

It'll blow your socks off.

Francis Treuherz 's socks are not the first thing you notice about him. But his friends do keep him in a steady supply. When we met he was sporting a fine pair illustrating the story of Jonah and the whale. What's with the socks I wondered? I would find out later. Francis' hunger for detail points to an investigative mind that will travel the globe in search of the answer to, not only a question, but a lead, a hint of a question. His insatiable curiosity for answers has attracted to him probably the world's largest library of Homeopathic books.

FT-I was born at a very early age. Mark Twain said that, and I've quoted it once too often. A patient of mine once returned with, "How did you know? Yes, I was 6 weeks premature."

I thought I wanted to be a rabbi but there was so much theological controversy in that community at the time so I became a social worker in the Jewish community, first with Jewish refugees from North Africa in France and Israel. In London I worked with youth clubs and then with the elderly Jewish people and then taught social workers at the university.

But the homeopathy? It really all started with my dentist. Or rather my dentist's brother. At that stage I didn't know the difference between psychopath and homicide. I figured homeopathy must be somewhere in between. I'd had hepatitis and my dentist suggested I pay a visit to his brother. With homeopathic treatment I got fit, began riding my bike again, my psoriasis was 80% better and I was hooked. This was a subject worth locking myself up in an attic for. I decided to do a PhD on this.

I wanted to know the boundaries of the subject. I found out about Kent and Swedenborg and wrote about that. I compared homeopathy with the anthroposophy of Steiner and the eccentric work of Bach on nosodes and flowers. The information about

the cholera epidemics in Europe during the nineteenth century was staggering. Homeopathy was consistently successful in treating patients. Yet all this information had been suppressed. In London the Secretary of the Board of Health had discovered that the mortality rate in the homeopathic hospital was considerably less than elsewhere. This statistic was consistent all over Europe but the report was suppressed because: “ It goes against Reason, Truth and Science”.

But I was hooked and I began my study -The Social Construction of a Rejected Science. I read more and more. I didn't know then that I was a collector. But I now have a library of about 6,000 volumes on homeopathy.

HT-So when did you decide to become a homeopath?

I discovered this new College in London and asked if I could just come along and observe but, realising that the observer actually changes what he or she observes, I decided to enrol as a student. I slowly gained confidence that I would practice, never mind writing the PhD which I abandoned. But the historical work was published and I edited the journal for the society for 7 years.

HT-You worked with the NHS in England ?

Yes, I had my doubts about working privately with homeopathy and was invited to join in the NHS in 1990. I'd been to Calcutta, a very useful training which helped me. I treated one Somali refugee child who was still suffering the after effects of convulsions from vaccination. I gave him *DPT* followed later by *Sulphur*. The child recovered and after that I dealt with all the vaccination problems. The “heart-sink” patients and chronically ill arrived at my door. Staff from the practice became patients. But with a change of policy in funding I left the NHS after 13 years service.

HT-You were also involved in helping to develop the MacRepertory homeopathic software. Tell me about that.

I was contacted by email in 1986 or 87 by David Warkentin. He was in California at the time and wanted to get a remedy. I sent it to him from Helios. This resulted in a liaison with MacRepertory, as David was the founder and creator. He had an electronic version of *Boericke*, the old materia medica, and couldn't figure out some of the abbreviations. I had the books and access to the information. Some years later I got a contract with the doctors and hospital staff in the Royal Homeopathic Hospital teaching people how to use the MacRepertory and ReferenceWorks on computers. For 12 years I helped to develop the software using my hobby of collecting 19th century books. A lot of my books were rescued in this way. No one would be reading these old journals and cases otherwise.

HT-I hear that you have attended all of the homeopathic conferences in Ireland. You're probably a record holder.

Yes, before the first one I read on the blurb that the first homeopathic practice in Ireland was set up in 1948. Now I knew this to be false and contacted Dr Jacques Baur in Lyon who had a copy of the first English translation of the Organon, published in Dublin, in D'Olier street in 1833. I presented this facsimile at the conference and it blew their socks off!! I got a real copy and brought it over and Nuala Eising bought it. I have a copy myself now.

I was invited to come back the following year and give a talk on the subject of the history of homeopathy in Ireland. So the research began. A lawyer in Richmond contacted me. He had the archive of his great grandfather, a Dr Kidd. A Limerick born doctor, a Quaker, who had studied homeopathy under Dr Curie in London. Kidd came as a volunteer during the famine and worked in Skibbereen and Skull. Comparing his work to that of the local hospital it was clear that his was more effective. His

great-granddaughter, also a doctor, came to me and sat in on my NHS clinics. She also accompanied me to Galway to hear my presentation the work of her illustrious ancestor. I had meanwhile discovered the proving of the diseased potato in South America and have the original in Portuguese and French. The proving included dreams and delusions of fancy.

In what circumstances, I asked the Galway conference, would you dream of eating human flesh? You could hear a pin drop. Then a voice from the back of the auditorium said, “During the famine.” The book I wrote on the subject sold a thousand copies. There may be a few copies available through www.minimum.com . I’ve been back here annually ever since. Irish students and friends send their relatives to me all the time in Kilburn. That’s why I say I come from Co. Kilburn.

HT- You were a good friend of Harris Coulter?

