

## **BOWEN THERAPY TODAY- an 18 April 2014 overview**

A summary of the therapy's beginnings; covering the spread of international and national teachings in Australia and development of the several Bowen schools; provides a chronology of schools, and touches on variations in technical practice. Includes statistics on schools, instructors and on therapist numbers, research links, recognition and acceptance of Bowen Therapy today, Bowen on the internet, International Bowen Therapy Week and the Future.

**Prepared for Bowen Therapy Worldwide and the Inaugural 2014  
International Bowen Therapy Week celebrations**

Disclaimer:

The work towards this report was started in 2013 and completed on Tom Bowen's birthday anniversary for the **2014 Inaugural International Bowen Week Celebrations**.

The report is referenced with footnotes so the sources of information are disclosed. Critique on historical information is welcome as long as it is supported by sound evidence. The report was prepared for Bowen Therapy Worldwide, an international Facebook Group of practitioners and students established in March 2013 by Enys Evans of Wales.

A number of schools and instructors were consulted on earlier drafts and their feedback addressed. Regardless, this overview does not pretend to represent the views of any Bowen association nor Bowen school, but rather reflects the leadership culture of Bowen Therapy Worldwide Facebook Group.

Feedback is welcome to Shirley Strachan addressed to [BowenWeek@allbowentherapyworldwide.com](mailto:BowenWeek@allbowentherapyworldwide.com)

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## A. Humble beginnings: from Geelong to the world

Between 1959 and 1982, Tom Bowen of Geelong, Australia developed a unique kind of Bodywork technique now practiced in his name.

“Bowen therapy” or the “Bowen technique” and other derivative/ related styles based on the original Bowtech® interpretation include Fascial Kinetics, Neuromuscular Integration Technique (NST), Smart Bowen and Fascia Bowen. These along with complementary adjuncts such as Emmett Technique are now delivered to an international public. It is a health modality offered by over 40 000 practitioners in some 59 countries or regions around the world.

All of this started with the work of one man in Geelong, Australia Tom Bowen (1916-1982) . Thanks to Ron Phelan and others, in 2002 his work was formally commemorated with a memorial monument in West Park Geelong, within sight of his first practice address at Autumn Street.<sup>1</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Monument project organised by Ron Phelan (NST instructor) and others and unveiled in 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Image created on Google Earth



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Bowen therapists are present in all regions of the world with the possible exception of Antarctica. “iBowen<sup>4</sup>” an international directory launched in 2013 by Louise Tremblay is searchable in 6 languages and has Bowen therapists listed in Northern, Southern, South Eastern and West Europe, North and South America, the Caribbean, Middle East, South Central Asia, East and West Asia, South and East Africa, Australia, Melanesia and Oceania.



Some 20 Bowen associations are established in, Australia, Canada, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, South Africa, Turkey and the United Kingdom. A list of these is compiled on the country directory page on the website of Bowen Therapy Worldwide ([www.allbowentherapyworldwide.com](http://www.allbowentherapyworldwide.com)).

The 40 000 or more therapists have trained and qualified through an estimated 25 training outlets worldwide.

The number of individual instructors directly attached to Bowen training organisations would reach an estimated 155 or more (based on current information taken from school

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<sup>3</sup> Close ups of the Bronze sculpture of Tom Bowen’s hands. For more information on the inscription and symbolism of the sculpture go to <http://www.allbowentherapyworldwide.com/> Photo credits S Strachan

<sup>4</sup> iBowen international directory and smart phone application [www.ibowen.ca](http://www.ibowen.ca)



websites and from the website of Bowen Training Australia<sup>5</sup>). The numbers of credentialed instructors teaching independently seems to number another 18 or so<sup>6</sup>.

## **B. Social and economic background of Bowen therapy in Geelong**

When Tom Bowen started treating people, Medicare, the Australian Government Health Scheme that subsidises health care for all Australians was non-existent. Medicare was introduced in July 1975<sup>7</sup>. By comparison the UK National Health Service was established in 1948.

Tom Bowen's work undoubtedly fulfilled a direct need in the communities of Geelong and beyond for an accessible and affordable therapy at a time when a government-supported scheme did not exist. During the second half of his career, government reforms brought with them the turbulence of registration for previously unregulated modalities. Tom Bowen called himself an Osteopath and this found him giving an account of his work before a Parliamentary Committee in 1973.

Many of Tom Bowen's clients were average families, factory workers and farmers, from Geelong, its agricultural hinterland in the Western District, and from further afield. Professionals were on his client list too, including (according to the 1973 enquiry<sup>8</sup> a neuro surgeon Dr Ernie Shield from Ballarat, politician Hayden Birrell a local MP, and a Jack Rossiter (undisclosed profession). As Jack is a common nickname for John, this is likely to be John Rossiter a Labour Party MP of the time who is believed to have been a supporter of Bowen's position during the period of regulatory changes that got underway after the 1973 enquiry.

Also stated in Tom Bowen's transcript to the 1973 parliamentary committee, is that Geelong businesses referred clients to him. He names these to include:

Godfrey Hirst Woollen Mills (still an active concern in Geelong)

Benders Buses (still active)

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<sup>3</sup> Based on Bowtech (92) NST (20), Smart Bowen (11) 12 VHT (12) (Vibromuscular Harmonisation Technique), and other schools. Bowen Training Australia also maintains a registry of Bowtech Instructors <http://www.bowentraining.com.au/>

<sup>6</sup> Another 15 or so unaffiliated in the US, UK and NZ, appear on the Bowen directory <http://www.bowendirectory.com/?p=5>, and others include ie Alastair McLoughlin, Art of Bowen [www.artofbowen.co.uk](http://www.artofbowen.co.uk) (UK), Graham Pennington Advanced Bowen Seminars Australia [www.bowenseminars.com](http://www.bowenseminars.com) and John Garfield Australian College of Clinical Myotherapy <http://www.burleighnaturaltherapies.com.au/about-john-garfield.html>

<sup>7</sup> Background on Medicare:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/Publications\\_Archive/archive/medicare](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/medicare)

<sup>8</sup> Transcript reprinted in full in Pennington G (2012) *A Textbook of the Bowen Technique*, Barker and Deane Appendix 1,

Britains Carpet Factory (probably wrongly transcribed in the 1973 enquiry and meant to be “Brinton’s” Carpet Factory, which was based in Geelong and closed in 2008.

Various small factories (around 6) in Geelong’s industrialised north.

Tom Bowen’s services were sought after at a time when Geelong’s economic backbone was predominantly industrial and unlikely to have enjoyed the higher standards of occupational health and safety provision afforded to workers today.

Bowen would have been able to relate with many of his clients too: he had past experience working in a Woollen Mill, and at the Geelong Cement Works before he took up full time practice in 1959 then aged 43. When eligible to vote, Tom Bowen appears in electoral rolls as a labourer and then all entries thereafter as a milk carter.

Geelong’s hinterland economy was and still is largely based on sheep rearing and cattle grazing for the beef and dairy industry. Agricultural produce and industrial products flow through its busy commercial port every day. In Tom Bowen’s time, a large percentage of the workers on the land and in factory had jobs that carried a high risk of back strain and injuries.

From what Tom Bowen stated to the enquiry he mostly treated musculoskeletal complaints, backs and necks and mentions shoulders and knee work too. Although he indicated he treated migraines through dietary advice (i.e. eliminate coffee), Tom was treating more than just obvious musculoskeletal problems. For instance one client, then a young teenager attended Tom Bowen’s clinic around the time he had just established in full time practice in Autumn Street. Her issues were hormonal problems<sup>9</sup>. From this it is easier to comprehend why Tom Bowen called himself an Osteopath- a modality based on the philosophy that the body is an integrated whole unit, there is a reciprocal relationship between structure and function and the body has a natural ability to heal itself when restrictions of the spine, the CSF and muscles and joints are removed.

### **C. Free clinics**

Tom Bowen is also known to have given free clinics for children with disabilities. Ron Phelan (NST instructor) who established the Tom Bowen Legacy Trust Fund in 2003 reported a personal discussion with Rene Horwood, (Tom Bowen’s clinic assistant) that

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<sup>9</sup> Pers comm. Former Bowen Clinic client to S Strachan 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014

this was an area of work that was special to Tom Bowen<sup>10</sup>. Within a decade a UK branch of the Fund was established under the direction of David Howells<sup>11</sup>. The Fund is poised to develop further and expand to other countries as time goes on. A key priority is to eliminate administrative overheads and ensure all of the funding support goes to the children with special needs.

Tom Bowen could rightly be seen as a champion of the socially disadvantaged and physically challenged before the Whitlam Government of Australia introduced better health and social security conditions between 1972 and 1975. At his clinic he was known to be very sensitive to the financial circumstances of his clients – in addition to free clinics, he stated to the 1973 enquiry he only charged pensioners for one visit as “there would not be very much left of their pension”, and he had a reputation for not charging people at all.

#### **D. Student witness and the start of the teachings**

Six individuals are popularly recognised as prominent in the observer role at Tom Bowen’s clinic. A number of others are known to have taken up this opportunity, but not for as long a period as the six better known “Boys” as he and Rene called them.

These 6 notable men saw Tom Bowen at work during different stages of the development of his ever evolving technique. Alone with him, each observed him work for an estimated 350 hours over a 3 year period. This involved 3 hours per week of observation and supervised practice<sup>12</sup>.

From early beginnings to the later clinic period these men were:

- 59- late 60s: Nigel Love, Keith Davis, and Kevin Neave<sup>13</sup>
- mid 70’s: Oswald (Ossie) Rentsch 1974 (for 2 <sup>1/2</sup> years<sup>14</sup>)
- from July 1977: Romney Smeeton (also refer footnote <sup>10</sup>) and
- for 3 years from 1979 till Tom Bowen’s death in 1982, Kevin Ryan. Ryan also managed Tom Bowen’s clinic for a 2 month period following his death. Romney

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<sup>10</sup> Information provided by Ron Phelan of NST who established the fund in 2003 and based on a conversation he had with Tom Bowen’s assistant Rene Horwood, before she died. Stated in a discussion thread in Bowen Therapy Worldwide Facebook Group.

<sup>11</sup> Link to the UK arm of the fund <http://www.tombowenlegacytrustfund.org.uk/tbltf-faqs.html>

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Ryan Osteopath, and one of the six men, stated on his website’s Tom Bowen page <http://www.gnhc.com.au/>

<sup>13</sup> Timing of attendance from Graham Pennington’s Bowen Seminars training presentation.

