

PHILIP BULL – THE QIGONG SENIOR (CITIZEN)

By Alistair Clay



My 92-year-old grandfather, Philip Bull, is proof that you're never too old to learn Qigong.

A couple of summers ago I was visiting my parent's home in Warwickshire and I was doing a little practice on the lawn.

Grandad was also visiting that day and was curious at the strange movements I was making across the neatly cut grass.

Never afraid to try something new - he bought a computer last year and is a huge fan of email - he asked me what it was I was doing and if he could have a go.

I explained to him that the 'strange' movements were from an ancient Chinese healing skill called Qigong, an incredibly powerful and precious method for creating good health.

He thought it sounded like a jolly good idea and so copied me as I performed the first few moves of the balancing gong syllabus.

It was all good fun but I wasn't sure that he would really want to take it up. However later that week we spoke on the phone and again he asked me about Qigong and if I could teach him a few basic exercises.

I hadn't been on the instructor course at the time so I spoke to Sifu and asked him if I could get special permission to show Grandad just a few moves that might help his breathing, as it was causing him a little discomfort at the time.

Sifu kindly said yes and so I taught Grandad Sau Gong, Holding the Dantian, Dantian up and down, supporting the sky and horse stance – and two years on he's still going strong.

Philip explains why: "I do the exercises once a day, usually in the morning for about 10-15 minutes. I try to do more but I don't want to push myself too hard.

"Just today I was practising outside in the garden because it was such a lovely day. That's the first time I've managed to do it outside all year.

"I would definitely recommend Qigong to other older people – it might look a bit silly but it definitely makes you feel good. There aren't too many of my age about now but I would tell them all to do it.

And it seems Grandad has really noticed a benefit to his health.

He adds: "It's perfect for the elderly because it's gentle but really beneficial.

"It has made my breathing better and my joints, I feel pretty sure that if I wasn't doing the exercises then I would not feel as fit as I do. I'll continue to practice now until I fall over!"