



From the President

It is a great honour to having been nominated as BSHM President. When I said following my installation in Bristol that “The BSHM moves forward on the shoulders of giants”, I was referring to Chris Derret, the outgoing President. Chris, and his predecessor Iain Macintyre, have brought about major changes in the organisation of the BSHM, improving communication and widening its appeal to early career historians and involving colleagues from medical museums and archive organisations. Chris has brought great energy to the role and we are delighted that he has agreed to continue to serve the BSHM as webmaster. I am fortunate to have the support of a very strong team of officers and leads for the various roles within the BSHM. Congratulations to Mike Davidson who is the new Vice President and President Elect. Edward Wawrzynczak continues as to provide stalwart support as Hon. Treasurer. I am pleased to welcome Anjna Harrar our new Hon. Secretary who will be a huge asset to the organisation.

A big thank you to all who contributed to making the Bristol Congress such a



success particularly fellow BSHM officers who unselfishly gave up many hours and days in the preparation. Thanks also to the local team from the Bristol Medico-Historical Society without whose contribution the meeting would not have been possible. Also thank you to the speakers, abstract reviewers and sessional chairs. A full report of the Congress will appear elsewhere in this Newsletter

I look forward to seeing members at the meetings planned for 2020. I hope that you enjoy reading this Newsletter.

Mike Collins

BSHM Congress Bristol

The Medical History Quiz

It was not all academic; the social programme started with a medical history quiz & reception hosted by Mike Collins and Martin Edwards. This new event proved a good networking session as well as testing our knowledge; it was just as well we were in teams!

Congratulations to the 'A (Anjna's) team', comprising of the combined encyclopaedic knowledge of Christopher Gardner-Thorpe, Neil MacGillivray, Catriona Head, Carolyn Paul and John Ward. The winners received the prize of a package of history of medicine books to share amongst them. Everyone is very grateful to the BSHM organisers who arranged the bubbles and canapes evening and thank Mike Collins for hosting the event. It will be in our memory for years to come.

The M Shed 11th-14th September 2019

130 delegates attended the Congress, held in beautiful weather, in the centre of the historic quayside of Bristol. As well as members from all over the British Isles, we were joined by historians from Australia, the USA and France. Colleagues from academic and museum backgrounds made valuable contributions to the meeting. There were 64 oral presentations and 10 posters.

[BSHM Presentations](#)



Excursions

On Thursday the heartier souls had a short trip in the harbour on the replica of Cabot's ship "The Matthew", complete with fish and chip supper.

Excursions on Friday afternoon included Dr Jenner's House and garden in Berkeley, Glenside Museum in Bristol and the New Room Museum (the oldest Methodist building in the world). The trips proved a welcome break from the lecture rooms - a chance to exercise the legs and mind in historical surroundings. The Congress dinner was held in the impressive Sansovino Hall (a former banking hall of the Lloyds Bank), modelled on Sansovino's 16th Century Library of St Mark in the Piazzata at Venice. The history of the room was expertly outlined by Sean Hughes. Musical entertainment was provided by Dr Jazz, several Bristol based medical historians were in the band.



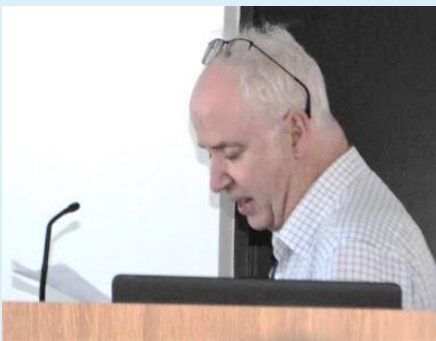
The Congress themes

The Congress themes were: History of Medicine in the West of England, History of Mental Illness and Mental Disability, History of Medicine at Sea, History of Health Care Education. The keynote speakers complemented the themed sessions with excellent presentations that were entertaining and informative.



Edward Jenner: saint or sinner? Prof. Gareth Williams, Emeritus Professor of Medicine, University of Bristol

Samaritans of the Sea: Duty, Disease and Privation in the Black Sea, 1854-56. Prof. Mark Harrison, Professor of the History of Medicine and Co-Director of the Wellcome Centre for Ethics and Humanities Oxford.



