



Newsletter

Autumn 2025

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Letter from the President, Hilary Morris



Dear members,

As the new president I would like to begin by thanking the officers who work tirelessly on behalf of the BSHM. Edward Wawrzynczak has joined the illustrious group more familiarly known as Past Presidents, and officers and members alike want to thank him for his ceaseless commitment to ensuring our society thrives and the great success of our recent Congress.

Peter Carpenter has now completed his term of office as honorary treasurer. His expertise has been central to ensuring the continued financial stability of the society, and he will be missed by all. These changes have required new

appointments for the posts of honorary treasurer and vice president, and I am delighted that Catriona Head and Bryan Rhodes have been duly elected. Both are known to many of our members and bring considerable experience and enthusiasm with regards to their new respective roles. Lee Coppack remains in post as honorary secretary, and I want to thank her for her commitment in terms of meeting the traditional aspects of the role as well as our successful presence on social media.

The recent Congress at Leeds was an immense success, and I would like to thank all who attended and supported the event in different ways. In addition to an outstanding number of papers, it was wonderful to see so many students take part. This was also a truly international meeting, and again those who travelled considerable distances were not only delighted with the opportunity to present papers but also appreciated the warm welcome. I would also like to thank our sponsors whose support is essential to the continuation of the biennial congress. The cost of an event on this scale continues to be at the forefront of our decisions and, therefore, any additional funds play a significant role in how the officers plan future events.

On a personal note, it is an honour to represent the BSHM as the next president. As a long-standing member, I have greatly appreciated all that the society achieves, not only in promoting the history of medicine but also ensuring that it continually develops to meet the challenges of delivering the subject in ways which are relevant to an ever changing academic and professional context. This was evident in the recent celebration to mark the 60th anniversary of the

BSHM and is certainly thanks to the continued support of its loyal members and relentless energy of past presidents. The officers and I are, therefore, already busy focusing on the next two years which we will continue to share with members via the newsletter, website and social media.

Hilary Morris, BSHM President
president@bshm.org.uk

New officers

BSHM has new officers elected at the 2025 Congress in Leeds. They are Hilary Morris, President, Vice-President, Bryan Rhodes and Treasurer, Catriona Head. Lee Coppack remains secretary for another two years.

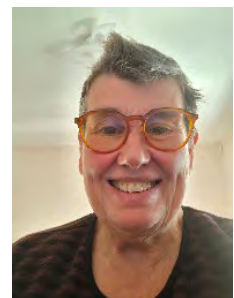
Hilary Morris is an academic medical historian, author and editor. She is past president of the History of Medicine Section of the Royal Society of Medicine and formerly convenor of the DHMSA at the Society of Apothecaries. She is currently editor in chief of the BSHM journal *Topics in the History of Medicine*.



New vice-president Bryan Rhodes is a retired consultant orthopaedic surgeon. He has a special interest in the history of surgery and was appointed as an Apothecaries' Lecturer to Lancaster University in 2021. He is chairman of the Lancaster Health and Medical Museum Collection and the guest editor for the next volume of *Topics in the History of*

Medicine.

Treasurer Catriona Head is a retired state registered nurse. Her interests are many and diverse, and she is honorary treasurer of the History of Medicine Section of the Royal Society of Medicine.



Secretary Lee Coppack is a journalist by background. She took an MA in the history of medicine as a mature student, and she is also facilitator of the history fellows of the Centre for Health Studies at the Society of Apothecaries.

Congress 2025

The 2025 BSHM Congress took place at Cloth Hall Court, Leeds from 10-13 September. There were 130 delegates with visitors from Canada, USA, Australia, Poland, Japan, Italy, Greece and India. The organisers were delighted to see a notable increase in the number of students taking part.



We had three keynote addresses including the inaugural John Blair Lecture, 70 oral presentations and 12 posters. In addition to formal sessions, an extremely popular visit took place to the Thackray Medical Museum located in the former Leeds Union Workhouse. Many delegates also attended the congress dinner held in the Queens Hotel. An additional cause for celebration was the 60th anniversary of the BSHM marked by a suitably shaped cake!



Keynote speakers

Dr Lara Marks: *A Quiet Revolution: How Monoclonal Antibodies Transformed Medicine*

Dr Simon Jarrett: *The History of Disability: Myths, the Everyday and Tales of the Unexpected*

Mr Iain McIntyre: The John Blair Trust Lecture: *John Blair and his Legacy to the History of Medicine*

Summaries of their speeches are available on the Congress page on the website.

