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Letter from the President, Hilary Morris

Dear members,



In September 2025, one of my first invitations as President was to attend the Scottish Society of the History of Medicine's autumn meeting held in Edinburgh. In addition to an afternoon of fascinating papers, I also attended the AGM at which Malcolm Kinnear was appointed the new President, following Andreas Demetriades term of office. Both are well known to many in the history of medicine community, and I would like to thank them for their unstinting commitment when it comes to promoting the subject.

I am also delighted that Malcolm's first presidential decision was to approve my suggestion that the 2026 Poynter Lecture should take place in Scotland. I have subsequently invited Dr John Clark, a world leading forensic

pathologist, to deliver this highly significant lecture in the BSHM calendar which he has graciously accepted. This will undoubtedly appeal to a range of professional interests as well as illustrate the way in which the history of medicine continues to facilitate a relevance in ways which Noel Poynter would certainly endorse. Further details regarding this event may be found below.

The end of 2025 also saw Volume 5 of our journal *Topics in the History of Medicine (ThoM)* published online. Within the first few days of it appearing, I received many delightful emails, personally thanking all those involved with its production and acknowledging its immense value in promoting the history of medicine to the very highest standard. For those of you who are new to the journal, I have briefly outlined the unique way in which in this publication is planned which can be found at: <https://bshm.org.uk/thom/> . Volume 6 is, therefore, already in preparation, which leaves the editorial board discussing plans for Volume 7. I am particularly delighted our previous guest editor and current vice president Bryan Rhodes has written a piece for this newsletter encouraging members for suggestions regarding possible content.

Lastly, the question increasingly being asked of me is where might be the location of the 2027 BSHM Congress? This is currently being explored in terms of identifying a possible new location but as ever, many factors have to be taken into consideration to ensure the congress continues to be a success. Consequently, once we have a venue we will announce it with all due ceremony.

As ever, I end with sincere thanks to all our members and officers for the support they continually show this society. It is a measure of success that we are able to promote the history of medicine with such commitment as seen in the accompanying newsletter and look forward to hearing from our affiliate societies in the forthcoming year.

Warmest good wishes to you all,

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

Call for proposals for a theme for a new Topics edition in 2027

We announce a call for themes for Volume 7 of our journal, *Topics in the History of Medicine* (THoM) to be published in late 2027. This follows the success of our most recent volume with the theme, *Quirks, Quacks and Cul-de-sacs*, which was published in December 2025, writes Bryan Rodes, who was its guest editor.



Alternate volumes of THoM are published in the year following the BSHM Congress, and the contents are normally inspired by themes and papers represented at the Congress. Work is well under way on Volume 6 of THoM, based on the BSHM Congress in Leeds in 2025, under the guest editorship of Peter Carpenter.

We are, therefore, looking for themes for Volume 7. This is not yet a call for papers; rather we wish to receive proposals for a new theme. The editorial committee is particularly interested in themes that have not featured in previous editions of THoM. We suggest that you consider proposals that are not too limited in scope or specialty: a medical analogy would be broad-spectrum rather than narrow-spectrum antibiotics.

It is our intention that THoM remains a high quality, open access BSHM publication, and the editorial committee will consider carefully any submitted proposals. For those who would like to discuss ideas, including expressions of interest for the role of guest editor, please email Edward Wawrzynczak editorial@bshm.org.uk

BSHM Poynter Lecture
20 June 2026
Buried Evidence
Dr John Clark

Pathologists continue to play a major role in the investigation of mass deaths in conflicts and war crimes. In recognition of this significant and often harrowing aspect of the history of medicine, BSHM is delighted to announce that the internationally acclaimed forensic pathologist Dr John Clark, will give the 2026 Poynter Lecture entitled “Buried Evidence” on Saturday 20 June.

In addition to a career in Aberdeen, Sheffield and Glasgow, John has been Chief Pathologist for the International Criminal Tribunal in the former Yugoslavia relating to the investigation of mass graves from the Balkans Wars. His expertise has also led to involvement with the International Criminal Court, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the European Court of Human Rights, where his expert testimony played a major role in convicting three former heads of state on charges of war crimes.

The lecture will run jointly with the summer meeting of the Scottish Society of the History of Medicine at the University of St Andrews and will take place at 17.00-18.00 online and in person.

