

# Hugh MacPherson: a celebration





On 16th July 2020 Hugh retired as Chair of the Board of the Northern College of Acupuncture, due to his declining health. This is a short video of a socially distanced presentation to him by College Principal Richard Blackwell of a book containing contributions from Hugh's friends and colleagues across the world, and a letterpress print for his wall.



**[bit.ly/hugh-presentation](https://bit.ly/hugh-presentation)**

# foreword

As we travel through life, we leave footprints behind us. Over time these fade and drift away like footprints in the sand blown by the winds of time. Very occasionally, you meet someone in life whose footprints are different; they leave an indelible mark on the earth, impervious to time. We are blessed and privileged to have met and shared our time with such a person.

We first met Hugh nearly 40 years ago through our shared love for Chinese medicine, and our desire to learn more. There we were, again and again, at one seminar after another. Hugh was the most impressive of our trio having already earned a doctorate in mathematics and campaigned for cycling in York before he began to study acupuncture.

Over endless cups of tea, in countless cafes, we talked, laughed, planned and discussed the finer points of Chinese Medicine and the meaning of life. At every event, we were together.

As we all built up our respective practices in York, Birmingham and Nottingham, we stayed connected, continued the conversation and deepened our friendship. In 1986 it was a make-or-break time for Hugh and Nick's friendship. Nick had just got married, Hugh had a young family, and yet they both decided to head off to Nanjing in China for five weeks to further their training. They were part of a pioneering cohort studying clinical acupuncture at a large teaching hospital. It was an experience that was to show them the real power of acupuncture as they both treated patient after patient with complex and challenging conditions, all under the guidance of some of the top doctors. And that was also when Hugh, and their friendship, was tested.

When they arrived, Hugh foolishly suggested he and Nick share a room in China, not knowing the perils of sharing a room with Nick and his ability to leave *food traps* as Hugh called them. Bowls of half-eaten noodles strategically placed around the room designed to catch an unwitting barefooted Scotsman on the way back from the bathroom. Undeterred and unscathed Hugh suggested late one chilly night they start an acupuncture college when they got back to the UK. An

idea that would go on to change the lives of thousands of people and elevate the acupuncture profession nationally and globally.

When Hugh returned to York, his extraordinary abilities, persistence and charm started to make things happen, and by 1988 the Northern College of Acupuncture was up and running with its first intake of students. Over the next few years, Hugh pressed for the development of the profession and the College was the first education provider in the UK to offer a University validated degree in acupuncture, and the first to be professionally accredited.



Over the next decade, Hugh pushed forward one idea after the other to develop the College and the profession, leaving us astounded by his capacity to think beyond the ordinary. He also brought a deep understanding of the value of bringing people together to work for the common good, and he steadily promoted mutual support and endeavour among staff and students.

The ethos of the College is one of his many lasting legacies. Always keen to hear what people had to say, Hugh always reminded us that “there’s always a golden nugget” in even the most challenging feedback. More

Northern College  
of Acupuncture  
co-founders Nicholas  
Haines, Richard  
Blackwell and Hugh  
MacPherson at the  
College's 30-year  
anniversary  
celebrations in 2018



Celebrating the first day's teaching at the Northern College of Acupuncture in 1988: Nicholas Haines, Hugh MacPherson and Betsy Galloway from the College's original Board of Directors

than thirty years on, the open and supportive environment at the College is frequently praised.

For most, this would already be a lifetime's achievement. For Hugh, it was just a start. He'd had the vision to develop research activity from early on, and after ten years as Principal, his focus shifted to acupuncture research.

As Hugh moved into this new life the same brilliance started to shine through. Again, he brought people together in a series of collaborative endeavours to raise funding, undertake large scale clinical trials, publish in prestigious journals and present to conferences and political gatherings. He brought intellect, determination and flexibility of mind to this work, and his quality was recognised as he became the UK's first Professor of Acupuncture Research at the University of York, and one of the leading acupuncture researchers in the West. He worked on powerful trials of back pain, neck pain, knee pain, depression, irritable bowel syndrome and more, as well as research into the central nervous system effects of acupuncture, and then built another massive collaboration to conduct meta-analyses powerful enough to prove that acupuncture is clinically valuable and definitely not a placebo.

These are extraordinary achievements in a single lifetime, and all in the context of his family life with Sara raising his lovely son and daughter, and of course cycling, windsurfing and a highly respected acupuncture practice and Integrated Healthcare Clinic in York.

Reading all the wonderful contributions from people thanking and celebrating Hugh, we are struck by how many lives he has touched in so many different ways. We are both enormously proud to speak of Hugh as our friend and colleague, and to take this chance to say as loud as we possibly can: "thank you Hugh!"

*Nick Richard*

**Nicholas Haines (co-founder) and Richard Blackwell (Principal)  
Northern College of Acupuncture**

**A lot of people went a lot of extra miles to pull this project together in a short time. Special thanks to:**

|                   |                                                  |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Denise Magson     | Sara Robin                                       |
| Fiona Shaw        | Shona MacPherson                                 |
| Harriet Lansdown  | Tom Laverick                                     |
| Helen Thomas      | Velia Wortman                                    |
| Joan Maynard      | Rick Harris, Laura Triplett and the Board of the |
| Mark Bovey        | Society for Acupuncture Research                 |
| Nick Haines       | Colin at Rosemoor Atelier                        |
| Richard Blackwell | Ian and Ellie at Fulford Framing                 |
| Sandro Graca      | Nick at York Digital Image                       |

At the outset of this project, John Wheeler said to me: "Good luck – you're going to be overwhelmed by all the love heading Hugh's way." He never spoke a truer word. Dear Hugh, everyone in this book is hoping that these heartfelt tributes give you some understanding of just how much you're loved and valued. We hope this book lifts your spirits in dark moments, and that it gives your family some healing sense of what you mean to us, your worldwide community of colleagues and friends. It's been a privilege and a joy to bring all this together for you.

Adding my love to everyone else's,

*Karen*

**Karen Charlesworth  
Acupuncturist, researcher, NCA Research Director  
and NCA alumna, class of 2013**





Hi Hugh,

I remember first meeting you back in the early 2000s when you were involved in governing the BAcC. I was a staff member at the time. You were very well-liked and held in high regard by everyone there, and I know how much you were missed when you went on to focus on research.

You've been a shining inspiration to me as someone who saw very early on that traditional acupuncture could and should embrace modern research methods. I know I would never have been able to imagine following a research path without the foundations you have put down. Thank you so much Hugh for everything you have given.

**Jonquil Westwood Pinto**  
Acupuncturist and PhD researcher,  
Southampton University



Hugh at Rothenburg with Arya Nielsen, 2013. Photograph courtesy of Velia Wortman.

Dear Hugh

We first met when I was part of the so-called Gang of Four (Giovanni Maciocia, Julian Scott, Vivienne Brown and myself) teaching a kind of postgraduate year in Chinese medicine and acupuncture in London.



You joined the course and I was immediately aware of your rare quality and of the possibility of friendship. That was a long time ago and both have flourished in the decades since. We all know your quality – your brilliance, your commitment to Chinese medicine and your many accomplishments. And although we have lived at different ends of the country and a day-to-day friendship was never possible, you are someone who instantly makes my heart lift whenever I see you – at conferences and seminars in various parts of the world. It is a special warmth that comes from long friendship, mingled with the family bond of belonging to the same Chinese medicine community.

I feel a real and deep love for you and I wish you well in every way possible.

**Peter Deadman**  
Author, founder of *The Journal of Chinese Medicine*, Qi gong teacher, UK



Dear Hugh

You have lived this life well. You have helped many people, educated many students, and made a lasting contribution to the scientific research of acupuncture. All of us will be poorer without you but I wish you well on the next stage of your journey back into the light from where we all come from.

Lots of love,

**Andrew Flower**  
Practitioner of Chinese Medicine

I am so sad to hear that my acupuncture research hero is seriously ill. His research career is such an inspiration and he is a HUGE contributor to the fact



that acupuncturists now trust that what we do for a living has clinical effect and we can meet sceptics with rational arguments. I love his brain, systematic approach and kind spirit. Hugh has many fans here, as he is the rock star of acupuncture research.

I just talked with a colleague at Kristiania

University College, and both of us consider ourselves friends of Hugh – and we guess so many do exactly the same, even though we think of us Norwegians as especially lucky and close friends. He has the capacity to make people feel seen.

**Merete Lindén Dahle**  
Research coordinator AcuBreast study at  
Kristiania University College, Norway;  
acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 2018



Hugh presenting at the annual Pain conference in Oslo, 2015  
Photograph courtesy of Merete Lindén Dahle

My first reaction when I heard that Hugh McPherson was retiring and due to ill health was that it saddens me that our community will lose a sharp mind. There was an opportunity to get to know him when Hugh and I and Robin Tiberi were sitting at the same table at the party of the Slettestrand conference in Denmark 2011. We had a very good time together very much thanks to Hugh's warm, curious and humorous personality. Always when I listened to him in his lectures or privately he made it fascinating and convincing.

**Peter Torssell**  
Head of Akupunkturakademin,  
Stockholm, Sweden



Dear Hugh!

There are so many stories I could offer about your wit, your wonderful British dry humour and your ability to connect humanistic and scientific thoughts and ideas. These are deeply saved in my heart.

But, and I have told you this before, besides all your personal, educational and scientific merits for me the one achievement of your life that sticks out and

spreads its ongoing ripples through the German acupuncture community is your book: *Acupuncture in Practice* (1996).

The exciting aspect of this book is actually that you are not the author but the publisher.

But by publishing this book you established two important pillars in the acupuncture and TCM world.

Number one: There is a western Chinese Medicine.

By collecting all the leading western TCM cracks into a collective format of reporting and discussing, you created a readable testimony of a western TCM community. It was an outward show of this community which than could be experienced in congresses like the TCM Kongress Rothenburg.

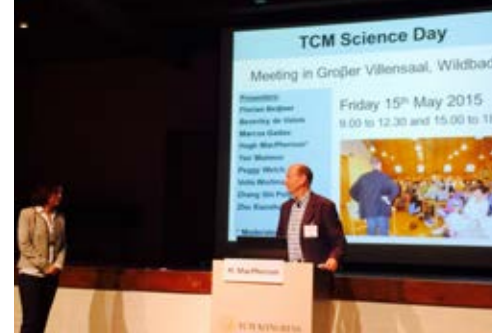
But Number two is in my eyes even further reaching: in your book you set a new standard in how to analyse and present cases. The five steps: collecting signs and symptoms, organising them in patterns, presenting them in diagrams and aetiologies and reaching a treatment protocol including a treatment strategy, are still the fundamental steps that we use in our school to bring organisation to real-life cases so that students can reach intelligent decisions on how to treat their patients. Every time we teach this, we mention your name as author and root and foundation of this practical five step ladder to come to a well-founded conclusion.

Dearest Hugh: I want to thank you for this groundbreaking idea that still is such a helpful and wonderful auxiliary tool for all the beginners lost and overwhelmed by signs and symptoms.

I can promise you that you will be forever remembered for this cornerstone of teaching and practice in Germany, and especially in the ABZ Mitte in Offenbach.

My heart reaches out to you. Yours,

**Nils von Below**  
Acupuncturist, teacher and TCM politician, Germany



Hugh at Rothenburg, 2015  
Picture courtesy of Velia Wortman



Hugh has always taken time for me. Whenever he came into College he would come into the office to say hello and see how everyone was getting on, if we passed on the stairs or in the corridors he would stop for a chat. He has made me feel an important part of the College.

*Abby*

**Abby Foreman**  
Nutritional therapist and Student  
Services Officer, Northern College of  
Acupuncture



Dear Hugh

I met you at a Dr John Shen lecture in London in 1989, just as I completed my acupuncture training at The London School of Acupuncture. The day was inspirational in many ways and not least because of your exciting plans at that time to establish the Northern College of Acupuncture.

Moving forward through over 30 years, as a BAAB Accreditation Committee reader for NCA, it is always a delight to reconnect with the college and witness the high standards of acupuncture education delivered to ensure that the practice and art of our medicine will be passed on to others.

Our work is never done, but the contributions you have made to our unique but sometimes vulnerable profession have been both crucial and reassuring. Your voice has helped the practice of acupuncture to be taken seriously, combining rigour along with open-mindedness – not always an easy combination to balance.

Thank you so much Hugh, the ripples from your work will continue to be felt.

**Charmian Wylde**  
Acupuncturist and educator



Most people are mainly aware of Hugh from his contribution to research for the British Acupuncture Council and the wider profession, but less know of his managerial role in the early days the BAAC. I was very privileged to work with Hugh,

Jasmine Uddin and Ken Shifrin as the quadrumvirate at the core of the BAAC's meteoric period of development at the end of the 20th century into the beginning of the 21st. Jaunting around London on his folding bike to and from our strategy meetings, Hugh brought great insight and wisdom to our plans.

Had the pressure of commitments not got in the way he would probably have been the Chair of the BAAC and a very good one, but the BAAC's loss was also the BAAC's gain as his work raised his and our profile. And he became a TV star!

I hope he looks back on it all with the feeling of satisfaction and sense of achievement it all merits.

**John Wheeler**  
Acupuncturist and former secretary of the  
British Acupuncture Council

I would like to thank Hugh for inspiring my academic career in acupuncture; for challenging and supporting me throughout.



**Jennie Longbottom**  
Acupuncturist, author and educator





Hugh is a man of many talents and interests. But many may not know that he has a passion for windsurfing. We had some phantastic windsurf holidays in great places like Venezuela, Bonaire and the Cape Verdi islands. With verve and never tiring, one could see Hugh windsurf with great speed and big sails through the seas. And always with a smile on his face, experiencing the sort of happiness that comes with the sport.

He was always ready for a chat with other sailors and so we got to know really interesting people. It was just great to spend time with him.

Hey Hugh, Walter and I are sending you our love.

*Barbara*

**Barbara Kirschbaum**  
Practitioner of Chinese Medicine and author,  
Germany



[bit.ly/sar-reh](http://bit.ly/sar-reh)

**“You are a gentle soul, a very deep thinker  
and a very wonderful person.”**

In this video, Richard remembers the excitement and importance of Hugh’s contribution to acupuncture research, such as the fundamental and ground-breaking paper on real and sham acupuncture.

**Richard E. Harris**  
Society for Acupuncture Research board member  
at University of Michigan, USA

Hugh, you have been a leader in developing a strong empirical evidence base for acupuncture. Using scientific methods, both challenging and contested, you have demonstrated that acupuncture and other complementary therapies can stand up to the most rigorous scientific scrutiny.

You have collaborated with lab scientists, experts in evidence synthesis and trials units amongst others in developing an enduring international track record. My hope is that this will inspire many others to engage with the wider health research community and research funders to explore, develop and evaluate approaches to improving health and well being that fall outside of the more traditional biomedical paradigm.



**Trevor Sheldon**  
Professor of Health Services Research  
Queen Mary University of London, UK



Hugh and Richard Harris at the Society for Acupuncture Research Board Retreat in Beijing, China, 2014. *Photograph courtesy of the SAR*

**Hugh, Professor Hugh, dear friend and colleague for all these years and forever a luminary for acupuncture. Can I share my appreciation of your work?**

You have brought to our world two rare qualities – your ability to just go out and boldly get things done and your talent to inspire collaboration.

The list is impressive: the Northern College of Acupuncture, the York Clinic, pioneering Chinese Herbal Medicine training and University degree accreditations, the Foundation for Research into TCM, and the ARRC Symposium.

Add to this your substantial work in your professorship role and that uncanny ability to charm real funding for our Cinderella field.

Who, in our world, has matched all this?

But great achievements don't happen without collaboration. The real secret to your genius, and the key to that ability to get things done, boils down to charm – the talent that has enabled you to beguile others into working together. See the co-authors on your published papers. See the way you have fostered enthusiasm and engagement in the many projects you have led.

None of your achievements in getting things done could actually happen without that magical ability to inspire others to work together with a common purpose.

An inspiration for us all.

We congratulate you Hugh, and thank you, for the huge difference you have made to our profession.

*Charlie*

**Charlie Buck**  
Chinese Medicine physician, educator, author  
and former Chair of the British Acupuncture Council



Charlie presents Hugh with his  
BACC Fellowship, 2014.  
*Picture courtesy of Acu / BACC*



[bit.ly/charlie-buck](http://bit.ly/charlie-buck)







I only met Hugh a few times  
but each time he made an  
impression.

At the Northern College  
of Acupuncture he was an  
inspirational and engaging  
teacher, sharing his  
knowledge and understanding

of acupuncture and Chinese Medicine and showing  
us how important research is to our profession and  
how it helps and supports our communities to use  
acupuncture more and more.

On another occasion, I saw a different side to Hugh,  
friendly and interested in getting to know me as a  
person, not just a student. I shared laughter, humour  
and possibly a boogie on the dance floor – I can't  
quite remember for obvious reasons (alcohol)!

I felt his energy, his love of Chinese Medicine and  
his ability to share his passion with everyone was  
infectious.

All I would like to say now is this, "Thank you Hugh.  
I am grateful to have met you, and to be part of this  
amazing profession you helped to create."

**Teresa Plant**  
**Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 2018**



Hugh and Yvette Evans Foster  
*Photograph courtesy of the BAC*



pioneer and creator  
of a global hive  
doling out stings to  
ensure we all thrive

with your books and journals,  
and needles and brain  
you altered the landscape  
of how we view pain

a solution for those  
who were struggling to cope  
left alone with our suffering  
without any hope

so now for those of us  
whom western medicine had failed  
there's a culture of care  
we're so grateful prevailed

we found a place to belong  
when welcomed into  
the NCA hive  
and it started with Hugh

*Jade*

**Jade Mutyora**  
**Writer and NCA Receptionist**





Dear Hugh,

A little more than 30 years ago you wrote two small books about Bach Flower Remedies. These were beautifully produced and gave valuable new insights into the remedies and how they can be used with positive affirmations and insights. Also how we might bring about change within ourselves, whether in illness or in health.

When the books fell out of print you kindly allowed them to be put online in the Bach Educational Resource. Here they are freely available throughout the world. Only last week someone wrote asking about them. She studies kinesiology in Australia. So your ideas are still travelling the world. For which all of us in this community are truly grateful.

Wishing you well for the future and thank you for your present from the past.

**Julian Barnard**

**Counsellor, writer, teacher and herbalist**

I remember the trepidation felt and the anticipation of starting the very first Northern College of Acupuncture course. We met in a hotel initially, and Hugh and Nick were at the helm.

It was a demanding, sometimes awkward being at weekends, and brave undertaking for me, and my work colleagues from my job seemed amazed. I was taking such a risk...

It was many things those first few years, fascinating, challenging, fun and sometimes boring (learning points by rote). However, the time was so well planned and used in those special weekends in York, down to the skills and intelligence of the two founders. I have always considered it my best time well-spent, and it changed me on so many levels to further understand and have a useful blueprint to use in this ever-changing world.

I always thought my bravery and challenge was nothing compared to those who dared to set up such a College when so little in the British culture was there to support it.

Hugh, I want to say you were a courageous and bold risk-taker who brought a lot of healing into the world by making these skills available to learn.

Wishing you and your family well and thinking of you...

**Rebecca Hunter**

**Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 1991**





Hugh,

You are as much a part of my career as an acupuncturist as the needles themselves are. It's been a joy and a privilege to work alongside you. You are respected and admired and I'm going to find it very difficult to work at the clinic without feeling your presence there. Thank you too for taking such good care of our little community at the York Clinic and for leaving us in such capable hands. I wish you strength and inner peace to face the challenges that lie ahead.

Hamba Kahle, go well

**Amanda Preston**  
Acupuncturist at York Clinic for Integrated Healthcare  
and College of Traditional Acupuncture alumna



Hugh at the York Clinic for Integrated Healthcare, 2019  
*Picture courtesy of Amanda Preston*



I found a picture from the famous ARRC Congress where Hugh always had amazing performances. I have such good memories of him and want to wish him strength. He has been of huge value for acupuncture in the world which in my opinion is underestimated. He knew how to tick all boxes of evidence. Just amazing.

From the whole European Community, I want to stress our respect for Hugh's work. We genuinely have been able to establish that his consistent stream of high-quality research has changed the position of the TCM practitioner in Europe. The ETCMA is very grateful for this fact and will build further on this knowledge and expertise.

**Johanna Biemans**  
Vice-President, European Traditional Chinese  
Medicine Association (ETCMA)



To my dear friend Hugh MacPherson,

Back to 15 years ago, I knew Hugh through reading his academic research papers, and we met in person at Freiburg, Germany in 2007, when he invited me to join the expert committee on the STRICTA revision. At that meeting, we had quite a lot of discussion about the acupuncture reporting standard. STRICTA is just one of the great contributions of Hugh to the acupuncture world, which influence many studies around the world. Since then, we met regularly at different international conferences and WHO expert meetings. Hugh is a very smart and kind person, and he would like to share his expertise with us and we learn quite a lot from him. We also work on different projects and co published papers. I, together with my team at Beijing University of Chinese Medicine, will treasure our pleasant meeting and friendship.

We wish you all the best and keep our happiness memory.

*Jianping*

Jianping Liu  
Beijing University of Chinese Medicine



STRICTA meeting led by Hugh at Freiburg, Germany, 2007  
Picture courtesy of Jianping Liu





Dear Hugh,

You have offered so much to the acupuncture profession, leading outstanding research. You were always patient and kind to me too, educating me in the world of acupuncture. I really valued and appreciated your calmness, scientific rigour and generosity of spirit to ARRC, BAaC and acupuncture generally.

Thank you, and stay strong.

**Nick Pahl**  
CEO of the British Acupuncture  
Council 2011-2016



Hugh with Nick Pahl and Charlie Buck  
receiving his BAaC Fellowship, 2014.  
*Picture courtesy of Acu / BAaC*

I have only known Hugh for a relatively short period of time, and yet I feel very privileged to have had the opportunity to get to know this inspiring and yet very modest individual.

The thing that always strikes me about Hugh is his calmness and serenity. Nothing fazes him and he takes everything with good grace. He has achieved so much and yet he is never boastful or arrogant and shows amazing dignity and compassion.

I feel very lucky to be working at a College which has such a strong ethos of care and compassion, and I believe that this was embedded in the foundations by Hugh and Nick all those years ago. I wouldn't be doing what I am doing now without Hugh's vision and enthusiasm, and for that I am truly grateful.