<https://bshm.org.uk/congress-2025/>

John Blair Trust Awards to students

Five UK medical students received awards from the John Blair Trust for posters and presentations at the BSHM Congress. The winners were:

Oral presentation

1. Sabrina Choudary: *Kingsley Hall and the Mental Health Bill 2025: evaluating R D Laing's legacy in psychiatric ethics* (University of Birmingham)
2. Leyla Zohar: *Are PTSD and shell-shock one and the same?* (University of Manchester)

Highly commended: Mubeen Hasan (Aston University), and others: *Al-Zahrawi's ophthalmic instruments and their significance in medieval cataract surgery*

Poster

1. Ellie Hotopf: *Hysteria: The interprofessional debate of the 19th century* (Brighton and Sussex Medical School)
2. Timothy Apthorp: *Gods as doctors: examining the relationship between Greco-Roman religion and Hippocratic medicine* (University of East Anglia)

Past BSHM Presidents at the Congress



Update on Topics in the History of Medicine

Volume 5 of Topics in the History of Medicine, our peer reviewed, open access journal, will be published by the end of the year. Peter Carpenter is the guest editor for Volume 6 which will feature contributions from presentations at the 2025 Congress. Publication is due in 2026.

<https://bshm.org.uk/thom/>.

Osler Travel Awards for Research in the History of Medicine

This new award offers grants of up to £4000 to support medical undergraduates at UK universities to travel to the United States or Canada to undertake research in medical history using resources there that are not available in the UK or online.

The deadline for applications is 17 November 2025, and the first award or awards are planned for 2026.

The award is funded by the Osler Club of London, the History of Medicine Society (Royal Society of Medicine), the Hunterian Society, the Scottish Society of the History of Medicine, the Friends of Millbank, the John Blair Trust and the British Society for the History of Medicine. For more information, contact Graham Kyle. See <https://bshm.org.uk/students/>

Hunterian Society Essay Competition 2025

John Hunter (1728-1793) was not only a groundbreaking surgeon, but a comparative anatomist and medical researcher. Each year, the Hunterian Society holds a competition for essays related to his wide-ranging work and legacy.

It is open to students from medical, dental, veterinary and healthcare disciplines and those with these qualifications in training grades.

The closing date is 28 February 2026, and the presentations of the shortlisted candidates will take place at Lettsom House, in central London, on the evening of 18 May 2026.

<https://www.hunteriansociety.org.uk/awards/>



COMPETITION TIME

1ST PRIZE £750
plus free fellowship of the
Hunterian Society for 3 years



**The Hunterian Society
Essay Competition
2026**

Awarded for the best essay of up to 2,000 words that connects contemporary medical, dental or veterinary practice and knowledge to 18th and 19th century medicine, comparative anatomy or evolutionary biology.

Applications are open to students and registered practitioners of non-consultant training grade in medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry or medical sciences
CLOSING DATE: 28TH FEBRUARY 2026



FOR FULL TERMS OF ENTRY PLEASE VISIT US AT
[hunteriansociety.org.uk](https://www.hunteriansociety.org.uk)

The Hunterian Society

Tribute to Sean Hughes (1949-2025)



Sean Hughes, President of BSHM from 2021-2023, was an academic orthopaedic surgeon and former Vice-President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, combined investigation into various aspects of clinical orthopaedics with research into the basic science that underpinned orthopaedic practice. He is also remembered for his warmth and generosity.

Sean qualified in medicine from the University of London in 1966 and trained in orthopaedic and trauma surgery at the Middlesex Hospital and the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, while a research fellowship at the Mayo Clinic led to an MS from the University of London for research on bone blood flow.

Appointed Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Edinburgh in 1979, he brought energy, enthusiasm and academic rigour to the department. Research interests were established in blood flow and mineral exchange in bone, in musculoskeletal tissue infection, in fracture healing and in the pathogenesis of intervertebral disc disease.

His academic department attracted researchers and postgraduate students from around the world. In 1991, he translated to the Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery at Imperial College London, where he continued developing and expanding these research interests.

Humanity

A man of great humanity and compassion, he chaired the charity DISCS, which supported people living with spinal conditions, and also served as chair of Action Medical Research, a charity that funds research into serious childhood illness.

Following the untimely death of his daughter, Sarah, an award-winning journalist, in 2021, he established an annual lecture and journalism prize recognising work that challenges disinformation. The range of speakers attest to the esteem in which he and his daughter were held, most recent is former President of the Supreme Court, Baroness Hale.

In later life he developed his lifelong interest in history, particularly the history of medicine and, in retirement, he graduated with an MA degree in history from King's College London. His interest in the life, poetry and medical works of the doctor/poet John Keats led to a series of papers and lectures on the topic. As in his clinical career, his historical research and writing covered a

broad range of topics, including the work of Scottish surgeon Charles Bell, who demonstrated that anatomical knowledge allowed artists to observe nature more closely, discern muscular structure and convey human expression with greater precision.