<sup>14</sup> *Bowtech Instruction Manual*, The History of Bowtech, p.viii, first printed 1997, revised edition 2007.



Smeeton and Kevin Ryan are also believed to have kept the clinic running for a period after for children with disabilities.

The group of 6 had different backgrounds: Nigel Love and Keith Davis described themselves as Naturopaths in 1973, though were later registered Chiropractors in 1979, Kevin Neave was a student of Chiropractic in 1973 also headed for registration in 1979, Ossie Rentsch a Massage therapist, later titled Osteopath, and Romney Smeeton also registered a Chiropractor in 1979. Kevin Ryan became registered an Osteopath in 1982.

Still active today in businesses that relate to Bowen in some way are Ossie Rentsch an octogenarian and actively teaching overseas, with Romney Smeeton, Kevin Ryan and Keith Davis (near retired) running clinics.

After Bowen's death, three elected to teach to some degree – two on a local/national scale, one national then international:

- Kevin Ryan (Osteopath) taught within Australia for 9 years to 5<sup>th</sup> year students of Osteopathy at Melbourne's Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and today still offers occasional courses to qualified Bowen and other practitioners.
- Romney Smeeton (in partnership with Ross Emmett) for a period offered a seminar called "what Tom said" and a course evolved called *TBT (Tom Bowen Therapy) 101* (now taught solely through the Emmett School<sup>15</sup>).
- Ossie Rentsch, in partnership with his wife Elaine from 1986 embarked on a very active teaching program that took Bowen therapy wider afield within Australia soon expanding overseas.

Ossie Rentsch (through Bowtech<sup>®</sup>) is responsible for the significant dissemination of his record and interpretation of the therapy throughout the world and without a doubt provided the stimulus that led to the start of the other Bowen Schools that formed in the 1990s and after, both overseas and in Australia.

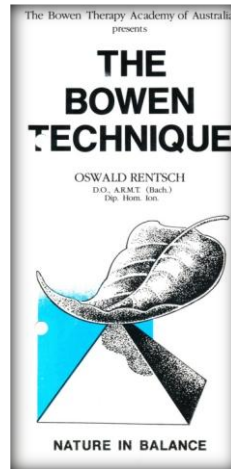
#### **E. Branching out: the flourish of teaching schools, the Bowen therapy expands overseas and throughout Australia 1986 - present:**

The Rentsches taught their first workshop in Perth, Australia in 1986. From 1987 their Bowen teaching (Bowtech<sup>®</sup>) commenced and in 1992 the Bowen Training Academy of

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<sup>15</sup> TBT 101 <http://emmett-uk.com/TBT101>

Australia was established<sup>16</sup>. An early brochure of the 1990's period describes the technique as "Nature in Balance" with a leaf balanced over a pyramid as fulcrum.



After initial workshops in Australia, teachings spread in to the UK, the USA and from there to Europe. Today this influence incorporates many more countries, 40 being stated in the Bowtech ® publication "Bowen Hands"<sup>17</sup> including Asia, Malaysia, and Africa.

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23 — WHAT'S ON THE PLANET NEWSPAPER, FEBRUARY/MARCH 1997 — 23

<sup>16</sup> Information from business and companies register, Australian Securities and Investment Commission, [www.asic.gov.au](http://www.asic.gov.au)

<sup>17</sup> Bowen Hands, 40 years on, 40 countries p.1 March 2014

<sup>18</sup> What's on the Planet newspaper Feb/March 1997, supplied courtesy of Graham Pennington

In the early 1990s , first appointed instructors in the UK were Isy Saunders in 1992 (now Isy Gabriel whose practice has moved to Sydney) and Julian Baker (now ECBS) . Isy Gabriel continues to provide workshops accredited for professional development with the UK's Bowen Therapists Professional Association (BTPA) though her Australian practice is now focused on Family Constellations counselling.<sup>19</sup> Others joined the Academy's team throughout the decade : by 1997 22 Australians were accredited (refer image on previous page), and many are still actively practising in Bowen therapy- in Australia and several overseas . Today the instructor base has grown to around 112 worldwide (figures drawn from the website of Bowtech® and Bowen Training Australia<sup>20</sup>.)

From the early dissemination of procedures compiled by Ossie Rentsch (with the input, of Tom Bowen's assistant, Irene (Rene) Horwood <sup>21</sup>) a number of independent overseas schools were established and Australian schools too.

This principally came about when interested people and professionals from other backgrounds of bodywork attended the initial training sessions. They saw how the therapeutic moves were performed over particular areas of the body and brought other systems of knowledge to bear on their understanding of Tom Bowen's work. These understandings do not appear to have been compatible with Bowtech®'s teaching philosophy and approach, so after initially spending a period instructing for Bowtech®, several ended up developing their own schools to give them the independence to explore and formally incorporate their comprehension of Tom Bowen's work into their own practicum.

The differences between the various schools are summarised later in section G below.

## **F. Branching out: the flourish of teaching schools, Bowen therapy expands overseas and in Australia post 1986- present**

### **1. Overseas schools**

Among the first schools established overseas and instructors providing Bowen training were:

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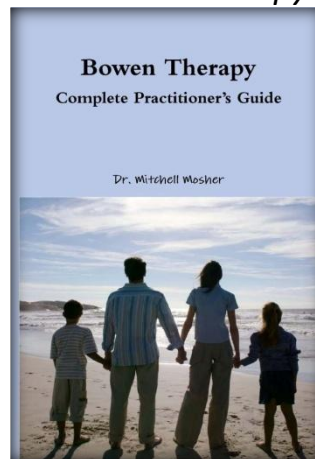
<sup>19</sup> Isy Gabriel, Family Constellations, Sydney Australia <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Family-Constellations/1474600062759186>

<sup>20</sup> Bowtech <http://www.bowtech.com/WebsiteProj/Pages/Learn/GlobalInstructors.aspx> and Bowen Training Australia <http://www.bowentraining.com.au/>

<sup>21</sup> Introduction to Bowtech's Module 1 training manual

**Bowen Training International (BTI) ®:** a USA school founded in 1997 by Milton Albrecht (1948-2003). Albrecht originally studied with Bowtech ® (also in 1988) and with wife Deni Larimore Albrecht sponsored the first Bowen Seminars in the USA. This led to a teaching collaboration with the Rentsches from 1994.

This partnership was superseded with the establishment in 1997 of *Bowen Therapy International (BTI)*<sup>22</sup> “teaching the basic classes and his own advanced classes” (Dr Mosher 2013). Milton’s wife Deni Larimore-Albrecht was college administrator. Assisting Milton on the instructor team were Cheryl Hillier and the late Joan Baker. Milton Albrecht is not known to have published any books other than his training manuals, though Dr Mosher has written a book that talks about his introduction to Milton, his own decision to become a Bowen therapist and includes many sketches of Milton’s procedures. Milton’s work and Dr Mosher’s descriptions and applications of it are included in the recently published *Bowen Therapy A Complete Practitioners Guide*.<sup>23</sup>



**US Bowen - Neural Touch® and Bowen Bridge®**<sup>24</sup> was established by Gene Dobkin around 1999. From 1994-1998 Gene Dobkin had spent some time with the Bowen Academy, including writing the two volumes of the *Bowen Companion* which further explained Bowtech Bowen procedures with illustrations and descriptions.

It is his Volume 2 that includes a substantial and valuable section where he correlates the points where Bowen moves are made with acupoints/acupuncture main indicators, the Chapman neurolymphatic points, trigger points as developed by Dr Janet Travell and acknowledges kinesiology links.<sup>25</sup> After completing the association with the Bowen

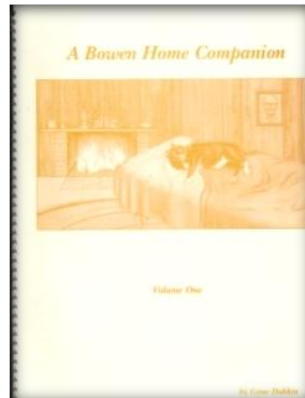
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<sup>22</sup> Bowen Therapy International <http://www.bowentherapy.com/>

<sup>23</sup> Mosher, M (2013) Bowen Therapy a complete practitioners guide <http://www.bowen4life.com/>

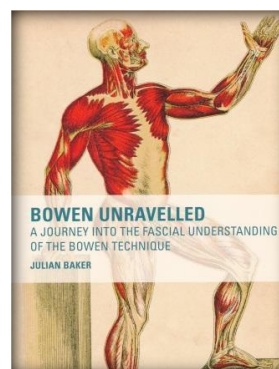
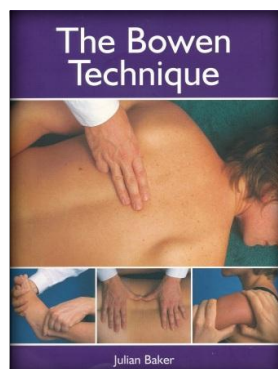
<sup>24</sup> A Bowen Home Companion Volume 2 <http://www.usbowen.com/>

Academy, 2 years of teaching followed with NST before Neural Touch®/Bowen Bridge® courses commenced under US Bowen.<sup>26</sup> US Bowen also provides training in the UK.



**European College of Bowen Studies**<sup>27</sup> became formally established in the mid 1990's by Director Julian Baker and co-Director Louise Atwill. Julian Baker was introduced to the technique in Australia in 1988<sup>28</sup> and also after an initial working association with the Bowtech® UK program offered training in the UK and then Ireland. Julian Baker is supported by a team of UK instructors (Sylvia Wilkinson, Jihan Adem, Michael Morris, Gus de la Querra, Jenny Holcombe, Karen Owens, Lindsay Evans and Mark Lange) while European instructors are Vibeke Brems (Norway) and Mageir Sigurdasson (Iceland and Denmark).

Julian Baker has authored *The Bowen Technique* and *Bowen Unravelled*<sup>29</sup> and two journal articles on hamstring and fascial plasticity (entered in the research compilation put together by the Bowen Association of Australia (BAA) (Section I)).



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<sup>27</sup> European College of Bowen Studies <http://www.thebowentechnique.com/>

<sup>28</sup> In Baker J, 2001, *The Bowen Technique*, Corpus Publishing, Gloucestershire, United Kingdom

<sup>29</sup> Ibid and Baker J, 2013, *Bowen Unravelled*, Lotus Publishing Chichester United Kingdom



**National Bowen Training®<sup>30</sup>** (NBT) was established in Ohio USA by Gene Hummel. First introduced to Bowen Therapy in 1989 in Phoenix Arizona with Bowtech® and Ossie Rentsch, Gene Hummel furthered his training with Milton Albrecht doing Advanced Bowen at *Bowen Training International* after it was established in 1997. Vice President Larry Dickey and Linda Neff are associate instructors for NBT.

