

Dr. Edward Bach

Dr Bach was born in Birmingham in September 1886 and lived at "The Hollies", Alcester road, Moseley. This was the house standing next-but-one to the north of the "Prince of Wales" public house, over the front doorway of which is carved the inscription "Dominus mihi auditor", (the Lord is my helper; Hebrews xiii 6). His father owned factories in Birmingham. Edward went to Wintersloe School in Wake Green Road when Howard Fisher was its head. He spent holidays walking in Wales, was of independent mind and with compassion for other human beings as well as animals.

He wanted to become a doctor, but on leaving school worked for three years in his father's brass foundry where he tried his hand at everything. He was found to be no good at any of it, so he joined the Worcestershire Yeomanry where he looked after the horses.



*Dr Edward Bach. by permission of
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He was determined to find ways of healing people and animals, but realised that he needed to know about medicine first. Therefore, at the age of twenty, he became a student at Birmingham University. He finished his medical training in London where he qualified in 1912, taking further courses with degrees in 1913 and 1914. He studied disease by observing patients and discovered that the personality of the individual - the patient's outlook on life - was of more importance than the body in the treatment of disease.

He worked as Casualty Medical Officer at a London hospital and as Casualty House Surgeon. Then he took consulting rooms near Harley Street where, although he was quite successful, he became more and more dissatisfied with the results of orthodox treatments. He thought that he might find the answer in bacteriology and had some success with vaccines. He made some important discoveries.

During the First World War he was in charge of 400 beds at University College Hospital as well as being Clinical Assistant of Bacteriology to the hospital

medical school. Due to overwork he became ill and had to be operated on. He was given only a few months to live. However, he became so involved in his research that he forgot about himself and, to everybody's amazement, recovered.

He discovered a vaccine treatment which was accepted by the medical profession, but was still dissatisfied with the slow progress. After the war he became a pathologist and bacteriologist at the London Homoeopathic Hospital. At this time, he read the works of Hahnemann who had worked a hundred years earlier along the same lines as himself, treating the patient, not the disease. This influenced him greatly.

He disliked injections, preferring the gentler way of giving vaccines by mouth. He carried out research on bacilli and purified the intestinal tract, which resulted in general improvement of health.

He divided his patients into seven definite human personalities and treated each with its particular vaccine called a "nosode", with good results, even in chronic complaints. He tried prescribing on determination of patient character alone and had success with this, as well as gaining international fame among homoeopaths .

In 1926, with Dr C E Wheeler, he published *Chronic Disease: a Working Hypothesis*. He had a research establishment with plenty of work coming from home and abroad. His large income was all spent on instruments etc. for research, and on salaries for laboratory staff.

Still working on the assumption that the patient's temperament was the important indication for treatment required, he gave lectures and published papers on the subject, *The Seven Bach Nosodes*. Later he tried to replace the bacterial nosodes by means of plants, and tried to match each of them with a particular plant. He first looked at people more closely - the way they moved, spoke, etc., and divided them into types. Then he attempted to find remedies not for their illnesses but for their types alone, regardless of the illness they complained of. On finding three herbs in Wales he gave up all his research work, his laboratory and his lucrative practice in Harley street, to follow his intuitions and find herbal remedies. He walked hundreds of miles all over the country watching people and nature. If he could help and heal he did so without ever charging fees for it. He learned all he could by examining each plant and flower he saw, and learning about their characteristics. He devised a new natural method of extracting the flowers' healing power through dew from certain plants.

In 1930 he wrote *Heal Thyself* propounding the theory that all that is important is natural happiness, for people to have intuition and to follow this regardless of others. He found the "Twelve Healers" in Norfolk. He studied human beings in a seaside town, healthy human beings, and confirmed that every individual belonged to a definite group or type. Members of each group were clearly recognisable by behaviour, attitude of mind, etc. Each type required different remedies, but all patients of one type reacted in the same manner whatever disease affected them. He established twelve states of mind which were not normal and led to illness. Gradually he found more remedies. He picked flower heads alone, in perfection, and extracted medicinal properties in the actual field where they grew.

While in practice in Cromer, as before, he did not charge for treatments and so was short of money. In 1931 he gave up practice and went wandering to find the remaining healing plants. He found some in Sussex and more in Kent. In London's Regents Park he wrote *Free Thyself*, teaching people how to follow their intuition. He was also said to have the power of instantaneous healing. In 1932/33 he was in trouble with the General Medical Council over the advertising of herbs and their use. He gave many examples of remedies used in cases of illness with very satisfactory results, including some amazing cures.

He had enlarged his findings and set out twelve types of people and twelve remedies; he now set out to find more remedies for more long-term illnesses and disabilities and the states of mind which they produced. For instance, gorse flowers produced the remedy for people who had been ill so long that they had become hopeless. He found altogether four cures, and called them "The Four Helpers" - gorse, oak, heather and rock water. He put all his discoveries and knowledge at the service of anyone who wanted to use them in *Twelve Healers* and *Four Helpers*, published in 1933. Then he used vine from Switzerland, olive and vine from Italy and wild oat, so that by 1934 he had altogether nineteen herbal remedies. The doses were made up with brandy.

From 1930 to 1934 he lived in Cromer, which he loved. He developed his intuitive powers and the power of healing to such a degree that it is claimed he wrought some miracles. He left Cromer in 1934 and wandered around to find a small house where he could settle down. He found it in Sotwell in Oxfordshire in April of that year.

But he still felt it necessary to find another nineteen remedies. To do this he suffered in turn all the nineteen states which he tried to cure before finding each remedy, which was very disabling. Sometimes he contracted the symptoms of his next patient hours before meeting him and suffered greatly. He published *The Twelve Healers and Other Remedies*, and found altogether thirty-eight

herbs, none of them poisonous, so there is no fear of ill-effects.

He died on November 27th, 1936, at sot well. His house, Mount Vernon, is still the Centre for Bach Flower Remedies, where his work has continued and is known nationally and internationally.

Hilde Smith

Sources:

Information kindly supplied from the Dr Edward Bach Centre, Mount Vernon.

Books written by Dr Bach.

Kelly's Directories for Moseley, [1870 onwards.]