



## Newsletter

Issue 32 – Spring 2025

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## Letter from the President, Edward Wawrzynczak



Dear Colleagues

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2025, a year in which the attention of the President and fellow officers will focus squarely on the next BSHM Congress in the city of Leeds this September. You can read more about it in this newsletter.

We are pleased to invite everyone who is interested in the history of medicine, healthcare and allied sciences, both in the UK and abroad, to participate in this flagship meeting, a national event held only once every two years.

I well remember attending my first BSHM congress, which was held in Leeds incidentally, and becoming an instant devotee. I was struck by the quality and variety of the talks, the knowledge and passion of the presenters for their subjects, and the friendly and congenial atmosphere that pervaded the academic sessions and social events alike.

Our Congress represents an excellent way to make new contacts and exchange ideas with colleagues who have varied backgrounds, expertise and know-how. Over time, I have had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know many BSHM members and non-members, who have educated and advised me. I have always valued their enthusiasm and support highly.

We also encourage delegates to consider the opportunity to present original research at the Congress and submit abstracts for oral presentations or posters. Prizes are offered for the best oral and best poster presentations by an undergraduate student. The deadline for abstract submissions is 20 May 2025. We will notify those whose proposals have been accepted by 17 June, which will leave three weeks to register and pay before the early-bird rate finishes on 8 July.

Students are most welcome to attend the Congress. Undergraduates and postgraduates registered on a full-time course at a recognised university can participate at a specially subsidised rate. Travel grants are available to support UK undergraduates in medicine and allied sciences. We have also reserved accommodation in student halls at the University of Leeds campus which must be booked directly. See the Congress website for the link.

In addition to the keynote lectures and delegate presentations, we offer delegates and accompanying persons several social events. These include our customary welcome reception and conference dinner. We have also organised a special visit to the renowned Thackray Museum of Medicine, the UK's largest independent medical museum which recently underwent an extensive refurbishment.

Outside the Congress, Leeds has a rich medical history to explore, along with a variety of interesting museums, galleries, shopping arcades and other historic buildings worth a visit. Many other locations of historical interest can be reached readily by train, and Yorkshire's national parks are ideal for an extended stay.



We look forward to seeing you in Leeds!

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

Edward Wawrzynczak, BSHM President

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## Congress Registration

Early-bird registration is now open for the BSHM Congress in Leeds from 10-13 September 2025. The academic programme will include a mixture of keynote lectures, oral presentations and posters related to the three main themes of the Congress and sessions on miscellaneous topics. We welcome everyone interested in the history of medicine, healthcare and allied sciences. Full details are available at: <https://bsham.org.uk/congress-2025/>.

## Call for Papers

The organisers invite abstract submissions on the three main themes of the congress – ‘Herbs, Potions and Magic Bullets’, ‘Disability and Rehabilitation’, and ‘Medical and Healthcare Learning’ – and on other subjects of general interest in the history of medicine, healthcare and allied sciences. The deadline for abstract submissions is 20 May 2025.

## Keynote Speakers

### **The John Blair Trust Lecture: *John Blair and his Legacy to the History of Medicine***

#### **Mr Iain Macintyre**



In addition to a lifetime's work as a busy general surgeon, John Blair made important contributions to the history of medicine. This commemorative lecture will pay tribute to his acclaimed work on the Royal Army Medical Corps, the medical schools at St Andrews and Dundee, and other areas. It will examine John Blair's legacy and explore the relevance of the history of medicine in an increasingly technological era.

Iain Macintyre MB ChB MD FRCSEd was Vice President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh during its 500th anniversary celebration and served as surgeon to the Queen in Scotland until he retired in 2004. He now researches, writes and lectures on the history of medicine and has contributed to several books, including *Surgeons' Lives*, *Scottish Medicine – An Illustrated History*, and *Scotland's Contribution to Naval and Military Medicine and Surgery*.