**Professional Massotherapy Inc** (and **Bowen** Soft tissue release): operated since 1998 by President Larry Dickey providing Bowen therapy, massage and other soft tissue therapies.

**Bowtech® Bowen Akademie Europa** : Manfred Zainzinger was instrumental in setting up *Bowen Akademie Europa*. In Australia Zainzinger trained with Bowtech® becoming an instructor in 1995. He returned to his native Austria in 1998 to establish an Academy<sup>31</sup>, teach and found a number of Bowtech® affiliated Bowen academy/associations in the region.

These today include bases in Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Poland, Republics of Czechoslovakia and Slovakia and Russia.<sup>32</sup>

Zainzinger also instructs for the BowNed school (refer BowNed school below).



The listing of therapists on *Bowen Akademie Europa's* website totals 637. The majority are in Germany (578) and of the remainder, Switzerland (47) and Austria (12). Their graduate numbers are expected to form part of the earlier graduate numbers for the Bowtech® school.

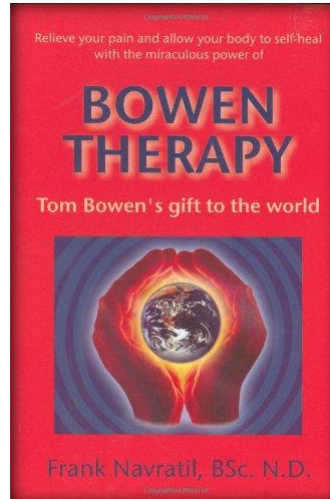
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<sup>30</sup> Gene Hummel's National Bowen Training <http://www.nationalbowen.com/>

<sup>31</sup> Zainzinger, M and Knoll S, *Bowtech the original Bowen technique* (nd)

<sup>32</sup> Bowen Akademie Europa <http://www.bowen-akademie.com/cms/>

Frank Navratil BSc and ND, a Czech Canadian based in Prague since 1997, operates an *International School on Natural Medicine*®. An expert in Iridology and other aspects of natural medicine he was introduced to the Bowen method in the 1990's and wrote a book about it: *Bowen Therapy, Tom Bowen's gift to the world*<sup>33</sup>.



Neurostructural Integration Technique (NST) ®: Michael Nixon-Livy of Melbourne, Australia, a doctor of Chiropractic and Osteopathy launched (NST) in France in 1996 after he developed the technique in 1995<sup>34</sup>.

Training DVDs and video clips are available on NST's website.<sup>35</sup>

Overseas instructors include Dr Patricia Cole, Tim Willcocks, David Howells, Sue Gassick, Linda Craig, Annie Waugh, Burkhard Behm and Anke Shilling teaching in UK, the USA and Germany.

BowNed®, Bowen Centre Netherlands and Belgium<sup>36</sup> was established in 1998 with the aim of teaching Bowen Therapy in the Benelux (the geographic regional union of Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg). Under Director Charles Aerssens, a multi skilled team of 12 instructors delivers training for the school. The teaching team includes Joanne Avison, Krista Anne Blom, Marja van der Ende, Annette Heigden, Jacqui

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<sup>33</sup> Navratil, F, 2003, *Bowen Therapy, Tom Bowen's gift to the world* Return to Health Books, <http://www.irisdiagnosis.net/en-bow/books.shtml>

<sup>34</sup> NST Website <http://www.nsthealth.com/>

<sup>35</sup> NST DVDs <http://www.nsthealth.com/catalog/dvd-training>

<sup>36</sup> BowNed website <http://www.bowned.nl/>

Hoitingh, Daniele-Claude Martine, Ron Phelan, Alastair Rattray, John SD Reference, John Wilks and Manfred Zainzinger.

**CYMA®:** In 1999 John Wilks trained as a Bowtech® instructor, and established CYMA.<sup>37</sup> He teaches widely in the UK and internationally and is a well known presenter at Bowtech® conferences.

Through CYMA's webinars John Wilks makes accessible to the international professional Bowen community a range of speakers who present on topics pertinent to Bowen Therapy and to professional development.

Wilks has authored the "*Understanding the Bowen Technique*" and "*The Bowen Technique the inside story*" and produced several educational DVDs (available on CYMA's website). *Inside story* has sold 4 000 copies plus another 1 500 in German. The booklet below has sold 40 000 copies with an additional 5000 in German.



Another book co-authored with Isobel Knight is pending titled: "*Using the Bowen technique to address common and complex conditions – a guide for health professionals and clients*". The book is due for release sometime in the near future.

**The Deutshes Zentrum for Bowen Therapie ( DZBT) ®-** In 1999 medical practitioner Tobias Hauser established the forerunner organisation set up in association with the Australia-based school International School of Bowen Therapy (ISBT). In 2009 the partnership ceased and DZBT now independently carries out Bowen Instruction and represents practitioners from all schools including ISBT, Bowtech ®, NST and Tom Bowen Therapy (TBT).<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Wilks J, *Understanding the Bowen technique* 2004 and Wilks J *The Bowen Technique the Inside Story*, CYMA, Dorset 2007 [www.cyma.org.uk](http://www.cyma.org.uk) and [www.therapy-training.com](http://www.therapy-training.com)

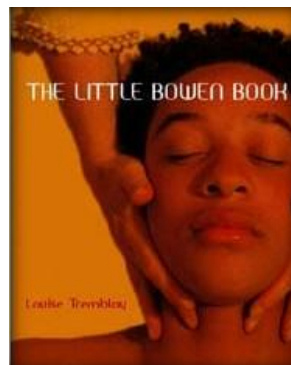
<sup>38</sup> The Deutshes Zentrum for Bowen Therapie ( DZBT)- <http://www.bowentherapie.de/dzbt/>

**Fascia Bowen School®:** around 2003, this school was established by Howard Plummer. This school distinguishes its Bowen therapy style by a feather light touch and a focus on fascial aspects<sup>39</sup>. From 2014, the Plummer school teaching will be delivered by Jo Wortley.

**The Bowen School®:** Anneke Loode launched her *School for Healthcare professionals* in 2003. Until 2005 teacher training with the late Jocelin Tennant followed and later with Emmett technique. In 2014 **De Bowen School** (in The Netherlands) is now relaunched with a new format and structure".<sup>40</sup> The school offers instruction in the UK, Netherlands and Croatia.

**L'Académie Internationale des Méthodes Thérapeutiques Contemporaines®.** (International academy of contemporary therapeutic methods (AIMTC))<sup>41</sup>. In 2000 Louise Tremblay trained as a Bowtech® instructor and in 2004 established the AIMTC school. AIMTC operates internationally and independently, predominantly in Canada, France, Belgium and Spain teaching to physiotherapists and Osteopaths as well as Bowen therapists.

The popular "Hidden Pearls" physiology and anatomy workshop is taught to hundreds of practitioners in Europe, America and Australia. Louise has published the *Little Bowen Book* for general readership, now translated into 6 languages, including English, French and German with thousands of copies sold.



**Art of Bowen®** Independent instructor Alastair McLoughlin, a Bowtech® Instructor from 1998-2005 was instrumental until 2001 in introducing Bowen to Italy, Norway, Spain and Cyprus. Through Art of Bowen<sup>42</sup>, Alastair is now teaching in the UK and Europe with

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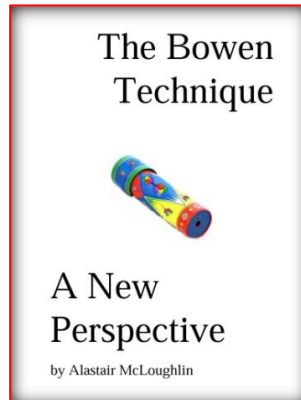
<sup>39</sup> Howard Plummer <http://bowentechnique.eu/blog/tag/howard-plummer/>

<sup>40</sup> The Bowen School/Debowenschool [www.thebowenschool.com](http://www.thebowenschool.com) and [www.debowenschool.nl](http://www.debowenschool.nl)

<sup>41</sup> AIMTC [http://www.aimtc.ca/aimtc/aimtc\\_fr.htm](http://www.aimtc.ca/aimtc/aimtc_fr.htm)

<sup>42</sup> Art of Bowen <http://www.theartofbowen.co.uk/>

upcoming international workshops in the USA already scheduled in 2014 and interest shown in his course in Australia and New Zealand. The teaching distinguishes itself by encouraging lateral thinking and “*working it out for ourselves*” and moving away from a formulaic approach to Bowen work. Various assessments of the body are applied with the aim “... *an individual, unique treatment should unfold for each unique subject under the hands of the practitioner.*”



## 2. Australian Schools

Two of Tom’s “Boys” undertook some teaching in Australia, but did not establish their own schools. Kevin Ryan, one of the apprentices who had observed Tom Bowen at his clinic in its later period undertook some early teaching in 1984. This is understood to have involved a small group of students who were taught Bowen’s work that year over a 6-8 month period and involving 1 day of instruction per month<sup>43</sup>.

Kevin Ryan later introduced Bowen Therapy into tertiary education to students of Osteopathy at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and taught Tom Bowen’s technique for 9 years as the “*the only truly Australian osteopathic technique taught at any osteopathic institution*”. Kevin Ryan states that these courses were “*a world first at RMIT and represented the beginning of the long process of the recognition of a genius who in time will stand shoulder to shoulder with all of the other great originators of osteopathic thought and technique*”.

Today, Kevin Ryan offers occasional workshops restricted to qualified practitioners. His website describes a number of features of Bowen therapy common to Osteopathy.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Information from Graham Pennington’s Bowen Seminars notes.

<sup>44</sup> Geelong Natural Healing Centre [www.gnhc.com.au/](http://www.gnhc.com.au/)



In the early 2000's Romney Smeeton (one of the 6 notable Bowen clinic observers/apprentices) and Ross Emmett gave presentations on "*What Tom Said*". The early teachings were not on a wide scale. Ross Emmett now teaches his interpretation of Tom Bowen's work as TBT 101 (*Tom Bowen Therapy 101*). Today, TBT 101 is available in Australia and overseas through instructors with the Emmett School.