I am also struck by the number of people throughout the world that have been touched by the life of Hugh MacPherson – not just the patients, students and staff that have benefited from his being in the world, but the many partners, friends, children, siblings of those people who, though they have never met him, have felt his influence.

I have learnt a great deal from you, Hugh – you inspire me, and knowing you makes me want to be an inspiration to others.

Thanks for everything.

**Karen M. Fallis**  
Nutritional therapist and Northern College of Acupuncture Vice-Principal



I was lucky enough to work with Hugh as my MSc Health Services Research thesis supervisor at York University in 2005-6. That time at York has the very happiest memories for me. I met friends for life, and most importantly of all, Hugh taught me so much about the practicalities of acupuncture research, and – less tangible but equally as important – about supervising students, through his example. I ended up with a prize for the best dissertation at York Uni that year – that was purely because of Hugh, and it gave me so much confidence for the future.

Another booster was a comment from the statistician on the trial Hugh and I carried out for my thesis (Five Element acupuncture for IBS). He was completely taken aback by the results our practitioners had achieved – Hugh and I certainly weren't!

I went back to my college to overhaul research teaching, and then in 2011 set up The Acupuncture Academy with Jen Wade. There, research is a central focus, and years down the line, our graduates are now carrying out and presenting their own research



work. Last year, we got a BAcC grant towards a study of Five Element acupuncture for student mental wellbeing, and the results are incredible. Without Hugh's support and influence, neither I nor my students would be doing what we are doing now. I am so glad to know him and cannot thank him enough for all he did for me personally, and the incredible gift he has given the acupuncture profession.

**Julie Ann Reynolds**  
Acupuncturist, teacher, and College Principal of  
The Acupuncture Academy

I'm a graduate of The Acupuncture Academy, and I won my MA in Health Research Methods from Nottingham University. Since I graduated, I have carried out a qualitative study and published it in the *European Journal of Oriental Medicine* (June 2019). I also presented it at the Acupuncture Research Resource Centre conference last year.

The year before that, I managed to get to speak to you. It was just before I'd started my study, and I really wanted to share my idea with you, because I had so much respect for you. You were so kind and professional, and listened with real interest to my idea. In the end, you wished me good luck with my study.

I'd really like you to know that I did it, and even if you don't remember me, that's fine. Your interest and encouragement made me really believe in my study and approach, and it gave me confidence to do it. You are an absolute inspiration and with your incredible tenacity and attention to detail – you have created an incredible foundation for acupuncture and I look to your work as exemplars of methods, communication and presentation. My own study concluded that Five Element practitioners meet the patient in their Element, and on the level of body, mind or spirit, by changing their own emotions and behaviour.

Thank you so much Hugh, for all of your work, tenacity and inspiration. With warm wishes,

**Sally Anderson**  
Acupuncturist and The Acupuncture  
Academy alumna, class of 2018





I first remember meeting you at a dinner for speakers hosted by Jacqueline Filshie at the Hurlingham Club in London. I learned that

your PhD was in fluid mechanics, and I must have missed the opportunity to comment on the irony that you then found yourself studying the properties, or movement, of Qi. You were one of the first of the 'TCM crowd' that I got to know because we would frequently appear at the same research-orientated meetings. You were always so easy to talk to, and I guess that was because we shared the language of acupuncture research and we shared some of the same frustrations over how that research was interpreted by the orthodoxy.

You pushed ahead with the pragmatic agenda when those around you pursued explanatory routes. You slowly built a reputation that meant you could get funding for the biggest acupuncture trials in the country. All of us in the field are indebted to you for this work. I saw first-hand the influence it had in informing national guidelines, when acupuncture was recommended for the first time by NICE.

Thank you for your efforts, they will continue to have an impact for many years come.

  
Mike Cummings  
Medical Director,

British Medical Acupuncture Society



Hugh presenting at the BMAS Spring Scientific Meeting, Cardiff, 2014.  
Photograph courtesy of BMAS/Mike Cummings

It goes without saying that Hugh's contribution to acupuncture research has been huge. Indeed, he has been one of the few who has put his head above the parapet! One of a rare breed of dedicated researchers who has not only produced some first-class research in this area but also established – along with other



pioneers such as Prof Volker Scheid – acupuncture research as a credible and worthwhile academic endeavour. He was not afraid of acupuncture's critics nor of putting acupuncture to the test in order to discover more about what the underlying mechanisms to its action might be – the MRI study being a prime example.

We met at various meetings over the years and I was delighted when he was awarded a Career Scientist Award as part of the Department of Health's Research & Development Programme in 2004, shortly after he was appointed a Senior Research

Fellow at the University of York. Like others who benefited from the same programme, he used the award to great effect. My only regret is that I wasn't able to meet up with him more often, including taking up his kind offer to visit him at his cottage on the Isle of Lismore in Scotland – a place where doubtless he would write, and think through his next set of projects.

My very best wishes to him,

**Peter Davies**

**Former Head of the School of Integrated Health,  
University of Westminster**



I feel immensely privileged to have learnt and had my clinic practice grow and develop as a result of the research that was so expertly executed and presented by you.

I first encountered you as a student at the Northern College of Acupuncture where I was inspired by the lecture you gave looking at research which had been carried out on back pain, but yet to be published. You also talked about other research areas you were beginning to develop. It was inspiring to know that I was training in TCM at a time when there was evidence being produced which was both clear, beautifully constructed and encouraging to students, practitioners, patients and sceptics.

Thank you for all your hard work, energy and force for positive change.

**Di Shimell**

**Acupuncturist, member of the British  
Acupuncture Accreditation Board  
and NCA alumna**

Hugh delivering a  
lecture in Belgrade  
with Stefan Willich



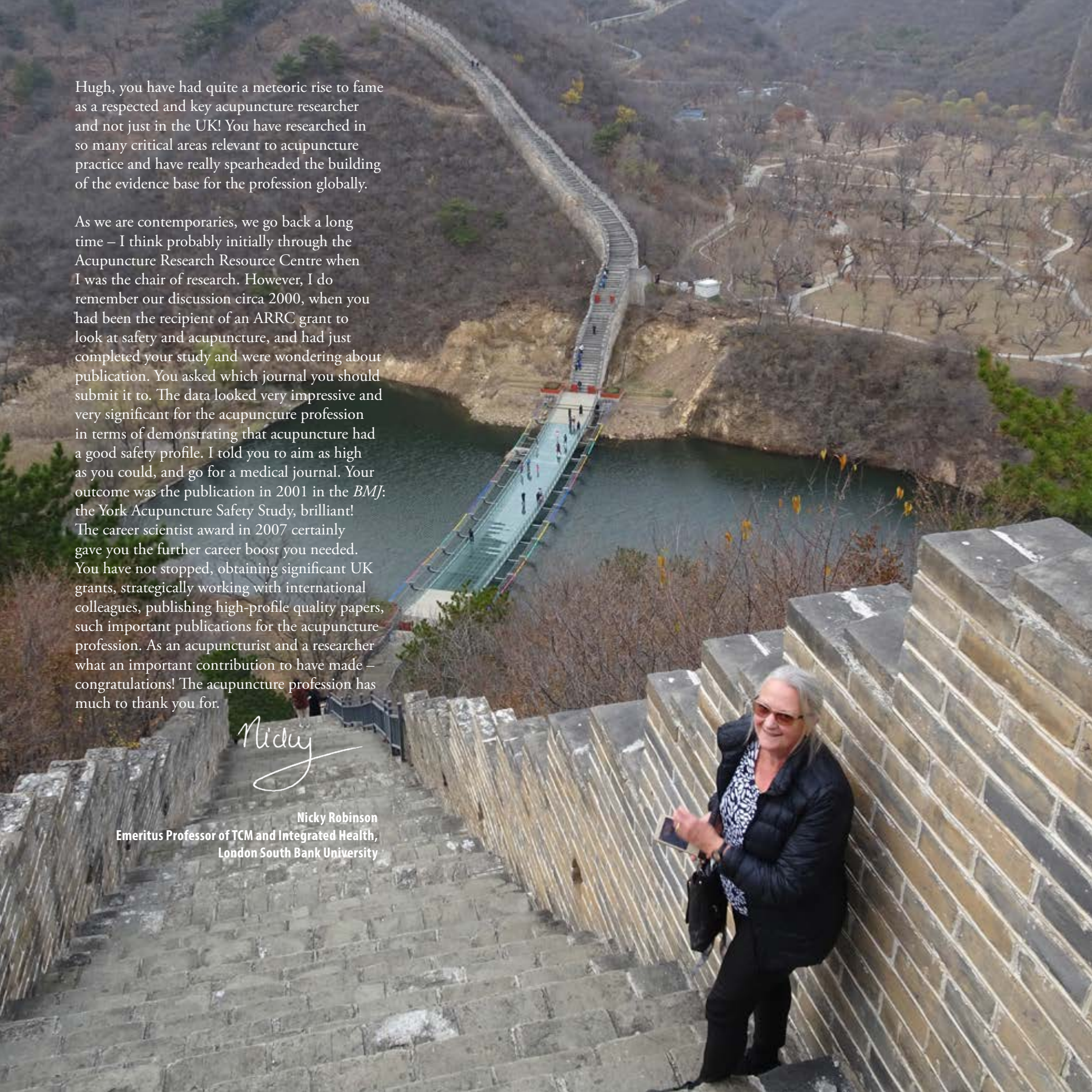


Hugh, you have had quite a meteoric rise to fame as a respected and key acupuncture researcher and not just in the UK! You have researched in so many critical areas relevant to acupuncture practice and have really spearheaded the building of the evidence base for the profession globally.

As we are contemporaries, we go back a long time – I think probably initially through the Acupuncture Research Resource Centre when I was the chair of research. However, I do remember our discussion circa 2000, when you had been the recipient of an ARRC grant to look at safety and acupuncture, and had just completed your study and were wondering about publication. You asked which journal you should submit it to. The data looked very impressive and very significant for the acupuncture profession in terms of demonstrating that acupuncture had a good safety profile. I told you to aim as high as you could, and go for a medical journal. Your outcome was the publication in 2001 in the *BMJ*: the York Acupuncture Safety Study, brilliant! The career scientist award in 2007 certainly gave you the further career boost you needed. You have not stopped, obtaining significant UK grants, strategically working with international colleagues, publishing high-profile quality papers, such important publications for the acupuncture profession. As an acupuncturist and a researcher what an important contribution to have made – congratulations! The acupuncture profession has much to thank you for.

Nicky

**Nicky Robinson**  
Emeritus Professor of TCM and Integrated Health,  
London South Bank University







I am a former long-standing Trustee of the Northern College of Acupuncture.

I was always struck by Hugh's light touch in chairing our meetings. His manner was gentle – that of a healer – but he also had the awareness of a lawyer (which he was not!) in going directly to the essential points of a discussion; his insight was usually right, and he invariably led the meeting to a joint and uncontentious decision.

Nor can I forget the courage he showed in the face of the diagnosis he received on his health, evinced in his continued chairing and manner, which remained as it had been previously – at least, so it seemed to me.

A privilege to have known him, a pleasure to have served on his Board.

*David*

**David Lipman, M.B.E.**  
Former NCA Trustee 2007-2019

I first met Hugh when I replied to an ad for a house share with him and his family in 1986. We ended up staying in a different house but I was already training in Touch for Health Kinesiology and was fascinated by the Bach Flower Essences and took the opportunity to study with Hugh in 1987, and then to co-teach with him in 1988 – 89. When he started the Northern College of Acupuncture, my recollection is that I was the first to apply (but I could be wrong!). Anyway, I vividly remember the interview with Hugh and Nick in the room above the Chi'en Clinic on St Saviourgate in York. I was so nervous. And I was so proud to complete the course in 1991, despite having tried to quit in year 2 (like many people do, I believe...) – Hugh persuaded me to carry on. I am so glad he did because without that training, which led to everything I have done since, I would not have been able to help so many people over the years since.

Bless you, Hugh, on your next journey. You have left a legacy and you join many other inspirational people who have touched my life.

*June*

**June Tranmer**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 1991



Hugh in the library at the Northern College of Acupuncture



Hugh has been what seems like a lifelong friend. Mary and I met Hugh in the late 1980s and had an instant connection when he stayed with us in Brisbane. We were all acupuncturists and shared a common passion. We would catch up when in England with both Hugh and Sara over the years and do bike rides in the Moors and enjoy a beer or two over pleasant chats or a curry. On one of our bike rides it was very hot and we all swam naked in a pond, capturing the moment forever on film – we had much younger bodies then. In Brisbane our house was burgled and because that photo was on our fridge, the police needed to take fingerprints from it. That made the print even more famous, a finger print right on Hugh's bottom.

Hugh has been a pioneer in the acupuncture profession, an amazing practitioner and a great friend. Distance can keep us apart but good times make me smile and make the distance fade.



My sister in York who was having acupuncture treatments from him introduced us to Hugh.

We first met him in

Brisbane when he came to stay. He became a family friend and my nephew Ben Elliot studied with Hugh and is still working as an acupuncturist at Hugh's clinic.

Hugh has had an amazing career with his research, teaching and clinic work. Pete and I were fortunate enough to be at the first graduation of the College he established. That was a very special occasion. Thank you Hugh for all your inspiration you have shared with many. Thanks also for the bike rides.

Mary

Mary Melling

Acupuncturist and friend, Brisbane, Australia

Pete

Peter Delaney

Acupuncturist and friend, Brisbane, Australia





In my first year studying acupuncture I decided I was going to work at York Clinic when I graduated. I managed to meet up with Hugh and it was subtly communicated that the clinic had plenty of acupuncturists – however, there was a need for a massage therapist at the time. Such was my desire to worm my way in I started studying remedial massage the month after and that was the start of Hugh and I working together in the Health Sciences Department at York University for three years and on Tuesdays at York Clinic for the last 10 years!

Over that time, Hugh has given me lots of advice and encouragement for my clinical practice, teaching at the NCA and most notably, telling me tales of starting his practice and having to sacrifice his long hair, stubble and earring in order to appear professional. I'm not sure if he was telling me the truth, but I recognised the undercurrent of the conversation and as a compromise I grew a beard (a neat one), and brushed my hair. It's fair to say Hugh has had a big influence on my career in many many ways. Tuesdays won't be the same.

**Ben Elliot**  
**Acupuncturist, lecturer and NCA alumnus, class of 2012**



Hugh with Mary  
Melling and Peter  
Delaney at the  
birthday party of  
young Ben Elliot

Dear Hugh,

We would like offer our deepest thanks for your dedication to acupuncture research and for being an exemplary and visionary role model to us all. A great researcher who has dedicated his life to the service of humanity and Chinese Medicine. We appreciate everything you have taught us and have fond memories of meeting the famous 'Hugh MacPherson' at induction day and in class at the Northern College of Acupuncture. Here is a photograph taken with us this year.

With gratitude, love and warm wishes,

**NCA weekday class of 2020**



Left to right: Susanne Crinson,  
Sue Brierley, Nat Heycock, Ana Guerrero,  
Hugh MacPherson, Amber Tuer,  
Jacqueline Shaw, Jen Speight, Paul Bond.  
In absentia: Chris Crockford, Emma Clarke,  
Amanda Smith, Alison Lyon



My choice of the Northern College of Acupuncture was mainly due to the presence of yourself, committed staff and also the amazing location (and Yorkshire pork pies). I soon began to realise the enormous effects of your life's work in acupuncture and research. The incredible work you have had to do to help TCM acupuncture to be more widely accepted within the health care sector.

I would like to thank you for making such a commitment and the effects of it have probably affected almost every country and countless people around the world and especially the people who have been able to deliver the treatments.

Thank you so much,

*Sheonagh*

**Sheonagh Swain**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna,  
class of 2016



Our heartfelt thank you:

One of the Three Kings of the Northern College of Acupuncture – you, Richard and Nick.

We were so lucky to have been guided and taught by you in our early years of TCM. Your passion, drive and experience helped lead us; together with other outstanding tutors, Charlie [Buck] and Sarah [Price], to where we are today.

So proud and honoured to be deeply involved in the world of Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine.

The Science of Life and a life of Science.

*Anna Marie*

**Anna Krypczyk and Ann Marie James**  
Acupuncturists, Chinese Herbal  
Practitioners and NCA alumni

In 1978 I was introduced to a deep mediation technique called The Boardroom. The simple idea was you collect the best of the people you know or have known, and have them in your Virtual Boardroom to advise, guide, love or inspire you in times of need. I met Hugh in 1982, and by 1987 Hugh was firmly ensconced in my Boardroom. Over the last 33 years, people have come and gone from my Boardroom, but Hugh has remained as a consistent member. Always there, always wise, always loved and always appreciated. So, why has Hugh had the dubious pleasure of existing in my altered reality for 33 years?

It's the same reason I love being with him in my real world. I don't know anyone else who has his unique ability to combine joy, innovation, hard work and a way of thinking that's way outside the box. Plus, and this is important, I love him dearly.

When Hugh suggested we co-found an acupuncture college all those years ago in China, it altered the whole trajectory of my life in a deep, brilliant and profound way. I am who I am because of you, Hugh, and I thank you deeply, my friend. And again, I love you dearly.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick".

Nicholas Haines

Kindness Ambassador, international speaker, strategist, author  
and co-founder of the Northern College of Acupuncture



[bit.ly/nick-haines](https://bit.ly/nick-haines)



**“Six words came out of your mouth that completely and utterly changed my life. You said: “Shall we start an acupuncture college?”**

**Thank you for those six magical words. Thank you for your friendship. I love you loads.”**





I remember having a banter with a lady cashier at Tesco some years ago. At some point she asked me what I did. I said, I was an acupuncture student for the time being.

She said: "I totally believe in acupuncture!"

I was somewhat taken aback by her fierce expression.

"Well, some people say it does not work!" she added, responding to my hesitancy. "I had acupuncture some 25 years ago from a very kind man and I can truly say: he saved my life!"

"That's wonderful to hear," I said.

She then proceeded to tell me how she had suffered terribly from depression as a young woman. Nothing at all seemed to make any difference. No drugs, no talking therapy. In desperation her mother arranged for her to go and see Hugh and try acupuncture.

"I knew nothing about it, but was willing to try it for my dear mother's sake. From the very first treatment I became a different person. I continued to improve without any setbacks. He literally cured me. I am forever in his debt."

She beamed at me. I told her that he was still practising at the clinic on Tadcaster Road not too far from here.

But she simply said: "That's good to hear. But I have no need for it any more. My depression never came back. Do let him know we talked though, please. And thank him with all my heart."

And so I did.

*Chrissie*

Chrissie Thomas  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 2018

Hugh at the ETCMA seminar,  
Rothenburg 2009  
Photograph courtesy of  
Jasmine Uddin



Acupuncture students know the name Hugh MacPherson better than their own. It's introduced early on and becomes a constant companion when researching and writing essays. Hugh was my first acupuncture hero, immortalised in the reference section of every assignment I ever wrote. If only those references had included a picture I may have avoided an embarrassing first meeting that continues to haunt me even now, 10 years on.

I was asked to speak to some prospective students at a Northern College of Acupuncture open day then mix informally



over a buffet lunch. Feeling fiercely loyal to the college, I felt it was my duty to recruit as many of the candidates as possible. The chap I was speaking to was intelligent, polite and seemed genuinely interested in the college.

Perfect candidate. "Will you be joining the new cohort?" I enquired, with that air of superiority you can only have by being a year or two ahead in the subject you're discussing.

I have to say, Hugh barely batted an eyelid, only giving a chuckle and a throwaway comment about it being a bit late for that. It was only after we ended our conversation that one of the tutors revealed who I'd been speaking to and the extent of my *faux pas*. I'd like to think I could be that cool in the same circumstances, but I doubt I could.

Most will remember Hugh for his enormous academic contribution to our profession. I have the privilege of remembering his humility, even if it still makes me cringe!

*Anthony*

Anthony Sigrist  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumnus, class of 2013



I would love to say that I am standing on the shoulders of a giant, but I have only managed to crawl up and peep over your shoulders. The contribution you have made to our profession and thereby also to the health of the population of Europe is immeasurable.

I am from the generation of acupuncturists that came after yours. I qualified in 1991 and later studied herbs in 2000 and took a BSc at the Northern College of Acupuncture. The path I have walked was so much easier and so well laid out, and that is in no small way due to you, your vision and your perseverance. I am eternally indebted and grateful.

The first time I met you was in a small provincial town in Denmark where you held a seminar. Since then I have bumped into you in York and for the last decade or so in Rothenburg. It has always been both a pleasure, as well as extremely inspiring to spend time with you. Thanks.

**Nigel Ching**  
Acupuncturist, NCA alumnus  
and author, Denmark



I have great memories of Hugh MacPherson over many, many years. He was there at the birth of the British Acupuncture Council, and was ever present.

He was our hero. He was one of ours. We relied on him to represent us on any forum or panel with the great and good. He would always hold his own (and better) with appropriate customised research – whoever he was up against.

He never let us down.

Hugh was smart, highly intelligent, plausible, acceptable and charming with his immaculate presentations.

He has done so much for our profession and we owe him a huge debt.

Thank you Hugh – with love and endless appreciation.

**Ron Bishop**  
Acupuncturist/osteopath and founding member  
of the British Acupuncture Council



We first met at the Norwegian University College for Health Sciences, where you taught my class on the principles of acupuncture research. Up until that point I had always been feeling that something was missing from my studies. I had previously focused on becoming

a clinician, and nothing else – but after your lecture I turned my entire life and studies around and began to focus all my efforts into becoming an acupuncture researcher. You were always there for me, with advice and help on my path. I erroneously went to medical school, and found they would not teach me research – I so clearly remember you asking “Yeah, I always wondered why you went to medical school?”

You helped me come to York, you became my supervisor (I still suspect delaying your retirement a year for that). You helped me discover my love for statistics and research methodology. You helped me formulate an idea for my PhD and encouraged my work at the Northern College of Acupuncture. We often sat and discussed possible avenues for new interesting research. I have not forgotten, and I often dream of finding the opportunity to come back to those ideas.

While my life has taken many twists and turns since that first meeting, I owe you more than I can ever put into words, Hugh. Without you I would not be where I am or who I am. I thank you so very much and will forever remember you as the person who showed me my purpose in life.

