

World Chiropractic Congress: London 1993

Graham Heale, DC

This year sees Great Britain once again hosting a world chiropractic conference. The British Chiropractic Association (BCA), European Chiropractic Union (ECU), and the World Federation of Chiropractic (WFC) are working together to make the May 27-29 conference a truly memorable chiropractic occasion.

The venue in London is ideally suited to our needs, and gives the BCA an opportunity to show the government how unified the profession is worldwide.

It will be a particularly auspicious occasion given the tremendous strides the British Chiropractic Association has made over the last few years. The publication a few years ago of the Medical Research Council trial was a watershed for the profession in Great Britain. This independent epidemiological study concluded that chiropractic was more effective in the treatment of low-back pain than hospital and outpatient management.

The BCA used the publication of this report as a springboard for an extensive media campaign to increase public, medical, and parliamentary awareness of the chiropractic profession.

The media have consistently shown chiropractic as a respectable specialty worthy of inclusion in the health care system, greatly increasing the public respect for our profession. Dialogue between all the major medical groups has ensured a greater understanding between the professions, ensuring their support for chiropractic legislation. All medical schools, many hospitals, and a considerable number of individual medical practices have been contacted. Lectures on chiropractic have been well-received and many more are being planned.

Negotiations with the government have led to the setting up of a working party by the King's fund under the chairmanship of the master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Bingham. The working party report is to be published within the next few months. The draft chiropractic bill will ensure protection of title and set up the statutory regulatory bodies required by law to manage the registration of chiropractors disciplinary procedures and educational standards of the profession. In common with similar legislation, the chiropractic bill will not detail scope of practice, or place any restrictions on the procedures chiropractors may employ.

Chiropractors will therefore be free to continue to practice as they do now but will be secure in the knowledge that only suitable qualified chiropractors will be granted a license.

The educational standards will be set up by the new educational council, based on those of the European Council for Chiropractic Education. This body having reciprocity with CCE, USA, Canada, and Australasia. Chiropractic education in Great Britain will by statute therefore conform to internationally recognised standards.

The cost of setting up and financing the King's fund working party has been considerable.

The BCA applied for and received substantial financial assistance from the American Chiropractic Association, the European Chiropractic Union, and the International Chiropractors Association. Such generosity by the world chiropractic community at a time of global recession is an indication of true altruism.

The BCA would like to thank these associations for their enlightened approach in offering such generous financial support to further the ambitions of chiropractic in Great Britain. We would also like to thank the WFC, particularly David Chapman-Smith, and John Sweeney, for their invaluable advice and support over the last two years.

The World Federation of Chiropractic has fostered international cooperation by observing a strict protocol of noninterference in national associations, while at the same time performing a truly international diplomatic role. The WFC as an umbrella organisation offers the chiropractic profession an international forum for debate, and a unity few other professions have achieved.

The British Chiropractic Association is honoured to be hosting the 1993 world conference, and looks forward to welcoming chiropractors from all around the world to what will be a truly regal occasion.

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