Having earlier served as editor of the *Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery*, in his last year he became editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Medical Biography*, where he showed his discerning eye for good biography and his willingness to go above and beyond to support submissions, particularly from international contributors whose first language was not English. He was also a guest editor of the BSHM journal, *Topics in the History of Medicine*.

With thanks to Iain Macintyre and Anjna Harrar

Welcome to our newest member

The Croydon Medical Society is a private medical society, formed of general practitioners and hospital consultants who either work in Croydon or are associated with Croydon. Members can be both practising and non-practising doctors.

The Society was founded in 1832 and originally called the Croydon Medical Reading Society. There were 16 members who paid an annual subscription of 10 shillings, and they met quarterly in each other's homes. They also had an annual dinner which was held at a reputable hotel in Crystal Palace. The cost of a four-course meal at that time was 10s 6d (ten shillings and six pence) per head, which was paid for out of the Society's funds.

At each meeting, following the formalities, books recommended for the society were put forward for purchase and required both a proposer and seconder. Every six months, a selection of these medical books, which had been in circulation for more than a year, was sold to the members. Fines of 2s 6d were charged to members who were absent for more than one hour on ordinary meeting nights, and 5s on nights of book sales.

The society is now called The Croydon Medical Society – speakers have replaced books and meetings are no longer held in members' homes. One of our aims is to provide a forum where primary and secondary care practitioners can meet and socialise. Our membership is currently 60.

www.croydonmedicalsociety.co.uk

Affiliate news and events

Researching the Science Museum's collection

Following the move from London to the Science and Innovation Park, near Swindon, the Science Museum Group's collection is open to research visits. Around 300,000 objects are stored at the National Collections Centre.

In-person and virtual visits are available. You need to give at least four weeks' notice and know the object numbers of the objects you would like to see. These can be found on the online catalogue at

<https://collection.sciencemuseumgroup.org.uk/>.

Guided behind the scenes tours are available. Tickets are limited. <https://www.scienceinnovationpark.org.uk/visit-us/public-guided-tours>. Sign up to the Science Museum's newsletter to find out more.

The picture shows an orange Mini Clubman car adapted for use for driver, Ed Freeman, who suffered impairments caused by the drug compound thalidomide. To give more headroom, the floor was lowered, and the controls were adapted, c.1978-1979.

© The Board of Trustees of the Science Museum



Designing Hospitals: Aspects of the History of Hospital Design in Britain since 1948

As the NHS in Scotland and England grapples with ageing infrastructure, staff shortages, and limited budgets, exploring the history of hospital design can offer valuable insights, writes Margueritte Dupree. At their meeting on 22 October, members of the RSM's History of Medicine Society heard two talks about aspects of the history of hospital design in Britain since 1948. The meeting explored how post-war hospital architecture addressed similar challenges and what lessons it holds for today.

Paper 1: Medicine and Modernity: 50 years of NHS hospital building in Scotland, 1948-1998

Harriet Richardson Blakeman, honorary fellow, University of Edinburgh, uncovered the history of hospital building in Scotland from 1948 to 1998, drawing on newly available records. Her research challenges the notion that few hospitals were built in the NHS's early decades, highlighting innovative designs like Vale of Leven Hospital (1955) — a break from traditional, outdated ward layouts. She examined how collaboration between architects, engineers and medical staff shaped design and situated Scotland's developments in a broader UK and international context.

Paper 2: Modernisation of our hospital system: new approaches to architecture, 1962-77

Alistair Fair, reader in architectural history, University of Edinburgh, turned to England between 1962 and 1977, exploring the bold promises of the *Hospital Plan* of 1962. He focused on the Harness Programme, which aimed to standardise hospital construction but faced obstacles in practice. Dr Fair revealed how economic pressures and NHS decentralization led to a partial rollback, offering a new understanding of this ambitious modernisation effort.

Future History of Medicine Events

Old Operating Theatre

Monday 3 November 2025

A Night of Magic and Medicine

St Thomas' Church, 9a St Thomas Street,
London SE1 9RY

<https://oldoperatingtheatre.com/event-posts/a-night-of-magic-and-medicine-2/>

*Ninewells Hospital, Dundee: Aerial photograph taken by
RCAHMS (now Historic Environment Scotland) in 1989*

British Society for the History of Radiology

Thursday 6 November 2025, 19.00 online only

Professor Iwan Morus, *Making up the future: Nikola Tesla's body electric*

<http://www.bschr.org.uk/>

West Sussex History of Medicine Society

Saturday 8 November 2025, 10.00-12.00

Ismini Pells, *Civil War Medicine* and John Burges, *Para Regimental Medical Officer in the Falklands War – Personal Reflection*

St Paul's Church, Churchside, Chichester PO19 6FT

www.wshoms.co.uk

Royal College of Physicians Museum

Monday 10 November 2025 12.30 – 13.30

Also Monday 15 December 17.30pm – 18.30pm

Explore *Making Visible*, a striking new art installation by doctoral researcher Catherine James in the Royal College of Physicians Dorchester Library.