Yours in everlasting gratitude,

**Simen Svenkerud**  
Acupuncturist, NCA research supervisor,  
data scientist and author, Norway

Hugh brought a level of rigour to acupuncture research that was previously sorely lacking. Always generous with his time and support for budding researchers, the acupuncture profession will always be in his debt for his remarkable contribution to research.

And that is not to mention his contribution to acupuncture education, acupuncture politics and many many patients. Few have achieved so much.

**Peter Mole**  
Acupuncturist, author and teacher of Chinese medicine



Hi, Hugh,

My chief memory of you from my time on the Northern College of Acupuncture Trustee Board is how you made me feel.

First, you made me feel very welcome. Second, I did not read all of your many published papers. Indeed, I read only a few. But they were clear, rigorous and powerful. They helped me bridge a difficult gap between my formal classical scientific training and a wider, more holistic approach.

You widened my horizon. Now back at work due to Covid-19 I find this to be of value. So, thank you Hugh. You are great.

**David Bullimore**  
Former Trustee, Northern College  
of Acupuncture





Dear Hugh,

I think of you frequently since we met at the National Institute of Health last year.

You are in my thoughts and prayers. You are a warrior and a magnificent person. Thank you for the contributions made to the profession. All of your work serves as a beacon. The light you have shed on acupuncture will remain illuminated for generations to come. Both of us are battling the same enemy and I certainly understand the circumstances. Making every minute count is so important now. I express my gratefulness to know you and say there is no one quite like you. You are a special person to all of us.

I am not saying goodbye but will use the French *Au revoir*. To see you again! Hang in there!

**Richard Niemtzow**  
**Doctor and acupuncturist, and**  
**editor-in-chief of *Medical Acupuncture* journal**



I started working for Hugh in 1989 and retired in 2003. I can honestly say they were 14 happy years.

When I started it was The Chi'en Clinic in St. Saviourgate, which was cosy and small. Hugh recognised he needed bigger premises so together we started viewing and when we saw Tadcaster Road that was the one (sorry Hugh, I can't remember what year we moved). That was the best thing you did after me pushing you.

Lots of great memories while we were there – too many to list. This comes with lots of love and hugs – and what ever happened to our coffee?

**Doris Beavis**  
**Receptionist at the York Clinic for**  
**Integrated Healthcare 1989-2003**



**“You’re a true mensch.”**

In this video, Peter pays tribute to Hugh and is grateful for their friendship, celebrating the ways that Hugh has contributed to the field of acupuncture and integrative medicine; and even more, the high standards Hugh has set for scientific and personal integrity.



[bit.ly/sar-pw](https://bit.ly/sar-pw)

*Peter*

**Peter Wayne**  
**Society for Acupuncture Research board member**  
**at Osher Center, Harvard Medical School, USA**



Hello Hugh,  
June Kennerley  
here. One  
of your first  
graduates from  
the Northern  
College of

Acupuncture (1991). I  
would like to tell you that  
I loved every minute of the  
course and remember it all as  
though it were yesterday.

I even remember the  
interview in 1988 with you  
and Nick. I then spent three  
weeks keeping my fingers  
and toes crossed, hoping you  
would have me.

I took a virtual tour through  
the new College and saw the  
Hall of Fame. There we all  
are in the first graduation  
photograph. Happy days!!

The qualifications gained  
set me in good stead for a  
successful practice, helping  
many, many people, having  
24 years of NHS contracts  
and gaining membership  
of the Royal Society of  
Medicine.

Hugh, I congratulate you  
on your very distinguished  
career. You have done much  
to promote the cause!

With love and thanks,

June Kennerley  
Retired practitioner of  
acupuncture and NCA alumna,  
class of 1991

Dear Hugh,

I have loved having the opportunity to cross paths  
with you in all sorts of lovely places. I especially  
enjoyed a rare opportunity to share a pint with you at  
Brigantes and learning about your past, what brought  
you to natural medicine and acupuncture research,  
and your love of beekeeping.

In the time I have been involved in acupuncture research and advocacy, it's safe  
to say that I haven't produced a single paper, lecture, or policy recommendation  
that hasn't included reference to your work in some capacity. Your research has  
transformed acupuncture from esoteric alternative medicine to an evidence-based  
medical intervention that is included in thousands of medical guidelines globally.  
This will have positive impacts on public health for many years to come.

I have appreciated learning from you and spending time with you. Thank you for  
your immense contribution to acupuncture and public health.

Lots of love,

**Mel Hopper Koppelman**  
Acupuncturist, evidence-base campaigner and NCA alumna, class of 2012



I worked with Hugh many years ago on a few  
research papers on acupuncture and empathy,  
and we shared many stories about Edinburgh,  
where I live. Hugh impressed me as a scientist,  
taking on large studies and doing trials and  
really being a trailblazer for acupuncture  
research.

After that early work we went our separate ways  
(most of my research is not in CAM) but it  
was a real delight to work with him again a few  
years ago in a study led by Debbie Sharp in Bristol. I was delighted  
when he was made a professor, much deserved and long overdue.

I thank him for his generosity as a colleague. Even though we never  
socialised and only saw each other sporadically, I always thought of  
him as a friend and buddy.

Stewart Mercer  
Professor of Primary Care and Multimorbidity, University of Edinburgh

We met at Findhorn Holistic Health Conference in 1992. You recruited me to be the Research Director of the Foundation for Traditional Chinese Medicine (FTCM) that you and Richard had established. We worked together, developing innovative qualitative and quantitative acupuncture research. I was keen on developing practitioner research; from early on you were heading towards the big studies that could validate acupuncture in the eyes of the NHS. So we did both. We continued our collaboration when I became Research Director at the Northern College of Acupuncture, to set up the research component of the new MSc course.



It was a delight working with you – your creative, challenging, compassionate energy – breaking new ground, taking risks, making things happen. I enjoyed our trips to London, meeting the BAcC folk and the HRH crowd, a new experience for me. As our relationship evolved into a friendship we stayed at each other's homes and met their families.

Hugh, you changed my life big-time in a way you may not realise. It was when Gina was about to move in with me. She was a refugee fleeing her farm cottage because the farm was about to be locked down – it was the foot and mouth outbreak of 2001. I told you that I needed to find her a desk she could use in the house because she was writing a new text book. You told me, “If you want her to stay you need to give her a room as an office”. So I did. We are now married and her OUP *Textbook of Immigration and Asylum Law* is in its 8th edition.

Hugh, you beautiful, creative, life-loving man. I want you to know how loved you are.

With love,

Mike

Mike Fitter

FTCM and NCA colleague and friend





Hugh has had a huge influence on my working life and experiences.

It is because he (with others) instigated the Acupuncture Research Resource Centre in 1994 that I arrived in York where I've remained for the last 25 years.

It is because he drew me into the burgeoning research agenda for the profession that I worked with him on the Low Back Pain study and subsequent studies; that I went to the US to the early research conferences and wrote articles, and that I did my MSc.

He and Mike Fitter created an atmosphere of co-operation and a real willingness to share and engage that was incredibly stimulating after my previous experiences in academic arenas. He was a great support and encouragement in my own work and he also introduced me to 'horizontal filing' – i.e., use every flat surface available – as we worked in the basement in Acomb!

Our paths criss-crossed over the years and the last intersection has been around beekeeping, which became a passion for us both.

My experience is just a tiny part of the influence he has had on so many over the years. I will always be grateful to him for these and other times we shared, and remember him with great fondness.

**Alison Gould**

**Retired acupuncturist and herbalist, and researcher**



It was in a London bar we met. It was crowded. Hugh bumped into me as he was turning around, a pint of beer in his hand. I do not know why but Hugh showed great delight in speaking to me.

I had just been appointed to build up medical anthropology at Oxford and invited him many times to give one of his always edifying talks, scientifically sharp, crystal clear, sparkling and amusing, so very well delivered, and so relevant to the advancement of Chinese medical care in the UK, and far beyond. He, of course, only very rarely had the time to agree to make the detour from London through Oxford to York. He was of course hugely popular with my students.

There are other memories too, very moving ones, celebrating my 50th birthday after the IASTAM conference in Bhutan, sitting side by side in the shade, staring into the subtropical heat, looking at the rocks, the ruins, and eventually their lengthening shadows, when he told me of his youth, his travels through Africa, family and career choices, and when we came away with this deep sense of purpose in life beyond our comprehension.

We said we wanted to meet again more recently, but life is always full with having to do something.

**Elisabeth Hsu**

**School of Anthropology, University of Oxford**



Hi Hugh

Thank you for your warmth and kindness, your thoughtfulness and your huge dedication to acupuncture and acupuncture research.

I have memories of sitting with you at BAAB meetings, staying with you and Sara in York and your openness and welcome when John and I first set up the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine. You never saw us as competition. Your response to the College was to invite us to talk to Northern College students about Five Element Acupuncture. And you helped us by telling John how to set up the College as a Company Not for Profit – that's been standing CICM in good stead ever since.

Personally, I'm grateful to you for inviting me to contribute a chapter to your case history book. Until then I'd never written anything or thought about writing. Once I'd dipped a toe in, I didn't look back. So, it's with many thanks to you that I've enjoyed writing ever since.

Your Chinese Medicine career has been huge. Not satisfied with being the founder of the Northern College, you also went on to become Professor of Acupuncture in York University – in fact a giant in acupuncture and research! You have had a major impact on the profession and can be credited with reigniting many acupuncturists' interest in research (including mine). Your enthusiasm for your work has inspired me and I salute you for all you've done to inspire all of us in the acupuncture world.

What a wonderful person you are! My thank you and wishes of love and peace.

**Angie Hicks**  
Acupuncturist and co-founder of the  
College of Integrated Chinese Medicine



Hugh at the British Acupuncture Council, 2003.  
*Photograph courtesy of the BAcC*



Dear Hugh,

We haven't met for a long time, but I have always felt you were someone special and your contribution to acupuncture has been immense. You were around before Angie and I set up CICM and you generously went out of your way to be helpful. You are modest, have a good heart and are someone special. There is nothing else to do.

A whole lot of Love,

**John Hicks**  
Acupuncturist and co-founder of the  
College of Integrated Chinese Medicine

Against the backdrop of our friendship, Hugh asked me to work on the AcuDep trial of acupuncture and counselling for depression. Really, counselling was only there to give another arm to the trial, but I never felt it was secondary in any way. Everything was shared, I was included in everything, and my comments – even about



acupuncture – were met with interest and thoughtfulness. And it was fun! So fascinating to be in rooms with statisticians – I'd never done that before. Other trial work came out of it for me, so it helped to develop my career, which I was grateful for.

Hugh has a talent for including people, for expecting them to be good at what they do and having no doubt that they will be up to the task. He invites you to share his confidence that this is going to be a wonderful, exciting project – he isn't troubled by recidivism. I don't remember him ever saying "I'll think about it and get back to you" or even sounding weary – he has unfailing energy and enthusiasm.

He has been a steady, loyal, interesting and caring presence over the years, and I will miss him terribly.



**Sara Perren**

**Psychotherapist, collaborator, co-author and friend**

Hugh and I met over 30 years ago, as a result of a co-counselling group.

Five of us, all in relationships with feminist women and all fathers of young children – we needed some support. We met every two weeks to talk and explore the relationship between us as fathers, with our children.

It was rich psychological work – a relief to know that others were going through the same issues, and it helped us all. Hugh got stuck into that and was really good at it. We developed a friendship that endured after the group stopped.

More recently, Hugh and I went for long cycling trips together. He took me to places I wouldn't have got to on my own: he enlarged my experience and made me realise I was capable of more than I thought.

I will really miss him.



**Geoffrey Wall**

**Fellow academic and friend**



My first memories of you, Hugh, are from when I was a teenager. We had a lively debate in York St John swimming pool during a Sunday morning family session. You used to come with Sara, Angus and Shona. I was probably only 14, but I recall clearly this was about the relative benefits of slow versus fast lane swimming. You argued for more endorphins with fast swimming and I'd like to say, all these years later, that I now think you were right!

When I was 15, you offered me a two-week placement for my Year 10 work experience. I wanted to be a chiropractor. The Chi'en Clinic, as it was then known, smelt of Chinese herbs and the clinic room next to reception smelt deliciously of aromatherapy oils. It was summer and Wendy, one of the other practitioners, was meditating barefoot in the garden when I arrived. I thought she was terribly glamorous. Everyone was very friendly and made me feel so welcome.

I was offered green tea! It was a huge eye opener for a teenage girl from York. I can still remember sitting in on your consultations with patients and watching you draw diagrams of people's tongues and then carefully place needles. You were kind and thorough and I had the impression always that they liked you very much. Later, you took me on as a Tuesday evening receptionist-cum-website designer. Through my time at the clinic, I learnt how to converse with adults much older than me and grew in confidence.

Now all these years later I think about how the people I met and the skills that I learnt working with you have influenced what I'm now doing. I'm a GP in Brixton, talking to patients and remembering always that conventional medicine doesn't have all the answers. Respecting people's decisions to consult with me and with complementary practitioners. Approaching patients in both health and disease holistically. Even being able to refer people for acupuncture on the NHS, thanks to the evidence base that you helped create. If you hadn't given me those opportunities as a teenager, I might not have chosen a career in healthcare and I would certainly be a less holistic, less open-minded clinician. Thank you for taking a chance on me. I promise to do the same for a teenager who comes to me some day. And as I do so, I will think of you, Hugh.

With my heartfelt thanks and very best wishes,



Handwritten signature of Gianna Chadwick with three small 'x' marks below it.

**Gianna Chadwick**  
Family friend and GP



Dear Hugh,

You have inspired and changed the lives of many people all over the world. It has been an honour and a privilege to know you and to learn from you. I will forever draw on the fond memories of your smile, your kindness and your knowledge, which has changed the landscape of acupuncture worldwide.

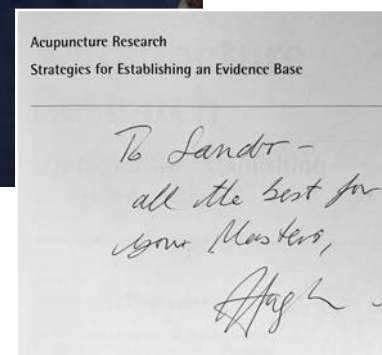
Personally, I will be forever grateful and will never forget how you took the time to say some reassuring words to me when I was “brave enough to step into your shoes” (as you described it on the day) to take your place and deliver your keynote address at the conference in Austria.

Your work and your achievements have always been an inspiration to me and we all have so much to thank you for. **Your light will forever shine bright in our hearts and it will be seen in our eyes when we say your name.**

Much love,

*SANDRO*

**Sandro Graca**  
Acupuncturist, lecturer and NCA student



Dear Hugh

I am very glad to have had the chance to work with you and collaborate on projects together.

You have been an inspiration to all of us involved in the practise and research of acupuncture and have influenced many people with your teaching, treatments and research.

Your contributions have been enormous and I only hope I can achieve a fraction of what you have.

All my love,



**Stephen Birch**  
Chinese medicine practitioner,  
author and researcher



My first interaction with Professor MacPherson's work was at the Northern College of Acupuncture open day in September 2014. The presentation contained a slide that examined the quality of evidence for success of NHS delivered outcomes in medical treatments and it was an absolute revelation to see the positive evidence percentage so much lower than I had expected. This was then juxtaposed with Professor MacPherson's work looking at the positive outcomes for acupuncture in the treatment of a wide range of conditions. It is no exaggeration to say that this presentation was instrumental in me leaving that open day knowing I wanted to study acupuncture at NCA.

Since then I have had the honour of seeing Professor MacPherson deliver that presentation (and many others at various conferences) in person and his calm delivery and assured conviction are truly spell-binding. I still talk to my fellow graduates about how reassuring his Year 3 teaching session was to us about the power of acupuncture and the results that we could expect in practice once we qualified.

Professor MacPherson has been our 'Top Trumps' card to beat all others in the world of evidence-based acupuncture. His work allows us to hold our heads high in discussions with other (sometimes sceptical) fellow healthcare professionals, and as a consequence his research has made an incredible impact upon the mainstream acceptance of acupuncture.

Thank you Professor MacPherson for your invaluable contributions in this field and for inspiring me to become an acupuncturist!



**Michael Ranft**  
Acupuncturist, lecturer and NCA alumnus





5<sup>TH</sup> July 2020



Dear Hugh,

*My friend, colleague and appreciated researcher.*

We had many close and special encounters, and you always inspired me with your clarity of thoughts and ability to make things happen.

When I think about you, so many memories are surfacing: visiting you at the University in the early 90's; meeting you as one of the pioneering researchers who helped me on my research path; being stuck in an airport in Denmark; sharing time in numerous congresses; walking on the grass in Rothenburg. Above all, your kind eyes, shy smile and bright mind, that always made me feel that I am in the presence of a remarkable man.

A man who lived for his vision, a man that made contributions and a real change in health and attitude towards our healing method worldwide. You left a deep mark with me and with so many others.

With your permission, I have "borrowed" one of the ending lines, which I heard in your lectures about research. You quoted Mahatma Gandhi - **"First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win"**. So true for every researcher, and for your life.

**To me, you are a great model of a winner.**

*With so much love (wish I could hug you)*



Yair

Dr. Yair Maimon OMD PhD Ac  
President of the European Traditional Chinese Medicine Association (ETCMA)  
[+972543400300](tel:+972543400300) | [president@etcma.org](mailto:president@etcma.org)  
[www.etcma.org](http://www.etcma.org)

Hugh skiing in  
Laax after the ASA  
TCM-Congress in  
Switzerland.  
*Photograph courtesy  
of Anita Meyer*

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Hugh MacPherson

A pioneer in his chosen profession

An accomplished acupuncture person

An honourable man of honourable reputation

Hugh MacPherson

A gentleman of gentle persuasion

Tenacious when following his passion

Capable of bringing dreams to action

Hugh MacPherson

Dedicated to TCM education

Instigator, architect, a man of creation

Initiator of the TCM research foundation

Hugh MacPherson

TV star, author, you set the wheels in motion

You and your work an inspiration

We raise our glasses in salutation

Hugh MacPherson

You planted seeds for cultivation

Your peers, your students, will tend your garden

Your work will continue in celebration

Hugh MacPherson

We salute you!



Remember, Hugh.....

.... when we met at the  
apparently most dangerous  
airport in Paro, Bhutan, back  
in 2009?

Our flight was late, our buses  
were late, the organization  
was chaotic, and everyone  
was tired and a little bit  
“stressed” out – that’s how we  
met. Later in the evening we

met again at the lobby in our hotel in Thimphu. Let’s  
take a whiskey in the hotel bar, remember? That’s how  
we met!

In the years to come, we met at conferences, we met  
at congresses – I even “bribed” you to come as our  
speaker to the ASA TCM-congress in Switzerland  
by inviting you for a weekend of skiing in Laax –  
everyone in the congress was delighted to hear you at  
the congress in Solothurn, and my husband and I, we  
enjoyed the time with you in the mountains, with a  
fondue, in the snow, on skis – it was fun!

I always appreciated your quick mind, your “out-of-  
the-box” way of thinking, your humour – thank you  
for everything you shared with me!

*Anita Meyer*  
Anita Meyer

**Phil Montgomery**  
Acupuncturist, clinic manager and supervisor,  
and NCA alumnus, class of 2012



# "Where you are stuck, we all are at the moment."

Dear Hugh, dear good friend,

The title of my contribution for celebrating your vast contribution to acupuncture research, was your final comment to me when you were the opponent whilst I was defending my Ph.D. thesis (2005) at the University of Bergen, Norway. Those words were a great relief in that context. After that, we got to know each other more through our common interest in acupuncture research. Later on, we developed a good friendship built on "un-stuckness". Research-wise, you have always been an inspiration. For me especially, your understanding and knowledge of pragmatic, randomised clinical studies have been an "eye-opener" in doing research on acupuncture as a complex intervention. It was great working with you on the protocol for the project "Fatigue in breast cancer survivors – is acupuncture a

treatment option?" As you know, Hugh, we got money (2019) for that project from the Norwegian Cancer Association – I am proud to have you on board as a team-mate. I am also proud to have you as a friend. I remember very well our skiing day up in the mountains in Norway. Driving up to the cottage we also met a moose on the road. Last but not least, the two of us have met many times at international conferences – the last one, I remember, was in February 2019 in the US.

My good friend Hugh – *vaya con dios*,



Terje Alraek

Acupuncturist, professor and senior researcher, Norway





It was the last year of my PhD study in Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine (NJUCM) in 2007 I first heard the name of Hugh MacPherson and his book *Acupuncture Research: Strategies for Establishing an Evidence Base* and knew he did some training at Nanjing University of Chinese Medicine (NJUCM).

After I moved to the UK and joined the University of East



London (UEL) and after, I had several occasions to meet Hugh, mostly in British Acupuncture Council conferences or Symposiums. He is the leading researcher on acupuncture clinical research in the western world, particularly in the

UK. I have cited many papers of his publications in my new book *Acupuncture for Brain: Treatment of neurological and Psychological disorders* (Springer, November 2020).

Although I have only a few chances to meet Hugh, as the University alumni from NJUCM, I am proud of him. As the acupuncture colleagues I respect his massive achievements.

Hugh MacPherson, you are a hero of acupuncture, in the UK and worldwide.

*Tianjun*

**Tianjun Wang**  
Acupuncturist, author and lecturer

I joined the British Acupuncture Council having benefited from treatment but knowing very little of its history and application, and believing that this very special therapy could make a difference to the wider community if more was known about it. At a very early stage of my involvement I met Hugh – and that was a turning point because I then developed a very healthy respect for the history of this ancient practice and what it could do for patients. Hugh led me through the research which informed this understanding, and helped in the preparation of the papers we would produce to give evidence to various committees in the House of Commons and the NHS, and also when we prepared our action to try to obtain Chartered status for all practitioners.

Acupuncture was sometimes ridiculed by members of the medical profession and academics from other disciplines on the grounds of lack of effective research data, and I would turn to Hugh for support and evidence which was always forthcoming. In my view, his approach and rigour enabled the profession to gain a status that was denied to other arms of Chinese medicine. It certainly helped refute the often ill-informed challenges which came from the media.

Acupuncture is a profession which relies very heavily on the people within it, not just the process. Hugh brought to it the rigour, discipline and dedication that helped it maintain its reputation in the face of very severe challenges – and which helped me enormously as one of the people charged by the members with carrying the profession forward.

Thank you, Hugh, for making a real difference.



