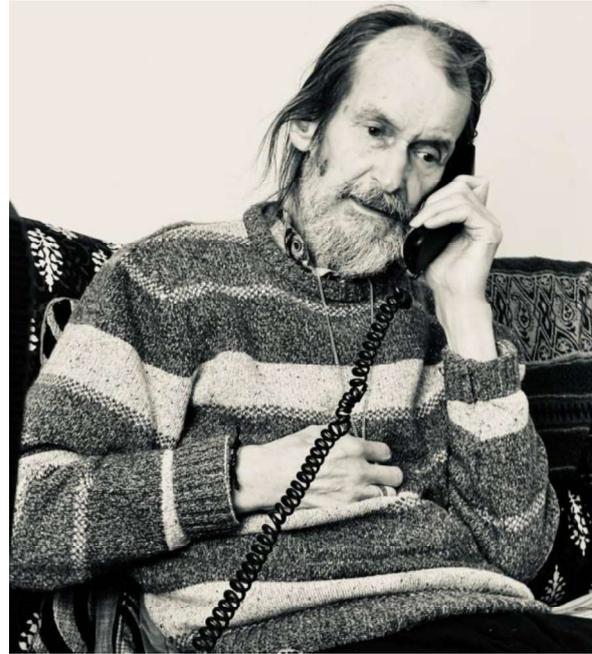


JOHN GORDON-SMITH 1948-2025

John Gordon-Smith, a much-loved Healing Trust stalwart and long-time chair of Hammersmith Healing Centre, died after a long illness on Wednesday, 3rd December. He was 77.

A gentle soul with a keen sense of humour, John's passions included travel, music and sports, while his heart was wedded to the Buddhist teachings that helped him in his latter years face the challenge first of his mother's terminal illness and then of his own.

He performed key roles for the U.K. charity that has championed the ancient therapy of healing since the 1950s, including as head of the region covering London and as a panelist for students in their final assessment.



"John was a kind man," said Alison Grunwald, a Healing Trust trustee and chair of its London region. "Perhaps 'no nonsense' was his credo but goodness was his very essence."

John lived a life of service, as a career social worker in west London, a long-suffering Queens Park Rangers fan, and as a practitioner of healing – a therapy he first encountered at a grand London exhibition called Mind-Body-Spirit.

Following a diagnosis for kidney cancer in 2007, John had a kidney removed and began attending Shepherds Bush Healing Centre in search of what he termed "emotional healing." He soon volunteered and was persuaded to train as a Healing Trust healer.

With the centre's future threatened by the sale of the venue, John took over as chair – his experience with local politics to the fore as he joined a packed and lively protest meeting which ultimately failed to overturn the decision.

But the centre was far from finished. A healing client with connections to Peabody Estate helped negotiate use of a room that is still home to Hammersmith Healing Centre.

Among volunteers, John fostered an atmosphere of camaraderie with his steady presence. Healers looked forward to their cafe visit not just to unwind post-session but to discuss best practices and learn from one another.

John would note how he had been lucky while training to be surrounded by healers willing to share their experience. At Hammersmith, John developed into a quiet mentor who ushered through students grateful for his supportive and straightforward approach.

He would proudly point to the centre's community efforts, including attending with Wimbledon healers a festival in Queens Park and working with a local Carers Group. He was constantly seeking ways to bring healing to hospices and other venues.

"He was a great role model from whom I learned how to stick to the job and watch the time." Alison added. "He was not one for chatter or small talk and would become irritated when we strayed from the business in hand! Handing his baton on to me after he had done it so well felt like a responsibility and a privilege."

Yet John loved to recount humorous stories from his healing past, eyes glinting as he recalled a female client insisting on bowing and touching his feet as a sign of respect for his superior years – the spectacle of being treated as a guru triggering his sense of humour.

Or the self-conscious builder so worried that his workmates on a nearby building site would spot him leaving the centre that he changed out of his work clothes – again tickling John that someone would go to such lengths to keep secret a healing session.

Under his stewardship, Hammersmith Healing Centre not only survived a period of uncertainty but entered one of the most vibrant phases of its history. A trickle of attendees post-Covid transformed into a flood as the regulars he had helped nurture combined with a fresh wave of clients to turn Hammersmith into a bustling venue.

His generosity, public spirit and sheer doggedness was evidenced at the Japanese Garden of Peace in Hammersmith Park, where John campaigned for, and financed, the erection of a decorative gate at one entrance of the gardens to complement the existing gate at the other end.

At a ceremony involving the Japanese Embassy in November 2024, it was named Jon's Gate. (The Japanese phonetic translation of John is the same as Jon. And John was actually christened Jonathan.) There, he spent many an hour taking in the serenity and beauty, his QPR scarf trailing from his wheelchair.

His doggedness also surfaced in his illness, treatment for which had left him struggling desperately in early 2024. As he took the decision to stop the treatment, few could have predicted that he would live another year and a half.

As his mobility deteriorated, John stepped back from his role as Hammersmith chair but insisted on – and relished – taking phone enquiries on behalf of the centre right until the end. It was a sign not just of his passion for healing but of his sense of community.

John leaves behind a legacy felt not only in the many lives he touched through healing, but in the community he shaped — a place where his kindness, humour and quiet dedication continue to guide those who follow.

“Healing basically means looking after myself,” John once recounted. “And trying to help other people.”