Meanwhile, Bowtech® teaching of Bowen therapy flourished overseas and separate schools and training concerns came into being. In Australia in the late 1980's- 1990's other schools were emerging in parallel<sup>45</sup>:

**Fascial Kinetics®**: after a period spent working with Ossie Rentsch of Bowtech®, in 1987 Russell Sturgess set up the forerunner to *Fascial Kinetics* a school name which was adopted in 1991 and registered 1992.

Russell Sturgess was then a remedial therapist who is described by the successors of his school and others as being "*one of the earliest pioneers who researched the properties of fascia and recognised its key importance in managing and maintaining health in the whole body*".

Since 2006 the Fascial Kinetics school has been operated by Lynne Hunter and Mark Brown from New Zealand. In New Zealand they are assisted by a third instructor Barry Vautier and have further three on the teaching team: Maxine Smith, Pat Piper and Moira Jensen based in Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia respectively.<sup>46</sup>

**Fascial Therapy (now Bowen Seminars®)**: was established by Graham Pennington in 1992 with 260 therapists trained before 1998. A teaching collaboration with the Southern School of Natural Therapies, (one of the major natural therapies colleges in the Southern Hemisphere) saw Bowen technique offered under "Fascial Therapy" as an elective for six years for students enrolled in naturopathy or massage. An additional estimated 250 + students took the opportunity to be trained at this time.

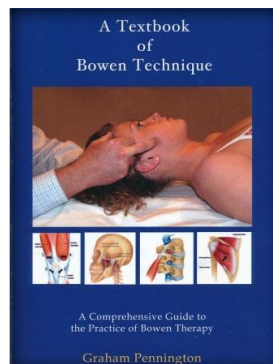
Today Graham Pennington is an independent instructor teaching Bowen Seminars<sup>47</sup> in Australia and internationally in New Zealand, USA, the UK and with workshops scheduled in 2014 in Croatia, Holland, South Africa and Singapore where his course "*The importance of symmetry*" is well received.

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<sup>45</sup> Chronological information largely drawn from the Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC) website <http://www.asic.gov.au/> and other websites including websites of schools and professional associations

<sup>46</sup> Fascial Kinetics: <http://www.fascialkinetics.com/>

<sup>47</sup> Bowen Seminars: <http://www.bowenseminars.com.au/>



**Neurostructural Integration Technique (NST) ®:** (established in 1995 and described earlier in the **overseas schools** section) has a teaching base in Geelong, Australia headed up by senior instructor Ron Phelan. Ron Phelan trained in the Bowen technique in 1996 and provides accredited training in Australia and internationally in the UK, USA, Canada and New Zealand and Europe.<sup>48</sup> Within Australia there are 6 instructors instructing in NST including Shayne Sullivan, Angela Lane, Robert Monro, Marianne Grainger and Wendy Eyles.

**Smart Bowen®:** After an introduction to Bowtech® Bowen in 1992 and already qualified in Remedial Massage, in 1998 Brian Smart commenced teaching under the name of Kelda Lea Bowen Therapy Centre, changing to Smart Bowen ®<sup>49</sup> in November of 2002. The first equine program was run in 1999.

The school has 10 instructors nationally within Australia and New Zealand. In addition to Brian and Lea Smart, these are Maggie Wright, Laura Bird, Jennifer Taylor, Rosalie Griniham, Maya Zenith, Helen Anderson, Kylie Smith, and Allan Edwards. Two instructors are based in the UK: Randy Barber who also teaches Human Smart Bowen ® through the Bowen College in Canada and Lindsay Holder in the UK who specialises in Smart Bowen's ® Equine Bowen Therapy (EBT).

**International School of Bowen Therapy (ISBT)** was founded by Directors Col Murray and Lisa Black. ISBT got underway in November 1998 after an earlier introduction to Bowtech® in 1990. ISBT-Bowen therapy is *"based on the principles and practices of their understanding of the work of Australian bodywork genius Tom Bowen 1916-1982"*. Elsewhere on their website ISBT describe their philosophy as based on the osteopathic

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<sup>48</sup> Neuro Structural Integration Technique (NST) <http://www.facebook.com/notes/bowen-therapy-worldwide/introducing-ron-phelan/577127579045181>

<sup>49</sup> Smart Bowen college [www.smartbowen.com](http://www.smartbowen.com)

principle that the structure of the body governs its function. Correcting the structure to improve overall wellbeing is often the aim.<sup>50</sup> ISBT also offers course in equine and canine Bowen. Training is available in Australia and New Zealand via 5 course coordinators, Frances Walsh, Gary Spencer, Jaya Lisa Saunders and Jane Allen. Seven international coordinators taking care of training in New Zealand, Hong Kong, China, UK, Portugal, Germany, Switzerland and Brazil. These are Cheryl Cunningham, Sabine Escher, Andrea Leb, Helena Quinta and Camila Henriques. On their website is a free chapter of their 2010 book *"In Search of Tom Bowen"*.

**Ross Emmett's Tom Bowen Therapy (TBT) 101®:** In 1988 Ross Emmett was introduced to Bowen therapy and worked with Bowtech® as a Bowen instructor 1997-2006. In 1999 Ross Emmett established his Emmett therapy<sup>51</sup> with registration in Queensland and on a wider scale around 2000. Emmett technique itself is not Bowen therapy, but it is well accepted as a complementary adjunct to Bowen within the professional Emmett/Bowen community.

Ross Emmett promotes this integration and teaches *Tom Bowen Therapy TBT 101*<sup>52</sup> is now taught solely through Emmett school and further facilitates the links between both. Ross Emmett's school is supported by six Australia-based instructors: Astrid Haase, Sandra Parker, Rick Cuthbert, Tim Donehue, Karen MacKenzie and Colleen Kelly.

**Academy of Integrated Therapies®** (formerly the Australian College of Myopractic) was established in 2001 by Chiropractor and Osteopath Neil Skilbeck. Another visitor to Tom Bowen's clinic in the late 1970's Skilbeck first started his classes as *The Bowen Approach*<sup>53</sup>.

**Border College of Natural Therapies®** (BCNT) was registered in 2003 and established as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO). This involves a rigorous process that requires compliance with the demands of the Australian National Qualifications Framework.<sup>54</sup> Since 2004 BCNT has operated exclusively under licence to Bowtech® to deliver Bowen Therapy training throughout Australia at Certificate IV and Diploma levels. College directors Michael Quinlivan and Karen Hedrick administer and deliver

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<sup>50</sup> International School of Bowen Therapy <http://www.bowen-therapy.com/>

<sup>51</sup> Emmett Technique <http://www.rossemmett.com.au/>

<sup>52</sup> Ross Emmett Discussing TBT 101: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nErvGdNjGbl>

<sup>53</sup> Academy of Integrated Therapies: <http://aoit.com.au/about-us/>

<sup>54</sup> Border College of Natural Therapies <http://bowen.bcnet.net.au/> RTO Registered Training Organisation under the Australian Qualifications Framework <http://www.asqa.gov.au/about/national-vet-regulation/australian-qualifications-framework.html>

training themselves and through a large network of Bowtech® instructors. Over 32 Australian instructors, too numerous to mention individually by name here, are listed on Bowen Training Australia's website<sup>55</sup>. The overseas instructors are a team involving Ossie and Elaine Rentsch, (directors of Bowtech®), John Wilks, Louise Tremblay, Alexia Monroe and Nancy Pierson.

The college has continued to maintain its RTO status and in 2014, appears to be the only RTO delivering nationally recognised Bowen Therapy in Australia at certificate and Diploma level.<sup>56</sup> The most recent audit shows that since the inception of Nationally Recognised Training, BCNT has produced over 2000 graduates.

**Australasian Academy of Wellness®** (Western Australia): in 2006 the Academy was an RTO then affiliated with the Bowen Therapists Federation of Australia. It formerly delivered a course in Advanced Myofascial Techniques and now the Certificate and Diploma Level training in Advanced Musculoskeletal Therapy<sup>57</sup>.

At this time basic weekend and evening 1-2 day introductory workshops are offered in Bowen: Bowen Therapy 1 and Bowen Therapy 2 and these provide a certificate of completion.

An Advanced Diploma in Bowen is registered in WA on the nationally recognised training website, however, there does not appear to be a college listed to deliver the training. For further information enquiries are directed to the Bowen Therapists Federation of Australia (BTFA).<sup>58</sup>

In Australia the Bowtech® school is represented by the Bowen Association of Australia (BAA), while the remainder of the Australia based schools fall under the umbrella of the BTFA.

Relevant information about the usual BTFA-endorsed schools is not available on the association's website at the moment<sup>59</sup>. Instead the association cautions prospective

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<sup>55</sup> Bowen Training Australia <http://www.bowentraining.com.au/bowen-therapy-instructors>

<sup>56</sup> Certificate IV <http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/22004VIC> and Diploma of Specialised Bowen Therapy <http://training.gov.au/Training/Details/22006VIC>

<sup>57</sup> Australasian Academy of Wellness <http://www.aaowt.edu.au/>

<sup>58</sup> Status of Bowen training in Australia as at 9 April 2014 <http://tinyurl.com/odj6frk>

<sup>59</sup> Bowen Therapists Federation of Australia and BTFA and schools it recognises... <http://www.bowen.asn.au/training/schools/>

students to carefully assess the non-Bowen subject components of courses on offer, especially the anatomy and physiology training and to ensure that they meet the standard required of RTO's under the Australian National Health Training Package.

All of the International and Australian schools or courses described above (with the exception of workshop offerings by Kevin Ryan and Romney Smeeton) shared a common inspiration and origins – the early firsthand demonstrations, training and interpretation of Tom Bowen's work as presented by Ossie Rentsch of Bowtech®, one of Tom Bowen's six "Boys".

In a training and technical sense the offshoots and development of the several Bowen Schools are a reflection of the layers of theory around to explain Bowen therapy – a modality that in its application appears relatively simple. The differences between the schools is described at section G.

#### **G. Over 40 000 trained therapists**

The figure of >40 000 (**40 736** minimum) for trained therapists worldwide is drawn only from the graduation statistics for several schools as follows and does not include total figures for BTI, nor NBT and excludes graduation statistics for BCNT on the assumption that these would have been accounted for in the Bowtech® figures:

Bowtech® (longest running, established 1986), 26 000 in 2009 (around 1 130 pa) resulting in an estimated **30 500** graduates by 2014

Bowen Therapy International (BTI)®: (Milton Albrecht (1948-2003) ) In 4 years graduated **300**, the total could not be established for all of the instructors of BTI.

