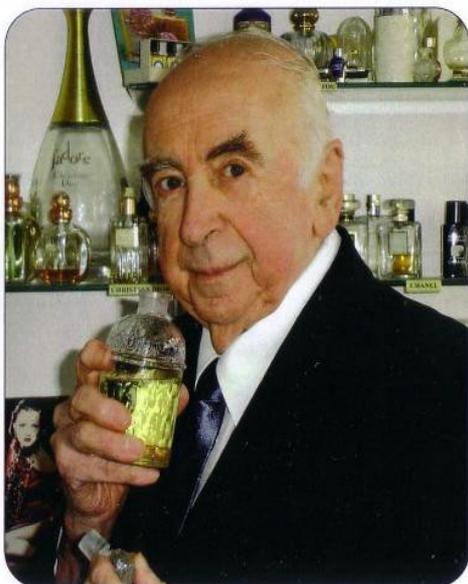


Bernard Joseph Hephrun

7th September 1926 – 4th February 2014



Bernie

A tribute to an old friend.

This name will not be known to many people in aromatherapy these days, particularly my readers in the USA. Therefore I am putting this page online to show how certain individuals contributed substantially to the aromatherapy world without being on blogs, newsgroups or by publishing popular books.

I first met Bernie and Sandy his Son in 1985 when they came to the herbal training clinic in London. Bernie suffered from asthma and wanted to know if herbal medicine could help. At the time they had just started an essential oil supply business and were looking into various aspects of the supply trade. I wrote asking if I could visit and look at the colours of the essential oils as that aspect fascinated me. He agreed and I visited them at their home in Southall nr London from where they were starting the business. It was then that I realised what a bibliophile Bernie was with numerous books on a wide range of subjects. That love of books grew over the years to occupy a huge office/library in their current house. Bernie was a retired school teacher with a diverse range of interests, but with a zest for trying to find out the truth behind what he was involved with.

My visit made me realise that there was a lot to be investigated about essential oils. It started me on a course that was to set the rest of my working life. During my herbal training I had become concerned that not all was as claimed with herbal tinctures. After delving into research papers in the Science reference libraries, I found out that the way herbal tinctures were produced, meant the essential oil component of the plants was lacking in some tinctures. That blew a hole in herbalist claims that they "only used the whole plant". This was an aspect that was kept under wraps by the suppliers at the time despite a couple of others making the same findings as myself. Therefore, my idea was "well if the oil is lacking in tinctures, why don't we add it back using distilled essential oils". Hence my further trips to visit what was now becoming Butterbur and Sage <http://www.butterburandsage.com/> the company established by Bernie and Sandy.

In those early days they visited many suppliers and established connections far and wide. Others who were trying to get into the aromatherapy market visited Bernie and picked his brain for vital information. **Some of these people then set up rival businesses with no acknowledgement as to where they first gained their knowledge.** People travelled from around the world to visit him

and gain some of his knowledge. I did warn him about that, but Bernie was a lover of education and a jovial host which tended to blind him to spongers. Several people took advantage of the good nature of both Bernie and Sandy over the years and a few ripped them off financially.

As the house in Southall became too small for the expanding business and circle of friends, this forced a move to Reading, UK where they managed to buy a factory and separate house. After a couple of temporary moves they ended up with the large house in Calcot and a factory on the Thames industrial site. Both Bernie and Sandy worked extreme hours to build Butterbur and Sage into an International supplier of a wide range of aromatherapy and beauty therapy related products. Sandy did most of the physical work and Bernie the researcher, contact maker, organiser and bottle filler when necessary.

It was not long before Bernie came to realise that the small aromatherapy suppliers badly needed a trade association to represent them. It soon became apparent that the small traders were being sold adulterated essential oils by a variety of sources. Therefore Bernie proposed an organisation to conduct tests on behalf of members. After a lot of effort this did materialise in a limited manner and EOTA was born. Other aromatherapy suppliers were not happy with the systems Bernie was establishing and broke away to form other associations. One thing Bernie was never credited with was the huge amount of efforts and money he put into various organisations often with little financial or physical support from members.

The first major event he organised for aromatherapy was the NORA Conference 1988 in Reading University, UK where various experts gave lectures. A few years later in 1994 he did a lot of the work involved in organising the NORA conference in New York. Bernie with his academic background was able to engage University experts and oil industry specialists who would not normally have anything to do with aromatherapy.

Bernie loved throwing parties and was a great cook. He had an interest in Chinese cooking and had many cook books. When Bernie stopped taking such an active part in the day-to-day business, Sandy always had a meal ready for him lunchtime after his early morning starts, as well as in the evening when he got back. Any visitors always knew they would get fed even if the cupboards were getting low in stocks. I never forget the times when I stayed for a couple of days when taking my visitors from overseas to see their business. Always a good feed and a comfortable bed. You just had to watch hairs from Nelly the cat who ruled the roost for many years.

Bernie had a deep interest in archaeology and especially Egypt. Again numerous books were purchased as well as contacts made. In 1991 after Bernie became friends with the Egyptologist Lise Manniche, he organised a tour to visit Egypt and see the sites, but greatly enhanced by having a real expert with us. Later he conducted experiments on re-creating some of the Ancient Egyptian formulas and was mentioned in the NY Times.

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/27/fashion/27SKIN.html?pagewanted=print&_r=0/

His best known publication was 'The Perfume Kit: Create Your Own Unique Fragrances: by Charla Devereux and Bernie Hephrun'. He also produced dozens of guidance papers such as this one on this site 'bernie buying oils.pdf'. There are many other invaluable papers that have not seen the light of day but maybe in time they may be made available. He started and never finished an excellent dictionary on essential oils that I tried several times to persuade him to complete it but with no luck. I have the copy and am hoping I may be able to finish that and put it online as a tribute to his hard work.

This old friend of mine had an amazing life story far too much to write about here. He will be deeply missed by those who knew him. Martin Watt.

Source and copyright:

<http://www.aromamedical.org>