Shell Shock: A Very British Practice. Professor Sir Simon Wessely, Professor of Psychological Medicine, King's College London

James Parkinson (1755-1824): Medical educator in the early 19th century. Dr Cherry Lewis, Honorary Research Fellow School of Earth Sciences, University of Bristol



The student presentations were of a very high standard as were the posters. The John Blair Trust awarded two student prizes. Best oral presentation to Sally-Ann Mather, ‘The transformation of the concept of medical uncertainty: Attitudes, emotions and trends over time.’ Best poster presentation to Jacob Oliver Chillingworth, ‘Sophia Jex-Blake (1840 – 1912): Scotland’s first female doctor



Undergraduates who participated in the oral presentation prize.



Dr Chris Derret hands over the Presidential duties to Dr Mike Collins. Who looks the more relaxed and relieved?

I am sure all the delegates would like to thank Chris and his team for a first-class Congress. If you were unable to come to Bristol, perhaps your appetite is whetted for Sheffield in 2021.

Mike Davidson

Featured Article: The New Room/John Wesley's Chapel

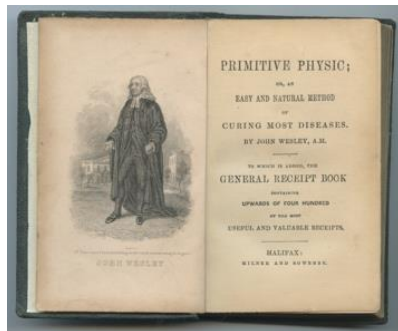
The [New Room/John Wesley's Chapel](#) is located at The Horsefair. This might at first have seemed to be an unusual choice, and certainly when compared to Edward Jenner's house, however John Wesley had deep links to 18th century medicine and some of his advice sounds strangely modern.

The original building was built in 1739 as a 'new room' in the centre of Bristol and became the centre for the Methodist movement as founded by John and Charles Wesley. The building is a hidden gem and has a great sense of peace about it. Whilst Wesley's



chapel in London feels more like a typical church with stained glass windows, the New Room felt more to me like a Quaker Meeting House, and so I was not surprised when I was told that a Quaker had designed the building.

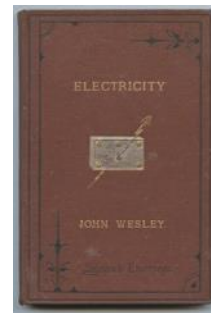
This was a time of great social division and John Wesley believed that Christians should help the poor, the sick, prisoners and the enslaved. Spiritual care had to be accompanied by physical and medical care, and prior to his mission work Wesley had read many medical books. His medical activities were to culminate in the immensely popular *Primitive Physic, or*



An Easy and Natural Way of Curing Most Diseases, published in 1747.

The book went through 23 editions in Wesley's lifetime. The first part of the book is made up of a preface and rules for the preservation of good health. The second part is made up of over 900 recipes and directions for treating 298 named conditions. Every doctor should read the

preface. Wesley presents early medicine as 'having a little experience joined with common sense and common humanity.' However, in Wesley's day 'Physicians now begin to be in admiration, as persons who were something more than human. And profit attended their employ as well as honour'. Also 'medical books, were immensely multiplied, till at length physic became an abstruse science, quite out of the reach of ordinary men'. Wesley had an aim of making medicine more accessible to the common person, and his book was based on both experience and experiment. John Wesley and Richard Lovett were the first to systematically use electricity for the treatment of disease. Lovett's *The Subtil Medium* was published in 1756, and Wesley's *The Desideratum, or Electricity made Plain and Useful* was published in 1760. Wesley had been influenced by the writings of Benjamin Franklin and was enthusiastic for the new technique. Electricity is recommended as a cure in *Primitive Physick*. The book was anonymous and written 'by a Lover of Mankind, and of Common Sense'.



At this time this book was cutting edge technology, and at the start of a massive increase in the use of electricity in medicine in the 19th and 20th centuries. [Wesley's electrical machine](#) may

be viewed at his house in London and also his apparatus for indoor exercise. By his writing of *Primitive Physick* Wesley's role in medical care should not be under emphasised, and he followed many of the medical greats including 'the great and good Dr Sydenham', 'the learned and ingenious Dr Cheyne', and 'the great Boerhaave'.

Adrian Thomas (*Past President BSHM*)

BSHM New Roles

Vice-President

Michael Davidson (B.D.S. (Lond), M.B B.S (Lond), F.D.S R.C.S. (Eng), F.R.C.S. (Edin), DHMSA.

