

50 years of *Simile*

The newsletter *Simile*, in its various evolving forms, debuting as *Similia* in 1970, celebrates 50 years! This is thus a most auspicious issue, with *carte blanche* to indulge in reminiscing over what has been a labour of love and dedication for many. *Simile* itself, with this name goes back to 1991, when Peter Fisher was the editor, and launched it by proclaiming, in a very enthusiastic way: '*Simile* is yours!' The mission statement was to be 'topical, accessible and international, allowing the publication of urgent, relatively brief items of news.'

Gill Graham

Like today, *Similia/Simile* relied on its readers to feed it news, particularly that deemed to be of importance to the homeopathic community. I note that competitions were run to encourage people to submit case reports. I am musing on how we could perhaps reinvigorate this idea! Suggestions for competitions and prizes and donations most welcome!

There is wisdom in these early editions, some of which could be inspirational to us now. We can certainly learn from these past issues and the experiences relayed and be proud of our evolution and the fact that we, fundamentally, are a community who continues to be dedicated to homeopathy, whether we are doctors, vets, pharmacists or allied practitioners, as Faculty members. Homeopathy binds us together; it is the glue that unifies us. The hope in this article is that we can reflect and celebrate some key contributors to *Simile*, remember significant figures who have been featured over the years, focus on some great achievements and lessons learnt and move forward with the same integrity, dignity and force of our predecessors.

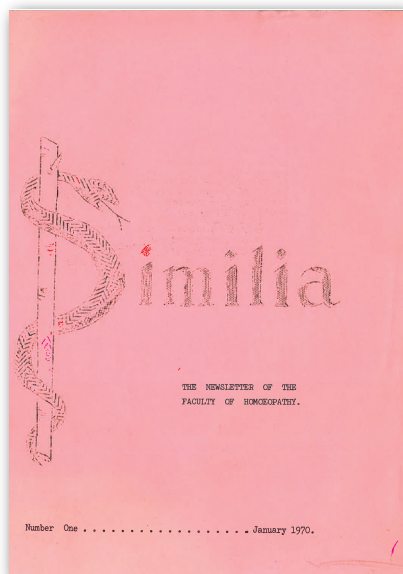
Regrettably several issues are missing or cannot currently be located, and it is impossible to cover everything, so this is but a glimpse of 50 years of Faculty news, but hopefully a tantalising one and a milestone which we hope to honour with our vibrant makeover for *Simile* in homage to our predecessors.

Over the last 50 years, we have had 18 presidents, from Dr Donald

MacDonald Foubister (1970-71) to Dr Gary Smyth (2018-present). There have been five clear Editors of *Simile* starting with Dr Peter Fisher in 1991.

Similia first came out in 1970. To put this in context this was the decade of the Space Hopper, the Ford Cortina, Raleigh Chopper bikes, the record player and cassette recorder. In 1977, the whole nation celebrated the Queen's Silver Jubilee with street parties. The first big new sound of the 1970's was 'Glam Rock', the main figures of this were David Bowie, Elton John and of course Gary Glitter.

Before you all get too carried away with the rock nostalgia feast your eyes on the sophisticated front cover of the first ever hand typed edition of *Similia*! I'd like to say it was classy, but let's just say it stands out and I personally love it.



The newsletter *Similia* arose from a suggestion made at the September 1970 meeting of the Faculty of Homeopathy,

to the effect that there was a meeting of the Faculty of Homeopathy to discuss how to improve communication amongst its members. It is unclear how long this publication lasted, but there is evidence of only two issues. In July 1976, the Faculty of Homeopathy and Homeopathic Trust newsletter was launched. This appears to have been published for a number of years.

I find it very poignant that **John Burry**, our editor 2013-2020 who sadly, recently died of Covid, had started to write this article. Of this first issue he said:

It was in January of that year (1970) when the Faculty produced Similia, which, according to the introduction, was published to meet '... the urgent need to improve communication between those members of the Faculty who do not have the opportunity of meeting their fellow members with any regularity.' Edited by Dr Gareth H Lewis, that first issue was a slim volume comprising only ten pages. But reading through those pages you quickly realise Similia is not only a fascinating historical document from half a century ago, it also provided a template for the content that was to appear in future publications, where the membership is encouraged to share their news, views and experiences in clinical practice through the pages of the newsletter...

Thank you, John, for your beautiful, posthumous summation of the first issue of *Similia*.



1970's/1980's

Gareth Lewis

'The Skipper' 1970, *Similia*, of Harlow, Essex, appeared to edit this first pink issue of *Similia*. Not unlike now, he encouraged communication, stating there was a lack of interaction, social and otherwise amongst Faculty members. In addition, he inspired participation, stating: "Tell us your views, write, just write!" Throughout the 70's, editions were not regular. They always boasted bright colours such as bright yellow or neon green, they were laboriously and probably lovingly hand typed, certainly no frills, but what is more than evident, is the effort that went into them. Other issues of the newsletter during this period of time, warmly discuss social events as well as other significant news. Definitely not all work and no play, which still resonates in today's issues of *Simile*. The importance of celebrating, having fun and being in each other's presence is brought more keenly home in our current state of semi-lockdown having been deprived of each other's company for well over a year. Thankfully technology has permitted us to keep the connections strong.

