

# Investing in the future

## The ARH bursary fund

The ARH bursary fund was established in 2015. Recipients of the award receive £1000 each towards their training cost. We asked each recipient of the ARH bursary awards (2018-2019) to let us know what difference the award has made to them, and also how they felt about the prospect of setting up in practice on completion of their studies. What follows is the personal story of each student. We look forward to publishing future reports, as our profession grows and flourishes!

For anyone who is interested in a fuller background to the ARH bursary awards, please refer to *HiP Winter/Spring 2017*.

### The key to a whole new world

by Amanda Beamon

I was lucky enough to receive a bursary from the ARH in my final year of college and, when Karin asked me to write an article about what's happened since then, my first response was to panic. It's been eight months and my practice isn't flourishing! I still haven't treated anyone with sciatica! I haven't given a single public talk! I've let the ARH down! But having a reason to reflect on those eight months enabled me to see how much life has changed.

I'm the first to admit that I lost my mind towards the end of college. The huge workload combined with a growing patient list, nursing a close relative with terminal cancer, and parenting two young

children mostly on my own, really took its toll (apologies to my wonderful supervisor and course coordinator if you're reading this – I think you bore the brunt of it). The house was neglected, the garden had run wild, and the kids had gone feral. So first I spent some time putting my life back in order, having a lovely summer with my family, and then getting my own self back to the point where I felt equipped to help others. It took a while.

The most important thing to say is that I haven't for one minute regretted training as a homeopath. Having all that precious knowledge has given me the key to a whole new world, and this is where I live now. That certainty provided a long-term attitude towards setting up my practice – I've got only one chance, and I want to get it right.



Amanda  
Beamon

Because I've always worried about the criticisms levelled at homeopaths, and because I like to write things down, the first step was to build my website. If I could make a professional, rational, comprehensive website with the information potential patients needed – about me and about homeopathy – then I knew I'd feel more confident. It would be back-up, and make me feel credible. It took me a while but I am pleased with the results and I've had good feedback.

I already had business cards (ordered in a flurry of excitement the day after graduation), so my next job was to start promoting my business. I have a marketing / copy-writing background so in theory this should come naturally, but it's very different when it's all about you! By this point I was still seeing some of my old patients, but hadn't seen a new one for a while.

I started sending fortnightly email newsletters to existing patients, while trying to grow my mailing list by asking people to sign up via my website. The emails have drummed up a bit of business, but not enough. A social media trainer friend gave me a tutorial on how to use Instagram for business, so I set up an account and watched similar practitioners. The soundest marketing advice is to 'be authentic' and,

by the time I started my own posts, I had realised that my authentic self is quite different from lots of my colleagues. But I'm going with it, in the hope that patients for whom I am the right practitioner will be drawn to me. So far, I've had one new booking, one query, and lots of web traffic, which feels positive for only six posts. My next step is to give a talk at a pregnancy yoga class through a teacher I know, which I am terrified of, but think might be the most productive way to grow my practice. So it is happening, slowly but steadily, now that my time and energy is focused.

During this period a couple of other incredible opportunities arose. One was the chance to work as a graduate at the Foundation Clinic at Neal's Yard Remedies, in a trial being set up by my college. The idea was born as a way to ensure that more graduates go on to set up a successful practice, because it can be so difficult in the early days. Soon I'll start working there one day a week, with the patients being recruited by my college and me seeing them independently, while being supported by a colleague and mentored by someone with extensive experience. If someone had asked me how best they might help me at this point, this would be my answer. I honestly cannot believe my luck. I'm

completely committed to doing everything I can to make it work, both for my own sake and for the future graduates to whom the programme will be rolled out.