In September 2019, Michael Davidson stepped down as Honorary Secretary to take over as the BSHM's Vice-President.

Mike graduated in Dentistry and Medicine from London University and was Consultant Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon in Taunton and Somerset. In 2015 he obtained the Diploma in History of Medicine and Pharmacy from the Society of Apothecaries. He delivered the 2016 Osler Lecture at the Apothecaries. Mike's areas of interest are the history of facial trauma management, British Voluntary Hospitals and the Scottish medical diaspora. He is currently reading for an M.Litt. in Scottish Heritage at Aberdeen University on a distance learning programme.



Honorary Secretary

Anjna Harrar

MBBS, BSc (Hons), MRCP, DRCOG, DFFP, PGDipDerm (Lon), DHMSA



Anjna, an inner London GP, is privileged to have stepped into the position most recently occupied by Mike Davidson, whose advice to avoid generalization and be specific remains a constant reminder to her to do just so.

In 2018, Anjna became President of the History of Medicine Society (previously Section) at the RSM with a programme including the NHS@70 celebrations, the history of organ transplantation and as a lifetime member of the Historic Croydon Airport Archives Trust also included her research on the risk of infection via flight in the 1930s, as her Presidential address. Her recent focus has been to serve the Officers and Members of the BSHM. She hopes to be a valuable aid to President Mike Collins and to the planning of the 2021 Congress to be held in Sheffield.

Future Events

The International Society for the History of Medicine (ISHM)



The ISHM meeting will be held in Riga in late August 2020. Latvia has long-standing traditions in researching the history of medicine and a substantial medical community dedicated to the history of profession. And, moreover, the Pauls Stradins Museum of the History of Medicine is one of the largest museums of its type in the world, offering a unique experience for medical students and the public at large when it comes to the history of medicine and health.

Keynote speakers include Alexander Lukas Bieri, Jacalyn Duffin, Nils Hansson and Dan Healey. They have produced history of medicine publications of international standing and it is worth looking at their online presence to appreciate the breadth of their work.

Full details on website: [ISHM 2020 Event](#)

Abstract submission: opens on 1st January 2020.

BSHM future events calendar

Affiliated societies can advertise their meetings on our **future events page**. To post future events contact Bill Dibb at affiliatesliaison@bshm.org.uk

The Worshipful Society of Apothecaries of London Faculty of The History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy

Historical Reflections on Medicine and Sexual Violence

27 November 2019 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Save the date:
Osler Legacy meeting on 1st October 2020

History of Medicine Society at the Royal Society of Medicine 2019

4 December 2019 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Medicine, dentistry and science: 19th century

These events sell out rapidly. Book in advanced if meal required.

The Scottish Society of the History of Medicine is organising a symposium to take place on 26 and 27 June 2020 at The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh.

[Details on the SSHM Symposium](#)

Poynter Lecture 2020

Dr John Ward is to give the Poynter Lecture at the Royal College of Physicians
1 October 2020.



**"The great Republic of Medicine knows and has known no national boundaries."
 - William Osler, the great medical internationalist.**



The lecture is named after Dr Noël Poynter (1908-1979), Director of the Wellcome Museum and Library, who did so much to advance the cause of the history of medicine

in Britain and abroad. In addition to his role as the driving force behind the founding of the Faculty of the History of Medicine at the Apothecaries, he was a very active and influential president of the BSHM.

The BSHM website and Social Media sites?

[Link to BSHM official website](#)

Social Media:

Recent blogs have included Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564) – the greatest anatomist that ever was? A blog can provide a snapshot of various interesting aspects of medical history - in just a few paragraphs!

[Link to past newsletters](#)

BSHM Book Reviews

The BSHM website includes regular reviews of recent history of medicine books.



Special Interest Database

The officers of the BSHM would like to develop a database of members' areas of expertise in medical history. This will enable the officers to respond to writers, journalists, programme makers and post graduate students seeking assistance in answering a specific question or help in interpreting defined areas within the history of medicine. The list would be kept by the BSHM and contact with the enquirer only undertaken once the BSHM member has had a chance to consider the enquiry and indicated they wish to be involved. The recent meeting of the Officers and Representative committee have supported this initiative. It might be that affiliate societies feel they can direct their members to being included or individuals may want to volunteer. Those wishing to be involved should contact the BSHM at admin@bshm.org.uk indicating contact details and specialist field.



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