At the end of the 70's and into the 80's, two very eminent figures in the Faculty received awards from the Queen for services to homeopathy. Both recipients were featured in the newsletters:

Colonel Michael Barraclough and Dr Margery Blackie. Recognition such as this has not happened in recent times, so it is wonderful to remind our members of these achievements. Our community has been somewhat starved of positive media coverage of late, but bringing it back to mind may help us manifest it!

The installation of Prince Charles as our Patron in 2018 acknowledged the strong tradition of connection between homeopathy and the Royal Family and how it continues to be very much part of Royal Life.



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Dr Margery Blackie (1898-1981)

Dr Margery Blackie obtained her MD from the University of London in 1928. During her career she combined a busy homoeopathic general practice with her hospital work, which culminated in her appointment in 1966 as Honorary Consultant Physician to the Royal London Homeopathic Hospital. She was Dean of the Faculty of Homeopathy from 1965 to 1979 and appointed Physician to H.M. the Queen in 1968.



She received a special 'Commander of the Royal Victorian order,' personal recognition from the queen, featured in the 1979 issue of The Faculty of Homeopathy and the Homeopathic Trust Newsletter, December 1979.

Colonel MC Barraclough OBE, MBIM

Colonel MC Barraclough was a former secretary of the Homeopathic Trust and Faculty of Homeopathy, joining the organisations in 1971, after a distinguished career in the army; he stayed until his retirement 17 years later. He was awarded the OBE for services to homeopathy in 1985.

Colonel Barraclough wrote a timeless article, in my opinion called: *Quis separabit?* which was published in *The British Homeopathic Journal* (April 1980). *Quis separabit?* is Latin for *Who will separate [us]?* It is the motto of the Royal Dragoon Guards the Order of St. Patrick, The Royal Ulster Rifles, the Irish Guards and the North Irish Horse. It also appears on the coat of arms of Northern Ireland. The article focuses on homeopathy and politics, and how it seems impossible for them to be separated. The same article could still be written today, with a possible wider interpretation of the title.

Colonel Barraclough with his wife, Anne Marie, son Charles and daughter Jane after receiving his order from the Queen at a Buckingham Palace Investiture on 11th February.

Colonel MC Barraclough OBE, MBIM, was appointed an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in the New Year's Honours List for his service to Homeopathy. It is well deserved. He has been indefatigable in his efforts to promote and safeguard this system of medicine.



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1990's

Dr Peter Fisher (1950-2018) Editor *Simile* 1991

As previously discussed, Peter edited the very first edition of *Simile*, in 1991 and will always be known as an influential, unforgettable figure in our community.



Peter Antony Goodwin Fisher, FFHom, FRCP (2 September 1950 – 15 August 2018) was an English physician who served as homeopathic physician to Queen Elizabeth II for 17 years.

Peter sadly died in a cycling accident in Holborn, London, on 15 August 2018. His absence from our homeopathic community as well as all those lives he touched will be felt probably forever and his legacy will live on in time immemorial. Shock waves continue to reverberate throughout our community.

In this first issue of *Simile* (1991) Major Bill Foxton, Secretary of the Faculty and the Homeopathic Trust, makes reference to the homeopathic hospitals, and how 'enthusiastic support may not be enough to ensure the survival of all 5 homeopathic hospitals into the 21st century.' As we now know, his predictions were chillingly correct, but it is credit to our resilience and determination as a community that some of these institutions have evolved, and are still treating people homeopathically, the focus often being on an integrative approach. In addition, Homeopathy UK have started to fund charitable clinics in many areas, such is the demand for homeopathy and the level of unmet need.

1991-2005

A gap yawns between 1991-2005, where we have struggled to locate copies of *Simile*. Step forward if you can fill the void. For now suffice to say the highly respected author **Dr Christina Scott-Moncrieff** was the editor between 1991-1997, and the very distinguished **Dr Bob Leckridge MBChB FFHom**, editor from 1997-2005, amongst his many other key roles with the Faculty over a long period of time.

2005

John Saxton



In 2005, *Simile* reports that the new President is John Saxton - the Faculty's first non-doctor president

making Faculty history. John Saxton qualified from the Royal Veterinary College in 1964, obtaining his Membership of the Faculty of Homeopathy in 1988, and his Fellowship in 1996. He describes *Simile* as 'an important strand in the fabric which holds the Faculty together, dealing as it does in what might be termed the 'human interest' aspects of Faculty life.' Change was evident in this appointment: part of the ever evolving nature of the Faculty.