Yes, Harry was one of the first people to whom my work was sent. He put it aside at first because Swedenborg didn’t interest him. Now that was precisely why I’d chosen to research Swedenborg - because Harry’s book hadn’t included him!! Anyway Harry did find his way to my work, found it interesting and said that the American journal should publish it. We became “distance friends” before the advent of e-mails. I remember one early morning phone call from Harry who was in London on a stopover to Moscow. He came around and we shared mushroom soup, chat and red wine. We were to meet up again in a month’s time in Galway. Harry never made it to Ireland. He had a stroke in Paris.

I packed the biggest briefcase I had with a copy of every book he’d written. I stood up at the Galway Conference and reviewed each one. It was the only way I could think to review his life. We lighted a candle and said a prayer for him. It was very moving. I then got a call from his son asking me to come to Paris as he was in a coma; they needed Harry to hear a familiar

voice. So I went by Eurostar. I walked into that ward and said “Hello Harry” and he replied, “Hello Fran.” The nurse arrived with medicine. I pulled myself up to my full official height and asked her not to give it. The bottle contained *Opium* 30c. Someone had prescribed the remedy to be given every hour up to 3 doses and they’d gone on administering it. Harry was in an exaggerated *Opium* state. When I left Paris Harry was sitting up talking. He had lucid periods but he did remain half paralysed. I found a homeopath I knew and trusted, to care for him there,

The last thing he wrote before that was the introduction to Julian Winston’s wonderful book –*The Faces of Homeopathy*. Harry is still alive and disabled, and he never did come to Ireland.

On that occasion I went to Hahnemann’s tombstone and photographed it. I also acquired a few second-hand French homeopathy books before leaving!

HT- Back to those books. How do you find them?

Well, they find me really. People give them to me. I use the internet of course and I have one or two favourite search engines. It’s not just books. I have lots of old medicine cases, advertising leaflets and portraits. I have a 19th century prize homeopathic chocolate box labelled Fry’s! It must have been a marketing ploy. If patients couldn’t drink coffee...let them drink chocolate!! Once in a jeweller’s shop in Manchester I was shopping for earrings for my wife and came across a three dimensional cameo portrait of Hahnemann for 20 quid. I’d love to mount a museum exhibition on the history of homeopathy and am talking to some museums about it.

HT- So who uses the books?

I love visitors and love conversations ... I have students from the University of Westminster and elsewhere, who are doing projects and I supervise some of these. There’s a charge

equivalent to a homeopathic follow-up fee. People can just come and read if they don't need to talk with me. I have copies of the Organon in Spanish, French, Italian, Hebrew, Swedish, Danish, Russian There's a wonderful book from my father's collection published in Berlin in the 1930s about prescribing remedies from the patient's handwriting. And, of course, the jokes...lots of jokes. It's got to be fun whatever it is .

HT- You practice from home mostly?

Yes, I practice because I love it in my library in my home in co. Kilburn. I see a lot of Irish patients and I'm also kept busy with my two sons Isaac 4 and Eliezer 9. I'm Secretary of the Society in the UK and supervise the editing of our journal.

HT- Now there's an idea for us...

I'm on the Professional Conduct committee. I also supervise the person who organises the conferences. I used to be the one to organise them a few years ago. I have many friends in the medical Faculty. I respond to the government in relation to pharmaceuticals and EU directives. They call me "The Homeopathic FT index." The Society receives a few hundred emails a year on its website and I'm the guy sitting there answering them.

There's also the Homeopathic Helpline which operates 7 days a week, 9am through midnight. It's a BT approved Helpline. Calls cost £1.50 a minute. It's really an acute prescription service for patients whose homeopath is away or on holidays. But the general public avail of it as well. Students in difficulty with their homework call as do newly qualified homeopaths in need of support. It really works. And it is viable as a commercial service. I work on it one day each week. 09065 343404 in the UK only.

HT- Francis you do a lot of charitable work.

My father was always involved in charitable activity. I learned a lot from him. I learned from the old saying from Rabbi Hillel
“If I am not for myself who will be for me?
If I am only for myself what am I?
And if not now when?”

I’m a trustee of our charity, Homeopathy Action Trust. We support low cost clinics, areas of high need, research, needy students who have exhausted other channels and are in danger of flunking because of unfortunate circumstances.

HT- So do you find any time for research?

I went to Australia in February and found myself in a Benedictine church 120 miles north of Perth in a place called New Norcia.

There had been this Friar, Rosendo Salvado, a missionary from Europe who’d gone out to convert the Aborigines to Catholicism. He was also a man of culture. He played music and appreciated the arts. He almost didn’t survive in the desert. At one point he raised money in Perth by giving a concert. His work was supported by Catholic, Protestant and Jew. He learnt the language of the Aborigines and used homeopathy to cure them. He was the first man to practice homeopathy in Australia. I read his biography and some of his memoirs translated into English. I found 25 books on homeopathy in Spanish, French, Italian, and English on homeopathy in the library there, and helped label the collection of bottles I found there in the museum. In return for their hospitality I gave them an 1927 copy of *Boericke* which looks like a Bible. All this came from a lead . One line in Winston’s history. I’m now in the process of writing this up.

HT –Well Francis, you have blown my socks off!! I wish you the best in your next adventures.