

BOOKS

**LOOKING BACK –
MOVING FORWARD**
by Rowena J Ronson

Food for Thought
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The subtitle tells us: 'Great teachers and practitioners of homeopathy, based in the UK, share their stories, wisdom, experience and insights'. Between 30 November 2004 and 5 December 2005, Rowena talked to 34 'of the UK's great teachers and practitioners of homeopathy' in 32 interviews, and this book is a record of these conversations in the order in which they took place. The book 'looks back' over the last forty years as these teachers and practitioners share their collective experience, and asks and answers question about how homeopathy is likely to 'move forward' through the new millennium.

Here's a list of interviewees in alphabetic order, which some of us might find helpful as the information is otherwise contained in a much larger list of 'UK homeopaths, past and present' in the index: Subrata Kumar Banerjea, Mike Bridger and Dion Tabrett, Peter Chappell, Kate Chatfield, Sheilagh Creasy, Robert Davidson, Annette Gamblin, Lesley Gregerson, Linda Guillim & Bill Rumble, Barbara Harwood, Brian Kaplan, Ellen Kramer, Martin Miles, Lionel Milgrom, Misha Norland, Nicky Pool, Ernest Roberts, Rebecca Preston, Linda Razzell, Gordon Sambidge, Roger Savage, Yubraj Sharma, Jeremy Sherr, Myriam Shivadikar, Sue Sternberg, Simon Taffler, Francis Treuherz, Charles Wansbrough, Anne Waters, Jerome Whitney, Kaaren Whitney, Carol Wise.

In the preface we learn that the inspiration for the book came when Rowena asked George Vithoulkas to name current great teachers of homeopathy. He did not include any UK-based names in his reply, because in the UK we have '... lost our way and are therefore not influencing homeopaths capable of sustaining our discipline into the future'.

As Rowena had just spent a year as education advisor for the Society of Homeopaths, which had brought her into close contact with six homeopathic course providers, three of which had a non-classical ethos, rather than her own much more classical perspective, she was well-positioned to ask questions to draw out information about various different approaches.

The interviews range from six pages (Lesley Gregerson and Rebecca Preston) to 22 pages (Sheilagh Creasy). Some give a fascinating insight into what brought the interviewee to the place where we knew them (Barbara Harwood, principal of CoH during my student years), and others give less away about the non-homeopathic aspects of their lives. Some are still in teaching mode – sometimes Rowena meets the interviewee in their lunch break during a teaching day – so we also get an insight

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into their favourite topics. (For example, Ellen Kramer's explanation and definition of practical homeopathy, or Subrata Banerjea's miasmatic approach, 'MTEK'.)

A lot of work has also gone into the index. There are various categories from Allopathic Medicine to Science, with Homeopathic Terms and Remedies, among other categories, in between.

It's a fascinating read if you like this sort of thing – which I do (I researched the heroes and contemporaries of James Compton Burnett, 1840-1901, as part of my final year project). It doesn't matter if you dip into this book at whatever chapter it falls open, or if you read it from first to 32nd, or if you head for an interview with someone who particularly interests you. But be warned, the pictures of the interviewees are very strange. Presumably each interviewee supplied a recent photo, but it looks as if the pictures have either been stretched or shrunk to fit a standard size and, honestly, if you don't know what these people look like, please don't think you'll recognise them from here!

On the downside: size, and cost. Too big to slip in your bag in case you have a few spare minutes in the day, and not easy to justify the cost at the exclusion of more erudite homeopathic tomes. However, I have enjoyed reading it, dipping into it, and revisiting it. I have also speculated about people who were not included. Did they say no, or were they unavailable in Rowena's timescale, or had they not crossed Rowena's radar?

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