European School of Bowen Studies® (ECBS established early 1990's) (2013 figures) **5 500**

Neurostructural Integration Technique (NST)® (established 1996) **1 252**

Vibro Harmonisation Technique (VHT)® (established 1996) **26**

BowNed® (Centre for Bowen, Netherlands and Belgium established 1998) **(97)**

US Bowen®: Neural Touch®/Bowen Bridge® USA : **350** students have graduated directly through Neural Touch® and Bowen Bridge®<sup>60</sup> (though these are subsumed in various

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<sup>60</sup> Pers Comm. Dobkin to Strachan



USA directories).<sup>61</sup> Other graduate figures are assumed to be part of the figures for the other schools e.g., while with Bowtech<sup>®</sup>, between 1992-1998 Dobkin taught around 1023 students, and during 2 years afterwards taught a further 445 students for NST.

National Bowen Training USA (NBT)<sup>®</sup>: specific student numbers were not available at the time of writing though qualified graduate are subsumed in various USA directories.<sup>62</sup> Smart Bowen<sup>®</sup> (established in 1998), (including human (1881), small animal (93) and equine (587)) **2 561**

The Bowen School/De Bowen School<sup>®</sup> (started in 2003) **150**

Border College of Natural Therapies<sup>®</sup> as stated above the school has graduated **2000** students since the inception of Nationally Accredited Training. (As noted this figure has not been included in the **40 736** tally).

The number of people over the world who have been treated by a Bowen therapist would reach many thousands to millions overall.

Milton Albrecht, was first trained in 1989 and started teaching Bowen overseas and in the USA. Soon after he established his own USA School, *Bowen Therapy International* in 1997 (BTI- operating since 1999). He qualified some 300 graduates under BTI before he died in January 2003. According to his wife Deni Larimore-Albrecht, he alone treated 7 800 people a year with Bowen (based on 25 treatments a day and a 6 day week). On a radio interview available on the BTI website, 75,000 treatments were given by Milton in the decade when took up work with the therapy.

The average practitioner is not treating this many people. If each of the 40 000+ graduates treated only 3 people a week, that is 150 people a year (a very conservative figure), this alone amounts to 6.0 million treatments a year, and over a 10 year period 60 million.

If only 50% (20,000) are assumed to be running practices and seeing just 20 people a week (400k a week overall) this amounts to 19.2 million treatments per year, reaching 192 million in a decade.

In a world with a human population that has just passed 7 billion these statistics give an indication of the staggering legacy that started with Tom Bowen's style of body work.

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<sup>61</sup> Country and association/school directories <http://www.allbowentherapyworldwide.com/page6.htm>

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*

Many in the mainstream benefit from Bowen Therapy, and reports are increasing of uptake by prominent athletes and celebrities which all helps to make Bowen Therapy a household name. The technique has an excellent track record in the treatment of horses and small animals too. If treatments from Equine and animal Bowen were included, the volume of treatments and impact of Bowen therapy worldwide would be much higher.

#### **H. Features of Bowen therapy and variations in teaching between the schools**

In 1973 at a parliamentary enquiry, Tom Bowen was stated to be treating a staggering 13000 people a year (based on the official survey done at his clinic by the Enquiry) and by his own measure stated an 88% success rate.<sup>63</sup> Some teachings such as *Bowen Seminars* based on this and observation work Smeeton's clinic aspire to work like Tom did with a faster targeted approach based on structural and tension assessments and balances.

Romney Smeeton one of Tom's students records in a forward to Pennington's textbook the remarks of Rene Horwood after Tom Bowen's death in 1982 that *"although he may have taken many of his secrets with him, he had imparted the basics of his approach in his "boys", and we had to work the rest out from there"*

Smeeton further states that Tom Bowen's approach was "not prescriptive" in practice, though it is appreciated now that to be teachable Ossie Rentsch transformed his shorthand record of "snapshots" into a series of systemised moves. These were first published by Bowtech® in 1987 as *"The Bowen Technique, an interpretation by Oswald Rentsch"*.

The majority of practitioners around the world are Bowtech-trained and apply a series of foundation relaxation procedures to which are added procedures that address specific complaints, each requiring their own prerequisite procedures. Other schools apply Bowen in a similar way. These can involve quick fixes though the majority of treatments are longer- up to an hour or so allowing for preparatory verbal consultation. Many clinics are comfortable with this as they have adapted to needs of the mentally stressed client of today and their expectation of longer sessions to relax and harmonise. This places the autonomic system in parasympathetic mode to improve homeostasis and hormone imbalance. Some practitioners will employ both approaches depending

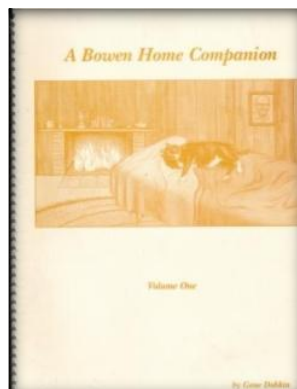
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<sup>63</sup> Transcript reprinted in full in Pennington G (2012) Pennington, Graham 2012 *A Textbook of the Bowen Technique*, Barker Deane Publishing, Victoria Australia <http://www.bowenseminars.com.au/>  
Appendix 1, Transcript of Proceedings Osteopathy, Chiropractic and Naturopathy, committee at Geelong 8 October 1973..  
<http://www.bowenseminars.com.au/>

on their training and on their clients' presentation and needs. Association policies permitting, therapists are more often seeking training from more than one of the Bowen schools in order to enrich their understanding of evolving Bowen theory, interpretation and clinical application.

It was Gene Dobkin in 1998/1999 who first published reflections on broader correspondences in the Bowen technique and remarked *"One reason doing this charting was so interesting to me was the richness it shows even in the basic Bowen routines. So many body functions are being stimulated, you can see why it's not usually necessary to load on extra procedures"*.

In *A Bowen Home Companion*<sup>64</sup> Gene Dobkin of USBowen prepared and published a comprehensive table called "Point Comparison Chart" that provides a succinct summary of the correlations between the points where Bowen moves are made. These points include acupoints, Chapman's neurolymphatic points (listed separately for muscles and organs), applied kinesiology (identifies the muscles that Bowen points are on) and muscle trigger points/referred pain from the work of Dr Janet Travell.



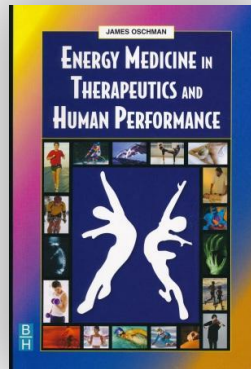
Bowen technique forms the core of USBowen *Neural Touch*<sup>®</sup>. In *Neural Touch*<sup>®</sup> Bowen is supported by integration of the many other correspondences recognised in the *Bowen Home Companion* and more. The elements include cranial technique, myofascial technique, neurolymphatic and neuromuscular technique, polarity therapy and positional release technique. Further detail on each of these is available on the website of the USBowen school.<sup>65</sup>

*Neural Touch*<sup>®</sup> incorporates energetic aspects. Bowtech<sup>®</sup> also recognises vibrational elements through reference to the work of James Oschmann (refer Bowtech<sup>®</sup> website).

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<sup>64</sup> Dobkin, Gene 1998/99 *A Bowen Home Companion*, volume 11, no publisher but available through mail order from <http://www.usbowen.com/BHC.html>

<sup>65</sup> For more details about the elements of Neural Touch visit <http://www.usbowen.com/element.html#2>



Nixon Livy developed NST Spinal Integration after he was inspired by the effectiveness of certain chiropractic and osteopathic approaches. In 1988, after an introduction through Bowtech<sup>®</sup> to the work of Tom Bowen, who he describes as “*the Australian soft tissue osteopathic genius*”, traditional and soft tissue approaches were incorporated into the NST spinal integration system. Further research followed and additional experimentation with the work of Major Bertrand De Jarnette’s SOT (*Sacro Occipital Technique*). By using advanced kinesiological testing techniques over 4 years, Nixon Livy states that the ‘complementary components’ of both Bowen’s and De Jarnette’s systems were melded to give rise to NST -S.O.T cranial work

Brian Smart developed Smart Bowen<sup>®</sup> after exploring the correlations between trigger points, acupuncture and acupressure and the co-relationship of these with Bowen therapy. Smart Bowen incorporates trigger points, proprioceptive neuromuscular facilitation stretching (PNF), myofascial adhesion release, lymphatic theory and vibrational medicine<sup>66</sup>.

ISBT embraces the osteopathic tenet on the reciprocal relationship of structure and function and is oriented to releasing fascial and visceral dysfunction with a minimalist approach<sup>67</sup>. There is no overt mention of acupoints, meridians, trigger points, PNF or any of the other elements incorporated in the teachings of the other schools.

Today Bowtech<sup>®</sup>’s 2007 Cert IV Training Manual states that Bowen therapy influences the body’s stretch reflex, joint proprioceptors, visceral somatic spinal reflexes, acupuncture points and meridians and fascia, and induces lymphatic drainage/detoxification. It too advocates “less is best”.

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<sup>66</sup> Smart Bowen, <http://www.smartbowen.com/athuman.php>

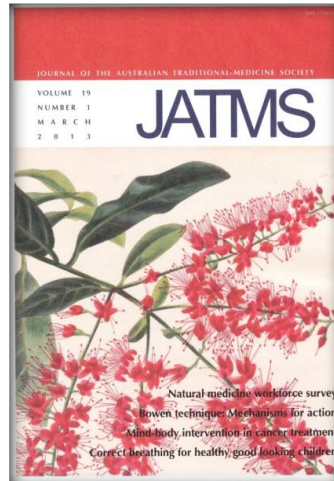
<sup>67</sup> ISBT website <http://www.bowen-therapy.com/>

Current Bowtech® teaching in Australia (under license through Border College of Natural Therapies®) firmly embraces modern fascial research, myofascial/anatomy trains, energy meridians and their associated kinesiology muscle testing elements, muscle firing patterns, and includes orthopaedic testing and rehabilitation. The recognition of Bowen move points as placed over individual acupoints and trigger points is not particularly emphasised.

Schools such as Fascial Kinetics and ECBS are primarily focused on fascial perspectives.<sup>68</sup> ECBS in particular is focused on current research on fascia –and the school's focus is being aligned to reflect this by teaching *Bowen Fascial Release Technique*<sup>69</sup>.