BSHM members are invited to attend the full meeting or the lecture only, in person or online. The cost for the lecture online is £10. Prices for in person attendance start at £50. Note: the deadline to register to attend in person is 21:00, 19 May 2026.

Programme

Friday 19 June

Arrivals and informal evening get together for dinner and drinks in St Andrews

Saturday 20 June

09.30-11.00 Tour/talk

11.00-12.30 SSHM Council Meeting (non-Council members can explore the town, which is an easy walk)

12.30-13.30 Buffet lunch

13.30 Talk 1 followed by short break

14.30 Talk 2

15.15 Tea/coffee

15.45 Talk 3 followed by short break

17.00-18.00 Poynter Lecture

18.00 Wine reception followed by dinner

Register and pay: [SSHM & BSHM Summer Conference 2026 – Fill out form](#)

Awards

Bristol student receives first Osler Award to study in Canada

Lakshmi Aggarwal, a third-year student at Bristol Medical School, has been awarded the first Osler Travel Award for Research in the History of Medicine. The award was instigated by the late Professor Sean Hughes to encourage medical students to undertake archival research in North America. This is its inaugural year, and the grant will allow Lakshmi to travel to Canada to research into Dr Peter Edmund Jones, a Native American, who introduced many sanitary and other public health measures into Native American communities.

The award is jointly 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.

The main feature of the award is that it is a competition, open to all undergraduate students at medical schools in the UK, to obtain funds to undertake archival research to further a project within the history of medicine. The archives must **not** be available online.

This year's competition will be officially launched within a few weeks. The likely submission deadline is the end of November 2026. More information is available from grahamkyle33@gmail.com. Please draw the attention of any medical students you know, individually or *en masse*, to this.

Tilli Tansey receives CBE

Professor Tilli Tansey, Emeritus Professor of Medical History and Pharmacology at the William Harvey Research Institute, received her



Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) from the Princess Royal at St James' Palace on 29 January.

The honour recognises Professor Tansey's remarkable contributions to the understanding and promotion of medical history and science.

Two former Presidents of BSHM, John Ford and Sue Weir joined her at the celebration lunch.

The 2026 Norah Schuster Prizes

Four medical students have received Norah Schuster Prizes from the Royal Society of Medicine History of Medicine Society. This award is named in



honour of the pioneering pathologist and medical historian, Norah Schuster.

The President of the RSM History of Medicine Society, Margueritte Dupree, presented to awards, and each winner gave a short presentation of their research.

The prize winners with Margueritte Dupree and keynote speaker Sir Mark Walport.

Left to right: Aleksandra Nowak, Francesca Carrino, Jennifer Okerenta and Morgan Bailey

Winning papers

Aleksandra Nowak, City St George's, University of London

How did Zora Jankovic's tangential excision change burn care, and how does it still shape modern burn surgery?

Francesca Carrino, University of Manchester

100 years since the introduction of the Kerr technique: The development of different surgical techniques used in caesarean sections throughout history

Jennifer Okerenta, University of Manchester

The Peckham experiment, 100 years on: Pioneers of preventive medicine

Morgan Bailey, Guy's, King's and St Thomas'

The creation of a public health in Cardiff c.1774-1850: How did a Chadwickian sanitary vision of public health rationalise and develop in the Welsh town of Cardiff?

Keynote

The evening concluded with a keynote lecture by Professor Sir Mark Walport "Medical Missionaries in China: a multi-generational family perspective". He explored the role of medical missionaries in China during the 19th and 20th centuries using family correspondence and archival research.

Celebrating 300 years: a pair of important anniversaries

The origins and influence of medical teaching in Edinburgh

The foundation 300 years ago of the University of Edinburgh Medical School, the first in the English-speaking world, proved to be important for medical education in the British Isles and further afield, writes Iain Macintyre.

It began a process which led to the city becoming a leading centre for medical education, producing large numbers of medical graduates and licentiates throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. Crucial to its establishment was the prior existence of two medical Royal Colleges. The Incorporation of Surgeons had a long tradition of anatomy teaching and dissection and had appointed a professor of anatomy in 1705, the first such formal appointment in Britain. From 1681, when it acquired a royal charter, the Royal College of Physicians had lobbied the university to establish chairs of medicine.