*Mike*

**Mike O'Farrell**  
First CEO of the British Acupuncture Council 1999-2011



When I reached out to Hugh for some help with a research project he was very kind and generous with his time. Unsurprisingly, his technical advice was invaluable, but perhaps more importantly his friendly manner and positive encouragement helped boost my own confidence as a young researcher.

Hugh's contribution to the field of acupuncture research has been incalculable in terms of substantially improving the quality of the evidence-base. His work has inspired me to continue to try and improve the evidence-base for our profession. I am truly grateful for the help and support he has given me with my own research.

**Nick Lowe**  
Acupuncturist and researcher



You have been my acupuncture hero since the first time you came to Denmark to teach at The Acupuncture School in the early nineties. You had a different way of explaining TCM and I learned a lot though I was supposed to be one of the leaders (Irene was the other leader) of the school and not a student. Later on when you became a researcher I read all your articles. You reopened my eyes to research which I had lost though I am educated in Western medicine, I did not question TCM. From you I regained my interest and respect of research and from you I learned that research is necessary whether you practise Western medical or classical Chinese acupuncture. When I teach acupuncture to medical staff in Denmark research, it is always integrated. You have been my mentor all the way though you might not be aware of it.

Thank you for all the research you have done and for lifting acupuncture into what it is today. Thank you for being a wonderful person, always open-minded and social. Thank you.

**Elsebeth Laegaard**  
Medical Doctor and acupuncturist, Denmark

Dear Hugh, we met at my first CAMSTRAND conference, in Manchester, when I was just starting my doctorate at Westminster. I was so inspired by the CAM research community that you played a major part in. Your research and leadership have played a major role in putting acupuncture on the agenda as an evidence-based intervention.

My very best wishes to you.

**Carol Granger**  
Co-Chair and Trustee, Research Council  
for Complementary Medicine



I have known you for almost thirty years, right back to the early days of the Northern College of Acupuncture. You have always been an inspiration and your contribution to the world of TCM is immense.

The impact of NCA alone has been fantastic, as all those trained there have gone out into the wider world to benefit others, while your research work, mainly from your base at the University of York, has transformed the acceptance of acupuncture in the UK and internationally.

On a personal level it has been a pleasure and honour to know you as a colleague and friend, to have been invited by you to teach at NCA and to have the great memory of staying with you and seeing you in your element as a family man. Your cooking, your cycling, your laugh, anecdotes and warmth will stay with me forever.

More recently it was brilliant to catch up with you at the NCA Thirty Years Anniversary event in September 2018 – what a memorable day that was and a tribute to all that has been achieved there!

Thank you Hugh for all your outstanding achievements, that have impacted so many and will endure, and also for being a great human being.



Your bicycle, kayak (?) hanging from the ceiling, enthusiasm for Bayesian statistics

Your dogged determination to continue, your patience, your careful presentations, your organising

Your graphs and humour, your serious dedication to the cause of acupuncture research

You have been an inspiration to many.

Thank you. Thank you.

**David Mayor**  
Acupuncture researcher, author  
and former acupuncturist

My kind regards to Hugh. And from Hilary, my wife, also. We both remember him fondly from when he first set up the York college and we both taught there.

**Stephen Gascoigne**  
Medical doctor, acupuncturist, herbalist, UK



Such a long and varied career – practitioner, academic, lecturer, researcher and Northern College of Acupuncture co-founder. Thank you for all that you have done to bring TCM onto the map in the last thirty-plus years.

I have great memories of my three years (1989-92) at Acomb Road when the College was almost new and you and Richard and Nick created an atmosphere that was both intense and laid-back, but also inspiring and fun. A bit later, after I'd qualified, I locumed at your clinic on Tadcaster Road which was an exemplary setting in which to work.

Thank you for your energy and scholarship which have influenced generations of acupuncturists, and wishing you all the best.

*Cathie*

**Cathie Ballard**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 1992



I met Hugh in the mid-1990s, when the complementary medicine debate pretty much had three factions: advocates, who felt themselves to be in a war against the hegemonic power of an uncaring and unfeeling medical profession; quackbusters, who felt themselves to be in a war against superstition and ignorance; a small group of researchers who felt that we should do the studies

and find out one way or another. Hugh was one of the very few practitioners who rejected the easy attractions of the first camp and dedicated himself to serious research.

That is in no way trivial: there can be fewer better things to say about a man than that he sets aside his self-interest, and his comfortable beliefs, for the greater good.

I've worked more closely with Hugh since 2006 and the development of the Acupuncture Trialists Collaboration. Whether working together on a paper, or drinking beer in the "English garden" in Munich, Hugh was always a wonderful collaborator and companion.

*Andrew*

**Andrew Vickers**  
Biostatistician and researcher, USA



Dear Hugh, I hope you are doing ok. I was deeply saddened by the news and I want to take the opportunity to say thank you for everything that you have done for me over the past years. It was entirely because of you that I chose this career and your modesty meant that I had no idea how famous you are in the acupuncture world until I started referencing you in all my essays!

It has been such a privilege to work with you at the York Clinic and it will not be the same without you. You have always shown me such support and kindness and that is something I will be forever grateful for.

Sending love to you all,

*Rachel*

**Rachel Hemblade**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 2015

Hugh once told me about how his dad used to go rambling and he'd carry concrete and water in his rucksack and a signpost over his shoulder, and he would reinstate signposts at forgotten footpaths. Such was the strength of his determined belief in the our need for the access to nature.

I am struck by a parallel here in thinking about what Hugh has offered to our profession. Hugh has quietly worked on, often carrying a heavy workload and meeting resistance time and time again. He has effectively created modern pathways in ancient territory and signposted possible routes for many of us to explore. His achievements in the field of acupuncture have opened many eyes to the beauty and value of this medicine.

I am grateful for this and for my friendship with Hugh which has been full of warmth, stories and welcome. I will think of Hugh most of all when I open a fresh jar of honey and when I am trying to get my head around P-values.

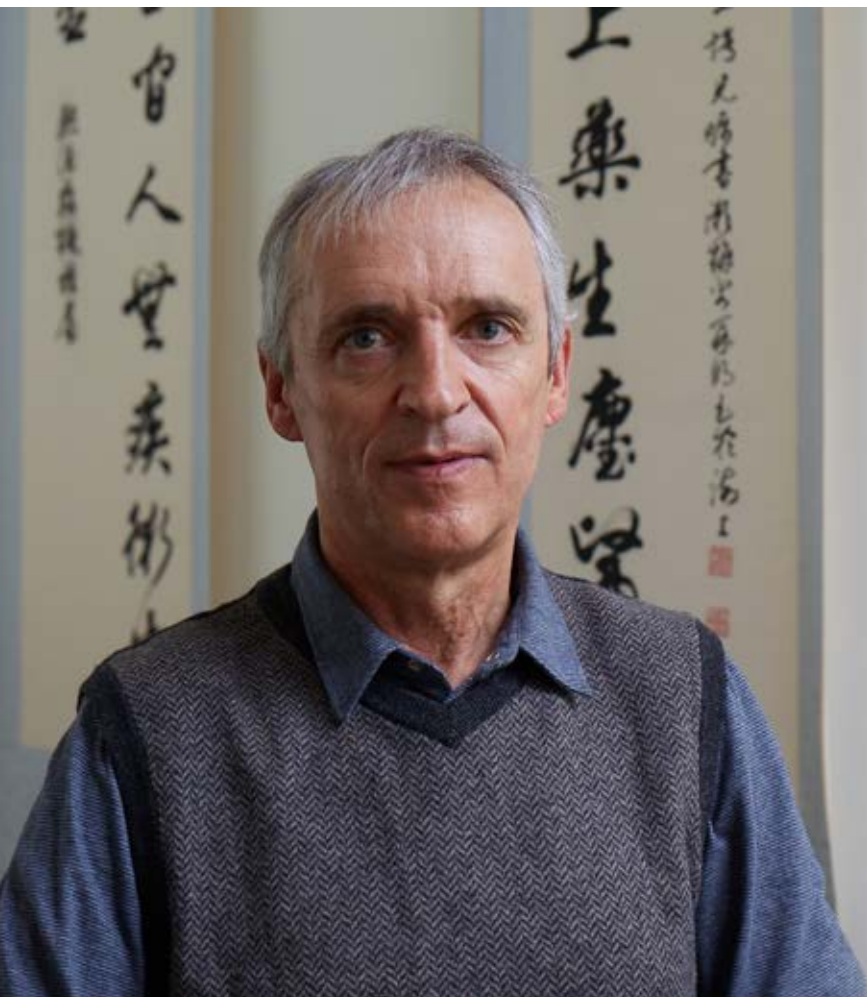
Love,

Hannah

Hannah Swift  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna,  
class of 2015







I have known Hugh for what seems a long time now, a sign that we are all getting older. We met through Chinese medicine, of course, a moment on which we had converged along quite different routes. But we had many things in common, too, most of all a desire to explore the world in a serious way without ever, however, forgetting the importance of play. We therefore ended up doing many similar things, from establishing an acupuncture college to running a multidisciplinary clinic, from breaking new ground in Chinese medicine research to travelling around the world. Hugh has always been ahead of me though, the kind of older brother I never had, and who is more important to the unfolding of my own life than he – and also I – realised at the time. At various moments in time he created important opportunities for me to present ideas to audiences I might otherwise never have reached. He showed me that it was possible to create for oneself a place in academia where none had previously existed. Most importantly, he has always been interested in my sometimes very different view of things. That is a rare thing and the very best one can say of an older brother.

Memories are plenty of both work and play. The joint editing of *Integrating East Asian Medicine into Contemporary Healthcare* (Elsevier 2011) and the workshops at the University of Westminster that led up to it; talking acupuncture research and much else from Thimpu in Bhutan to Ann Arbor in Michigan; the joint organisation of the Rothenburg science days. My biggest regret is that Hugh decided not to accept the professorship I managed to create for him at Westminster and the collaborations I imagined to result from this that never happened. But these are selfish thoughts and I completely understand the reasons why.

During one of our last conversations Hugh remarked that in the wider scheme of things acupuncture research was perhaps not the most important thing in the world. With hindsight, climate change and the looming environmental catastrophe may have been the issues to focus on. For someone at the top of his field, this was a very humble thing to say. That, though, is the man Hugh is.



Volker lectures at  
Rothenburg to an  
audience including Hugh

**Volker Scheid**  
Chinese medicine practitioner,  
teacher and researcher





Conference at the University of Westminster, April 2007: *Authenticity, Best Practice, and the Evidence Mosaic: The Challenge of Integrating Traditional East Asian Medicines into Western Health Care*. Felicity Moir stands front left with blue folder.  
 Photograph courtesy of Mark Bovey.

My relationship with you, Hugh, goes a long way back to when you were training in Chinese medicine and you used to come down to Lincoln where Tony Brewer and I ran a practice. When I think back to those early beginnings, what an amazing input you have made to our professional world since then. Your wonderful Northern College that has stood the tests of time; prolific research output; and all those patients whose suffering has been alleviated.

Hugh, we will always be in your debt. Safe journey.

**Felicity Moir**  
**Acupuncturist and educator**

**“The fruits of your labour are evident all around us, with greater acceptance of acupuncture in the Western world, particularly the US.”**

In this video, Vitaly pays tribute to Hugh’s presence in, and rich contributions to, the Society for Acupuncture Research board, and to his generous support of more junior colleagues.



[bit.ly/sar-vn](http://bit.ly/sar-vn)



*Vitaly*

**Vitaly Napadow**  
**Society for Acupuncture Research board member**  
**at Harvard University and MGH, USA**



Dear Prof. Hugh  
MacPherson,

Although we do not  
know each other  
personally, I'd like

to let you know that I was highly impressed when  
I listened to you at the Rothenburg Congress (and  
then heard about your background) many years ago.

You in fact belong to those people who, after  
having been a TCM-practitioner for quite a while,  
encouraged me to take up the challenge of attending  
the Northern College of Acupuncture's online MSc  
course back in 2014. Now that the course has been  
successfully completed, I am still 'on fire' to dive  
deeper and conduct more robust research in our  
field.

So, although I usually refuse to accept 'role models'  
for my own life, I, nevertheless, need to confess  
that (taking into consideration your path from an  
ordinary TCM practitioner to the first Professor in  
the field of acupuncture research all across Europe)  
you indeed are something like a 'role model' for me,  
in a positively associated way, as the pioneer you  
undoubtedly are.

I would like to sincerely thank you for paving the  
path, and wish you all the best and all necessary  
power and strength.

Respectfully yours,

**Nils May**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumnus, class of 2019, Germany



I remember the old accreditation process,  
now many years ago, of the body of  
acupuncturists forming their professional  
accreditation body in the UK. I was closely  
linked with this for quite a time, helping  
to bring the project to fruition. It brings  
cheerful memories and greetings across the  
decades to Hugh.

**Edward, Earl Baldwin of Bewdley**  
Former cross-bench member of the House of Lords  
Chair of the British Acupuncture  
Accreditation Board 1990-1999

Dear Hugh,

Although it's years since we  
reconvened in real space, just two  
weeks ago I was thinking of you, and  
asking Julian (Scott) if he had news  
of you. So you are present, and your  
presence has real meaning in the  
lives of many people.



We met at the JCM course that  
you took, with Giovanni, Peter, Julian and myself. Then the  
Northern College of Acupuncture: an expression of your  
capacity to bring inspiration and powerful conviction into  
realisation. What an achievement – and to collaborate with  
people of such calibre as Richard Blackwell. I have always  
treasured memories of coming to teach occasional seminars at  
NCA, many years ago, and conversations with you about the  
need for research.

Our world is much the richer for your vision and achievements  
– thank you.

**Vivienne Brown**  
Acupuncturist, healer, founder and former editor of  
*Caduceus* journal, Leamington Spa, UK



Hugh is a man of energy, dedication, commitment and foresight: never afraid to lead from the front and break new ground, he has helped to put acupuncture and acupuncture

research firmly on the medical map, and has contributed a huge amount to the profession.

However, there is not only Hugh the clinical colleague, there is Hugh the cyclist (how old is that bike?), Hugh the gardener (how many allotments?), Hugh the beekeeper (now there's dedication for you!), Hugh the apprentice fly-fisherman (got any treatment for backache?), Hugh the husband, father and friend.

**Mike Stephenson**  
Acupuncturist, formerly of York Clinic  
for Integrated Healthcare



You've been a great inspiration through my acupuncture/research days – remember that long phone call the night before my PhD interview? I completely changed my interview plan following your advice and was given the scholarship. I'm sure I would not have done so without that advice.

I'm proud to have contributed to your book – for my one chapter you must have spent as long as I did on it, thanks for your patient editing and prompts for rewriting.

I hope this compilation will let you know how much you will be missed.

**Trina Ward**  
Acupuncturist, Chinese herbal medicine  
practitioner and researcher



Dear Hugh,

You are ill – and I struggle for words

I am sad – and don't know what to say

And I want to tell you about so many memories

but don't have the words

So I am sending you a hug instead

and I want you to know you won't be alone – you'll always feel our love

**Angelika Findgott**  
Acquisitions editor, author  
and presenter, Germany





**"You never hesitate to help when you can.  
You're a beautiful human, thank you for  
being you. I'll be missing your bright face...  
a lot of love from across the pond."**

In this video, Lee celebrates Hugh's contribution to building the evidence-base for acupuncture's safety, efficacy and effectiveness; and his support of her, to develop her research skills.

**Lee Hullender Rubin**  
Society for Acupuncture Research board member  
at University of California, USA



I have worked with Hugh at the York Clinic for the past 8 years in my profession as a hypno-psychotherapist. The York Clinic was the only place I contacted and wanted to work at when I moved my practice from London

to the north-east. Hugh is the most charming, gentle, well-mannered and respectful man, with that wonderful combination of deep wisdom and ability to listen. It's been a great honour to work alongside you Hugh, with all your accomplishments, not the least being how your work has done so much to raise the awareness and respect of complementary therapies generally.

Warmest always,

**Lorna Cordwell**  
Hypno-psychotherapist at York Clinic



Thank you for your outstanding leadership and contribution to acupuncture research. Your work has been so significant, inspiring many and influencing the quality and excellence of the research methodology globally.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to have collaborated with you on many significant papers and systematic reviews. Thank you again.

My thoughts are with you at this time.

**Caroline Smith**  
Formerly Professor Clinical Research,  
NICM Health Research Institute, Western  
Sydney, Australia

Dear Hugh,

Many people in this book have to travel the world to see you. So the fact that you live just up the road from me, and that we're allotment neighbours, has always seemed such a great stroke of luck.

It has its downsides, of course. I'm remembering the day I was standing in the pond, heaving at an intractable set of roots that suddenly came loose; finding myself flat on my back covered in stinking mud and weeds, I scrambled to my feet to find you saying "Hello Karen!" and offering me a slot at a conference. I think you did it on purpose to embarrass me, with that wicked chuckle. It still makes me laugh to remember it, even now. Dignity is over-rated.

It goes without saying that you've been an inspiration from the moment we met, a decade ago in my first year at the Northern College of Acupuncture. From the moment I first got excited about trials, you were so generous with your time, your skills and your backing of my research. Having worked on this book, I now understand fully how characteristic that generosity is. You create and tend communities: bees, students, researchers, colleagues, friends. I think you want everyone to co-own the means of production of knowledge – which fragment of intellectual Marxism I love you for, and as NCA's research director I try always to build on.

In this book, Merete calls you "the rock star of acupuncture research", and I'm sorry to confess that it took me some time to see through the stardust to the real HuMan Person (Clayton McClure, 2013). But I guess some degree of dazzlement was to be expected. It's been an inexpressible privilege to start a career in acupuncture research with so many people's hero as my mentor and "research uncle", as Mark describes our relationship (Bovey, 2020).

That description makes me both laugh and feel very sad. Hugh, I wanted to be one of your research nibblings (Conklin, 1964) for many years to come; to carry on sharing a mutual curiosity and passion for acupuncture research, celebrating and grumbling together about its joys and its setbacks, helping to push its boundaries and reshape its paradigms – as you've done so brilliantly. We will all miss you terribly. I will miss you terribly.

But you've taught us nibblings plenty – and oddly enough, skills and knowledge are probably the least of it. As so many of the contributions in this book make clear, your enduring influence is in the qualities you've modelled: creativity, collaboration, rigour, enthusiasm, communication, tenacity and plain old-fashioned kindness. This book is an evidence-base for the deep affection you've inspired in your communities of colleagues and friends. That affection speaks not just of a skilled and knowledgeable man, but of someone who led by warm, inclusive example – and by doing so, connected as a HuMan Person with the HuMan Person in others. That spirit is as much your legacy as your research work itself, and your colleagues and friends are proud to take forward both.

Research, write, publish, defend, repeat.  
Just you watch.



**Karen Charlesworth**  
Acupuncturist, researcher, NCA Research Director  
and NCA alumna, class of 2013

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Dear Hugh,

From the moment I met you on my introductory day at the Northern College of Acupuncture, I knew then I had picked the right place to study. Your extensive knowledge, passion and enthusiasm left a lasting impression on me and it is certainly down to you and your researching colleagues that I owe gratitude for the increased acceptance and understanding of acupuncture in the UK today.

I thank you from the bottom of my heart and as I graduate this year and move into this wonderful profession, I promise to do you proud. You and your literature will be in my mind.

It has troubled me immensely to hear of your very sad news. I will be thinking of you and I simply pray that the valuable time you have left is filled with the people and activities that make you happy.

With love and respect from,

**Charlie Worswick**  
NCA student, class of 2020



Dear Hugh,

The email with news of your retirement evoked a memory of the excitement I felt over 30 years ago as I embarked on the acupuncture course at Acomb Road – a career-changing moment. You, Richard and Nick were such inspirational teachers as I made my way to becoming an acupuncturist. The needs of two very small children meant I started each very full teaching weekend with a sleep deficit but would finish with a surfeit of energy and enthusiasm for learning. What an accolade. Admittedly it was hard work, but it was always in the context of encouragement, kindness and even fun!

But, Hugh, your contribution has been much more than this and without doubt the place of TCM in the UK today owes you a great debt of gratitude for your tireless energy and commitment to research and practice. What a legacy. My sadness is the fact that your well-deserved retirement has been brought about as a result of ill health.

With deep appreciation and affection,

**Liz Marshall**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 1992





I and NICM Health Research Institute colleagues are devastated to hear your news Hugh, and we wish you and family and friends strength and courage during difficult times.

We recall all the wonderful activities and engagements we've had with you over the years, including your visit to Sydney and our Institute only a few years ago. I first met you in 1983 when we worked together in the Chi'en Clinic. It was such an exciting place to be with much of the integrative medicine activities just emerging in the north of England. You introduced Sarah and I to all the exciting York co-ops and many of your friends and colleagues.

You have always been a thoughtful, intelligent and sensitive man. Countless friends will have benefitted from your emotional generosity and kindness. We shared many poignant moments

theorising on mind body interactions, including why your troublesome knee also retained memories of your father! And it's those funny nuanced engagements that we tag with friends.

There is no doubt that your academic achievements in the field have been phenomenal. But what remains important for me, and I suspect many of your colleagues and friends, is your heart. Your heart and compassion have motivated your research and that is why it holds so much meaning for us all.

We send our love to you Hugh, Sara and family, as ex-Yorkers and Chi'en Clinic colleagues,

**Alan and Sarah Bensoussan**  
**Friend and researcher into Chinese medicine; and**  
**Director of the NICM Health Research Institute,**  
**Sydney, Australia**



I saw Dr. Hugh MacPherson speak only once, when I was a recently graduated practitioner at the British Acupuncture Council conference in 2006, I think it was. His academic wisdom and bravery in presenting a touchy subject (placebo – there were a few very defensive voices) affected me deeply. It had a profound effect on my thinking and left me with huge regard and deep thankfulness that such people exist in, fight for, and represent our profession. Thank you, Hugh.

*Kay*

**Kay Hay**  
**Acupuncturist and College of Integrated Chinese Medicine alumna**



I first became aware of Hugh MacPherson when I read his paper “The York acupuncture safety study” (Macpherson et al., 2001) in the *British Medical Journal*. I used this and the companion paper by White et al. (2001) in an exercise for medical students, and later included this exercise in my textbook *An Introduction to Medical Statistics*, 4th ed.