11 St Andrews Place London, NW1 4LE [Register free](#)

Old Operating Theatre Museum

12 November 2025

Fragile Creatures: Live Performance

St Thomas' Church, 9a St Thomas Street,
London SE1 9RY

<https://oldoperatingtheatre.com/event-posts/fragile-creatures-live-at-the-old-operating-theatre/>

Scottish Society of the History of Medicine

Saturday 15 November 2025, 14.00-17.00

Autumn meeting

Royal Scots Club

29-31 Abercromby Place (central Edinburgh) Edinburgh EH3 6QE

<https://sshm.ac.uk/>

Hunterian Society

Monday 17 November 2025

Professor Sir Nick Black, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

James Lambert: Medicine's Neglected Hero

Lettsom House, 11 Chandos Street, Cavendish Sq, London W1G 9EB

<https://www.hunteriansociety.org.uk/calendar/>

Bristol Medico-Historical Society

Saturday 22 November, 10.00-16.00

History Around Us

Tyndale Baptist Church by Clifton Down shopping centre

Whiteladies Road, Bristol BS8 2QG

[BMHS Next Event | Bristol Medico Chiru](#)

West Sussex History of Medicine Society

Saturday November 2025, 10.00-12.00

Graham Kyle, Glasgow Rickets and Surgical Innovations, and Professor Tony

Mundy, *A History of Urethral Surgery*

St Paul's Church, Churchside, Chichester PO19 6FT

www.wshoms.co.uk

Society of Apothecaries – Centre for Health Studies

Monday 24 November 2025, 18.30-19.30

Sydney Selwyn and Osler Lecture

Monica Aquilina, *An argument for providing more detailed ethical guidelines for doctors giving medical advice to family and friends*

Daniel Sokol, *Error to Ethics: Essential Lessons from Teaching Clinicians in Trouble*

Society of Apothecaries, Black Friars Lane, London EC4V 6EJ

<https://www.apothecaries.org/events/category/cfhs-events/>

Old Operating Theatre Museum

Monday 24 November 2025

Museum After-Dark

<https://oldoperatingtheatre.com/event-posts/museum-after-dark/>

St Thomas' Church, 9a St Thomas Street, London SE1 9RY

Friends of Millbank

Friday 28 November 2025, 18.30

Sarah Paterson, curator, Imperial War Museum

A Record of Toil and Sacrifice: The Women's Work Collection at the Imperial War Museum and First World War Female Commemoration

Millbank (Chelsea College of Arts) 16 John Islip St, London SW1P 4JU

<https://www.friendsofmillbank.org/programme-2025>

British Society for the History of Pharmacy

Monday 1 December, 18.30-19.30 online

Halil Tekiner, Erciyes University School of Pharmacy, Turkey

A Dose of satire: Caricatures Tracing the History of Turkish Pharmacy

<https://www.bsph.org/events>



Lady Grace Pierrepont, whose 17th-century donation of books re-established the collection of the Royal College of Physicians after the Great Fire of London

Royal College of Physicians Museum

Thursday, 4 December 2025, 17.30-20.00

Museum late

A body of knowledge – festive crafts. Discover 500 years of book collecting at the RCP in the new exhibition and create book-themed festive decorations. Tours exploring these tales within exhibition '[A body of knowledge](#)' will run at 18.00 and 19.00.

11 St Andrews Place London NW1 4LE

[Register free](#)

History of Medicine Society of the Royal Society of Medicine

Friday 5 December 2025

Sarah Hughes Memorial Lecture

Emily Hills, clinical specialist occupational therapist and Lindsay Hardy, paediatric occupational therapist

The Power of 8: understanding our senses for safety, regulation and learning

In person and online

1 Wimpole Street, London W1G 0AE

<https://www.rsm.ac.uk/events/history-of-medicine/2025-26/hsu02/>

The Osler Club of London

Thursday 11 December 2025

Professor Piers Mitchell, University of Cambridge

Disease and Medicine in the Crusades

Royal College of Physicians of London, 11 St Andrews Pl, London NW1 4LE

<https://www.osler.org.uk/events/blog-post-four-hyyfe>



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Hilary Morris

Vice-President

Bryan Rhodes

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