At the beginning of the 18th century the standard route to medical practice was

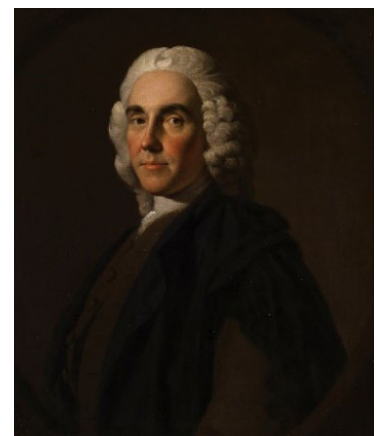


John Munro

by apprenticeship, with a select few able to gain an MD from the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge because the *Test Act* restricted Oxbridge entry to Anglicans, effectively barring those of other religions. One such, John Monro (1670-1840), an Edinburgh surgical apprentice was so inspired by the teaching he received in Leiden that he resolved to set up an equivalent in Edinburgh. When he later became Deacon (President) of the Incorporation of Surgeons, he had sufficient political power and political allies, to see that ambition realised.

The appointment of his son Alexander to the Chair of Anatomy in 1720 started the process, leading in 1726 to the establishment of the new medical faculty, with the appointment of four other professors, who between them taught chemistry, institutes of medicine, *materia medica* and most importantly **practice** of physic.

As in Leiden, medical empiricism was emphasised as was clinical bedside teaching, available in the large Royal Infirmary close by. The excellence of the teaching, much of which was in English, the lack of religious barriers and the relatively low costs all contributed to its popularity. English, Irish and international students all outnumbered Scots from the outset.



Alexander Munro Primus

By the late 18th century as its reputation grew, demand was such that an extramural medical school developed, and students could move freely between the two. The extramural licentiatehip (LRCS) developed into the double (LRCS/LRCP) and then the Triple Qualification (TQ), both recognised by the GMC as a licence to practise throughout Britain.



The university medical school became the largest in Britain such that 96 per cent of all British medical graduates between 1800 and 1850 were from Scottish universities, and some 40 percent of these were from Edinburgh, yet the numbers receiving LRCS licentiate diplomas during this time were even higher. In 1895 many of the extramural schools consolidated into the School of Medicine of the Royal Colleges at Surgeons Hall and this continued until 1948. The TQ diploma continued until 1993 and was a route to the medical register for those, such as women in the 1880-90s and refugees in the 1930s unable to enter British universities.

Edinburgh's two medical schools enhanced and complemented each other, and their graduates and diplomates could be found around the world and were influential in establishing medical schools in North America, Australia and New Zealand.

Guys Hospital: 300 years of caring for the health of the community

The first patients were admitted to Guys Hospital in 1726. Guys had been funded and built by the merchant Thomas Guy from his own resources, and he lived long enough to see his hospital built but died before patients were admitted. He wished to see that patients with chronic diseases (incurables) were cared for and, indeed, left sufficient funds for estates productive in producing food and rent should be purchased 'so that no patient admitted to Guys should have to pay, and no patient should go hungry', Professor Stephen Challacombe writes.

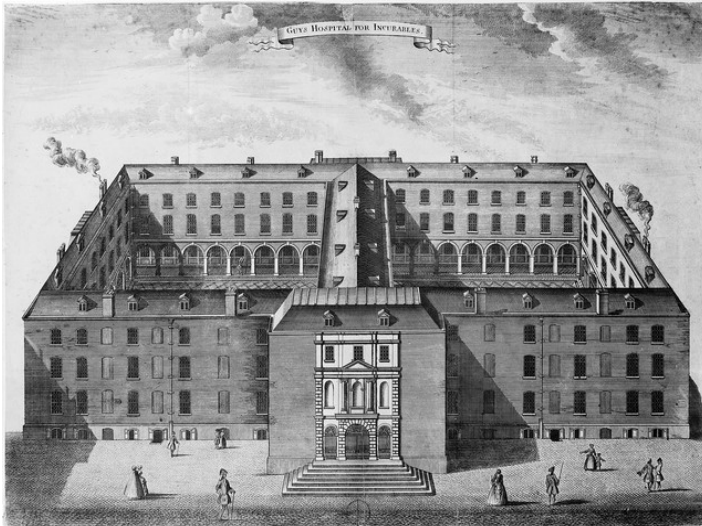


Guys Hospital 1726 to 2026
Caring for the Health of our Community

The celebrations in 2026 recognise 300 years of medical caring for the health of the community and take place at the beginning of May. All those with an interest in Guys are welcome to attend. On 5 and 6 May, there will be a series of community activities in Bermondsey, in the forecourt around the statue of Thomas Guy and in the adjacent Science Gallery (free entry).