I moved from St. George’s, London, to the University of York in 2003. Soon afterwards, I was delighted to be joined in the department by Hugh. We worked together on several trials of acupuncture, to treat chronic pain, irritable bowel syndrome, and depression. Also included in these trials were other complementary medicine techniques, including counselling and Alexander technique. Other trial work included homeopathy for mental fatigue and copper bracelets and magnetic wrist straps for rheumatoid arthritis. Methodological work included patient preferences within randomised trials. Non-trial work included a systematic review and meta-analysis of acupuncture as an intervention to reduce alcohol dependency. Some of these studies were done by Hugh and colleagues, some by postgraduate students, attracted to the Department of Health Sciences by Hugh.

A characteristic of Hugh’s trials was that he always avoided sham acupuncture. He argued that sham acupuncture did not provide a fair comparison, as needles incorrectly placed may still have some effect. Although I am a great believer in double blind trials, I was happy to go along with this, as I found his argument

persuasive and thought that, if the acupuncture worked, it did not necessarily matter whether this was a placebo effect. Additionally, before I met Hugh I had analysed one acupuncture trial, which was double-blind, using needling in the wrong place as a control, which demonstrated a highly significant effect of acupuncture on the consequences of enforced menopause. I knew that acupuncture could work.

Hugh’s trials demonstrated the biological and clinical effects of acupuncture in a variety of problems. It was a privilege and a pleasure to work with him.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Bland".

**Martin Bland**  
**Emeritus Professor of Health Statistics, University of York, UK**

**MacPherson, H., Thomas, K., Walters, S., Fitter, M.** (2001). The York acupuncture safety study: prospective survey of 34000 treatments by traditional acupuncturists. *British Medical Journal*, 323, 486–487.

**White, A., Hayhoe, S., Hart, A., Ernst, E.** (2001). Adverse events following acupuncture: prospective survey of 32 000 consultations with doctors and physiotherapists. *British Medical Journal*, 323, 485–486.

It is a privilege and pleasure Hugh, to know you as colleague and friend and to consider you as Researcher Extraordinaire. I can think of no one in the field of acupuncture research who has contributed a more diverse set of trail-blazing studies. Since today's credo is to support such claims with evidence, please allow me to recap at least a few highlights of your accomplishments.

You were ahead of your time when, in 2000, you issued a clarion call that research on acupuncture be designed to reflect its real-world practice and not be constricted to fit existing bio-medical research models. Since that time, the remarkable breadth of your publication record includes rigorous and innovatively-designed clinical trials demonstrating acupuncture effectiveness for low back pain, depression and irritable bowel syndrome. Also included are your numerous studies documenting acupuncture's safety, cost-effectiveness, and community use. One of the jewels in your crown is the landmark set of "STandards for Reporting Interventions in Clinical Trials of Acupuncture (STRICTA)" that you named and lead-authored, which has led to major improvements in the quality of published research world-wide.

On a personal note, one of my fondest memories of our

research collaborations is based in our mutual enjoyment of trading British and American idioms. You will recall the time when we finally finished the last edits of our review of acupuncture research and I weighed in with the Hollywood film industry's line, "That's a wrap!"; you countered by introducing me to the more colorful UK phrase, "Done and dusted!".

So, here's to you, Hugh, for your eminent, multi-faceted career in service to expand acceptance of acupuncture as a healthcare option in the West... a career brilliantly 'done and dusted'.



**Richard Hammerschlag**  
Emeritus Dean of Research, Oregon College of Oriental Medicine, USA;  
Co-Director of Research and Innovation,  
Consciousness and Healing Initiative, USA



**"You are an amazing pioneer, trailblazing,  
Renaissance man for acupuncture research. It's  
hard to think of an area that you haven't made  
a major contribution to."**

**Richard Hammerschlag**  
Society for Acupuncture Research board member  
and founder of SAR

In this video, Richard names the huge range of acupuncture research that Hugh has contributed to, and celebrates the defence of acupuncture in the face of its detractors and sceptics; along with Hugh's warm friendship over the years, and his dry British humour.



[bit.ly/sar-rh](https://bit.ly/sar-rh)





Hugh has been a pioneer for acupuncture since the 1980s. I first became aware of him through some early publications with

his friend Richard Blackwell in the *Journal of Chinese Medicine* in the early 1990s. I didn't get to meet him until an informal meeting organised by Stephen Birch at the University of Exeter in the UK where a diverse group of international researchers and clinicians met to discuss the future developments and the need for rigorous research that was desperately needed for acupuncture. It was here that Hugh first floated the idea of STRICTA (which he joking called PRICTA – Procedures for Reporting In Controlled Trials of Acupuncture).

Hugh told me of his time studying in Australia and his familiarity with

the Aussie culture and the streets of the Eastern suburbs of Sydney, which resonated with me. Hugh was always enthusiastic, willing to listen to others and brought a touch of humour to any discussions or interactions I had with him.

Hugh has been instrumental in promoting rigour in acupuncture research and in my opinion has been the leader of acupuncture research outside Asia, pushing the boundaries and prompting authentic and innovative research strategies to address the unique aspects of acupuncture research. He has also published many important and pivotal research publications including the recent individual meta-analyses associated with pain and depression amongst the many over the last three decades. I also had the opportunity to contribute to one of his several edited books which showed his ability to engage with clinical aspects of acupuncture not just



iSAMS 2012: Hugh lunching with Terje Alraek and Alan Bensoussan.  
Photograph courtesy of Chris Zaslowski

the dry and academic aspects. I know Hugh liked cycling as well and he told me in the summer months how he cycled around the UK and Europe.

Hugh – while we are separated by thousands of miles of ocean now, I continue to value your friendship, your academic rigour and affable character. You are indeed a true English gentleman!

Your Aussie mate!

**Chris Zaslowski**  
Head of Chinese Medicine, University of  
Technology, Sydney, Australia



One of my favourite memories of Hugh is of the 2011 Rothenburg TCM Conference.

The weather was unusually fine and by the end of the Research/Science Day session, the temperature in the Grosses Villensaal beneath the roof of the Wildbad conference centre was high. The last item on our long agenda was a discussion between the invited speakers, and the by-now restless and slightly sweaty participants. I sensed the audience's flagging interest and looked over to Hugh for help. He then proceeded to remove his shoes and socks and leapt barefoot to the front of the room, rousing all of us and injecting incredible energy into the last half hour of the meeting.

I think this inspiring behaviour was typical for Hugh in any project he initiated!

I co-chaired many Science/Research Day sessions from 2009 to 2018 and I thank him for all the support and care he gave all of us in Rothenburg.

*Velia*

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**Velia Wortman**  
**Medical Director TCM Kongress**  
**Rothenburg, Co-Chair Science Day Session**  
**and TCM practitioner**



Dear Mr MacPherson,

I remember meeting you for the first time as a prospective student. Your knowledge and wisdom shone through your gentle and modest nature,

which was awe-inspiring. As I approach graduation I reflect that every single day I have felt proud and privileged to have been able to study at the Northern College of Acupuncture. I am extremely grateful that the college you founded has shaped and enhanced my whole life. Hopefully through my future practice I am able to enhance other lives too.

Many thanks to you.

**Jacqueline Shaw**  
NCA student, class of 2020



Irina with Hugh talking to a student at the 17th International Acupuncture Research Symposium, King's College, London, March 2015



Some 24 years ago, for my MSc, I planned to investigate how a therapist's sensory intent and feeling affected a clinical outcome and asked Hugh his opinion. He very kindly wrote back and said that it was an area of research that was much needed, and wished

me success. Regrettably, the rigid academic strictures at the time prevented this research but I was always grateful to Hugh, himself an academic, for his ability to see 'outside the box' and his humanity in encouraging a humble student in his research.

**Paul Underhill**  
Acupuncturist, Qi Gong practitioner  
and NCA alumnus

I would like to acknowledge Hugh's early input into my MSc thesis. Although he couldn't continue to supervise me due to other work-related commitments, the initial advice he provided me with ensured that I was on the right track and succeeded with my project.

Thank you, Hugh!

**Irina Szmelskyj**  
Acupuncturist, author and NCA alumna, class of 2012



Congratulations Hugh on a spectacular career.

A true visionary and pioneer in acupuncture and acupuncture research. The entire global TCM community have you to thank for the incredible achievements and progress you have passionately provided in your dedication to the profession of acupuncture during your life's work.

A gentleman, a scholar, a friend, a colleague and role model. Thank you!

*Mitchell*

**Mitchell Macgregor**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumnus, class of 2019



Dear Hugh

I'm so upset that I have never got to speak to you for years – especially as I was planning to attend ARRC this year.

I can only thank you from the bottom of my heart for all you have done for us in the acupuncture world.

I loved those early days of the Northern College of Acupuncture when we had the privilege of being taught by you personally. Thank you too for your kindness and concern as you took on yet another role – that of student pastoral care.

I don't know if you ever knew – but lunchtime in clinic meant some panic amongst us students about asking you a worthy question in the after-lunch session. I think we were slightly scared of not living up to your ambition for us. I also thank you for having that ambition for us.

I have followed your blog and was pleased to see you were beekeeping – something I have taken up recently. I can't stop trying to follow you, it seems.

Love from,

**Jo Wright**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna



Debbie with Amanda Preston,  
acupuncturists at the York Clinic

I've loved working alongside Hugh and the other therapists at York Clinic. Over the years I have seen many changes. More recently I've seen the clinic being redecorated and transformed. I felt honoured and valued to be included in the decision-making. I've got to know Hugh more recently and learnt that we share a love of windsurfing. His enthusiasm for life has always been clear.

The contribution he has made to the acupuncture world has been truly wonderful. Yet he remains humble.

Much love and respect for him.

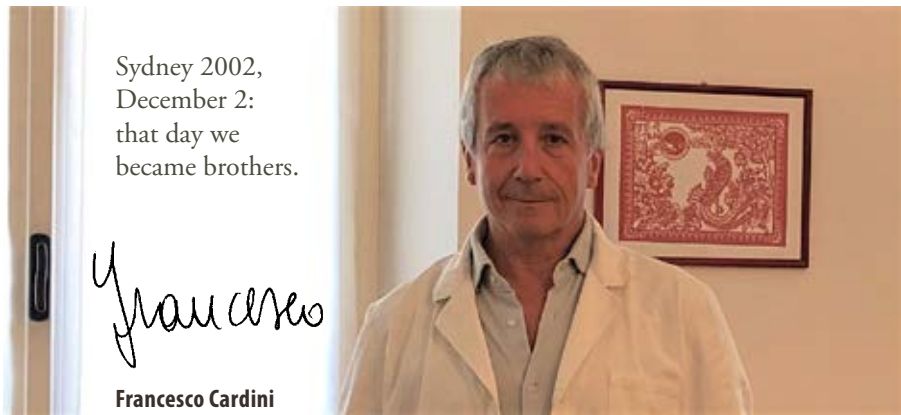
**Debbie Priestley**  
Acupuncturist and sports therapist  
at York Clinic for Integrated Healthcare



I have never met or seen Hugh McPherson but I know that name so well from my time as a student and now as a teacher. I have always been in awe of the work that he has done. I know he will be a great loss to the acupuncture profession and that his name will live on in the work he has done. The brightest stars shine for the benefit of others. Of course at this time my thoughts are with him, his family and close friends who I hope are able to share and cherish the time he has left.

*Clare*

**Clare Venters-Smith**  
Acupuncturist and teacher  
at the College of Integrated  
Chinese Medicine, UK



**Francesco Cardini**  
Acupuncturist and researcher, Verona, Italy

Hello, Hugh!

I wrote you a fan letter a year or so ago, after your presentation at the NIH session on acupuncture research, and here I am writing another.

Among all the people I've met who do acupuncture research since the 1990s, I feel as if I've resonated to your ideas and research most closely. It's just something you do – some way of envisioning – that corresponds with what needs to be done, and, I admit, the way I think, too. You have been forward-thinking, active, supporting the growth of acupuncture research in perceptive and pragmatic ways. I have always admired you!



I am in the midst of writing a book comparing six medical systems. One of them is East Asian Medicine, and your work in research will form a major part of that chapter. The book provides a neutral way to compare very different systems, and each chapter dedicated to a particular system is divided into two parts: the 'inside' view, and the 'outside' view. Acupuncturists will 'speak,' and so will researchers. Your research will shine in the section on the 'outside' view—how to do

effective research on a medicine that is so very different from biomedicine and the reductionistic clinical science it spawned.

Lucky for me, a year and a few months ago we got to have lunch together. You told me your time with us was short, so I have enjoyed your recent talks and publications with extra attention. I thank you here for your friendship, such as it was across so many miles and years, and for your creativity, and I congratulate you on your well-spent life. I know you are setting out upon a new adventure, and I wish you patience and peace and even joy as you travel on.

My great respect, and my warmest wishes,

*Claire*

**Claire Cassidy**  
Acupuncture clinician and researcher, Maryland, USA

# 英國中醫藥學會

The Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture UK (ATCM)

ATCM, Suite 1, The Brentano Suite, Solar House, 915 High Road, Finchley, London N12 8QJ

Tel: 0208 457 2560

Website: [www.atcm.co.uk](http://www.atcm.co.uk)

E-mail: [info@atcm.co.uk](mailto:info@atcm.co.uk)



Date: 04<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Dear Hugh,

You, as a Professor of Acupuncture Research, Department of Health Sciences, University of York, and the Clinical Director of York Clinic for Integrated Healthcare, have made great achievements in the world's acupuncture, research and education.

You founded the Northern College of Acupuncture, set up the Foundation for Research into Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and conducted clinical trials and studies to explore the use of acupuncture for a variety of conditions. You have been working hard to promote TCM and acupuncture! I, as a TCM practitioner and Acupuncturist, highly value and appreciate your contribution towards this profession indeed!

The Association of Traditional Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture, UK (ATCM) had our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019 in London. We were honoured to have you delivered a lecture 'The Growing Evidence Based on the Treatment of Chronic Pain with Acupuncture' to our members. You shared your expertise with us, and it was very informative and inspiring to our members.

On behalf of ATCM, I would like to send our sincere thanks to you.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Liqin ZHAO

ATCM President



I have known Hugh since at least the mid-1980s. We got to know each other better through the years and especially bonded when we worked together to edit a book titled *Acupuncture in Practice: Case History Insights From the West*. I never had a better collaborator than Hugh. Since that time, I've read almost all of his over 100 publications and had the pleasure of spending time together at conferences and meetings. He has laid the foundations for the authenticity of our profession in the West.

Hugh's contributions are staggering. His publications include foundational meta-analyses, landmark randomized controlled trials, important methodology papers, provocative theoretical papers, major policy papers, valuable cost-effective analyses, unique survey research, groundbreaking qualitative research, and innovative neuroscience work.

Ultimately, the most important way Hugh affected me was on a personal level. He always had a deep sense of modesty that made me pause and reflect. He always had kind words, insightful suggestions, and encouragement. He was always supportive. His scientific and strategy insights were always enfolded in a gentleness, unselfishness and graciousness. Hugh was an amazing combination of modesty and greatness. He inspired me.

Ted

**Ted Kaptchuk**  
Professor of Medicine,  
Harvard Medical School, USA





Dear Hugh, it was a real pleasure being able to work with you on the SCIM project and other collaborations. I always looked forward to our meetings and you were so supportive of my early career research.

*Ava*

**Ava Lorenc**  
**Researcher in complementary medicine,**  
**University of Bristol, UK**

Hugh has always been an inspiration to many, and a driving force in establishing acupuncture as a valid modality in the medical world, both in the UK and further afield. Without Hugh, Nick and Richard establishing the Northern College of Acupuncture I doubt that I would ever have studied acupuncture, so for that I will be eternally grateful and I am blessed to be part of a profession that I love.

I'm not sure what Hugh remembers of our cohort, other than perhaps an incident with a bell and sellotape..... I won't go into more detail, but hasten to add that I was not the culprit! I know who it was, but to divulge that information 24 years later – well, it just isn't going to happen.....

I was so pleased to see Hugh again at the NCA 30 year anniversary get-together in York in 2018. I know it probably took great effort on his part to be there and I'm glad I had the chance to exchange a few words.

Thank you Hugh for all you have done.

*Julie*

**Julie Devlin**  
**Acupuncturist and NCA alumna,**  
**class of 1996**

The Northern College of Acupuncture graduation ceremony, class of 1996.  
*Photograph courtesy of Julie Devlin*





# The York Clinic for



Alison Longridge



Anna Mackay



Avril Watson



Ben Elliot



Debbie Priestley  
and Amanda Preston

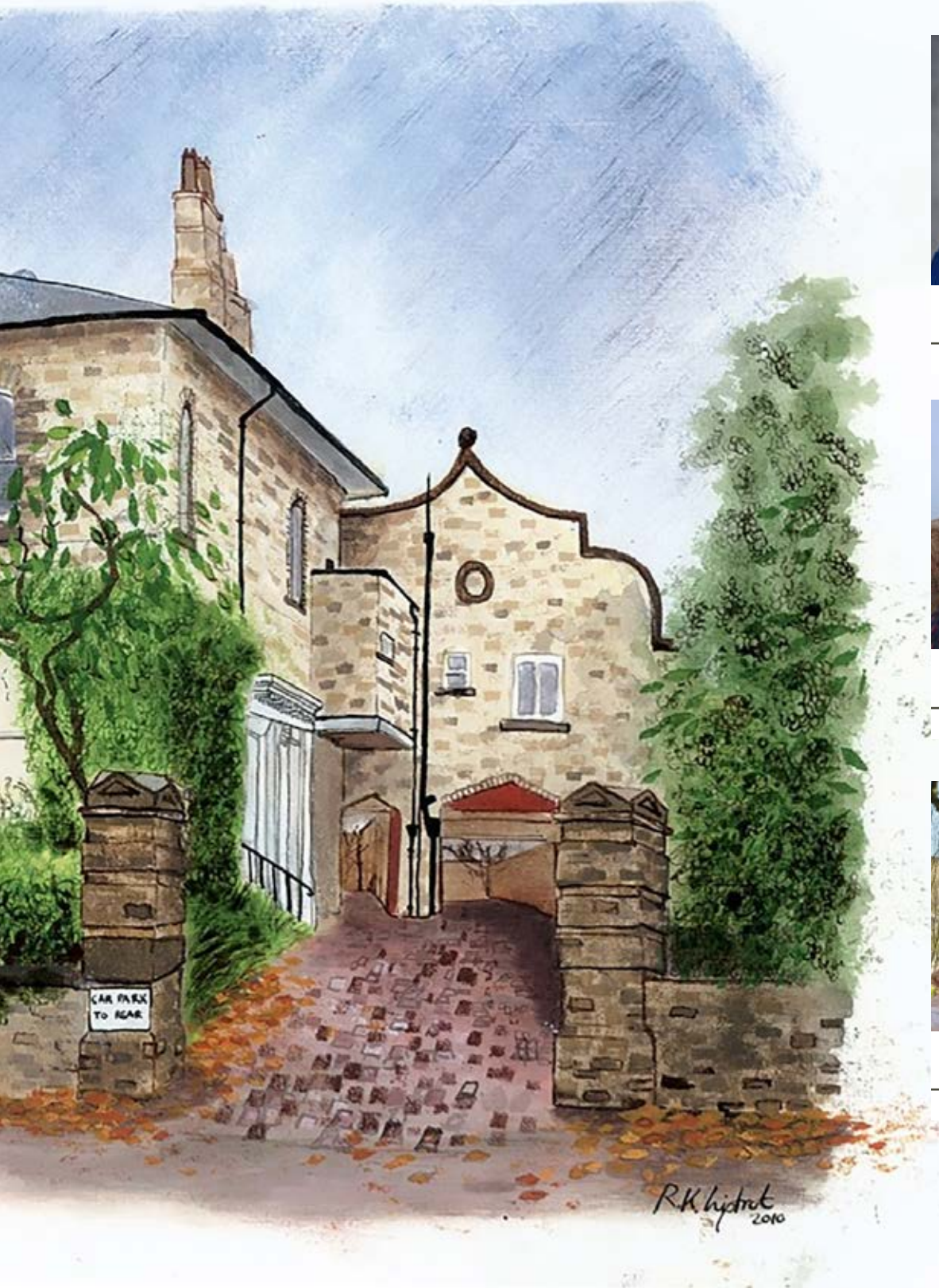


Diane Greenwell





# Integrated Healthcare



Keren Wheeler



Lorna Cordwell



Louise Coughlin



Michaela Scott



Shelagh Taggart



Terri Willmott



bit.ly/sar-jw



**“Your contributions in this Universe have been incredible, and I’m so pleased to have had the association we’ve had.”**

**John Weeks**

**Colleague and editor of the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine***

In this video, John talks of the pleasure of working with Hugh on the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* over the years, and “that” dinner in Vermont.



Dear Hugh,

I don’t remember when we first met. It might have been at a conference of the Society for Acupuncture Research. But I know that in 2015 you invited me to Rothenburg for the first time, to a congress that I had not heard of before. Now,

five years later, I have organized my second Science Day in Rothenburg and will continue to do so. I have found many new friends there and I am grateful that you introduced me to this place. We had a very nice conversation that first time in 2015 noticing that we have much in common. For some reason, I remember that one piece of advice you gave me about not starting a business together with my wife. I followed it and did not regret it.

Scientifically, you are a giant for me. A humble giant, I might add. I often reference your work in my lectures. But then, when I look through your publications, there is always a paper that I have not yet read. Oftentimes these are full-fledged papers about a topic that I have just begun to think about. It is truly amazing.

Before you leave, let me tell you that I have decided to quit my professorship at Hannover Medical School by the end of the year. I am in the process of founding my own research institute, the Insula Institute for Integrative Therapy Research, which will allow me to focus even more on the important topics and be less distracted by academia. Fortunately, I can take some of the money from the endowed professorship with me to get started. But I will also start to work clinically, something I have always dreamed of (if I pass my Heilpraktiker examination). So I will continue to follow in your footsteps, and do what needs be done in order to make acupuncture and related techniques accessible to everybody who needs them.

Thank you for everything. Have a nice trip!

**Florian Beißner**

**Professor, Hannover Medical School, Germany**





I am very pleased to have known Hugh, who, like me, had a training in Maths (and Physics in my case). I felt that because of the

similarity of our backgrounds we were very much on the same wavelength.

I got to know him when he took the *JCM* course from the 'Gang of Four', again when he came down to Brighton, and later when he invited me up to York. During the times I was there I got to know him better and to find out what a warm person there was inside.