All Bowen schools, massage and osteopathic schools and practitioners of other forms of bodywork are learning from modern fascial research. New understandings are emerging from consideration of previously unappreciated and unknown properties of fascial tissue, along with deeper insights into the role and effect of stimulation of mechanoreceptors and how they generate healing or reparative responses.

John Wilks, a prominent Bowtech® instructor and educator at CYMA® discusses mechanisms of action in his paper in the Journal of the Australian Traditional Medicine Society<sup>70</sup>.



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<sup>68</sup> Baker, J, 2013, Bowen Unravelling, a journey into the fascial understanding of the Bowen Technique Lotus publishing available from ECBS (Refer footnote 19)

<sup>69</sup> Bowen Fascial Release Technique – ECBS <http://www.facebook.com/ECBSBowen>

<sup>70</sup> Wilks, J, (2013), Bowen technique, mechanisms for action: Journal of the Australian Traditional Medicine Society March 2013, Vol 10, Number1,



Appreciation of this action was presented earlier – in a 2004 booklet and in the 2007 book *Inside Story* Refer footnote <sup>24</sup>. The 2007 book also devotes a large section to Mae Wan HO's work on fascia and acupuncture.



At the AIMTC®, through the development and the teaching of continuing education classes such as "the Hidden Pearls" in the Bowen Therapy program, students learn how cutaneous stimulation (touch) and its effects on the fascial properties of mechano-transduction, reach and deeply influence the Central Nervous System. The Hidden Pearls gives students a deeper insight into the links between the fasciae, the nervous system, the lymphatic system and Bowen procedures. The teaching is richly illustrated with high quality anatomical information and up to date information about fascia.

Graham Pennington's 2012 work *A Textbook of the Bowen technique* (refer footnote <sup>42</sup>) illustrates in substantial detail the correlation between acupoints and Bowen moves with full colour illustrations. A holistic approach is advocated and based on osteopathic principles. A key aspect is assessment of structural symmetry and use of palpation skills. Once dysfunctional tissue states are found, and after consideration of whether Bowen is an appropriate strategy for the presenting complaint, a targeted Bowen procedure is applied to return the body to balance. This involves finding the "sustaining muscle spasm" that is affecting the structural symmetry and balance of the body. The work draws on substantial clinical observation of 2 of the 6 "Boys" that saw Bowen at work, in particular Romney Smeeton at his busy Geelong practice. The other is Kevin Ryan.

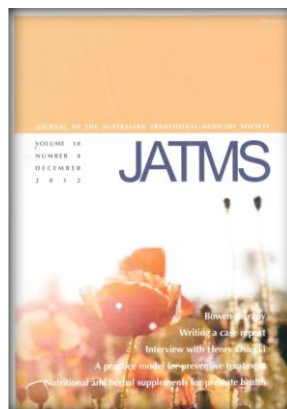
Some Bowen trainers today primarily see Bowen therapy as a musculo- skeletal technique that addresses structural imbalances and structural symmetry. This approach is popular and a more accepted approach in eg a sports performance environment or where the practitioner prefers to work with Bowen solely in regards to postural/ structural balance and to reduce symptoms of myofascial pain and discomfort.

In a clinic aligned to a western paradigm of health, beneficial effects on the endocrine system and in return the hormonal activity that controls all aspects of health and wellbeing are seen to be derived from effects on the autonomic nervous system and

immune system. These effects are through the calming of the sympathetic “fight/flight” activity which occurs during a treatment and initiating the “rest/digest” of the parasympathetic mode.

Others versed in acupoints, and trigger points and spinal reflexes use these elements to explain the beneficial effect of a Bowen treatment – its deeper energetic effects in releasing myofascial tensions and neural dysfunctions that create disease within the body’s systems. With this work, disease states driven by hormonal and immune system dysfunction can be assisted to balance and restore optimal function.

A 2012 journal article by Katrina (Kate) Pennington reviews the Bowen therapy profession and among issues raised are the holistic principles of osteopathy – a modality that Tom Bowen embraced - at least as far as its philosophical underpinnings are concerned - by adopting the title of Osteopath. The tenets of osteopathy recognise that the body functions as an integrated, whole unit, structure and function share a reciprocal relationship, the human body has an innate capacity for self regulation and healing and therapeutic intervention is based on understanding these three tenets<sup>71</sup>.



Kevin Ryan and Osteopath and coming from the osteopathic manipulative perspective acknowledges the Bowen technique involves cross fibre connective tissue manipulation, and some of the techniques are lever assisted. Stating that the technique influences the stretch reflex he reflects: *“In this respect Bowen’s work has something in common with Muscle Energy Technique (MET) and Balanced Ligamentous Tension (BLT) for example”*. MET and BLT are techniques used by Osteopaths and body workers alike.

Tom Bowen’s adoption of the title of “Osteopath” was for very good reason though many seek to dismiss this on the basis he simply adopted the title as there was no name

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<sup>71</sup> Pennington, K, (2012), Bowen therapy a: A review of the Profession: Journal of the Australian Traditional Medicine Society December 2012, Vol 18, Number 4,

around for the work he did. He was able to do this as Osteopathy was an unregulated profession when he started practice. After the 1973 enquiry that led to registration, Tom Bowen unfortunately failed the formal qualifying examination. In recognition of the success and efficacy of his work he was officially allowed to continue practice, but not as an Osteopath, so simply took on the title of “alternative therapist”.<sup>72</sup>

**I. Versatility of the therapy: from home or main street practice, primary care to areas war-torn or affected by environmental disaster.**

Bowen therapy is a versatile therapy that is adaptable to a variety of “treatment cultures” and settings. It is suitable for all age groups from babies to the older citizen and is effective for a range of conditions including musculoskeletal and a wide range of other health issues.

Today, Bowen therapists will conduct treatment sessions that can be quite short or up to an hour or more including consultation time. On this point therapists will inevitably come around to reflecting that as Tom Bowen was seeing a large number of people, he could not possibly have worked the way the many practitioners do in their 21<sup>st</sup> century clinics by dedicating up to an hour of clinic time to a client.

In practice Bowen is what the practitioner makes of it in response to client needs. It can be used as a short treatment structural balancer or be applied as a relaxing time-out or spa therapy. For this reason it has found its way into sports environments, gymnasiums and into beauty clinics, day spas, bodywork clinics and practices that fulfil the various niches in the bodywork and body therapy market.

Bowen therapy continues to strengthen its presence in the main stream – for instance the work of Paula Esson and her clinic-collaboration model with the UK’s National Health Service (NHS). Together with the University Hospital North Durham’s chronic pain services and the *Care closer to home strategy*, people suffering from chronic pain and who are under a doctor’s referral are treated in primary care settings<sup>73</sup>. This is found to better serve patient needs, deliver positive treatment outcomes and reduces reliance on hospital admissions.

Though a young therapy, Bowen therapists are increasingly finding themselves in service to their local and global communities in times of need: therapists are more often taking part and working with relief efforts in areas affected by natural disasters, poverty or in

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<sup>72</sup> From an 1999 article in the Geelong Advertiser [http://www.bowentechnique.org.uk/bowenlibrary\\_press\\_geelong.htm](http://www.bowentechnique.org.uk/bowenlibrary_press_geelong.htm)

<sup>73</sup> University of Durham hospital <http://www.healthnorth.co.uk/uhnd-pain-management-sacriston>

war torn areas that have left a legacy of emotional and physical trauma on victims.

Recent and current examples of Bowen therapists at work in areas affected by the ravages of war and natural disasters are Heather Graham who worked with her local neighbourhood in the Queensland Australia floods in 2011.<sup>74</sup> In that year too Miranda Lesley Gorst participated through the *Healing Hands Network* (UK)- a charity set up to work in Bosnia and with UK veterans<sup>75</sup>. In 2013 Mary MacFarlane, from the Midlothians in Scotland and likewise with the Network attended the Sarajevo Clinic to assist those still suffering from trauma and amputations from the Bosnia-Herzegovina conflict of 1992-1995.<sup>76</sup> In early 2014 Australian therapist-instructors Tina Price and Jane Murphy from New South Wales, spent 3 weeks in the Philippines, giving Bowen treatments to trauma victims of the Typhoon Haiyan( or “Yolanda” as it is known locally). Below at Villamor Airbase in Pasay City, many evacuees from Tacloban stayed in tent cities for 6 weeks or more and were given Bowen treatments<sup>77</sup>. A return visit is taking place later this year. Work in this area is also described by instructor Rita Hart-Smith<sup>78</sup>



Within the next 6 months, Leanne Meeny and Samantha Hamilton of *Bowen without Borders* will visit the Thai/Burma border to give Bowen therapy to children and adults in the NuPo refugee camp who have been traumatised by war. This work is occurring in partnership with Phil West, CEO of the PEACE Foundation. The PEACE Foundation takes

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<sup>74</sup> Page 24, Heather Graham’s story Bowen Hands March 2011 [http://bowtech.ro/wp-content/uploads/dt\\_intfc4f217e4ead0d2\\_4feda76000c61.pdf](http://bowtech.ro/wp-content/uploads/dt_intfc4f217e4ead0d2_4feda76000c61.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.healinghandsnetwork.org.uk/>

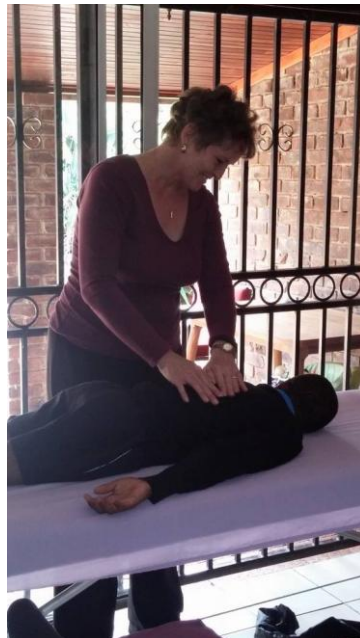
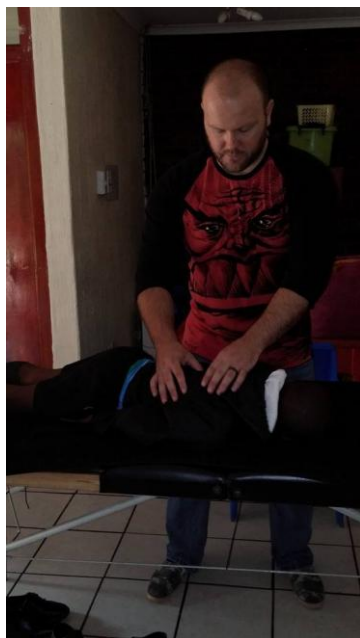
<sup>76</sup> <http://www.midlothianadvertiser.co.uk/news/local-news/midlothian-therapist-to-aid-bosnian-war-victims-1-3086793>

<sup>77</sup> Photo credit Tina Price Bonville Bowen, NSW Australia

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.bowentraining.com.au/personal-stories/bowen-therapy-disaster-victims-philippines>

art therapy to children living in refugee camps who have been exposed to war.