## ***A Quiet Revolution: How Monoclonal Antibodies Transformed Medicine***

### **Dr Lara Marks**

Since their creation 50 years ago, monoclonal antibodies have radically reshaped medicine and spawned a whole new industry. They have improved the accuracy and speed of diagnostics, which proved crucial in the COVID-19 pandemic, helped transform the treatment of certain cancers, inflammatory and autoimmune diseases, and many other significant disorders, and have major potential in the fight against antimicrobial resistance.



Lara Marks DPhil (Oxon) FRSB, Visiting Researcher in the Department of Medicine at the University of Cambridge, is a historian of medicine who has published numerous articles and books, including *The Lock and Key of Medicine: Monoclonal Antibodies and the Transformation of Healthcare*. She is currently managing editor of the charitable online educational resource [WhatisBiotechnology.org](http://WhatisBiotechnology.org).

## ***The History of Disability: Myths, the Everyday and Tales of the Unexpected***

### **Dr Simon Jarrett**



The history of disability is suffused with myths. Many of these frame the disabled person as an eternal outcast – shunned, or at best pitied, by society. The historical excavation and examination of people’s everyday lives creates a new prism through which unexpected insights emerge. Within all this lurks the tense and uneasy relationship between disability and medicine.

Simon Jarrett PhD is Visiting Fellow in the School of Health, Wellbeing and Social Care at the Open University. He is the author of *Those They Called Idiots: The Idea of the Disabled Mind from 1700 to the Present Day* and *A History of Disability in England from the Medieval Period to the Present Day*.

## The Power of Study Touring

Jon Baines began poring over maps as soon as his eyes could focus. It is no surprise to anyone who knows him that his childhood daydreams have been manifested in a passionately curated travel business. Jon's pathway began in the world of medical publishing. He describes his route.

I ran the small travel company within Mark Allen Publishing, which created medical study tours to China. They were a side enterprise to the main publishing business and were marketed via medical journals. I learned a lot, as I ran the whole business with one colleague.



Before long, though, I was itching to expand my horizons beyond China, and in 2007 established Jon Baines Tours (JBT) as a boutique study tour operator. Today the company is based in London and Melbourne and runs medical, professional non-medical, and cultural study tours and cruises to countries on every continent – excluding, so far, Antarctica. Though we have got as close as you can in Tierra del Fuego.

Within the vast swathes of history, medical history apparently occupies one niche. Dig a little deeper however, and the history of medicine reveals itself to be connected to the history of botany, trade, scientific advances, colonialism and empire, social and economic change, and the whims of monarchs. Studying one facet provides insight into many more.

As does a specialist study tour. These tours look at a country or a region through the prism of a particular niche – maritime, botanical or medical history. They may also follow in the footsteps of historical figures or a profession, such as general medicine, midwifery, ophthalmology, palliative care, engineering, or veterinary science.

### Connections

By also exploring the culture, history and society of a destination, travelers finish a tour with a deep insight into the ways in which their interest intertwines with the place they are visiting. It is not only this that brings people back to specialist travel; it's traveling with like-minded individuals.

We know from our regular travelers that our tours have led to lifelong friendships, work relationships – and in one memorable case, a marriage!



*Roman theatre Pergamon*

Upcoming history of medicine tours include [History of Medicine Along the Nile](#), with world-renowned Egyptologist Professor Rosalie David (February 2026); [Conflicts, Cures and Curiosities Cruise in the Eastern Mediterranean](#) with Natasha McEnroe and Simon Chaplin (6-15 May 2025); and [Medicine in Turkey and Greece – Historical and Contemporary](#) (7-19 October 2025), led by Australian GP and archaeologist, Dr Matt Young. Further tours planned for 2026 include a trip to Kaiserswerth in Germany, a history of medicine cruise in the Aegean and a legacies-of-plagues tour in Europe. Other tours will examine the history of medicine from a slightly different angle, such as botanical history tours to [Sri Lanka](#), [Crete](#), and the [Canary Islands](#).