I have always admired Hugh for his vision and tenacity in setting up the Northern College of Acupuncture, which remains, in my opinion, the best acupuncture school in the UK. That is really a remarkable achievement.

As though that were not enough, he took on a separate career in acupuncture research, doing some really pioneering research. I don't know what problems he faced, but he must have had quite a lot of resistance from the establishment. It is really remarkable work, and a huge contribution to the field.

**Julian Scott**  
Acupuncturist, author and teacher

If it hadn't been for Hugh setting up the Northern College of Acupuncture, I wouldn't be where I am now. I am grateful to him because I have been able to help so many people since 1991. God bless you Hugh, you are a wonderful human being.

Very best wishes,

**Shashi Champaneria**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 1991

Hugh, thank you for giving me the opportunity to grow and flourish as a practitioner at the York Clinic. I enjoyed an amazing 11 years working with you and the team. Love,

*Terri*

**Terri Willmott**  
Osteopath at York Clinic for  
Integrated Healthcare, 2007-2018



These photos remind me of the good old days of the life at Northern College of Acupuncture with Hugh. Without Hugh my life would have been very different.

Thank you,  
Hugh,

**Li Ping Han**  
Acupuncturist



Second International Symposium on Research in  
Acupuncture, Bologna, Italy, 2018.  
*Photograph courtesy of Carlo Giovanardi.*



Working in the field of Chinese medicine research, you soon realise how few of us there are and how quickly you become part of this academic family you never knew existed.

When I joined research, Hugh became one of those in my extended family. I will always think of him as an academic genius and as a hugely-respected visionary but more importantly I know him as somebody who approached his work and life in general with a sense of humour and with humility. He always made time for others and warmly welcomed junior researchers like myself, and it's because of this combination of attributes that Hugh will remain a constant source of inspiration to me and many others I know.

Thank you Hugh for all that you have done to support and nurture our community of practitioners and researchers.

*Lily*

**Lily Lai**  
Acupuncturist and Chinese Herbal Medicine  
practitioner and researcher



I was lucky enough to meet Hugh, even if it's only been a few years. A kind and modest person who has made a fundamental contribution to research in acupuncture. His work has contributed decisively to the acceptance of acupuncture by modern biomedicine.

All of us are grateful. We will miss you.

*Carlo Maria*

**Carlo Maria Giovanardi**  
President of the Italian Federation of  
Acupuncture Societies (FISA)





Hugh has been pivotal in the life of the College and in promoting acupuncture research and raising the profile of acupuncture as a treatment and as a profession. At College, I enjoyed his calm, patient teaching. His published material has been phenomenal as well as being accessible. He will be sadly missed!



**Judy Blair**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 2012

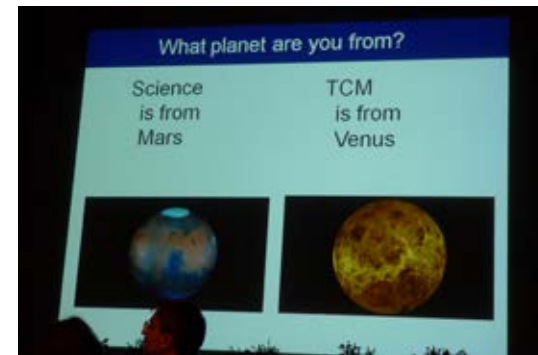


Hugh, thank you so much for the day you invited me to help with the honey. It was such a special experience and I'll never forget it!

All my thoughts are with you now – I know you're walking with courage toward whatever may come and that you'll find peace.

Much love,

**Shelagh Taggart**  
McTimoney chiropractic at York Clinic  
for Integrated Healthcare



Slide from the 'Mars  
and Venus' lecture  
at Rothenburg.  
Photograph courtesy of  
Velia Wortman



Hugh, to add my voice to many others, I just wanted to let you know how much I have valued your work and the brief interactions we have had. Your 'Mars and Venus' lecture at Rothenburg set the bar for interesting research lectures, one I am still trying to reach. Your work in creating *Acupuncture Research: Strategies for Establishing an Evidence Base* was such a gift for me, opening up so many possibilities when writing my PhD proposal, and today I remain grateful to be able to reference quality research from your other collaborations. There was also the personal encouragement and support – your kind interest in my PhD when we first met, the invites to lecture at Rothenburg, supporting the masters online programme here in NZ, and of course, the interesting conversations about bees!

We have a term here in NZ that I think of as appropriate to describe the regard that you are held for your contributions to our profession, as someone with 'Mana' – denoting a person with influence, status, dignity and deserving of respect.

With appreciation and respect,

**Debra Betts**  
Acupuncturist, author and researcher



I haven't met you many times but I found you very kind and generous when we did meet. You steered me in the right direction setting up in the therapy world and you always seemed genuinely interested in how I was doing. I will always thank you for that. I have learnt from colleagues how much of a superstar you are in the acupuncture world, which makes the fact that you always made time to support others even more meaningful. Thank you,

**Louise Coughlin**  
Psychologist at York Clinic



Much love and gratitude to you, Hugh, for your support and skilful guidance, enabling me to successfully complete a Master's degree, and, together with yourself and others, to make a small contribution to the vast world of research. Congratulations on all your achievements.

**Fraser Kirkwood Allan**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumnus, class of 2012;  
MSc Applied Health Research, York (2017)



**Above:** International Scientific Acupuncture and Meridian Symposium (iSAMS) conference, University of Technology, Sydney. L-R: Terje Alraek, Jon Adams, John McDonald, Beth Sommers, Hugh

**Above right:** Hugh lecturing at Harvard Medical School for the Society for Acupuncture Research in 2015

*Photographs courtesy of John McDonald*



I only had the pleasure of meeting Hugh MacPherson twice: once at the International Scientific Acupuncture and Meridian Symposium (iSAMS) conference at University of Technology, Sydney, in 2012; and again at Harvard Medical School in Boston at a Society for Acupuncture Research conference in 2015. I have great respect and admiration for the many contributions Hugh has made to the acupuncture profession and to acupuncture research, from his pioneering work in creating and updating the STRICTA criteria (which have clearly improved the quality of reporting of acupuncture trials), his critique of the NICE reviews and his promotion of network meta-analysis as a more clinically relevant tool to assess the place of acupuncture in clinical practice guidelines. The individual patient data meta-analyses in which Hugh was involved have also provided some of the most robust and impactful evidence we have to date to support the effectiveness, efficacy and safety of acupuncture.

As a first-time researcher, over a decade ago, Hugh was one of my research heroes, and I will be forever grateful for his leadership and inspiration in the acupuncture research community.

Thank you Prof Hugh MacPherson, from all of us.

**John McDonald**  
Acupuncturist, lecturer, researcher and author, Gold Coast, Australia



Hugh, your collaboration on our study Mechanisms in Orthodox and Complementary Alternative Medicine Management of Back Pain (MOCAM) has been hugely valuable, insightful, and constructively critical. You have helped us to formulate a novel and well-argued protocol, sharpening the rationale for our work and ensuring we captured the conceptual complexities around non-specific, incidental, and contextual characteristics of acupuncture. Your support on this project has helped us to complete the more mundane bits like data collection and the far more interesting bits like data interpretation, write-up, and all the conversations we have had along the way as a multidisciplinary group of applied health researchers.

Beyond our work on MOCAM, we've all benefitted from your powerful contributions at various acupuncture and CAM research conferences over the years. Your work has undoubtedly led the way in shifting the paradigm of acupuncture research to make it highly relevant to commissioners and practitioners.

You have contributed so much to underpinning the practice of acupuncture with evidence. Your work will continue to help clinicians and academics to work together, question practice and drive changes for patients' benefit. We feel immensely privileged to have the pleasure of working with you.

**Flis Bishop**  
**Kat Bradbury**  
**Lisa Roberts**  
**Miznah Al-Abbadey**  
**Dawn Carnes**

**For the MOCAM study**  
**University of Southampton, UK**

I have only 'met' Hugh once and that was on a grey January afternoon, earlier this year, when he very graciously agreed to have a Skype chat with me about my possible application to York University for doctoral studies. I felt immensely privileged that a man of Hugh's academic and professional standing would even bother to take the time to discuss my proposal! But not only did he listen to me ramble on about the merits of Therapeutic Sound for addressing mental health issues, he seemed genuinely interested in my work and encouraged me to apply to York, even offering to assist in the drafting of my application.

This seemed to me an incredible act of generosity and I remember feeling so humbled, yet delighted, that somebody in such an esteemed position would take my work seriously.

Thank you Hugh – that one conversation gave me the impetus I needed to take this work forward.



**Jane Ford**  
**Singing teacher, choral director, sound therapist,**  
**training provider, and Chair of IPST**  
**(Institute of Professional Sound Therapists)**



# "A seed can grow a forest!"



Dearest Hugh,

You've been a star shining bright in the world of acupuncture for such a long time. Your impact and talents have borne fruit in so many areas, as an educator, political strategist and for what you're best known for, as a researcher. Not just content to be the co-founder and first Principal of the Northern College of Acupuncture you steered the college to being the first British Acupuncture Accreditation Board accredited teaching institution in 1993; as a member of the strategy group of the British Acupuncture Council, you were part of the team which gave evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Complementary and Alternative Medicine in 2000; you were instrumental in founding the Acupuncture Research Resource Centre in York, before it became part of the BAAC; you sat on the Executive Committee of the BAAC for many years and put yourself forward to be the next chair after I stepped down, before a large research grant pulled you in the direction which would combine your twin passions for mathematics and acupuncture.

I hope you know how loved and respected you are by an international community of fellow travellers for the superb quality of your research which has helped provide the credibility our profession needs and which you have shown we deserve. We all owe you such a debt, Hugh, as your efforts and vision have rubbed off on all of us. You made research accessible to many practitioners who were just a little bit scared to go down that road but then felt empowered to embark on a similar journey.

I have also valued our friendship from that first trip to Nanjing we shared in 1986... lovely memories, your quiet but powerful presence, Christmas dinner at the Jinling Hotel, going up to York to tell your students they didn't need to be interviewed any more by the RTCM, chatting in the Reichstadthalle bar about your allotment...

And your unique laugh, I can hear it now...

Wishing you much love,

**Jasmine Uddin**  
Acupuncturist, President Emeritus of the BAAC, Vice-Chair of the  
BAAB, Editor of EJOM and Head of Education ETCMA

Nanjing, 26 December 1986

How can I use words to capture such an expansive person?  
Thank you Hugh for giving so generously of yourself  
to others. An inspirational teacher with the ability to  
draw down the wisdom of the ancients. A well-spring of



intellectual thought, and years ahead  
of your time, you had the capacity  
and will to carve a pathway through  
the desert of acupuncture research  
and enquiry in the UK.

And look at the growth that  
followed. The formation of the  
British Acupuncture Council, the  
British Acupuncture Accreditation  
Board and the Acupuncture Research

Resource Centre. The professionalisation of our profession.  
An awakening to complementary therapies in the wider  
world, culminating in the House of Lords report in 2000;  
a time of great hope for new perspectives in health and  
healing.

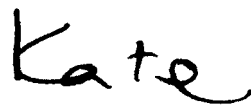
Attitudes to acupuncture were gradually changing within  
the NHS too, documented in a succession of British  
Medical Association reports from 1986 to 2000, progressing  
from the marginalisation of acupuncture as quackery to its  
acceptance as a valid model of healthcare.

But there were many rivers to cross in bringing together the  
powerful paradigms of holistic and reductionist healthcare.  
You appeared to adopt a strategy of unification through  
dialogue, embarking on joint research projects and building  
STRICTA bridges.

You were generous with your time, your encouragement  
of others, your help, guidance and the information you  
shared. I was certainly a recipient. You kindly gave me a  
copy of a tender you submitted for a multidisciplinary  
NHS musculoskeletal service. This became a platform from  
which I launched a holistic healthcare project of my own,  
which went on to attract £100,000 of Public Health, NHS,  
European and third sector funding. So thank you Hugh.

These are but a few fragments of the whole which is you.  
When words run out, the eternal Tao says it all.

With every good wish,



**Kate Anderson**  
Acupuncturist and teacher, Merseyside, UK



I remember my first meeting which was my  
interview with Hugh and Nick. I was so  
nervous.

Hugh was sitting in a rocking chair. As  
he got up to greet me he nearly fell over  
backwards, Nick laughed and so did he.

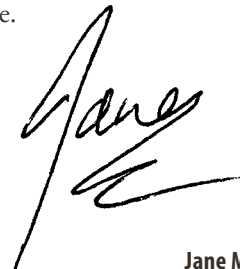
I was immediately put at ease.

As I was just a new mum he was keen  
to know that I would want to practise  
acupuncture, not just do the training.

Well, I can confirm I was the second intake  
at Northern College of Acupuncture, had my  
certification given on 30th May 1992 and  
have been practising ever since.

Moreover I am still passionate about it and  
love helping people.

Thank you Hugh,



**Jane Mills**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 1992



I applied for the Acupuncture Research Resource Centre (ARRC) job in 1998 and was interviewed in Exeter. Hugh was on the panel – I didn't know him before then. Afterwards he came over and offered his ongoing support.

I was quite touched, as he seemed to be a knowledgeable and important person in the field, and it was a warm and personal commitment. He was as good as his word, over the next 22 years. He's never let me down when I've needed advice/ideas/support.

Through thick and thin he's stuck to his principles, to do the right research for traditionally based acupuncture, and back it academically, politically and with the practitioners. It was his vision that saw ARRC established, to provide an interface between practice and research. He would always say 'yes' if asked to speak at the Symposium, and loved to stop afterwards for a glass of wine and a chat with anyone.

The affability is allied with enormous determination: he forged a new path and got the job done. Whatever you think of our status now it has been utterly transformed by Hugh's work (and a few others). For British Acupuncture Council acupuncturists he is the research Master who also talks their language.

Mark

**Mark Bovey**

**Acupuncturist and Research Manager, British Acupuncture Council**



Meeting in York, 2006, to develop the book *Acupuncture Research: Strategies for Establishing an Evidence Base*. Photograph courtesy of Mark Bovey



Hugh MacPherson – my employer for the past almost twenty years, but also someone I am happy and proud to call my friend. It is a rare thing to find one so academically

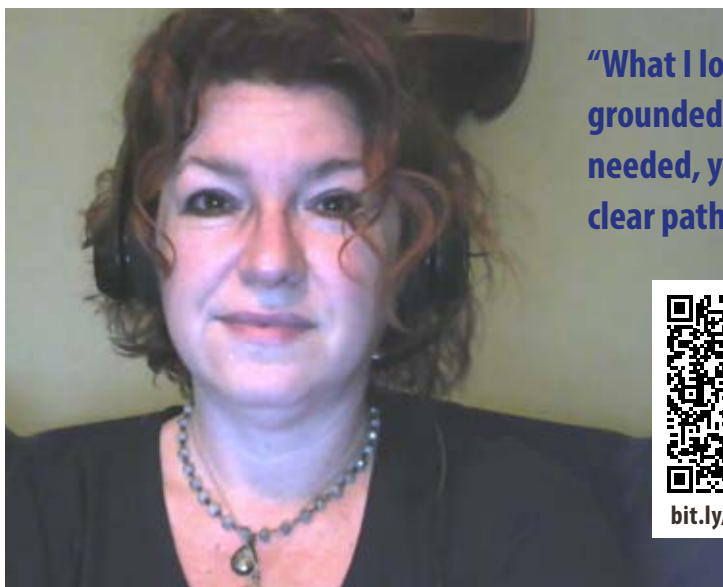
gifted but at the same time so tolerant of, and patient with, those of us who are not similarly blessed. He understands and puts up with my dislike and mistrust of all things "techie", standing looking over my shoulder at the computer screen for a while, and then saying it might be better if he went away. Usually, it isn't! His patients, from the great and the good to the man/woman in the street, he treats them all with the same care, concern, attention to their concerns and problems. For therapists working at the Clinic, he listens to any concerns and acts to allay them when he can. And for newly qualified therapists, whatever their field, he will do everything he can to help them build their practice.

But for me, the most important thing is his fairness – he treats everyone fairly and makes everyone feel that they matter, and his presence in the Clinic will be sorely missed.

Diane

**Diane Greenwell**

**Receptionist at the York Clinic for Integrated Healthcare**



**"What I love about you is your kindness, your groundedness, your willingness to step in when it's needed, your ability to lead others in a quiet way along a clear path, your thoughtfulness and your good energy."**



bit.ly/sar-lt

*Laura*

**Laura Triplett**  
Executive Director, Society for Acupuncture Research



Hugh, I am so sorry to hear that you will no longer be playing an active role in acupuncture at the Northern College of Acupuncture and in the wider world. You have been a driving force in getting acupuncture out there and recognised.

I always found your lectures fascinating and your clinic teaching inspiring if a little terrifying as you were a total perfectionist. Taking a case history on your clinical teaching days could be daunting but it made us "pull our socks up."

At my initial interview you were so encouraging and helpful – and thank you for not mentioning that I spelt acupuncture wrong on my application form! That was such a long time ago but I've been an acupuncturist and herbalist ever since, so thank you for the opportunity.

*Lynda*

**Lynda Sharp**  
Acupuncturist, Chinese Herbal Medicine practitioner  
and NCA alumna, class of 1994



Hugh MacPherson, you are one of the nicest, most thoughtful human beings I have ever had the pleasure to meet. A truly inspirational and highly intelligent

person with an unassuming nature. You gave great support and encouragement to my son Tom on your trip to Norway, something I will be eternally grateful for.

Our encounters have been too few and too fleeting, but knowing you has enriched me beyond words.

I shall miss seeing you around the College.

**David Laverick**  
Northern College of Acupuncture  
IT Manager



[bit.ly/pain-acu](https://bit.ly/pain-acu)



Dear Professor MacPherson

I've been reflecting on your work at the University of York, and your achievements here. In my mind, you stand out particularly for your open-mindedness. As a complementary medicine practitioner, you were never reluctant to use real scientific methods, and

a rigorous approach, to find out 'what works'. This is a marked contrast to others, not only in complementary medicine but in many areas of health services research (not least health policy, where I've wallowed about for the last 30 years!). You have done real RCTs, with various controls, and even fundamental science and neuroimaging, to test the effects of acupuncture and other approaches. You have engaged sceptics and convinced them (us...) to be open-minded to the therapies too.

On a personal note, just now I remember two things about our time together particularly. One is your company on a nice walk over Redmire Hill in Swaledale with the policy research group a couple of years ago. And the other is being in the next-door office when you were doing the MRI scanning project, televised on BBC2. I blame you entirely for worrying out loud on national television whether silver toenail polish was safe in an MRI scanner – my academic credibility up in smoke there, I think!

Thinking of you at this time.

**Karen Bloor**  
Professor of Health Economics and Policy,  
University of York, UK

Hi Hugh,

I'm really sorry to hear about your cancer returning, and just wanted to write a message. You have been, and remain to this day, an inspiration to myself and countless others within the fields of acupuncture and complementary therapy research. I recall starting my qualitative PhD in acupuncture and rheumatoid arthritis way back in 2002, when at the time of starting there were only two published qualitative studies exploring patients' experiences

of receiving acupuncture; one of them was your study with Alison Gould.



Since then, I have watched in awe as you have moved the field of acupuncture research forward. Your work with the Acupuncture Trialists' Collaboration has provided the greatest evidence of acupuncture's effectiveness in treating

chronic pain; while your work developing the STRICTA guidelines has improved the quality and reporting of clinical trials within the field. I had the pleasure of working with you on the feasibility trial of acupuncture in cancer patients undergoing radiotherapy treatment, and it was a privilege to work with you.

Thank you Hugh, for everything you have done for me, as well as the UK and world research fields in acupuncture and complementary therapy. You will be in my thoughts, and I wish you well in these difficult times.

Take care,

**John Hughes**  
Director of Research, Royal London Hospital for Integrated  
Medicine; Associate Professor, University of West London,  
and Co-Chair, Research Council for Complementary Medicine





[bit.ly/sar-cw](https://bit.ly/sar-cw)

**“I love you as a sparring partner when we talk research methodology.”**

In this video, Claudia thanks Hugh for all the dedication and motivation he has put into acupuncture research, and remembers her memory of visiting York and being shown Hugh’s garden with the passion he put into it.

**Claudia Witt**

**Society for Acupuncture Research board member  
at University of Zurich, Switzerland**



Dear Hugh,

I remember when we first met at my interview to start the acupuncture course at the Northern College of Acupuncture. Then continuing our relationship during

the start of the MSc course and my supervisory role and during the Chinese Herbal Medicine course.

Throughout all this time I have been very inspired by your great work in setting up the college and the contributions you have made to Chinese Medicine against all the adversity that exists. You have influenced my life by opening a door that led from delusion to enlightenment. Thank you.

**Stan Switala**

**Naturopathic physician, acupuncturist and  
Chinese herbal medicine practitioner;  
NCA alumnus, class of 1993**

Hugh, I just wanted to thank you for all the amazing things we did together. It was super-exciting how the both of us transformed from academics into TV stars for the BBC acupuncture programmes. “You’re the one that was on TV,” said one lovely lady when I was shopping in my local Sainsburys – who then proceeded to tell the security guard and everyone else! Life-changing, that was.

The TV filming was just so much fun to do with you, Hugh. We became a duo. Just like Bodie and Doyle (it was fabulous how the BBC included the theme tune from The Professionals when they introduced us – they made us look so good, Hugh!), Starsky and Hutch (can I be Starsky?), Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson (you can be Sherlock) and Batman and Robin (I want to be the Batman but really it has to be you).

That is all the duos I can think of immediately except the most endearing one to me personally which is MacPherson and Asghar. Your substantial contribution to the academic advancement of acupuncture research is remarkable, extraordinary and exceptional. I will always hold deeply in my mind your energy, kindness and friendship.

Can you think of any more duos, Hugh? Energised suddenly into my mind is Captain Kirk and Spock but there must be more....

**Aziz Asghar**

**Senior Lecturer in Neuroscience, Hull York Medical School, UK**



[bit.ly/aziz-hugh-tv](https://bit.ly/aziz-hugh-tv)



I first came across Hugh when I was invited to teach on obstetric acupuncture in the early 1990s, when the Northern College of Acupuncture was in a very different location. We then met many

times over the years: at the prestigious working group meeting which met in Exeter to create the important STRICTA guidelines (a minor administrative role being played by me) and then especially at many Acupuncture Research Resource Centre symposia, when I was Mark Bovey's assistant. The big one for me was when Hugh invited me to be a speaker in Rothenburg on the Science Day. WOW! Hugh, generous as ever, opened the door, for me to attend. I am sure that experience played its part in me being invited to present on two further Rothenburg Science Days. Thank you, Hugh.