A recent initiative by Sean Johnson of The Bowen Clinic, Gauteng, South Africa and with Bowen colleagues Zirkia Fourie and Diane Strickett is focused on work in children's orphanages and homes<sup>79</sup>. Bowen treatments are given to children (babies to teenagers) who were abandoned due to poverty or the AIDS pandemic in South Africa.



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<sup>79</sup>Images next page courtesy of Sean Johnson The Bowen Clinic <http://www.facebook.com/seanjohnsonbowen>

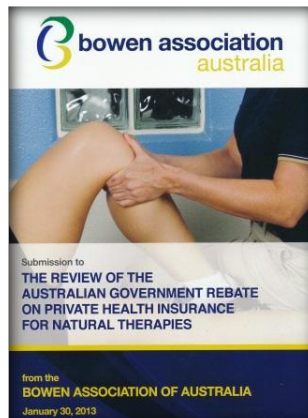


J. **Books, Research and articles**

The several books written on Bowen therapy illustrate this background. Also available are useful collations of peer reviewed research and published articles in periodicals and elsewhere.

In January 2013, the Bowen Association of Australia (BAA), and in response to an Australian government review of natural therapies, made a submission that presented evidence on the efficacy, effectiveness and safety of Bowen Therapy<sup>80</sup>.

The submission draws on articles and research specifically on Bowen therapy from all over the world including information available on the websites of professional associations. A selection of papers with scientific standing is drawn from material in EBSCO which hosts a vast array of databases including PubMed and other academic research databases<sup>81</sup>. Some of the research was of considered to be of sufficient calibre to be presented as meeting the stringent clinical research standards of the Review. The report also provides an appendix with a comprehensive listing of general research and articles published in various periodicals and magazines.



The Bowen Therapists Federation of Australia made a submission that focused on current information in fascial research.

This broader approach is explained in the introduction which states that “...Bowen had recognised an apparent common causal relationship in many seemingly unrelated painful conditions particularly musculoskeletal but including neurological and other

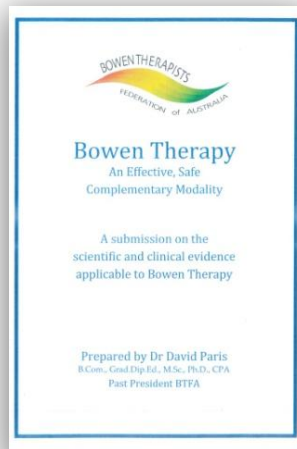
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<sup>80</sup> Bowen Association of Australia, Submission

[http://www.bowen.org.au/uploads/37613/ufiles/researchpapers/Bowen\\_Association\\_of\\_Australia\\_Submission\\_-\\_final.pdf](http://www.bowen.org.au/uploads/37613/ufiles/researchpapers/Bowen_Association_of_Australia_Submission_-_final.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> EBSCO <http://www.ebscohost.com/>

health problems. He identified the causal link or relationship as being the soft tissue or fascia".<sup>82</sup> Bowen-specific studies are listed on BTFA's website<sup>83</sup>



## **K. Other areas of Bowen, Equine and Canine/Small animal**

Tom Bowen is known to have applied his technique to animals including horses, cats and dogs.

Several schools teach equine and small animal Bowen along with Bowen for Humans. The list includes Bowtech®, Smart Bowen®, NST® and ISBT® and in related courses, Emmett Equus® and VHT®.

### **1. Equine Bowen**

Schools dedicated solely to teaching Equine Bowen Therapy include the Equine School of Learning and Research<sup>84</sup> and the European School of Equine Bowen Therapy<sup>85</sup>.

As Beth Darrell from the European School of Equine Bowen Therapy<sup>85</sup> states:

*"All horses are special in my eyes and over the years, all manner of equines have been treated. Whether it's a new foal, a hairy native pony, a show stallion, an excited thoroughbred race horse (and plenty of ex-race horses!), the heavy draught horses, ex-Police and army horses, donkeys and mules, show*

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<sup>82</sup> Bowen Therapists Federation of Australia Submission

[http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phi-natural-therapies-submissions-containerpage/\\$file/Bowen%20Therapists%20Federation%20of%20Australia.pdf](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phi-natural-therapies-submissions-containerpage/$file/Bowen%20Therapists%20Federation%20of%20Australia.pdf)

<sup>83</sup> Bowen studies on BTFA's website <http://www.bowen.asn.au/bowen-therapy/studies/>

<sup>84</sup> Equine Muscle Release Therapy <http://www.emrt.net.au/course-info.htm>

<sup>85</sup> European School of Equine Bowen Therapy [www.equinebowentherapy.com](http://www.equinebowentherapy.com)

*jumpers, eventers, polo ponies, driving ponies, happy hackers, elderly retired horses at the ends of their working lives - I've treated them all....*

*I can honestly say, that I feel privileged to have been able to combine my two passions of horses and healing; Bowen suits animals very well indeed, they soak it up like a sponge. I have also been able to give Bowen to cows, sheep, dogs, cats and even a pig. They just love the top and bottom stoppers!"*

A kindle book, *Bowen technique for horses* has been written by Charlotte Maguire<sup>86</sup> other books on Bowen for horses and animals are listed on the Bowen Directory<sup>87</sup>



## **2. Canine Bowen**

The European Guild of canine Bowen therapists<sup>88</sup> represents up to 118 or so therapists (some are represented in more than one area), the majority in the UK (63), followed by Switzerland (30), Netherlands (12), Austria (8), Germany (3), Lichtenstein (1), and Luxembourg (1).

Where Equine, canine and small animal therapists meet professional standards they are admitted as members of the same professional associations that represent therapists who specialise in Human Bowen therapy.

### **L. International registers and association, council and school directories**

The iBowen® international register developed by Louise Tremblay of Canada features a smart phone app (visit [www.ibowen.ca](http://www.ibowen.ca)). In addition to this international register, 20 individual association and 9 school directories have been found to exist. The website of [www.allbowentherapyworldwide.com](http://www.allbowentherapyworldwide.com) makes available in one place access to iBowen

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<sup>86</sup> Charlotte McGuire's kindle book *Bowen Technique for Horses* <http://tinyurl.com/kbu7w9f>

<sup>87</sup> Bowen Directory <http://bowendirectory.com/?p=9>

<sup>88</sup> European Guild of Canine Bowen Therapists <http://www.caninebowentechnique.com/>

and the range of directories. These will be updated as additional directories are located or are created. These are managed by associations, schools, and by overarching professional bodies such as the UK's Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council. In some cases they are managed by individuals on behalf of the profession. For instance, Pam Myers and David Bean manage two separate USA directories.<sup>89</sup>

**M. Celebrating Bowen therapy in social media and Bowen on the internet**

**1. Inaugural International Bowen Therapy Week (IBTW) 2014**

In April 2013 the idea was proposed on Bowen Therapy Worldwide Facebook Group to recognise Tom Bowen's 18 April birthday anniversary with tributes and testimonials to Tom Bowen and Bowen Therapy. At that stage Bowen Therapy Worldwide<sup>90</sup> was a newly formed group and the response was limited.

By Christmas when the group had reached around 800 members this idea was re-proposed but as a week-long international celebration to recognise Tom Bowen and promote and celebrate Bowen therapy.

This was to be accomplished by whatever activities and means practitioners wished to pursue – including articles on Bowen, Bowen clinic discounts, complimentary or by-donation Bowen treatments, specials and tasters, fundraising for the Tom Bowen Legacy Trust Fund, new initiatives, media and radio interviews, gatherings and public presentations to name a few.

It was proposed the week would finish on the anniversary of Tom Bowen's birthday (18<sup>th</sup> April). From this *International Bowen Therapy Week* (IBTW) was born. Bowen family member Merrin Wake was invited to be involved and took part in the project launch.

Integral to the overall concept was to realise a special 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration in 2016.

The inaugural 2014 event has drawn to a close with encouraging results. Activities of the IBTW are reported on the website of Bowen Therapy Worldwide and on a new

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<sup>89</sup> The USA Directories <http://bowendirectoryus.com/> and [www.bowendirectory.com](http://www.bowendirectory.com)

<sup>90</sup> Bowen Therapy Worldwide <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bowentherapyworldwide/>

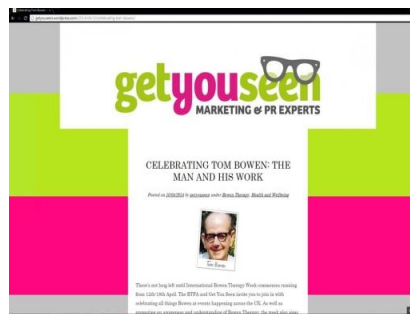
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©Prepared for Bowen Therapy Worldwide and Inaugural International Bowen Therapy Week 2014  
Shirley Strachan, ND, Bowen & Massage Therapist, & accredited Professional Historian, Geelong, Australia

Facebook page that will be further developed as the public education page for the Group and for Bowen Therapy generally. The website and page are linked by a plug in<sup>91</sup>.

A core group of Working Party members focused on critical promotional and communications activities to enable widespread awareness of the week and its purpose, while others delivered special project initiatives.

Key were Alastair McLoughlin (video and promotional posters), Louise Tremblay, (communications through iBowen® and free download of her *Little Bowen book*), Maggie Hebblethwaite-Sharp (e-donation mechanism for the *Tom Bowen Legacy Trust Fund* (supporting awareness of the Fund was among the week's priorities)), the BTPA (Claire Harrison) and BAA (Chris Reed) who assisted with raising awareness of the week with their respective association members. The BTPA also engaged marketing expertise via "get you seen", prepared a blog and placed promotional banners on its website.



Several other associations also offered their support and goodwill e.g. in Austria, Italy, and New Zealand. This offers positive prospects to build on for future events.