I'm very proud that travelers return to explore the world with us – so much so that we have an unofficial JBT 'family'! We're doing what we love to do, and it's gratifying to know that other people also love our tours. Here's to exploring more of the world with you all – whether you are new to our tours or a valued JBT regular.

*Jon Baines Tours is a valued sponsor of the BSHM Congress 2025.*

[www.jonbainestours.com](http://www.jonbainestours.com)

## Update on *Topics in the History of Medicine*

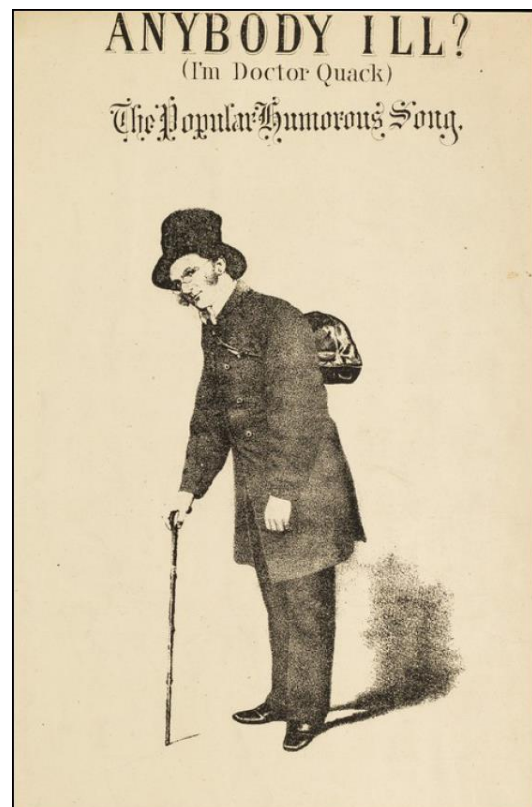
The BSHM's journal *Topics in the History of Medicine (THoM)* goes from strength to strength. Our fourth and current volume was published in the autumn of 2024. It features editorials from guest editor Sean Hughes and new editor-in-chief Hilary Morris and nine papers on medicine in war and conflict, medicine in the age of European colonialism, literature and visual arts as a historical resource, and other topics. See: <https://bshm.org.uk/thom/v4/>.

Following the call for papers for our next volume, slated for publication later this year, we were pleased to receive a substantial number of proposals from the UK and abroad on the special theme of "Quirks, Quacks and Cul-de-sacs" suggested by guest editor Bryan Rhodes.

The editorial team found itself in the enviable position of reviewing many interesting ideas, while facing the difficult task of choosing the limited selection of proposals that we were able to accept as the basis for manuscript submissions.

Looking further ahead, the editors invite presenters of talks and posters at the forthcoming BSHM Congress in Leeds to consider writing a manuscript based on their presentations for inclusion in Volume 6 of *THoM*. Peter Carpenter has kindly agreed to act as guest editor for this edition, which is due to be published in 2026.

*THoM* is a peer reviewed, open access, online only journal which aims to promote scholarly work on all aspects of the history of medicine and healthcare. It provides an attractive option for authors to publish novel research, reviews of historical literature and biographical accounts. For more information see: <https://bshm.org.uk/thom/>.





## Event Reports – Hunterian Society

Professor Sebastian Lucas gave a talk on the “History of HIV/AIDS from a Pathologist’s Perspective” on 18 November 2024. He gave a history from the early cases in Africa up to the present day and showed what is now known about HIV and how it can affect biological systems. The effects in old age are still being revealed and he emphasised that there is more work to do in HIV pathology.

Art historian, author and conservationist, Alan Powers, gave a beautifully illustrated talk on 20 January 2025 entitled “What is art doing in hospitals” showing the importance of art in clinical settings for the well-being of patients and staff. He commented that surveys showed patients tended to favour more abstract or non-representational art for hospital walls.

