

# The Chiropractors Act 1994 and opening of the GCC register 1999



The long journey towards statutory regulation began in 1975 when the BCA applied, unsuccessfully, for chiropractors to register under the Professions Supplementary to Medicine Act. Later in 1982, when I was BCA President for the first time, David Chapman-Smith (WFC) and I spoke to 26 MPs in parliament and a BCA Parliamentary Committee was formed. A great deal of initial work was done under both myself and Michael Copland-Griffiths as chairs in the 1980s.

In 1983/84 I met two people who were to help us over the years, Lord Kindersley and Sir James Watt, at dinner parties held by HRH The Prince of Wales. Sir James, as President of the Royal Society of Medicine, initiated a series of eight Colloquia on Conventional and Complementary Medicine. Three of these were attended by Prince Charles. At the seventh, Baroness Trumpington as Health Minister suggested “across the board” registration of complementary medicine practitioners.

A Council for Complementary and Alternative Medicine was formed and I spoke at the 1985 launch with former Prime Minister Lord Home. However, this approach to registration was unsuccessful.

Later in 1990, I met with Peter Ediss, Department of Health, and discovered that the osteopaths had made substantial progress towards statutory regulation. Peter advised me that our regulation would have to be via a Private Member’s Bill and be preceded by;

- the support of ALL chiropractors
- the support of the medical profession
- a Report recommending such regulation.

In March 1991 the Chiropractic Registration Steering Group was formed with representatives from all the professional chiropractic associations plus Peter Ediss and Sir John Bailey as observers.

Meetings were held with the medical profession but the major breakthrough occurred at a 29<sup>th</sup> March 1991 dinner party held by Lord Kindersley attended by key leaders of the medical profession, which gained their consensus towards statutory regulation.

Meanwhile, a King’s Fund Working Party on Osteopathy had been established. In July 1991 the King’s Fund agreed a Working Party on Chiropractic. After a long process, this reported on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1993 in the presence of HRH The Princess of Wales, attracting publicity in 6 national newspapers, TV and radio. At the World Chiropractic Congress, later in May, Tom Sackville (Health Minister) and I appealed to the 40 odd MPs present to support a Private Member’s Bill.

On 2 December 1993 I met with David Lidington who agreed to take our Private Member’s Bill which was steered through the Lords by Lord Walton.

In June 1994, Steering Group members attended the final parliamentary stage of the longest Private Member’s Bill to go through parliament. We went off to celebrate with David Lidington. The final step on a long journey had been made.

Royal Assent took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 1994 and exactly 5 years later on 5<sup>th</sup> July 1999 the first chiropractors were registered – 25 and 20 years ago respectively.

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