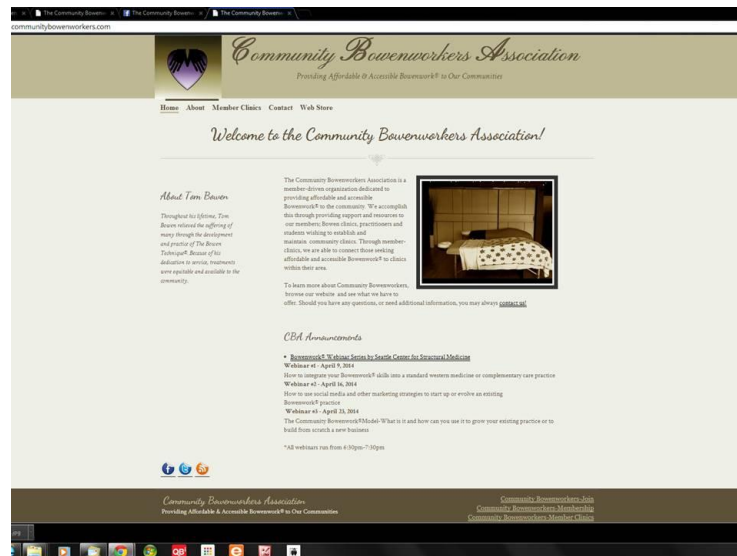
Appreciation goes to IBTW members who initiated specific projects for the week: Antonis Xiroudakis provided *gratis* a 3 day teaching workshop to a large group of therapists as a capacity building project in Greece, Sean Johnson, assisted by Zirka Fourie and Dianne Strickett, started an initiative taking Bowen therapy to children in charity-funded homes in South Africa. During the week this took place at the Ikholwa home where infants to teenager victims of poverty and the aids pandemic receive shelter and care, Kate Merritt with Susan Nicholls in Ballarat, Australia who hosted a public presentation on Bowen therapy at the Australian Catholic University, Dejana Matkovic and Mara Fotez in Zagreb Croatia who gave public presentations at the city library (recorded by Draženka Šarić Šimić)).

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<sup>91</sup> BTW International Bowen Therapy Week Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/BTW-International-Bowen-Therapy-Week/1425155974406789>



In Seattle USA, Rebecca Moorman launched the *Community Bowenworkers Association*. This new initiative is a member-driven organisation dedicated to providing affordable and accessible Bowenwork® to the community. Clinics, practitioners and students are able to join together to create community clinics and to provide affordable and accessible Bowenwork® clinics in their area.



In addition, numerous practitioners in various countries got involved with “pay it forward” activities and/or promoted Bowen in some way on their websites and social media pages.

Overall, the inaugural week achieved more than was expected given the short lead time (3<sup>1/2</sup> months) and the several language differences across the Bowen community. It resulted in a 25% participation rate in the international online event (from the 1000+ strong membership) and interest in joining the working party increased to around 10% participation in the lead up as people became aware of the event.

A public Facebook Page was set up on 16<sup>th</sup> April to capture all the activities taking place and attracted a steady flow of followers as the week reached its peak celebration day on 18<sup>th</sup> April.

For the benefit of future events, the inaugural year demonstrated the value and usefulness of organic relationships and fast networking through social media. This was accompanied by behind the scenes coordination by Bowen Therapy Worldwide administration team. For 2015 and beyond this platform can be expected to be combined with more formal involvement from the various professional associations, practitioner businesses and the schools.

## 2. Internet presence

Facebook started in February 2004. Today there are already 23 Bowen Therapy Groups around the world representing thousands of practitioners and some public members. Of the two larger groups, one, the Bowen Technique established by Julian Baker of the ECBS school has over 1800 members – therapists and public. It is an open group created prior to 2012, date unknown. Bowen Therapy Worldwide (BTW) was founded by Enys Evans just before Easter 2013. It also aims to share information about clinical application and experience of Bowen therapy and distinguishes its purpose having an practitioner-only (including students) membership policy, and inclusive of the approaches of all schools of Bowen Therapy. The Group respects the differences between the schools and the sharing of knowledge and problem solving. In its first year, the membership reached 1100 and is growing fast. The Group is supported by a website [www.allbowentherapyworldwide.com](http://www.allbowentherapyworldwide.com) and now the Facebook page created for for IBTW. By April 18 2014 the website it had attracted over 2339 site visits (it went live in the New Year) and many of these due to promotion by iBowen and through supporting IBTW.

A quick survey of YouTube uploads shows that there are thousands of videos available on the subject of Bowen therapy: for example 21 800 videos are loaded on the Bowen technique, 19 700 on Bowen treatment, 11 400 on Bowen therapy and many more.

YouTube was launched in February 2005 and this presence is quite impressive by any standards conveying as it does the enthusiasm and commitment of the Bowen community to raise awareness and understanding of Bowen Work.

Bowen therapists are increasingly putting Bowen bodywork on the map with an online presence -expressed through websites, Facebook business pages and groups, and tweets on twitter, directories, Google communities and more.

From a survey in early 2014 of therapist members on Bowen Therapy Worldwide it was established about 31% of members have Facebook Business Pages or a website (29%) dedicated to Bowen therapy. Late last year, Australian and UK members demonstrated the greatest online presence (30-40%) respectively, followed by the USA.

These figures to some extent represent that for many, Bowen is a community therapy, something that many learn and use to help family and friends. It is not necessarily one in which those trained seek to have a professional or business profile with the public.

## **N. Health fund support and recognition**

In Australia 36% of 54 Health Funds provide cover for Bowen Therapy, in the UK at least 3 funds are believed to cover Bowen: Paycare, Medcash and Health Shield <sup>92</sup>. In the USA there are some insurance programs that cover “manual therapies”. Some corporations also provide their employees with coverage of “alternative methods” but these are a minority.

Similar to Australia, USA’s Medicare and Workers Compensation do not cover Bowen, though in Australia, with a Doctor’s referral, Bowen may be available to accident victims under the WorkCover/Worksafe scheme.

In Europe the recognition of Bowen has yet to be firmly established. In the Netherlands though there are codes for reflexology and shiatsu, there are none for Bowen. This makes it difficult for the modality to be conspicuous on the health insurance system. A similar situation exists in Switzerland.

## **O. The future- Bowen technique in modern practice.**

The future of Bowen Therapy holds great promise.

The sharing of information and professional cooperation on social media and especially on *Bowen Therapy Worldwide* has shown that the collegiate culture between members is strong and mutually supportive regardless of which Bowen school a member attended. This bodes well for any future integrative thinking on theory/philosophy aspects that may lead to a practical synthesis (or simply a better understanding) of approaches to Bowen therapy.

Many of the book authors listed in this report such as Gene Dobkin, John Wilks, Alastair McLoughlin and both Graham and Katrina (Kate) Pennington have already made significant moves in this direction in their books and/or peer reviewed journal offerings. In any case the assumed differences between the schools appear to have been overstated as the correspondences can be seen to be greater upon closer analysis.

Key issues in current writings/teachings are about the following:

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<sup>92</sup> The list of Australian Health funds covering Bowen is available on the Bowen Association of Australia website <http://www.bowen.org.au/health-funds/>

(a similar list has not been found on the website of the Bowen Therapists Federation of Australia website but is expected to be similar. The information on UK Health Funds drawn from discussion in Bowen Therapy Worldwide Facebook Group <http://www.facebook.com/groups/bowentherapyworldwide/>).

- understanding Bowen better in terms of underlying fascia (Baker and Tremblay)
- collation of knowledge of mechanisms of action (Knight & Wilks pending),
- moving away from the recipe approach embedded in the initial learning (McLoughlin and Pennington (though from quite different perspectives)), and
- Gene Dobkin who in 1998/99 first brought us the detailed table of correlations of the position of Bowen move and other systems of points (e.g. acupoint, trigger, Chapman etc) invites the brilliance of the beyond. He has now moved beyond practical textbooks and manuals stating *“when just about everything verifiable about Tom Bowen has been revealed, I'm looking to the bigger picture. I want to know what every and all therapies are doing. What do they all have in common, especially the ones that seem most to be opposites.”*<sup>93</sup>

With all of this, and uncharted territory beckoning, a definition of the therapy is called for to ground current knowledge, and with a definition that that can be universally accepted. The definition would need to transcend basic Bowen practice, the teaching differences between schools, practice by rote and the regulatory environments of jurisdictions.

Bowen is a therapy with a growing research base and a fledgling presence in scientific literature. It enjoys positive client acclaim, a developing media profile and a strengthened place in the health system e.g. in Australia this is evident through Health Fund recognition, in the UK with the advent of collaborative projects such as those pioneered by Paula Esson within the NHS. In China, official introduction of Bowen in into the Hong Kong Hospital Authority took place when Occupational Therapists (trained by ISBT in Bowen) were accepted by the Central Organising Committee of the Authority to apply Bowen treatments in the hospital.

Contributory factors are increased professionalism, quality of training and other standards placed on members by professional bodies in conjunction with consumer satisfaction and beneficial health outcomes.

The efforts of professional bodies towards marketing on behalf of members and communications support are also invaluable. This is evident in the work of the UK's BTPA in funding association advertisements in magazine outlets such as *What Doctors Don't Tell You* (WDDTY) and in the case of Australia's BAA in funding the expensive artwork and banners to be customised by members for own-in clinic promotion. Evident too are practitioner efforts to establish a strong profile for Bowen therapy

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<sup>93</sup> Pers comm. to S Strachan 12<sup>th</sup> April 2014

through website, social media and a YouTube presence.

Integral to the proposal for IBTW celebrations and looking ahead to 2016, (the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Tom Bowen's birthday) was the desire for formal recognition of the international stature of Tom Bowen and his work through a peak celebration and to perhaps achieve alongside this an international convention of Bowen therapists.

Such a timely gathering could only serve to enhance understanding and a sharing of knowledge about this extraordinary technique. Tom Bowen was a layman and unquestionably a bodywork genius. Such a convention would have the opportunity of many themes to explore. These could encapsulate in a multifaceted but integrative way this young therapy's journey and what its future holds.

It would also be a time to accept and recognise that the most significant effort to promulgate Tom Bowen's unique therapy lies with Ossie and Elaine Rentsch of Bowtech® and from that effort the many schools we are familiar with today and subject of this overview put down roots and bore fruit from this stock.

This Bowen Therapy Today background hopefully assists in illustrating how a technique practiced in the name of its developer Tom Bowen has flourished from its humble beginnings in Geelong to the growing presence it now enjoys around the world.