## Women in the History of Psychiatry – Essay Prize and Online Conference

In celebration of the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of the psychiatrist and author of *Dracula for Doctors*, Fiona Subotsky, the History of Psychiatry Special Interest Group (HoPSIG) of the Royal College of Psychiatrists has organised an essay prize and online conference on women and psychiatry in history. It will take place online on 6 June from 13.30 to 17.00.

Six speakers will discuss points from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the current time, including Leonard Smith on the female proprietors of asylums; Hannah Blythe on Mrs Ethel Vickers and the start of mental after-care; and Gianetta Rands on how women have changed psychiatry in the last 50 years. The prize winner will present his or her paper.

Most of this area is little known or discussed, and the conference should interest anyone wanting to explore the role of women in this profession. It is open to non-college members.

Details of the event are available at:

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/events/conferences/detail/2025/06/06/default-calendar/history-of-psychiatry-online-event---women-in-psychiatry>

## Future History of Medicine Events

### **Worshipful Society of Apothecaries – Centre for Health Studies**

18 March 2025 18.30-21.00

Launch of Centre for Health Studies and Spring Lecture

*Adventures in Search of Envenoming & Poisoning* – Professor Sir David Warrell

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

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

### **Herbal History Research Network**

19 March 2025, 14.30-17.15

ONLINE SEMINAR

*Evolving Traditions: Influences on Western Herbal Practice*

<https://www.herbalhistory.org/home/seminars/>

### **Friends of Millbank**

28 March 2025, 18.30

*Gaza Medic – A War Surgeon’s Story 2024* – Richard Villar

Chelsea College of Arts, formerly the Royal Army Medical College, John Islip St, London SW1P 4JU

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

### **The Osler Club of London**

3 April 2025, 19.00

Members’ Papers Evening

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

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

### **History of Medicine Society of Wales**

4 April 2025, 10.30-16.45

SPRING MEETING

Imperial Hotel, Llandudno, The Promenade, Vaughan St, Llandudno LL30 1AP

<https://homsw.org.uk/events/>

### **British Society for the History of Pharmacy**

5 April 2025, 09.30-16.00

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

George Marshall Medical Museum, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester WR5 1DD

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

### **Hunterian Society**

7 April 2025, 19.00

*Bringing a rare, neglected disease into the 21st century – the journey of male genital cancers* – Professor Nick Watkin

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

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

### **Worshipful Society of Apothecaries – Centre for Health Studies**

8 April 2025, 18.30-19.30

*Unravelling the Double Helix* – Emeritus Professor Gareth Williams

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

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

### **George Marshall Medical Museum**

12 April 2025, 11.00-14.00

*Through Fire and Water* – book launch and talks

Charles Hastings Education Centre, Charles Hastings Way, Worcester WR5 1DD

<https://medicalmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/2025/4/12/through-fire-and-water-book-launch-and-talks-with-mr-john-black-prcs-and-dr-mark-houghton>

### **Friends of Millbank**

25 April 2025, 18.30 (Zoom only)

*Millbank and Netley* – Martyn Lovell

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

### **History of Medicine Society of the Royal Society of Medicine**

14 May 2025, 17.30-19.45

The History of Genetics and Antibody Engineering

The Annual Bynum Lecture: *How the chromosomes got into the clinic* – Professor Soraya de Chadarevian

*From serum therapy to engineered antibodies: A century of therapeutic innovation* – Edward Wawrzynczak

<https://www.rsm.ac.uk/events/history-of-medicine/2024-25/hst06/>

Check the Events Calendar on the BSHM website for updates and new events: <https://bshm.org.uk/history-events/>

The BSHM is not involved in organising these meetings. Please check the official websites to confirm the date, time and location of the events listed and direct enquiries to the relevant societies

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British Society for the  
History of Medicine

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