to the UK. He developed a passion for the science of herbal medicines in the 1980's and joined the BHMA Board, serving as Chairman between 2010 and 2013 and never retiring from the Board.

Working for many global companies over his career in the development and supply of herbal medicines including Brewhurst, Booker, Gerard House and American Home Products Corporation, he applied his considerable talents to a number of industry roles including heading teams developing OTC medicines and leading commercial health food manufacturing operations in India and Puerto Rico.

Peter's passion however, always remained the science of herbal medicines. His most personal contribution to the BHMA has to be his singlehanded authoring and production of the two volumes of the British Herbal Compendium published in 1992 and 2006. Both of these ground-breaking publications of their time were truly painstaking labours of love over many years, with Peter retiring from work early to complete the authoring and publication of the Compendium Volume 2.

In addition to these solo efforts, Peter was the driving force behind all of the BHMA's activities on scientific publications, handling the marketing and sale of all BHMA books from his own home. He contributed to every single BHMA book published since 1983, all of which continue to be sold around the world today.



These are, and will remain, at the core of his legacy to herbal medicine and the Association for many years to come.

More broadly, Peter was passionate about the work and objectives of the BHMA and he was always at the forefront of any debate about its future. A staunch supporter and protector of the organisation, he worked tirelessly to secure its long-term future and was a vocal campaigner for the application of the highest standards of science to herbal medicines and ultimately the availability of high-quality products to the public.

Peter's influence and impact in the field of herbal medicine was of course in no way restricted to the UK. He was a leading figure in the BHMA's membership of The European Scientific Cooperative on Phytotherapy (ESCOP) and an integral member of the UK delegation from the very beginning, attending the foundation meeting of ESCOP held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June 1989. His talents for scientific writing and attention to detail were immediately recognised by his European colleagues, and in addition to co-chairing ESCOP Scientific Committees from 1989 to 2011, he acted as "editor in chief" overseeing the development and publication of over 60 scientific monographs. These initial ESCOP monographs, and the supporting scientific literature, underpinned much of the review work completed by the Herbal Medicinal Products Committee of the European Union. These reviews resulted in many of the accepted and approved efficacy claims which can be applied to herbal medicinal products sold across Europe today.



The sheer scale of the impact Peter was able to have on the field of herbal medicines can in many ways be directly linked to his personal values and character. With almost all of the work on BHMA and ESCOP publications in the early 1990's completed manually, without the aid of the internet or electronic database searches, Peter's dogged determination to have the full story on any particular issue would routinely see him attending the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and Royal Society of Chemistry libraries to manually gather paper copies of scientific articles in person. On his return home, each paper would then be alphabetically and chronologically catalogued into ring binders ready for review and possible referencing in a herbal monograph. His passion and intellect, coupled with an unrelenting need to have every last scrap of published information on whatever herb he was working on at the time, allowed Peter to produce many of the finest reviews of medicinal plant chemistry, pharmacology and clinical efficacy, despite eventually filling many of the rooms of his house and garage with scientific literature!

His extraordinary attention to detail was without parallel and Peter nurtured an old-fashioned respect for the written word. As an editor, he was in effect the writer's worst nightmare, having a hawk-eyed attention to every grammatical and punctuation detail. On many an occasion, a proud author's draft manuscript would be returned annotated with a sea of suggested corrections in red ink. It was however Peter's charm and good grace which enabled him to soothe the writer's despair and ultimately deliver a finely honed written product which was comprehensive, accurately referenced and grammatically perfect. His obsession with words extended to his focus on numbers and in his leadership roles for ESCOP and BHMA he always demanded the highest standard around expense management, cost control, prudence and fiscal discipline.

In addition to his staunch protection of herbal medicine, Peter was also a fierce defender of the environment, back as early as the 1980's. He was passionate in both words and actions on conserving the Earth's resources by always minimising his consumption of energy and materials and never missing an opportunity for recycling.

Work with the BHMA, and particularly ESCOP, provided many opportunities for travel and there are multiple tales in the archives of adventures in many European destinations visited on ESCOP business. Peter's huge personality meant he was without fail the "star actor" at shared dinner evenings where he was universally recognised by all his colleagues and friends for his kind, warm, fun-loving personality and renowned for his passion, good humour and generosity.



Peter Bradley and Fritz Kemper, ESCOP



Peter's contribution to the BHMA over more than three decades is frankly without parallel. During this time, he brought together the rigour of his scientific training, obsessive attention to detail and dogged determination to develop the BHMA into an organisation with the principles of modern scientific rigour at its core. In 2015, Peter's contribution to the BHMA was formally recognised by an award at the Association's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations event held at the Barber Surgeon's Hall in London.

The BHMA publications and ESCOP Monographs will remain his lasting legacy and effectively memorialise the significant impact he has made on the scientific and therapeutic application of herbal medicine across the European continent and beyond. In honour of Peter's contribution to scientific writing, the BHMA will be establishing a prize for students of herbal medicine in the UK.

The current BHMA Chair, Secretary and five other board members attended Peter's funeral on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 at Canford Crematorium near Bristol. A gentleman and a huge character, who had a significant impact on the Association, Peter will be very sorely missed, but remembered as a fundamental and truly memorable part of the BHMA and its history.

With greatest respects and fondest memories

### **Board Members of the BHMA**

*October 2021*



From left: Chris Etheridge (BHMA Chair), Ray Hill (past BHMA Chair), Roberta Hutchins (BHMA Company Secretary), BHMA Directors: Ann Godsell, Dick Middleton, Martin Willoughby, Sarah Edwards, Simon Mills.