The other opportunity was a job at a local low-cost community clinic. I've been looking for a community clinic to work in since graduating, but sadly they are few and far between. The one based at my local GP practice is notably evasive about why they don't currently have a homeopath and why they don't want one. I was delighted to be invited for an interview, but knew by the end of it that I wouldn't get the job. I typically do well in interview situations, but I completely failed to articulate why I was so passionate about the organisation and what it does, and how committed I am to working with those in our community who need it the most. I don't know what happened and I am still trying to figure out what I can learn from the experience, but for now I am kicking myself.

So there have been highs and there have been lows – all to be expected I'm sure. I am raring to go now and I wish I could build my practice faster, but I know I have to be patient. Right now I'd say I feel grounded, and only 10% terrified about the future. I know where I am and I know where I'm going and, although progress is slow, I can see it happening, and that is the most wonderful thing. ▶

**'I haven't for one minute regretted training as a homeopath'**

## ▷ Training to live a dream

by Joanne Edwards

The ARH bursary has made an incredible difference to me becoming a homeopath.

I have been fortunate on my journey to becoming a homeopath in so many ways. The first was that I was able to train to live a dream of mine helping and supporting people heal. I knew this would be an investment of both money and time and, as a mother of three, two of whom were under ten at the time, I knew I would need to juggle numerous different resources, money being just one of them. I was determined from day one that I could do this and that the training would benefit me personally, my family, and then enable me to have a career that would allow me to work around my children.

After 25 years away from education, stepping back into learning was huge for me in so many ways, and the first year was challenging. This has been great as it has given me the resilience to learn and grow, and find the confidence to work with different types of people with various issues.

The ARH bursary has been life-changing. It provided the finance to support myself with all that I needed to learn: money towards each weekend of learning, and books to study from. When I needed to finish case studies and complete course work, it allowed me to work fewer hours. It also gave me the money to do additional CPD days and attend extra seminars and lectures in specialised areas.

The bursary has been both financially and emotionally supportive as it made me feel that the ARH believes in me and this, in itself, has spurred me on to grow in so many different ways.

I am currently a fully qualified homeopath and studying a fourth year, which is all about setting up practice and learning about certain situations in greater depth. I still keep in touch with some of the clients I worked with during my



Joanne Edwards

student years. I see a few clients but at present I am enjoying integrating the studies, family life and learning more. I will be setting up my practice over the next six months so that I can see more clients on a daily basis. However, for now I am allowing myself the time and space to realise how life-changing the journey of becoming a homeopath has been for me, and how all that it has entailed has allowed me to heal and grow in ways that I didn't think was possible. The bursary has supported me in making this journey easier, with more access to resources as well as increasing my confidence due to the investment.

**‘The ARH bursary has made an incredible difference to me becoming a homeopath’**

## The best thing I have done

by Christine Harvey

At the age of 25 I started a career in veterinary medicine as a nurse, and learnt about pharmaceutical drugs, diseases, surgery and vaccinations. In all the veterinary jobs I have had the animals received allopathic medicine including steroids, antibiotics, anti-inflammatory drugs, and so on. I never really questioned this, and completed a three-year course to be a registered veterinary nurse. I enjoyed my job working with animals and I worked for animal charities for 18 years before having a career change to become a homeopath.

Throughout my teens and early 20s I was unwell with different conditions for which I took allopathic medicine, but I noticed it just suppressed the symptoms which would always come back, so I started looking for alternatives. About 15 years ago I bought a first aid kit and a childbirth kit which I started using for acute situations, although I didn't know very much about the remedies or how they worked; I just learnt about the different remedies along the way.

I started seeing a homeopath regularly and had my children treated with homeopathic medicine, although I did still use allopathic medicine at times when needed. The more I learnt about homeopathy the more I wanted to know so, finally, in 2016 I started college to study to be a homeopath myself. I had now worked in the veterinary industry long enough to see how the pharmaceutical drugs just suppressed the disease and were not a cure. Once the animal's allopathic drugs were stopped symptoms came back, and there was no other form of treatment to offer. This became increasingly difficult for me, so I decided to leave my job as a veterinary nurse to work in a homeopathic pharmacy.

