

## THE POYNTER LECTURE 2016

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> October, 6:00pm**  
at the  
**Wellcome Collection Conference Centre,  
183 Euston Road, London.**

*The Officers and Society Representatives will meet at 3:30 pm. For all members the afternoon starts with a short AGM at 5:00 pm and all members are invited to attend.*

This is followed at 5:15 pm by a drinks reception courtesy of the Wellcome Trust.



The lecture will be by Sam Alberti, Director of Museums and Archives at RCSEng. Sam has a long standing interest in medical museums, and especially paths

travelled by the objects within them. He will focus in particular on what medical collections can tell us about the lives and experiences of those who were treated. He will argue that museums must find these patients.

**Book to attend using the BSHM website:**  
[bshm.org.uk](http://bshm.org.uk) from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016

that the more appropriate symbol was the rod of Aesculapius, the Greek god of healing, which featured a single serpent. The Aesculapian symbol was the one traditionally associated with medicine, but in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the English medical publisher John Churchill began to use the caduceus as a printer's mark. The controversial adoption of the caduceus by the US Public Health Service and particularly the US Army Medical Corps saw its association with medicine enhanced in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the USA. The relative merits of the two symbols are still debated, but like most medical organisations the BSHM believes that the rod of Aesculapius has by far the more authentic claim and it now features in our new logo.

Further reading: Wilcox R.A., Whitham E.M. The Symbol of Modern Medicine. *Ann Intern Med.* 2003; 138:673-677. There is an extensive bibliography on the topic on our website.

## BSHM Congress 2017

Date  
13-16 September 2017  
at  
The Royal College of  
Surgeons of Edinburgh



Themes for the Congress include:

- Women in Medicine
- Scotland's contribution and influence
- Apothecaries and their successors and
- Art and Photography in Medicine.

These themes are not exclusive and papers and posters on any aspect of the history of medicine are also welcome.

Inside this issue:

The Poynter Lecture 2016  
The BSHM logo  
Congress 2017 Update  
The New BSHM website  
The Osler Lecture at Apothecaries' Hall

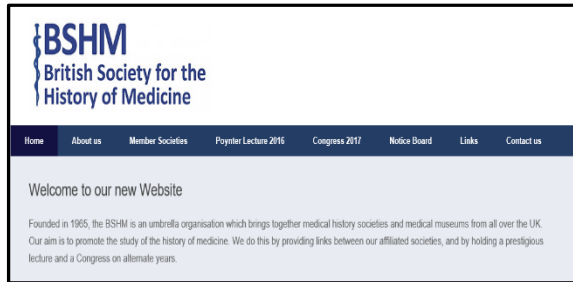


## A change of Logo

The original logo of the BSHM (above left) featured the caduceus, a symbol incorporating twin serpents entwined around a staff topped with wings. Several members pointed out that this was inappropriate as the caduceus was the rod of Hermes (Mercury), messenger of the gods, and had come to symbolise commerce rather than medicine. It was suggested

**Date for your diary: The Poynter Lecture, Wednesday 12 October 2016**

## The New BSHM website



The BSHM website ([bshm.org.uk](http://bshm.org.uk)) has recently been redesigned to meet the need for a modern website which could be kept up-to-date and which would be responsive to the needs and interests of our members. The new design features our new logo.

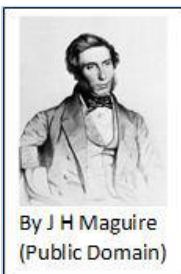
By using Wordpress software the Society's officers can maintain the website at low cost and with greater flexibility.

The notice board page offers a new facility for member organisations to publicise up-and-coming events and a history of medicine news blog.

The content of our new website, which is still in the course of development, will reflect the objectives of the BSHM. In the future we hope to incorporate features that will enable members to post their contributions directly.

If you haven't yet done so, please take a look at [bshm.org.uk](http://bshm.org.uk) and let us know if you have suggestions for changes and improvements.

### **Sir William Wilde (1815 – 1876) Pioneer Eye and Ear Surgeon and Polymath. His achievements, adversities and his son Oscar**



By J H Maguire  
(Public Domain)

Sir William Wilde established one of the first Eye and Ear hospitals in the 19th century in Dublin and doctors from overseas came to learn from his practice. His "Aural Surgery" is still regarded as a landmark textbook. He devised a number of instruments such as "Wilde's forceps" - and his surgical approach to the treatment of acute mastoiditis became known as "Wilde's incision".

Wilde was editor of a medical journal, a biographer and a noted antiquarian. He wrote two books based on his travels in Europe as a young man and valuable observations when visiting the famous *Allgemeines Krankenhaus* in Vienna. His knighthood was awarded for his work as medical commissioner for the Irish census during the years of the potato famine.

At the peak of his career, he was embroiled in a disastrous libel case. His ensuing medical career never reached its earlier heights. Finally, there are parallels between his successes and flaws and those that followed in the life of his second son, Oscar.

*Based on the Osler lecture given at Apothecaries' Hall, London on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2016 by Dr Mike Collins, Treasurer, BSHM*

### **BSHM Information**

Recent requests from colleagues seeking information have included:

- PhD candidate from the University of Canberra (Australia) researching the history of knee joint studies. Thanks to Mr Bryan Rhodes and Mr Krishna Kunzru for providing helpful information.
- Information on medical history videos recommended by the BSHM that are freely available online which may be of use to medical students. For those interested in viewing these interesting videos, please see the BSHM noticeboard: [bshm.org.uk/notice-board](http://bshm.org.uk/notice-board)

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The Royal Society of Medicine Library has regular exhibitions on history of medicine topics. The current exhibition (until 23<sup>rd</sup> April) is on 'The Dublin Doctors' and there is information on the work of Colles, Graves, Stokes and Wilde.  
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If anyone is interested in providing a short piece (150-175 words) on a history of medicine subject, for the next newsletter in June 2016, please contact: [secretary@bshm.org.uk](mailto:secretary@bshm.org.uk)

**All members of affiliated societies are automatically BSHM members**