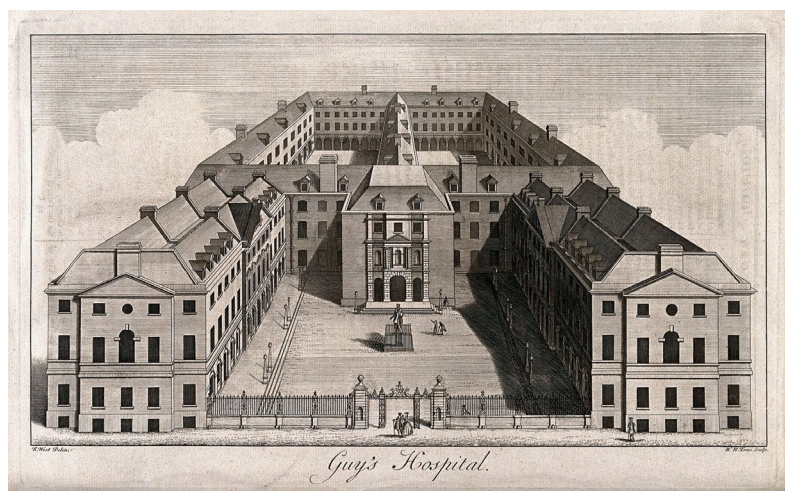
On 7 May 2026 there will be a service of celebration and commemoration in Southwark Cathedral led by the Bishop of Southwark and with the address by Sir Nicholas Black. The service will be followed by an afternoon tea and reception in the forecourt of Guys under the marquee. (booking needed).

**Guy's Hospital, Southwark; an aerial view, etching and engraving on paper, c.1725–28, GTC2021.016
Thomas Bowles (1689/90–1767), published by John Bowles**



Before the East and West wings were built

Guys Hospital in 1776 showing the addition of the west and east wings



On Friday 8 May, there will be an all-day scientific symposium, reflecting especially those scientific discoveries made within Guys which have had an

impact on clinical care. The symposium will be held in the New Hunts House. That evening, there will be a gala dinner and ball for 700 people with special guests and speeches as well as dancing later (booking needed).

To book: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/kingscollegelondonalumni>
There will also be a special edition of the *GKT Gazette* comprising over 100 articles on the history, education, buildings, students, patients, clinical care and research which has emanated from Guys Hospital over 300 years.

Affiliate news

Digitisation of the historic records of the Hunterian Society of London

The Hunterian Society of London has allocated a sum of money from its Rudolf educational fund to digitise historical records dating from the founding of the society in 1819 by William Cooke and Thomas Armiger. The purpose of the society was to celebrate the legacy of the renowned surgeon John Hunter (1728-1893), and the digitization will mark the 300th anniversary of his birth.

The majority of our records are currently held safely within the Wellcome Archives, Euston Road, but although all but the most recent are available to view by visiting in person, very few are currently online. The records include the earliest minute books and records of meetings, discussions and lectures from 1819 with more detailed published *Transactions of the Society* dating from 1868.

Although not the oldest in the UK, the society played an important role in the education of surgeons, physicians and general practitioners at a time



Lettsome House in central London - home of the Hunterian Society

when there were few medical journals or forums for debate available to qualified doctors. Many key experts and researchers spoke at society meetings. Although some, but not all, of their work was also published elsewhere, in some cases the minutes and *Transactions of the Society* may well be one of the only places where their opinions and theories were debated

and recorded.

The society also owns records and letters from the Hunter brothers and wills relating to the Hunter family and Matthew Baillie dating back to the late 17th century. There are also student notebooks filled with contemporaneous notes taken in the lectures given by John Hunter and his contemporaries, some of which have never been published.