Many other meetings spring to mind, many shared meals and laughter.

Having introduced TCM Acupuncture into an NHS maternity unit in the 1980s, with all the challenges that involved, I soon realised the importance of good quality, meaningful research to our profession. The research work that Hugh became so well known for was crucial in its ability to convey credibility for our work. What this man has done for our profession is beyond any words I can convey. A thousand thank yous, Hugh.

I wish Hugh peace and a soft path.

I wish his family the same, and my thoughts are with everyone that knows and loves Hugh.

With love from

*Sarah*

**Sarah Budd**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 2018

Rothenburg Research Day 2013. L-R: Velia Wortman,  
Sarah Budd, Terje Alraek, Arya Nielsen, Hugh.  
*Photograph courtesy of Arya Nielsen*



In addition to Hugh's outstanding contributions to medicine, anyone who has had the blessing to interact with Hugh has experienced his support and grace.

I first met Hugh when the College invited me to teach on Gua sha in 1996 just after my first book was published. I had never been to York and found it amazing. In subsequent years Hugh invited or facilitated an invitation to conferences and events. Our global network facilitates us to be in touch between research conferences where we could connect in person.

Hugh, thank you for your support of my research and work, and for me personally. You are kind, even, professional, spirited... and British... expressing enthusiasm in very measured but then all the more meaningful ways. Somehow that does not prevent me from saying whole heartedly and with deep respect and love: you have made my life better, you have made the world better and supported the rest of us to do the same. It may be your Highness for the Crown; we honor your Hugh-ness.

Love,

*Arya*

**Arya Nielsen**  
Researcher, author, teacher and Board certified  
acupuncturist, New York, USA







It's hard to know where to start. There are so, so many things I think of, when I think of Hugh. We met because I was staying a few doors down from him in York and spotted the beehives he keeps behind his house. We struck up a conversation

about 'barefoot beekeeping', which turned into a longer conversation about honey, allotments, bicycles, acupuncture and the research he was doing at the University of York, which turned into a much, much longer conversation and friendship that has lasted over 10 years now.

Hugh was one of the main inspirations for me choosing to study acupuncture: my overly rational/pragmatic brain needed 'evidence' and he duly provided it! Hugh, his wife Sara, and their dogs, have hosted me hundreds of times whenever I've needed a place to stay in York. They have been like a second family. Hugh's Zen-presence – his grounded and calm energy – co-habits with his boundless energy for two things in particular: research projects on acupuncture and other complementary therapies, and digging on his allotment!

Thank you so much Hugh for everything you have done for the world of acupuncture, and for me.

*Ian*

**Ian Fitzpatrick**  
Acupuncturist, researcher and NCA alumnus, class of 2015

**Keywords:** bees, honey, acupuncture, York, Lismore, whisky, windsurfing, evidence-base, research, salmon-on-oatcakes, allotment, competitive-digging, loganberries, conferences professor, clinic, integrated-healthcare, NCA, cycling, fixing-bikes, Scotland, humility, Zen-presence, generosity.



Picture courtesy of Shona MacPherson





Hugh and I met not long after I started working at the Northern College of Acupuncture as the marketing manager in 2007. Hugh is a member of the Board of Directors and more specifically the Marketing and Recruitment strategy group, and we have worked together for the benefit of the NCA ever since. Hugh regularly contributes to our acupuncture introductory events and brings a significant amount of kudos with his presentation about the research for acupuncture – much of which is his own work.

When I introduce Hugh to our attendees, I say this: “We are honoured and privileged to



[bit.ly/denise-hugh](https://bit.ly/denise-hugh)

have with us today Professor Hugh MacPherson. Hugh is not only a co-founder of the Northern College of Acupuncture, but one of the world’s most prestigious acupuncture researchers. If you choose to become an acupuncture practitioner your career will be directly influenced and enhanced by Hugh’s pioneering work into the evidence for acupuncture.”

Hugh, this is a message to you – it is I who have been honoured and privileged to work with you! Thank you so much for all the support and help you have given me over the years in both my role as marketing manager and personally. You truly are one of our acupuncture pioneers and the acupuncture profession in the West has benefited hugely from your work and dedication.

Hugh, the profession will miss you for your research work – the College will miss you for your experience and dedication – but I will miss you as a friend and mentor. Thank you, Hugh.

**Denise Magson**  
**NCA Marketing Manager**

Hugh presenting at an NCA Open Day



It's amazing the effect a few words from the right person at the right time can have on someone's life. Hugh was one of those people at a point in my life. I was in the process of deciding to study acupuncture and went along to the Northern College of Acupuncture open day where Hugh was presenting that day.



I was taken by the fact that this man of logic and mathematics had found beauty and fulfilment in the way Chinese Medicine put information together about a person's life and symptoms to help them. I had difficulty making that leap but he encouraged me to trust my judgement and own experience in making my decision. I committed to the course and have been grateful of those words ever since.

I often think how those few words have had a ripple effect on those patients who have gone on to have babies, of those threatened miscarriages that have been averted by treatment and people in pain that gained relief; all those lives influenced as a result of those few clear, wise words. Hugh had a big influence on my life and inspired me with his work in research. Many thanks for what you have done in your life, Hugh.

*Jonathan*

**Jonathan Hill**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumnus, class of 2001





[bit.ly/lara-hugh](https://bit.ly/lara-hugh)

“Karl von Frisch mused that the collaborative work he had done with colleagues and students had made them his friends; a process he called “one of the most beautiful fruits of scientific work”. I hope you know, Hugh, that you’ve inspired thousands of us to care about research, to delve into research and in some cases even to do some. That’s a gift that you’ve given.”



**Lara McClure**  
Acupuncture Course Director,  
Northern College  
of Acupuncture







Hugh, you have been a good friend and a colleague for many decades now. I want to thank you for believing in me and seeing potential in me when I was still green behind the ears, and for your continuing support and encouragement over the years.

You invited me to teach at the brand new Northern College of Acupuncture in 1989, and later to move up to York to become involved as Academic Dean. This was a wonderful opportunity and I particularly remember the kindness you and Sara showed me when I first arrived, taking time to show me the best places to live, and giving me nice food and good company. We went on to share many experiences and long conversations about the evolution of the College, the development of the profession, research, and the political challenges of establishing acupuncture as a valued medicine in the UK.

I have learnt so much from you. I particularly value your ability to hold your ground while carefully listening to other views, your way of working with groups to draw out balanced contributions from everyone in the room, the way you work hard to see the best in every person you encounter, and your ability to stay focussed on the big picture. Through the College, your research work and teaching, and your clinical work with patients, you have enriched the lives of many and created a lasting legacy. It has been a real privilege to be a small part of that.

**Richard Blackwell**  
Principal, Northern College of Acupuncture



Dear Hugh

Like so many other people, I am truly saddened and shocked to hear that you are so unwell.

I remember when I first came to 124 Acomb Road for an interview for the post of Administrator and Clinic Receptionist. It was a lovely summer's

day, the front door was open and when I came in you were dressed in 'work-men's' clothes and had a paint brush in your hand. I said 'I'm early' and you said 'Well I'm here' – it was the easiest interview I've ever had!! I have many fond memories of my years at the Northern College of Acupuncture, particularly those early months when the College was in its infancy and everything was new and exciting. It was a unique and special time, and I'm very happy to have been a part of it. I have never worked anywhere else where I could walk around bare-foot and sing so spontaneously – and I was able to do that because of the ethos you created.

You have achieved so much in your life-time – more than most people would manage in several – and you have left so many wonderful legacies. For most people, the College is probably your biggest and most important legacy, but for me it is something much more deep and personal. If you had not asked Richard to become Deputy all those years ago we would never have become a couple, and more importantly we would never have had Joshua. Your legacy to me is my beautiful son, and there really are no words to describe my gratitude for that.

So thanks for everything, Hugh. I'm glad our paths crossed, and I hope you realise how much you are respected and admired by so many people.

With much love,

**Tracey Homer**  
Former NCA administrator

**“You have been an essential part of the Society for Acupuncture Research family, a mentor to me, and an amazing inspiration to the field and to acupuncture researchers everywhere.”**

In this video, Rosa celebrates working with Hugh as co-writer, co-researcher, co-board member and friend.



**Rosa Schnyer**  
Society for Acupuncture Research board member  
at University of Texas, USA



[bit.ly/sar-rs](https://bit.ly/sar-rs)



Dear Hugh

In December 2010, we invited you to give a lecture at the ASA TCM Congress in Switzerland. You were reluctant to come – so we added the incentive of some skiing after the congress in Laax, in our holiday home. You happily agreed to come!

At the congress, you gave a stellar presentation on your research. Listening to you talking about research was so much fun. Research was no longer boring and tedious. You presented it with so much pleasure that it became alive and clinically meaningful. We were fortunate again to hear other presentations you gave, for example at the University of Zurich or at the TCM Congress in Rothenburg: it was always so joyful and informative to listen to you! You have a great gift of making research accessible for non-researchers.

The skiing weekend that followed the ASA-congress in Solothurn was a one-of-a-kind event that we will never forget. Besides discovering your advanced skiing skills, we had the time and pleasure to go beyond research and Chinese medicine and meet the wonderfully kind-hearted, happy and curious Hugh. Even though this was only a two-day event and lies many years back, it is what we remember most when we think about you. It was a brief blink but of great significance.

We both thank you for this!



**Simon Becker and Anita Meyer**  
Co-Presidents of ASA TCM-Kongress, Switzerland

It has been a pleasure and privilege to work with you. You had a wonderful team in the Complementary Therapy Research Group and I enjoyed being part of it. I learnt a lot from you and will always be grateful for your advice on my Masters dissertation which put me on track for an excellent result. Thank you.

**Helen Tilbrook**  
Postgraduate Research Administrator,  
University of York, UK





Photograph courtesy of the British Acupuncture Council / Acu

There are many intelligent people in the world, and a fair number of kind ones, but I have never met anybody whose intelligence is so thoroughly and effectively deployed in service of kindness. Practice, teaching, research, and leadership in the research field seem like tiers of ever-increasing leverage Hugh has found, for the purpose of helping others to alleviate suffering.

At my first Society for Acupuncture Research meeting, perhaps 15 years ago, the very first workshop was Hugh instructing a packed conference room of researchers on the use of the STRICTA checklist. If you do an acupuncture study and the treatment is crap, I remember him saying, then all you've proved is that crap acupuncture doesn't work. It seems extraordinary that elucidating this simple principle represented such an enormous methodological advance – but indeed it did.

Years later, Hugh was the external examiner for my PhD thesis. I can remember him asking careful questions about one of the statistical calculations I'd made, listening attentively and nodding with each answer, so that I felt quite well understood and reassured. With the gentlest of looks he then explained how I'd missed the boat entirely and needed to redo the section from scratch – but he said it all so thoughtfully that it seemed all right somehow.

Then recently, perhaps six weeks ago, I asked for some methodology advice. In one Zoom call he heard the full scope of the issue, connected it to challenges identified as early as the 1990s, and created the opportunity for an immediate, collaborative way forward. He also said that he had closed his practice in the pandemic and that, not treating patients for the first time in 35 years, he felt a piece of himself missing. I couldn't help thinking that there are enough pieces of Hugh to fill more than one ordinary human being, and how many of us have benefited from the abundance.



**Claudia Citkovitz**  
Research Assistant Professor,  
New York University Medical School, USA





Dear Hugh

You have been one of the leading lights in acupuncture in the UK and beyond for many years, not least in research. We were much in touch some fifteen years ago when I was external examiner at the Northern College of Acupuncture and Chair of the Research Council for Complementary Medicine. I recall that you received one of the first Research Fellowship awards that Professor Stephen Holgate and I had negotiated with the Department of Health in the wake of the House of Lords Select Committee report on CAM. After your path finding work building on that experience, it was very good to meet up with you again at the Houses of Parliament a few months ago after all these years – this time in my new role as Chair of the British Acupuncture Accreditation Board. As a result of your research and that of other leading figures in the field, I am confident that acupuncture will soon gain an even firmer foothold in healthcare in this country.

All my very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike" with a stylized flourish underneath.

**Mike Saks**  
Emeritus Professor, University of Suffolk and Chair, BAAB



Mike with NCA Acupuncture Course Director Lara McClure and Hugh at the  
British Acupuncture Council breakfast briefing

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Dear Professor MacPherson,

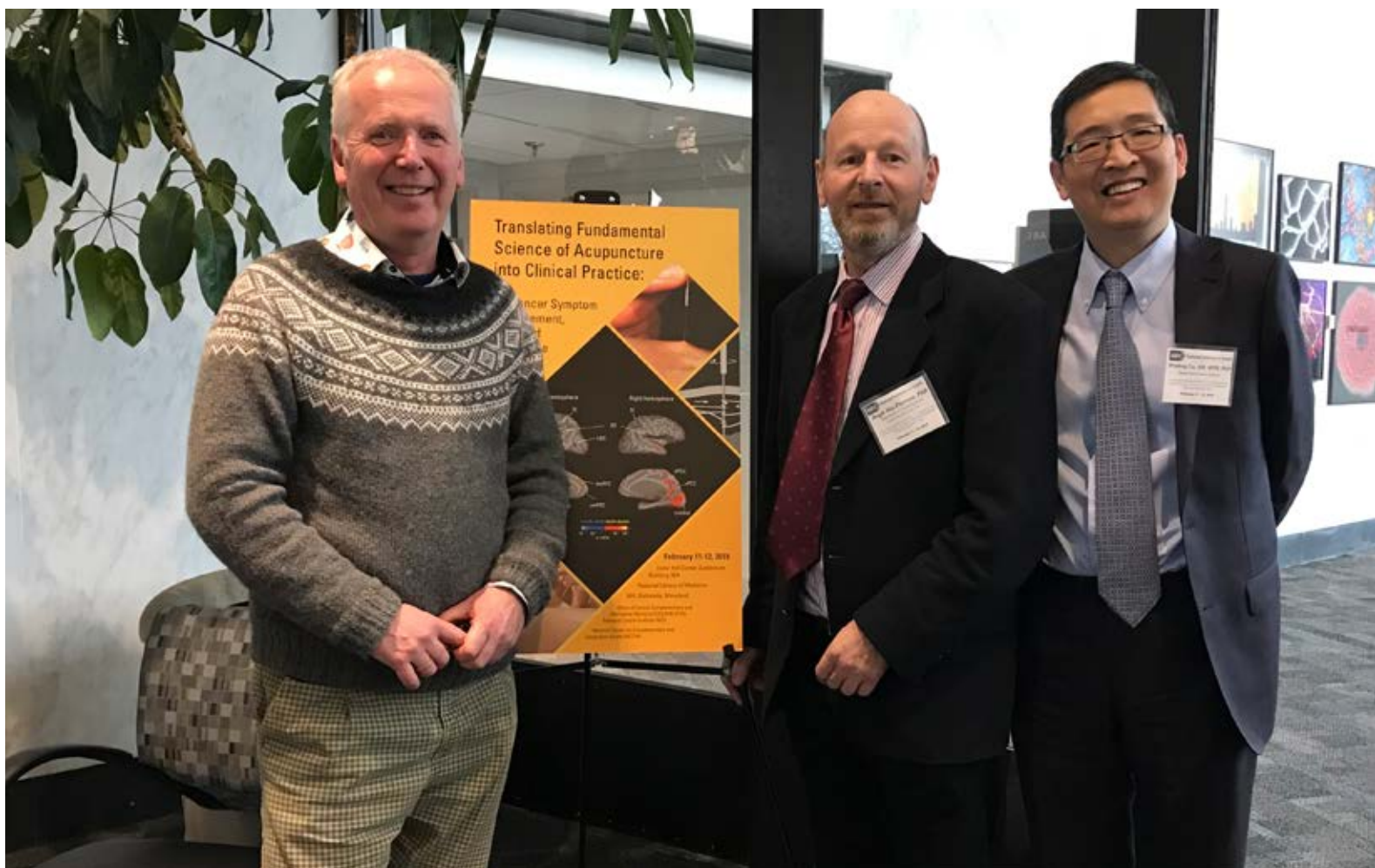
I was sorry to hear about your health situation. I hope all goes well and you can look forward to going home with peace and calmness.

Professor, I am fortunate to know you in person and know you as an acupuncture researcher. Your work in acupuncture has really driven acupuncture into mainstream medicine. Without you, we would still be in the dark! I have long admired your work. Every time I hear your talks at various scientific conferences, your speech and your data opened our eyes and minds each time. I wish I had another opportunity to hear you talk.

As a person, your kind and gentle nature always make me feel extremely comfortable when we were together, whether it was a discussion, or it was a casual dinner. I remembered that we had a dinner together in Washington, DC. It was a nice moment with you. You have made a significant mark in the history of acupuncture research. Now it is time for us to take over your torch to go on.

**Weidong Lu**  
**Lead Oncology Acupuncturist, Dana-Farber**  
**Cancer Institute, Harvard Medical School, USA**

Terje Alraek, Hugh and  
Weidong Lu at the National  
Institute of Health





Dear Hugh,

Thank you for everything that you have contributed to the acupuncture profession as a whole and for your years of hard work and dedication to Chinese Medicine. Your vision, passion and boundless energy has been truly inspiring and has made a real difference to the lives of so many students and patients. You will always be remembered for your many accomplishments.

Personally, I am so grateful for the richness and fullness of the experience of being a student at the Northern College of Acupuncture, and for the clarity and depth of knowledge that you imparted as a teacher, and as a mentor when I was fresh out of the NCA nest!

It's not possible to say goodbye as you will always be in my heart and memory.

With love and gratitude,

Nicky

**Nicky Thomas**  
**Acupuncturist, Qi gong teacher,**  
**NCA clinic supervisor and**  
**NCA alumna, class of 1999**



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Hugh delivering a presentation at the NCA Research Conference, 2019





Well Hugh,  
where to begin?  
You have  
been such a  
huge force in  
the acupuncture world. No-one has moved  
research forward as you have. No-one has  
done so much to legitimise acupuncture in  
the UK.

But my recollections are more personal. 27  
years ago I started training in our little family  
in Acomb Road. One of our first lectures was  
given by you and was so inspiring, as were  
many later. You confirmed for me that I was  
on the right path.

I remember our “negotiations” when I was  
student liaison. You never let me get away  
with much, as I remember! Some years later I  
remember your coercion to get me to teach,  
and I have been very grateful for that ever  
since. We had interesting discussions setting  
up the Ethics course. I have had the feeling  
that you were always there, always a constant  
over the years.

Whenever I think of you, your smile, your  
encouragement, and your optimism form the  
immediate image.

You will be much missed, Hugh. I hope you  
realise the enormous amount you have given  
to so many people over the years. We owe  
you a very great debt of gratitude.

With love and thanks from

**Hilary Coles**  
Acupuncturist, NCA alumna and former NCA tutor  
and clinic supervisor



Dear Hugh,

I'm so grateful for the vision and energy  
you and Nick had in setting up the  
Northern College of Acupuncture, which  
enabled me personally, as well as so many  
others, to realise a different calling in life.  
I also remember with great fondness the  
early days in practice, working in your

beautiful clinic, which  
was a fantastic stepping  
stone into practice  
that you have enabled  
so many fledgling  
practitioners to take over  
the years.

As teacher, supporter,  
researcher, part of the  
bedrock of the college and simply a great  
human presence, you have such a special  
place in the heart.

Sending you much love,

**Eileen Gibbon**  
Acupuncturist, Chinese Herbal Medicine  
practitioner and NCA Chinese Herbal  
Medicine Course Director



Thank you Hugh for your foresight and  
vision in founding the Northern College of  
Acupuncture, pioneering research, and for  
bringing Nutrition on board too. With love,

**Sally Duffin, Jenny Thewlis & the Nutrition clinic team**









NCA 30-year anniversary celebration, September 2018



As a Trustee and Director, it is so inspiring to see how pioneering the founding of the College was – and how Hugh and his team have built, shaped and steered the College to be such a well-respected, professional and much-loved institution.

I am so grateful that Hugh was happy to welcome me as a Trustee/Director. Such a privilege and a real pleasure.

*Helen*

**Helen Thomas**  
Educationalist and member of the Board of Directors, Northern College of Acupuncture

Although we have only known each other for a few months, Hugh, it is very clear how passionate you are for the profession and how much you deeply care about the College, its students and its staff. You are such a pleasure to work with, kind, generous, humble; and I've enjoyed meeting with you and learning more about the history of the College and the profession.



You should absolutely be proud of what you have achieved at the Northern College of Acupuncture, and your legacy is that you have built a robust and well-respected education organisation which will live on for many decades to come.

*Kate*  
-x-

**Kate Wicklow**  
NCA Board member and Policy Manager for GuildHE





**“What I will remember most is your kindness, your humbleness and your generosity. You are truly a wonderful person.”**

In this video, Jun gives gratitude to Hugh for becoming the researcher he is today, and recollects reading one of Hugh’s books on acupuncture research from the first to the last page in one day.



[bit.ly/sar-jm](https://bit.ly/sar-jm)

Jun Mao

Society for Acupuncture Research board member  
at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Centre, USA



bit.ly/sar-am

**"I hope that the wind of destiny brings you comfort, serenity and strength."**

In this video, Ari celebrates Hugh as one of his research idols, from the first time he read the book that Hugh co-edited with Richard Hammerschlag, George Lewith and Rosa Schnyer: *Acupuncture Research: Strategies for Establishing an Evidence Base*.

Ari

Ari More

Society for Acupuncture Research board member, Brazil

You have been the most kind and helpful colleague during the years I have known you. You helped me lose my nerves when I first ventured into the acupuncture world and I knew I could always ask your advice. You helped physiotherapists find a niche where we could join together with the acupuncturists and work in unison with our medical colleagues.

So many ways you have helped us: joining in research, clarifying the techniques and ideas that have helped maintain the use of acupuncture, despite the opposition (!); advising in training and supporting Panos Barlas and I in setting up the MSc in Coventry which ran for 12 years (sadly now crushed by politics, but the continuing basis for much training and many ideas).

I'm so glad I met you. Physiotherapy will not forget you, nor will I.

