

Tribute to Peter Matthews M.Ed M.Phil. L.L.B. F.R.S.M. FAHSM



It was with great sadness that we learnt of the passing of Peter Matthews on 17th November 2021 as a result of B cell high grade non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. His well-attended funeral took place on 29th November 2021.

Peter was a mainstay of the Association of Hypnotherapy & Stress Management (AHSM) from its formation as the Society of Stress Managers (SSM) in 1999 until 2018. He always strove to achieve the highest possible standards in the profession of stress management and hypnotherapy and worked tirelessly to gain official recognition from the government and the public. His work with both SSM/AHSM and the United Kingdom Confederation of Hypnotherapy Organisations (UKCHO) over many years contributed to the establishment of the Complementary and National Healthcare Council (CNHC), a legacy for which he should be remembered in future years.

He had an outstanding career which included achieving five university degrees, the first of which was a Bachelor of Arts degree in Latin from the University of Wales in 1960. This was followed over a period of time by a Post Graduate Certificate of Education from the University of London, a Master of Arts in Classics from the University of Wales, a Master of Education from the University of Manchester, a Master of Philosophy from the Open University and a Bachelor of Law from the University of Manchester.

Following National Service in the Parachute Regiment, he started his first teaching post, which resulted in a long and successful teaching career. During this first teaching post, he was also recruited by the Foreign Office, as a gifted language graduate, to learn Russian at Cambridge University on an intensive Russian language course on behalf of one of the UK's Security Services!! It would be inappropriate to comment further on this! However, later it did result in his instigating a Russian Language class in the sixth form at the grammar school where he was still employed and he then taught Russian alongside Latin for some years. He taught for many years after this at other schools, which included a short retirement of about four weeks, before being coaxed back and eventually he became one of the oldest serving teachers at his last school.

During one period of his teaching career, he became active in the National Union of Teachers, ultimately becoming Secretary of the Rochdale branch of the Union. This was the start of a second career in employment relations and to ensure for himself he was fully qualified to do this, he completed the law degree at Manchester University mentioned above, passing with distinction. Following his final retirement from teaching, he served on employment tribunals in Manchester and for the Employment Tribunal Service for twelve years.

Having seen first hand the effects of stress in the workplace, he went on to become a founder Member and Secretary of SSM (later to become AHSM) and started his own clinical hypnotherapy practice in London, helping hundreds of people both in Harley Street and his own study at home. This was at a time before mental health was considered a serious issue. NHS help was fairly non-existent. One of his proudest achievements was working with his colleagues and SSM over several years to validate and set national standards for clinical hypnosis. His hard work and dedication resulted in clinical hypnosis becoming the mainstream treatment it is today and he was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine of which he was very proud. His dedication assisted in enabling clinical hypnosis to be accepted and understood by the medical profession.

Among other achievements, he managed to find time to be an examiner and marker for several examination boards including AQA and Cambridge, was Secretary of the School Library Association and a school governor.

All in AHSM will remember Peter as a font of information, help, support and guidance, for which we will always remain very grateful. We are all saddened by his death and he will, of course, be sorely missed.