There have been considerable changes over the last 200 or so years. We now welcome veterinarians, dentists, nurses, medical historians and curators of medical collections as fellows. Women have been admitted since the mid-20th century. There is an annual prize essay competition for students of medical sciences and qualified professionals in training posts, and we welcome students as guests at our meetings

Digitising will commence in this spring, and we hope to complete the project by the end of this calendar year. We hope that they will be of use to medical historians and scientific researchers alike and give a more comprehensive account of how such societies were set up and have served their members.

Fully indexed and searchable historic records will be made available freely online via our website: www.hunteriansociety.org.uk

Cathy Corbishley (President) and William Edwards (Curator)

The John Clifton Essay Prize 2026

The British Society for the History of Radiology (BSHR) has launched the John Clifton Essay Prize for 2026, promoting research and insight into the history of radiological sciences (including medical imaging, radiotherapy and nuclear medicine). The prize is named in honour of Professor John Clifton (1930-2023), renowned medical physicist and member of BSHR over many years.

The first prize is £250 (and publication in *Invisible Light* / BSHR website). Additional prizes may be awarded at the judges' discretion. Winners also receive a year's membership of BSHR.

Closing date: Friday 23 October 2026

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

Friends of Millbank

We had a successful programme of 11 talks during 2025, three of which were Zoom only, the rest being held in the Lecture Theatre at Millbank in London and streamed online simultaneously via Zoom, writes President David Vassallo. This hybrid format for our talks, instituted in January 2021, continues to work well as outreach, with many people still attending at Millbank while the online option attracts many members and guests from around the UK, as well as overseas, with members attending regularly from Canada, the United States and Malta in particular. There are now 50 recordings available on our Members' Area. There have been occasional minor technical challenges with Zoom, all part of a learning curve: I now know that 'gremlin' never registers in advance; he simply makes his presence felt on the day, so it is just a matter of finding out under what guise and adapting accordingly.

<https://www.friendsofmillbank.org>

Visit

Unearthing Texts, Tonics and Trees: The Apothecaries and the Chelsea Physic Garden

Friday 26 June 2026

This year's event, *Unearthing Texts, Tonics and Trees*, will explore the botanical legacy of the Apothecaries' and the garden in shaping our understanding of the healing properties of plants to the development of the drug trade through annotated texts from our archives, live tours and interactive exhibitions.

Medieval historian Rosalind Lintott will examine the role of written texts in supporting medical treatment in professional and domestic contexts.

Drawing upon a range of printed books and manuscripts in the collection at the Chelsea Physic Garden, you will explore how and why early modern readers engaged with botanical works in Latin, English, Italian and French, and consider what the garden's collection reveals about health concerns in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

At Apothecaries' Hall in Blackfriars, biocultural historian, Kim Walker will speak on botanical drugs, then engage with tours and displays related to plant medicine, herbals and the Apothecaries' involvement in the drug trade. The afternoon will also include a 'make your own bitter mix' session where you can create your own blend of bitters to infuse in your next homemade beverage.

[More information and tickets](#)

International

International Society for the History of Medicine – 50th Congress 4-6 November 2026

The 50th Congress of the International Society for the History of Medicine will take place in Tunis, Tunisia, from 4 to 6 of November 2026. The official languages will be English, French and Arabic.

Congress themes include the Peoples of the Sea and the transfer of medical culture across the Mediterranean; Antiquity: the Pharaonic School, the Greek School, the Carthaginian School and the Alexandrian School; medical exchanges with China and Asia; and the ancient pharmacopoeia.

The deadline for submitting abstracts will be 31 July 2026

<http://ishm.wikidot.com/news>

Affiliate events

British Society for the History of Pharmacy

8-10 May 2026

Annual conference: Pharmacy Communities: Local & Global Perspectives

Royal Pharmaceutical Society, Edinburgh

<https://www.bsphp.org/post/annual-conference-2026>

15 June 2026, 18.30-19.30, online

What's in a name - College of Pharmacy or Pharmaceutical Society? Deciding what's best for British Pharmacy 1841 to 202, Stuart Anderson, and

Museum Reports: The changing role of the Museum at the Pharmaceutical Society,

Pharmaceutical Historian Editor and Museum Manager, Royal

Pharmaceutical Society, Catherine Walker. <https://www.bsphp.org/events>

Friends of Millbank

24 April 2026, 18.30

Jacques Lisfranc de Saint-Martin (1787-1847), A surgeon of the Napoleonic War, Adrian Thomas

28 May 2026, 18.30

Vignettes from the former Royal Army Dental Corps, Quentin Anderson

26 June 2026, 18.30

A scandalously short introduction to WWI medical advances, Dominic Hodgson

All meetings at Chelsea College of Art, 16 John Islip St, London SW1P 4JU, and online unless otherwise stated.