**Val Hopwood**  
Author and Clinical Editor of  
*Acupuncture in Physiotherapy*

Hugh interviewed me to join the Northern College of Acupuncture. He was so positive and encouraging. I often think about it and the effect it had on me. I also remember watching in awe as he demonstrated some acupuncture to us in class. His contribution to our profession and to the NCA has been huge, and we all owe him a great debt of gratitude.

**Francesca Howell**  
Acupuncturist & NCA alumna, class of 2001



Hugh – thanks so much, you've been instrumental in helping our profession as acupuncturists! I'm always talking to patients with passion about the work that you've done over the years and I will carry on doing so. You are an absolute legend!

**Rebecca Callicott**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 2014



It is my great honour & pleasure to know you, Hugh – the first Professor in Acupuncture in the UK. I wish I could have had more opportunities to work with you on making the economic case. Thank you SO much for your warm smile and thoughtful kindness.

**A-La Park**  
Health Economist,  
London School of Economics

Dear Hugh,

I write with the sincerest regards to you, both as a friend, esteemed academic, clinician and colleague.

Many of us involved in the delivery of acupuncture in the UK and further afield can attest the incredible dedication you have provided over the years in supporting the profession in terms of high-level research and national recognition of this immensely useful modality in healthcare.

I remember your kindness in inviting me as chair of the British Academy of Western Medical

Acupuncture (BAWMA)

to contribute to your research paper in the *BMJ Open*, along with several other colleagues in 2009. Your paper was warmly received by the BMJ and rightly published.

I also remember the wonderful lecture you delivered to the BAWMA in Liverpool to our

members some years ago, which greatly impressed so many of our practitioners.

My thoughts are with you at this time, and I send you every good wish both to you and your family.

Warmest regards,

**Aaron Kenneth Ward-Atherton**  
Lord of Witley and Hurcott



I was one of the first fledgelings who were part of the beginning of the Northern College of Acupuncture, back in the day when no building existed and we used to meet at the Lady Anne Middleton Hotel. I will always remember a session that Hugh led on tongues, where we were stunned by the long list of 'names' of different tongues presented in a handout. Luckily someone had the nouse to ask if we would be expected to know them all by the end of the course... and happily Hugh said that if we knew half of them in 10 years, that would be good! Phew! Reset – learn – and carry on...

I must thank Hugh for having the courage, determination and vision to establish NCA, and I am deeply appreciative of the training I received there, as it has been my livelihood ever since...!

Sending my regards and best wishes to Hugh and his family,

**Sarah Nolan**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 1991



When I met you first, dear Hugh, at the 2nd ARRC Symposium 1999 in London, I was fascinated how you introduced research for acupuncturists – saying that it is of high interest for clinical practice to understand research. This understanding was new, and it guided me to regularly oversee the Science Day at the TCM Kongress Rothenburg. It developed with the precious help of you and Velia Wortman to become one of the pearls of the Kongress. You are an important part of the growth and strength of Chinese Medicine in Europe, in fact in the entire West. Thank you for your incredible dedication to acupuncture research, for us, the TCM Kongress Rothenburg and the whole CM community.

**Gerd Ohmstede**  
Guest Professor of Chengdu University of TCM and Vice President World Federation of Acupuncture and Moxibustion Societies



Dear Hugh

I was privileged to be one of the second intake to Northern College of Acupuncture, and your enthusiasm for acupuncture was always inspiring and energising.

You were one of the people who, in clinic, helped me make sense of the theory and connect it to real practice. Your down-to-earth approach to the business realities of setting up in practice hugely helped me to make acupuncture a career for 25 satisfying years. And during that time, the research you conducted and initiated did so much to establish acupuncture and Chinese Medicine as a real health benefit, not a sideline alternative therapy.

Thank you so much. We're all thinking of you.

**Dwara Young**  
Retired acupuncturist and NCA alumna,  
class of 1992



Hugh MacPherson has made a tremendous contribution to the evidence base not only in acupuncture

but in other treatment areas as well. Indeed, a Professor of Psychiatry remarked to me on Hugh's acupuncture trial for depression, which was a three-arm trial of acupuncture, counselling and usual care, that "I don't think Hugh has realised that he's actually gone and done one of the largest trials in counselling for depression", thereby adding to evidence beyond that of acupuncture.

I wish him and his family well.

**Professor David Torgerson**  
Director of York Trials Unit,  
University of York, UK

This is sad news indeed. Hugh really was an inspiration to all of us striving to work in the field of integrative medicine, both in research and in education. His work contributed significantly to the evidence base to support the value and benefits of integrating alternative approaches to medicine into contemporary healthcare, something that many of us support but he was able to articulate and evidence in a strong and determined way.

I suppose "determined" is a good word to use: to thrive in research in an area that causes controversy, that was and is frequently attacked, is not for the faint-hearted. Hugh has made a difference with his

work, and has provided the necessary evidence to widen the availability of acupuncture to the benefit of many.



**Celia Bell**  
Deputy Dean, Faculty of  
Science and Technology,  
Middlesex University, UK



[bit.ly/sar-hl](https://bit.ly/sar-hl)



In this video, Helene describes how Hugh's work has profoundly influenced the field of acupuncture research by forging a path out of the impasse of sham-controlled trials. She talks of her memories wrestling with white papers and snow-shoeing together with Hugh.

**"Hugh, you are one of the rocks of the  
Society for Acupuncture Research."**

**Helene Langevin**  
Director for the National Institute of Health's  
National Center for Complementary and  
Integrative Medicine, USA



Hugh listening to a lecture by Volker Scheid at Rothenburg  
Picture courtesy of Velia Wortman



I first met Hugh through the Research Council for Complementary Medicine when I was working there as Director of Medical Education, 1996-1999. I loved the fact that he was an incredibly

bright, open-minded yet rigorous thinker, but in that world of big academic egos, he was a generous, gentle, modest, humorous man, who steadfastly managed and sustained that Herculean task of funding and producing high-quality research into complementary medicine within a Russell Group University.

At one of the early Foundation for Integrative Health conferences at the Royal College of Physicians, Michael Dixon asked Hugh and me to do a joint presentation on the state of the evidence-base in complementary medicine and our vision for a more appropriate and fit-for-purpose set of methodologies and research culture. Hugh was way more experienced than I was, and much more immersed in the world of real-life academic research, yet he made me feel like an equal with valid input to give and encouraged me to trust in myself.

Hugh – I've just worked out that it must be coming up for 17 years since I first met you when you joined Health Sciences! I am sorry that during all that time, I have not had the opportunity to work directly with you on a research project. However, I have enjoyed our many conversations over the years, be they in the corridor, whilst cycling to or from work, at the bike racks and once even at Yorkshire Sculpture Park's Longside Gallery!

You are a man who is always generous with your time, knowledge and advice – and I thank you immensely for that.

**Jude Watson**  
Senior Research Fellow  
York Trials Unit, Department of Health Sciences  
University of York, UK

In my experience, Hugh always goes out of his way to support and encourage others and to do what he can to develop others' skills even if it means giving up his time for no obvious benefit to himself.

I know our paths haven't crossed all that often, Hugh, but you have made a big impression on me and I count you as one of my early mentors and helpful influences!

Thank you!

**Catherine Zollman**  
Medical Director, Penny Brohn UK, GP and Honorary Clinical  
Lecturer University of Bristol







[bit.ly/amy-hugh](https://bit.ly/amy-hugh)

*This song reminds us  
that the world is  
better with Hugh...*



"I always hear this song as if it's about Hugh. So this is my tribute to him."

**Amy Sewell**  
**College Manager,**  
**Northern College of**  
**Acupuncture**



Demonstrating back  
points to students.  
*Photograph courtesy of  
Shona MacPherson*

Dear Hugh

A heartfelt thank you for sharing your passion and expertise for TCM. Through your vision in co-founding the Northern College of Acupuncture and your ongoing stewardship through the Board, you've afforded me and countless others the life-changing opportunity to study, experience and share the transformational nature of TCM and as importantly to forge lifelong friendships.

With deep respect and gratitude,

**Jenny Ross**  
**NCA alumna, class of 2002**

Thank you for all your endeavours Hugh, and I will try to honour yours and the Northern College of Acupuncture's work with every diagnosis that I make and needle that I place.

Namaste,

**Mairéad Keating**  
**NCA student, class of 2021**



bit.ly/sar-jtk

**“You have been a constant source of inspiration  
... thank you for creating wonderful memories  
together as a friend and colleague.”**

In this video, Jiang-Ti celebrates the inspiration of  
Hugh as a researcher, teacher, practitioner, colleague  
and role-model.

**Jiang-Ti Kong**  
Society for Acupuncture Research board member  
at Stanford University, USA

Dear Hugh,

I am very sad to hear that you are ill.

It has been a long time since we met, but  
you are definitely a person whom one does  
not forget. You, Richard, and Nick did  
something marvellous together in setting  
up the Northern College of Acupuncture.  
It took vision, courage, passion and  
commitment, and you have all these in  
spades. My three years there was a very  
important time for me, and opened up  
many worlds for me. I loved your teaching  
and got a lot of energy and inspiration from  
you. I have read about your many other  
achievements in research and education

since. Through these, you have made such a  
difference to many people in so many ways.

You will have many things to see to now,  
and will take time to reflect on your life,  
and your time with your family and people  
close to you. I just wanted to let you know  
that I am one of the many whom you  
touched, and want to send you my love and  
best wishes. Thank you.

With hugs,

**Kit Oi Chung**  
GP/acupuncturist and NCA alumna, class of 1991





It was a pleasure to work with you on the trials about acupuncture for osteoarthritis of the knee and for depression. Diverse topics, which indeed was the hallmark of the research you did: even exploring the effect of acupuncture using imaging of the brain. It was all interesting and exciting research. It was great to see how you supported students and staff that you worked with, and everything always got written up. Prolific publication record and setting standards in the design and conduct of trials in acupuncture.

I also enjoyed sharing office space with you and admired how you were regularly presenting about your research around the world. A true trail (and trial!) blazer.

Your windsurfing always sounded so liberating, a free spirit riding the waves like you did with your advocacy and research into acupuncture. Willing to get away from the safety of the sandy shores.

You made a lasting impact and will leave fond memories.

**Stephen Brealey**  
**Research Fellow and Trial Manager, University of York, UK**



I have worked at the Northern College of Acupuncture for almost nine years, much of that time on reception. Whenever you have come in for meetings you have always been extremely courteous and friendly. You have made the time to always say hello and ask how I am, and to wait for an answer too.

You have undoubtedly contributed a great deal to the world of acupuncture, but sometimes the exceptional is in doing the ordinary and just being yourself.

Thank you!

**Michelle Bowie**  
**NCA receptionist and administrator**



Dear Hugh!

We have mailed much more often than we actually have met. When we wrote, it was about reporting guidelines, on adequate randomisation, sham controls and pragmatic trials. Mostly the same subjects during the official meetings. Clearly, you were the king of pragmatic acupuncture trials. And you shaped clinical research on acupuncture with your style.

A few times we met to talk about other, private things. Your visit at our place at Starnberger See, south of Munich, with your wife and your daughter on a nice summer day. Our walk and beers after the Acupuncture Trialists meeting in Miami. These are nice memories...!

With warmest regards!

**Klaus Linde**  
**Physician and researcher into**  
**alternative medicine, Germany**





Dear Hugh

Though we have never worked closely together, our paths have crossed a few times over the decades. I remember those times fondly. I salute you for steadfastly holding the values of holism against the tide of reductionist research. Your example has been, and will continue to be, a beacon for the rest of us. I wish you a satisfying conclusion.

*Richard*

**Richard James Clark**  
Former acupuncturist and psychotherapist, UK

Hugh MacPherson – a most memorable lecture – and lecturer!

When I was an acupuncture student at the Northern College – 20 years ago now – I was lucky enough to have Hugh come to lecture on several occasions. The lectures were never quite what we anticipated as he had the knowledge and experience to go

in completely unexpected directions. One particular lesson I remember to this day.



As students, we were trying to grasp the concepts of TCM and Chinese Medicine, only to be informed by Hugh that if the table, in front of where he was lecturing, represented Chinese medicine then TCM would be but an egg cup on that table in terms of its contribution to the medicine as a whole. He then informed us that his current interest was in Talismen and their use in Chinese medicine and culture, and proceeded to give his lecture on this, as opposed to the TCM theory we were expecting. Hugh's analogy of the table and egg cup, and putting TCM in the broader

context of Chinese Medicine, I have never forgotten and I tell this anecdote to my students still – sorry Hugh, I have mercilessly used your idea to inspire students in giving them a sense of the enormity and complexity of Chinese Medicine, as you did for me all those years ago – and for which I am very grateful.

Thank you Hugh, you instilled in me a love of the subject that has stayed with me all these years.

*Ric*

**Ric Chamberlain**  
Acupuncturist, lecturer and NCA alumnus, class of 2002

I have known Hugh for around eight years since I came to work at York Clinic.

He gave me an opportunity to start building my business which I am very grateful for.

He is a gentle man who is inspiring and one of a kind.



*Keren*

**Keren Wheeler**  
Therapist, York Clinic for Integrated Healthcare



bit.ly/sar-rd



**“You’re the real deal – the complete package.  
An amazing researcher and a gracious and kind  
human being... I couldn’t have done what I’ve done  
without knowing that you had my back.”**

In this video, Robert pays tribute to Hugh’s brilliant, pioneering, impactful and foundational work as an acupuncture researcher, and to Hugh as a kind, generous and supportive coach, mentor and cheerleader.

**Robert Davis**

**Society for Acupuncture Research board member; clinician  
at Acupuncture Vermont Oriental Medical Clinic, USA**



Hugh was the supervisor for my MSc; a pilot study for a clinic trial of acupuncture for osteoarthritis of the knee. It was such a lot of work and I was so relieved when it was finished.

But before long, Hugh was on the phone. It was time to reduce my carefully crafted 20,000 word dissertation into a short publishable article. He pushed, I resisted. He pushed, I procrastinated. Eventually, painfully, and with a huge amount of help from him, we achieved publication.

Hugh’s dogged persistence has achieved so much for me, and for the whole acupuncture profession. He never gives up and he sees everything through. Thank you, Hugh. After 30 years of knowing and working with you, I’m full of admiration.

**Harriet Lansdown**  
**Acupuncturist, NCA alumna, class of 1991,**  
**Lead Accreditation Officer for the**  
**British Acupuncture Accreditation Board**



Dear Hugh

I’d like to thank you for all the work you’ve done, and most of all for *Acupuncture in Practice: Case History Insights from the West*. This wonderful book has, over 20 years now, continued to bring me inspiration, understanding, learning, some smiles, and often tears. It is the book I encourage students to read to gain a greater understanding of what being an acupuncturist is about.

Thank you!!

With love

**Annie Milles**  
**Acupuncturist and NCA alumna,**  
**class of 1999**

Dear Hugh,

It was with great sadness that I heard about your current situation; the profession will suffer a great loss. You brought together your many and various skills and abilities to transform the teaching, practise and research within the acupuncture world. By founding a school, you managed to cut through all the divisions and factions which existed at that time, and the Northern College of Acupuncture went on to become the most respected institution in the UK. Your dedication to high-level, innovative research has raised the profession to a different level – one which will hopefully be maintained.

Thank you, Hugh, for your wise, detached, humorous and brave commitment.



**Sandra Hill**  
Acupuncturist, author and lecturer, UK



Hugh, I first met you when I came to do some filming with yourself and Denise for the College at the University of York. I'd only been with the College for a few months and was slightly apprehensive

about causing too much disruption for you as we were filming an interview in your office.

From the second I met you, you shook my hand with a smile on your face and you were as kind and friendly as I could ever have hoped for. You reassured me (perhaps sensing my apprehension!) that I'd to just tell you where I needed you to sit, where I needed to be with the camera, anything that I needed to move around or hide from the frame, etc.

You greatly put me at ease that day and it's something that I'll always cherish. I've had the privilege of spending time with you on numerous occasions over the years since then and you have always been that same friendly face and made a point of coming over to talk to me and ask how I am, be it during a break in filming/your presentation work, or just from bumping into each other in and around College.

It's always been a pleasure, thank you.



**Tom Laverick**  
NCA E-learning production editor

Hugh at the Northern  
College of Acupuncture  
Research Conference,  
October 2019



I first attended a research day that Hugh had organised with the British Acupuncture Council, the British Medical Acupuncture Society, and the Acupuncture Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in London, and it was attending this that led me to start my research journey. There was a lot of underlying tension in the air at this event, and I was struck at how Hugh navigated this territory and moved between the groups with ease.

As an acupuncturist, I see the impact of Hugh's work in clinic every day. It has provided a persuasive argument for clients who may not have considered acupuncture otherwise.



For me personally, the body of evidence together with my research training has imparted an increased

confidence which was missing at the start of my career. It has given me the tools to confidently engage with doctors, nurses, and researchers who are looking at starting acupuncture.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Hugh both personally and professionally, and have been greatly inspired by his work over the years.

**Hina Patel**  
Acupuncturist and College of Traditional  
Acupuncture, class of 1998



Hugh's major contribution to acupuncture and indeed to broader aspects of Traditional Chinese Medicine has been to put it on the map alongside conventional medicine as practised here in the West. The device through which he did this, initially at least, was by lobbying Government agencies and others for research funding to explore a way in which to provide independent evidence of its efficacy as a treatment methodology. All of this was done at a time when there was practically no funding available for 'research' on this exotic fledgeling thing called acupuncture. In this work he has been a pioneer with an exceptional work ethic. He has been singularly successful at this and managed to build up an impressive library of books, articles and broadcasts on the subject.

He was also instrumental in setting up the Northern College of Acupuncture in 1988, acting as its principal until 1997. He has worked as a Senior Research Fellow at the University of York, becoming Professor of Acupuncture Research there in 2016.

As a colleague I cannot thank him enough for his ground-breaking work in the area of acupuncture research which is contributing hugely to the acupuncture profession being universally accepted for the clear benefits of its use as a treatment.

**Michael McCarthy**  
Former Chair of the Irish Register of Chinese Medical  
Herbalism, and University of Westminster alumnus



Dear Hugh,

Velia informed me that you are very sick again. I am very sorry to hear that, because I had hoped that you had recovered well from your tumor disease.

I think of you and hope that you do not have much pain.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for good, always harmonious cooperation, for our common goal, the evaluation of acupuncture or Chinese medicine with best research methods, which I like to think back to. Thank you so much.

**Benno Brinkhaus**  
Deputy Director of the  
Institute for Social  
Medicine, Epidemiology  
and Health Economics,  
and Head of Project  
Division, Complementary  
and Integrative Medicine,  
Berlin, Germany



Hugh MacPherson's exquisitely disciplined written and spoken work has created a positive and enduring impact on the acceptance of acupuncture in 21st century medicine. By confirming its clinical value, he and his colleagues – more than any other individual or team of researchers – have legitimized acupuncture and accelerated its integration into medical practice. Thank you, Hugh. Thank you very much.

**Joseph Helms**  
Professor of Medical Acupuncture and  
clinician, California, USA



Hugh inspires and has shone a light all through my acupuncture career. Without his College, I probably wouldn't have studied acupuncture, without his teaching I would have taken so much longer to grasp the practical side of diagnosis – and as his locum, his treatment plans continued to educate, on many levels.



My shelves hold dust free, go-to, practical and inspiring books written by Hugh, and I feel safe and confident referring to his research because I know it is sound and rooted in a true understanding of our medicine, and reflects as far as possible our person-centred practice.

Hugh inspires me, and always will.

**Liz Castle**  
Acupuncturist and NCA alumna,  
class of 1995



Greetings from Slettestrand, Hugh, on the northwest coast of Denmark! Kathaline and I have wonderful

memories of you at the congress here in September 2011, where you joined the small band of intrepid dawn bathers to brave the North Sea! We don't have photos, but here are a few verses of a song I wrote at the time, which may help to bring it all back to you!

I went down with my friends to Slettestrand beach  
The time it was just before dawn  
We were all so relieved we didn't have to teach  
And we were naked as the day we were born!

The sea looked so inviting, it really looked exciting  
Though you could hardly say that it was warm!  
But our friendship it made up for that, we didn't even wear a hat  
We were naked as the day we were born!

We dipped in a toe, we dipped in an ankle  
Our calves, our knees, then our thighs  
We were looking at each other like sisters and brothers  
Wondering if what we were doing was wise!

Then came the difficult bit, to get beyond the hip  
As the sea froze the Ren, Du and Chong!  
The three heaters they were covered by the waves of the All-Mother  
Though it must be said some didn't stay in that long!

Some need years of meditation, retreat and contemplation  
To get even a glimpse of the shimmering shining dao  
But we did it all together, we didn't care about the weather  
We only cared that we were swimming in the now!

Much love from us both, Hugh. We are right behind you!



[bit.ly/firebrace](http://bit.ly/firebrace)

**Peter and Kathaline Firebrace**  
Acupuncturists and friends



Bhaisajyaguru Dharani

Namo bhagavate bhaisajyaguru  
vaidūryaprabharājāya tathāgatāya  
arhate samyaksambuddhāya  
tadyathā: om bhaisajye bhaisajye  
bhaisajya-samudgate svāhā.



**HUGH**  
MACPHERSON

**'HUMAN PERSON'**

**PIONEERING**

**SPIRIT**

*Allotment Gardener*

*THE UK'S ONLY*

*Professor of Acupuncture Research*

**'Let's go round and hear — everyone'**

**big heart**

*Reshaper of Paradigms*

**TRIPLE of THE**

**effective**

**(NOT EFFICACIOUS)**

*Luminous*

*Luminary*

*look for the golden nugget*

**HEALER**

**WHO OWNS**

**PRINCE CHARMING**

**ACUPUNCTURE**

**is more than placebo**

**TEMACIOUS**

**COLLEAGUE**

**HERO TO MANY**

**Influencer**

**Wednesday Wheeler**

**EXTRAORDINAIRE**

**AMBASSADOR**

**Inspirational & Teacher**

**REPEAT.**

**Serene, calm, unfappable**

**SURFER**

**OF MANY KINDS OF WAVE**

**indred spirit.**

**ind friend**

**Establisher & questioner**

**of the Evidence Base**

**LEGEND**

**VISIONARY**

**Beyond Needling**

**PRAGMATIC PERFECTIONIST**

**CREATOR of CAREERS**

**YOU'VE PUT**

**ACUPUNCTURE**

**ON THE MAP**

**brilliantly**

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