At the end of my first year at college I applied for a bursary to the ARH, and was lucky enough to receive money towards my second

year fees. I was so grateful as, being a working single mum with two children, I was finding it hard to pay for the course, and the bursary lifted the worry about continuing with my studies for my second year at college. The bursary is a generous gift from the ARH and makes a significant difference to the students that receive it.

I currently work in a homeopathic pharmacy and make homeopathic medicines. I also give advice to the general public on supplements and flower remedies and prescribe remedies for acute conditions over the counter. This job has been amazing in supporting me in my studies as I'm learning so much every day. I also enjoy being around like-minded people, including other therapists who work with energy medicine, complementary and alternative therapies.

In 2018 I supported homeopathic vets and the campaign which was run by CAM4animals to protest in London against the RCVS (Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons). Having come from a veterinary background it was a subject close to my heart, especially after seeing the effects of pharmaceutical medicines first hand on the animals I used to treat. The RCVS statement released in 2017 states you could not use complementary or alternative medicine as a first-line medicine, as homeopathy exists without a recognised body of evidence for its use. The statement implies homeopathy can only be used alongside pharmaceutical medicine.

I also attended my first homeopathic conference – with the ARH – which was great, and I got to chat to other homeopaths and meet other homeopathic students. It is a great way to network and meet other like-minded professionals working in complementary and alternative medicine. It is also fantastic to have the help and support of the ARH. Choosing this career has been the best thing I have done, and I'm excited to qualify this year and see where my new career takes me. I'm looking forward to treating new patients and seeing positive results from homeopathic treatment.

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Christine Harvey

### A last resort becomes a new way of life

by Kelly Herbert

Like many others I originally came to homeopathy as a last resort, clutching at straws after realising that the mainstream medical treatment that I had always valued and trusted did not have all the answers and was unable to help me. I sought treatment initially for a recurring and unexplained dental problem that conventional medicine had failed to treat. When faced with the prospect of losing several teeth, having been told that nothing else could be done, I refused to accept that this was really the only possible course of action. It was there that my love of homeopathy began. While this was a distressing situation at the time I now recognise it as one of those pivotal moments that alter the course of your life forever; definitely a blessing in disguise.

As well as healing my original complaint, homeopathy enhanced every area of my life and helped me cope with the strain of a very stressful degree course. I was amazed at the power and depth of homeopathic treatment, and my interest was stimulated. I felt a real affinity with homeopathy and I became a curious patient who read about my remedies and the underlying principles. The more I learned and experienced, the more interested and in awe I became, while simultaneously becoming disillusioned with the mainstream healthcare system that I had studied hard to become a part of.

A few years later, during a second course of constitutional treatment, I felt I was being called or pushed to study homeopathy, but at the time it seemed like an impossible dream. I was a single parent working part-time and had my low income topped up with benefits. But when I first dared to voice this dream a wise friend said 'if it's meant to be the money will come' – and she was right. Once I made the decision to commit to finding a way to make

▷ my dream a reality, doors seemed to open with ease. I left the security of an employed role with the luxury of holiday and sickness pay to become self-employed, as this was the only viable way to fund my training, and I found ongoing work immediately. That leap of faith was the best decision I have ever made and I have been very fortunate to be supported in many different ways on my path. My life has improved in all respects, I have evolved as a person and my love for homeopathy continues to grow as my training progresses. I am eager to see what the next stage of the homeopathic journey brings.

The ARH bursary has made a huge difference to me as it allowed me to continue with my studies at a time when I was going through a series of dramatic changes which presented themselves as crisis points. With hindsight it is possible to see these changes were ultimately for the best and had a purpose, but it was a very challenging experience. I was coming to the end of my second year of studies and although I wasn't flush by any means things had been ticking over quite nicely. I was meeting all my financial commitments and the course costs, when life started taking a series of sudden and unexpected turns. The organisation that regularly contracted me in my self-employed work suddenly lost its funding and, without warning, I went from ticking by quite comfortably to having no income. Fortunately I managed to find some other work fairly quickly but had still lost about a third of my income and, as a single parent, there was no-one else to fall back on. I did everything I could, taking on lower paid work than usual and working all hours to make ends meet, but I was living month-to-month, and my financial position had become precarious at best.

