

**Ian Whyte D.O.**  
**Kirsten Nottrot D.O.**  
**Rebecca Podmore BSc (Ost) Hons. BA**  
**Rachel Griffin BSc (Ost) Hons. Dip PGO**

## **Registered Osteopaths**

Established 1978.



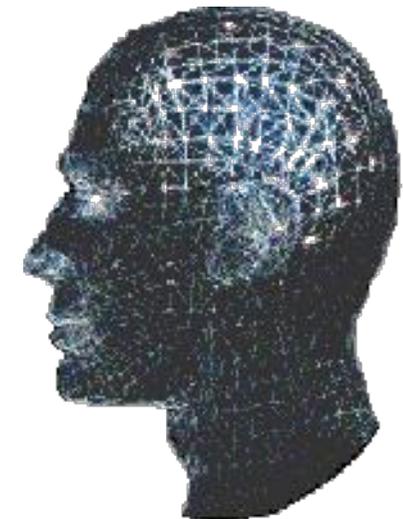
19, Lichfield Street.  
Stone.  
Staffs.  
ST15 8NA  
Tel: 01785 816481.

Castlefields Surgery.  
Castle Way.  
Castlefields.  
Stafford.  
ST16 1BS  
Tel: 01785 248298

[www.staffs-osteopaths.co.uk](http://www.staffs-osteopaths.co.uk)

# CRANIAL

# Osteopathy



The aim of this small leaflet is to explain to you something about cranial osteopathy and how this form of treatment could help you.

The concept which came to be known as Cranial Osteopathy was first discovered at the turn of the century by Dr William Garner Sutherland. The discovery was not made public until the late 1920's and has attracted great attention ever since.

It's quite a complicated concept so let's start with a short anatomy lesson:-

The human brain which, although only weighing about three pounds, contains more than 100 billion neurons. (If you wanted to spend £100 billion pounds in one year, you would have to spend £274 million a day!!!) This amazing piece of the body rests in the skull and is supported by a vertical, crescent-moon shaped structure called the falx cerebri, and a horizontal structure called the tentorium cerebelli. These structures stop the brain from flopping around and help to prevent damage. The brain itself floats in a fluid called cerebrospinal fluid (C.S.F.) which effectively reduces the brain's weight to about an eighth of its real value. The C.S.F. acts as a shock absorber and also helps in nutrition and removal of waste substances from the brain.

The C.S.F. is produced in cavities in the brain called the ventricles of which there are four. Some fluid makes its way down the spinal cord to the base of the back while the rest slowly circulates towards the top of the brain where pressure sensitive valves allow access into the normal blood system. There is just a bit less than a pint of C.S.F. in an adult and this is formed and renewed about three times a day.

Sutherland noted that there was a resulting pulsation of the C.S.F. of about 6-12 cycles a minute and it was this pulsation, which he called the Primary Respiratory Movement, that intrigued him. It could be felt anywhere in the body but more easily over the head or the sacrum. He surmised that there was a pull through the fascia of the body (the tissue which encases all of our organs) which enabled him to feel the pulsation anywhere where he placed his hands.

The skull itself is made of 22 interlocking bones that move very slightly during each pulsation of the C.S.F. and just as irregularities in the heartbeat can indicate certain clinical conditions, so he discovered that the same applied in the pulsation of the C.S.F. The mechanism could be likened to the cogs of a Swiss watch which link and move together but if allowed to get out of alignment, would result in the watch telling the time incorrectly.

Much to his amazement, clinical conditions which had failed to respond to either orthodox medical treatment or orthodox osteopathic treatment, began to respond when he corrected the C.S.F. pulsation by working on the head and also the sacrum. (The latter because of its connection to the spinal cord) The rest of his professional life was then devoted to study and research into this discovery resulting in the establishing of the Sutherland Cranial Teaching Foundation, the work of which still continues today after his death in 1953.

### **So what conditions does cranial osteopathy claim to help?**

The scope is very broad, but the commonest are perhaps: headache, migraine, sinusitis, M.E., developmental problems in children (e.g. hyperactivity, learning difficulties, cerebral palsy, Downs's syndrome, and infantile colic.)

Treatment is extremely gentle and simply involves minute adjustments to the mechanism itself. Your osteopath will be able to feel if anything is not functioning as it should and whether it is perhaps moving too slowly (as might be the case in an M.E. sufferer), is compressed (as might be the case in a baby with colic), or is torsioned in some way (as might be the case in a child with behavioural problems or learning difficulties).

No one as yet fully knows or understands how the mechanism works, and there is a vast amount yet to discover about the workings of the brain and, most importantly, how the C.S.F. affects how the body regulates itself. Research is in progress and hopefully, one day we might be able to explain a bit more about why this mode of treatment is so successful.

If you have any further questions regarding Cranial Osteopathy that have not been covered here, or in fact anything to do with how osteopathy could help you, then please feel free to ring either of the practices to speak to one of the osteopaths in attendance.