

The Denis and Doreen Brookes Archive

In August 2012, osteopath Doreen Brookes passed away aged 89, still practicing till 3 days before her death. Doreen was the widow of Denis Brookes PhD, DO, MRO, the first President of the Cranial Osteopathic Association (now ICrA) and she has bequeathed to the ICrA their joint collection of books, lecture notes, films and equipment including a MacManus Table. The books include original editions of early cranial texts as well as Denis Brookes' book, published in 1981 and translated in Japanese and in Portuguese. Denis passed away in 1983. The collection of books and papers is now preserved at the National Osteopathic Archives (NOA) under museum conditions in a special room in the British School of Osteopathy, 275 Borough High Street London SE1 1JE, and is accessible to all ICrA members. The film and audio archive is still being evaluated by ICrA member and historian Bill Ferguson, to see if the quality is adequate for reproduction.

This short history of early cranial osteopathy in the UK is gleaned from the papers in the collection, but there is so much more to add. Doreen (Nunnery, later to become Brookes) was originally a medical doctor, specialising in children with learning difficulties. Disillusioned by the use of the mind-altering addictive drugs for these children, she heard about cranial osteopathy and was directed by the US osteopaths to Denis Brookes in England. After seeing the results on his treatment of some of her young patients, she attended many of his lectures. Aware that the BMA would not approve of the direction of her treatment approach, she soon decided to re-train as an osteopath.

Denis Brookes was a graduate of the BSO (pre-war) and was probably the first English osteopath to study Sutherland's work in the USA. Further research is needed to establish when he went first to the USA, but the lecture notes suggest he studied under Paul Kimberley in 1947. He definitely studied with the Sutherland-trained osteopaths Howard and Rebecca Lippincott in the USA. As early as 1944 he presented a paper in Amsterdam, on 'The pineal gland from an osteopathic point of view'. The Dutch Dr Jules Samuels was well known at that time for his radio-wave treatment described in his book *Endogenous Endocrinopathy*.

In the 1960s, Dennis Brookes started cranial study groups in the UK under the aegis of the Research Society for Naturopathy. The group known as 'The Cotswold mob' included Joe Goodman, William Wright, John Scott-Cameron, Ron McCatty, and Ron Woodward (who founded the Northern Institute of Massage in Manchester). Denis is remembered for being the English osteopath who, in 1964, brought three US cranial osteopaths - Harold Magoun Sr., together with Viola Fryman and Thomas Schooley - to France for the first time to instruct nine doctors or physiotherapists in Paris in the art of cranial osteopathy. The instruction took place in the practice of Rene Quéguiner, who, together with Francis Peyralade, shortly afterwards organised a society to support the spread of cranial osteopathy within France. In the same year, 1964, Denis instructed the founder of the l'Association de Thérapie Manuelle, Bob Bénichou.

In 1965 Joe Goodman D.O., N.D. and William Wright D.O., N.D. founded the Cranial Osteopathic Association (CRO, later re-named ICrA). Denis Brookes was the President and the association was affiliated to 'Le Sacrosphenoid Club' of France. The earliest papers in Doreen's collection date from 1983, when there were just 17 members.

In 1970, Denis treated two cousins aged 29 and 25 years who had lost their sight due to rapid onset of Leber's Disease. Both were medically diagnosed and attending the RNIB centre at Torquay to learn braille. Denis treated them over a period of 12 months and both recovered their sight (Daily Telegraph 22nd October 1970). A year later The Shropshire Star (27 Nov 1971) reported that the once blind 'Mr Powell and the osteopath who because of medical ethics must remain anonymous were the guests of honour' at a big medical conference in Amsterdam. The article mentioned that 'the osteopath had successfully treated 63 people, all of whom had been told by specialists at various hospitals in the country that they would be blind for the rest of their lives.' The osteopath is quoted as saying that doctors are 'sending patients to me now and are beginning to accept it'.

In the 1995 edition of The Cranial Osteopathic Association Newsletter, Chairman Joseph Goodman looked back at 30 years of the CRO. He mentioned Denis Brookes who had educationally and by example changed their practicing lives; he acknowledged the help of many members past and present including successive treasurers of the CRO: Leon Chaitow, David John and Margaret O'Callaghan; of willing helpers such as Sandra King the conference organiser and Claire Low, Vivienne Moss, Guy Williamson, Tim Brown, Peter Bartlett, John Scott- Cameron, Doug Penn, Paul Ashburner, Bernard Barillon, Gerard Montet, Manu Shah and his late wife Helene; he mentioned Michael Kern helping to teach the CRO courses with Bill Wright and Jo; Julia Summerton editor of the Newsletter; and Linda Goodman and Richard Cook who were the librarians. During most of those 30 years the association ran annual 5 day training courses, 3 day follow up courses, and two conferences per year. Full membership was open to manipulative therapists who had completed an approved cranial training and presented a learned paper to their peers. There is much more to be uncovered from the papers, perhaps with the help of the Osteopathic History Group and the American Osteopathic Association. The old 35mm films are a treasure trove yet to be uncovered. And if any member is interested in using their MacManus table, they would be in good company: a MacManus Table was used by Magoun to treat Eisenhower! UK osteopath Paul Manley has a clip on Sacral Musings showing his 1921 McManus table he has used for over 30 years, found in a warehouse in Los Angeles in 1969. Contact HQ if you are interested.