



Founding Member and IHPE History

I was recently delighted to be contacted by the organisation's only remaining founding member, with whom contact had been lost. **Mary George (nee Ryley)**, currently 96 years of age, established the Institute of Health Education, as we were originally known, with Frank Rowntree and others in 1962. Her Membership Certificate is Number 3. Mary was Dental Health Education Officer for Gloucestershire at the time. Mary was subsequently awarded Honorary Life Member status in 1992.

The Inaugural Meeting of the Institute was held on the 28th April 1962 where the aims and purpose were ratified and the first officers, or Executive Council, of the Institute appointed. Lord Cohen of Birkenhead became Patron soon after.

One of the principal objectives envisaged in the formation of the Institute was the provision of support and opportunities for Health Educators as individuals, and an important feature that was noted was that: *'The Institute is not sponsored by, or associated with, any particular Government department, local authority or sectional interest'*. This independence continues today.

During the first year the membership grew significantly from a range of academic and professional backgrounds including medicine, dentistry, nursing, public health, education, sociology, public relations, journalism and administration, all of them undertaking the practice of Health Education. A formal programme of activities was established including regional meetings, a regular Journal, quarterly Newsletters, information services and a library of Health Education literature. A key focus was to facilitate exchange of knowledge, experience and views among health educators, within the UK and overseas.

In 1998 the Institute broadened its title to become **The Institute of Health Promotion and Education**. However, it was not until 2014 that the Institute achieved charitable status.

The Annual Report for 1962 states that;

'There is no doubt that with the passing of time, the contributions of the Institute of Health Education to the standard of the practice of Health Education, both in this country and overseas, will increase.'

I hope that all our efforts over the years have helped achieve this ambition, and our recently published strategic priorities, which are grounded in the Institute's original constitution, are focussed on developing this further.

I am very pleased that Mary took the trouble to reconnect with us. It was so interesting to learn about her involvement in the formative years of IHPE and on behalf of IHPE I send her my thanks and very best wishes.

Angela Towers
President, Institute of Health Promotion and Education
09/07/2024