2006-2013

Dr Steven Kayne Editor

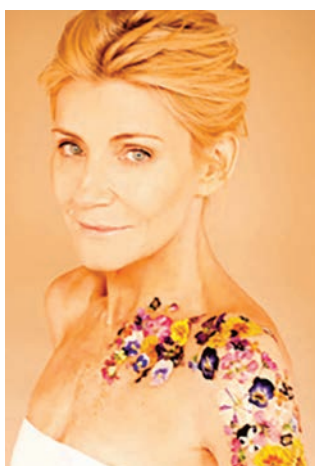
Dr Steven Kayne BSc PhD MSc (Medical Science), LLM (Medical Law), FRPharmS, FFHom is a retired Consultant Homeopathic Pharmacist from Glasgow, Scotland.



When Steven said goodbye to being editor in 2013, little did he know this would not strictly be the case. Due to sad circumstances and the death of John Burry, Steven is now back in the editorial role, with a little bit of help from his friends; namely myself, Gabriella Day, Alison Davies, and Helen McDonnell. In the short time I have been working with him, I can see why he has so many letters after his name, witnessed by his immense, high-quality, erudite often very humorous contributions to *Simile* over the years. In addition, he seems to know everyone and everything about every aspect of homeopathy. It's not enough to say he is wise and clever, we could add funny and inspirational, and many other fitting adjectives that cover his illustrious career to-date.

2014

The 4Homeopathy celebrity campaign and the advent of *The Snooks*



In January 2014, *Simile* reported on 4Homeopathy's national media campaign highlighting the health benefits of homeopathy. The campaign reached millions of people and was featured in *The Metro*, *The Daily Express*, *YOU Magazine* and



Woman, as well as in a number of local and regional newspapers. It also appeared on several websites, most notably *The Mail Online* and *Yahoo Lifestyle*. "The feedback has been unanimously positive,"

said the Faculty's then chief executive, Cristal Sumner. "Celebrity endorsement is a powerful tool in delivering positive messages about homeopathy and we are delighted that so many famous women agreed to take part in the campaign."

April 2014

Simile reports that *The New Australian Report* into the effectiveness of homeopathy was slammed and was dismissed as having 'deep flaws' with critics claiming it 'seriously misrepresents the nature of the clinical research evidence in homeopathy'. This saga is on-going and only recently has the degree of corruption surrounding the real facts been revealed. HRI are hoping, that with new evidence, research and a full-on approach involving important relevant stakeholders, that *The Australian Natural Therapies Review 2019-2020*, delayed somewhat due to COVID-19, will 'debunk myths and offer a balanced view of our industry'.

February 2018



It was reported in *Simile* that The Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons' (RCVS) ruling council agreed a new position statement on complementary therapies which was said to be tantamount to a ban on the use of homeopathy in the treatment of sick animals. In response, Peter Gregory, the Faculty's veterinary Dean, said the statement "has serious implications for the whole profession and the future of veterinary medicine. The evidence is inconclusive – in the same way the evidence bases for many conventional medicines used in veterinary practice, as well as human medicine, is inconclusive."

August 2018

It was reported in this edition that The British Homeopathic Association (BHA) failed in its legal challenge to get NHS England's decision to stop funding homeopathic medicines overturned. Margaret Wiley, Chair of Homeopathy UK stated:

"It appears NHS England can fail to engage with patients properly on removing services and get away with it. That is not good enough, for it is important to remember that the real losers in this case are the patients who are now being refused a treatment on which they have come to depend."

Problems continue with the removal of patients' rights to this day with the ASA demanding, in June 2021, that various articles be removed from Homeopathy UK's website, as they could 'discourage essential treatment for conditions for which medical supervision should be sought.' Homeopathy UK, in their response stated that this has grave implications for the patient's freedom of choice and Integrated Medicine as a whole.

Conclusion

Simile is, I feel, a snapshot of the life and times of our diverse community; as Dr Gary Smyth once said...

'In Varietate Concordia'

Current homeopathic research is demonstrating undeniably positive results, and this paves the way for great things in the next 50 years. What lies ahead? We are well armed to build on the foundations already laid, mustering the same passion and conviction that Hahnemann demonstrated. As irrefutable evidence regarding the mechanism of action of homeopathic remedies emerges, the ignorant few who continue to mindlessly stalk us, will no doubt look rather foolish.

We have now used the strapline 'Voice of the Faculty of Homeopathy' with reference to *Simile* as it is clear that *Simile* has an important 'influence' in the lives of Faculty members, the significance of communication has been stressed so many times over the years in many issues. The style, language and presentation has moved with the times but the fundamental message remains; Dr Gary Smyth recently mentioned at the AGM, that the goal of the Faculty is to strive for excellence. I would like to think *Simile* reflects this; it has become a place where we can steep ourselves in reflective nostalgia, whilst voicing our common concerns, giving way at times to the odd rant, the combination of which invariably makes for good journalism. The subject matter revolves around us as an eclectic community, dedicated to a common goal, whilst covering our fundamental humanity, in all its various forms and glory. *Quis separabit?* Indeed.

Reference

The British Homeopathic Journal (April 1980) 2nd April 1980 Volume 69, Issue 2, April 1980, Pages 57-64
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0007078580800196>. Quis separabit?

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