This is where the ARH's support was invaluable to me. It reduced a significant part of the financial uncertainty that accompanied my third year of study and allowed me

to fully embrace and enjoy all that the year brought to my learning, without the added worry that any small additional expense could be the financial straw that broke the camel's back.

The ARH bursary really has been a lifeline for me to continue with my homeopathic education. I am pleased to report that, after some hard work rebuilding my business, I will be commencing my final year of studies on a much more stable financial footing and in a position to fully fund the rest of my journey. I am very grateful to the ARH for the help and support I have received along the way.

## We look forward to publishing future reports, as our profession grows and flourishes



Kelly Herbert

**‘The ARH bursary really has been a lifeline for me to continue with my homeopathic education’**

### A change of outlook

by Helen King

Why did I choose to study homeopathy? Good question – I had never used it, had a few friends who brought their families up with it and swore by it, and others who were practitioners; so I knew of it, but didn't really understand it. Although many people have heard of *Arnica* and some even have *Arnica* tablets in their medicine cabinet, homeopathy is something very ‘alternative’, isn't it?

Originally I wanted to be a naturopath. After ten years as a sports therapist I felt that, although I was getting results with my clients' pain and injuries, I was only skimming the surface on what was really going on in their bodies. Of, say, 20 clients – all completely different in every way – all were taking the same repeat prescription drugs and no one seemed to be getting any better; just managing the problem and living with it.



Helen King

**‘I am forever thankful to Yubraj and the ARH for helping me so generously along my way’**

I had a nagging feeling I was going to have to retrain, so I started looking around to see what was out there. After much research and a few false starts, a friend took me to Yubraj Sharma’s college for the day. The difference in attitude and atmosphere from other colleges was like chalk and cheese – you can go and sit for half a day and, if it’s not for you, no worries. I realised what a thorough grounding this was in health and beyond. I signed up for the following year, to train to become a homeopath.

After the first two years I moved house (along with my clinic). I started the third year, but had to tell Yubraj that I just couldn’t afford to come anymore and that I had to put my studies on hold. I hadn’t appreciated how hard it would be, moving to a new area and starting my business from scratch again, coupled with all the expense of moving house.

Yubraj told me about the bursary, so I filled out the form and waited to hear. I was successful and so was able to resume my studies, for which I am so grateful; it really took off the financial pressure. College weekends are not just about paying the fees, there are train fares and not being available to work in clinic and paying the dog minder – it all adds up – and so it was a huge help to me at a difficult time.

Homeopathy has completely changed the way I look at life and health, and people – it gives you such insight and has introduced me to many other things that I never thought I would love.

Last year I sadly lost my old dog Terry and, in the months preceding his passing, I once again missed a few classes as I didn’t want to leave him on his own for long periods of time. However, at the ARH Conference I bought the Pet Kit from Helios. This has been an amazing ‘go to’ item. Animals respond almost

immediately, without judgment or cynicism and, luckily for me, my vet is a homeopathic vet and is my first port of call for any problems.

Another meandering path I have gone down is biodynamic gardening and herbs. This year I am redesigning my garden as an herb garden for dogs; this will be a satisfying way to allow them to self-select for their particular needs – dogs are naturally the best herbalists.

I have also just taken on an allotment and started experimenting with having a pharmacy in my back yard.

I might be the longest serving homeopathy student / apprentice since the emergence of homeopathy! I’m definitely the tortoise not the hare – but I’m really enjoying the journey getting there and I am forever thankful to Yubraj and the ARH for helping me so generously along my way. □