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

History of Medicine Society of Wales

Spring meeting: Friday 17 April 2026, Imperial Hotel, Llandudno.

**Summer meeting: Friday 26 June 2026 - Metropole Hotel,
Llandrindod Wells**

The opening meeting of the 2026 session of the History of Medicine Society of Wales will take place at the Imperial Hotel, Llandudno on Friday 17 April. As well as interesting talks, the social aspects of the meetings are important, and non- members are welcome to attend.

<https://homsow.org.uk/>

Further information and booking: secretary.homsow@gmail.com

Hunterian Society of London

15 April 2026

Visit to the Royal Veterinary College, Camden Campus, organised in conjunction with David Danson. Check website for details.

20 April 2026 19.00

Scientific Meeting and Council

From Gillies to Guinea Pigs - the story behind the WWII Maxillofacial Units,
Andrew Brown, retired consultant maxillofacial surgeon,

7 May 2026

Walk and tour of Highgate Cemetery led by Richard Pusey and a specialist guide. Check website for details.

18 May 2026, 19.00

Scientific Meeting, AGM and Hunterian Prize presentations.

15 June 2026 Afternoon Tea at Lettsom House with Mrs Hunter.

Presidential address: *Anne Hunter and the Bluestockings*, Cathy Corbishley,
President of the Hunterian Society

Meetings at Lettsome House 11 Chandos Street, London W1G 9DP
unless otherwise stated.

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

Lindsay Society for the History of Dentistry

28 May 2026, 19.30 online

What's in a name? The legacy of René Le Fort, Peter Dyer

<https://lindsaysociety.co.uk/events/>

Osler Club of London

23 April 2026, 19.00

Members' papers evening

28 May 2026, 19.00

Germes and Governance: the 'rediscovery' of hospital infection in Britain c. 1947-1970, Professor Marguerite Dupree, University of Oxford

25 June 2026, 19.00

Knowledge, Networks and Influence - Osler, the Great War and Cerebrospinal Fever, Edward Wawrzynczak, writer, lecturer and researcher

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

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

Royal College of Psychiatrists History Special Interest Group

20 May 2026, 12.50-17.15, online

Paradigms of the past

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/members/special-interest-groups/history-of-psychiatry/events>

Royal Society of Medicine History of Medicine Society

13 May 2026, 17.30

Even Better than the Real Thing: A History of the Simulated Patient, Gayle Davis, Professor of the History of Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, and *E is for the Environment - how Escherichia coli transformed into a sentinel for water and environmental health*, Claas Kirchhelle, Research Professor at the National Institute of Medical Research (CERMES3), Paris.

Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole St, Marylebone, London, W1G 0AE

<https://www.rsm.ac.uk/events/history-of-medicine/2025-26/hsu06/>

Scottish Society of the History of Medicine

20 June 2026, Summer meeting, University of St Andrews

See Poynter Lecture on page 4 for the programme and booking.

Society of Apothecaries Centre for Health Studies

21 April 2026, 18.30, Lecture

Life science regulation and a history of antivaccination and vaccination, David Jeffreys, Master Apothecary, and Tony Cartwright, retired pharmaceutical regulatory consultant

<https://www.apothecaries.org/events/event/cfhs-spring-lecture-2026/>

25 April 2026, 10.00-15.30, History of Medicine Showcase

Medical culture in history, literature and film

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

15 May 2026, 18.30, Leslie Payne Memorial Lecture:

Oceans and Battlefields: Trauma Care in Tomorrow's War, Col Paul Parker and Surgeon Commander Jowan Penn Barwell

<https://www.apothecaries.org/events/event/the-leslie-payne-memorial/>

4 June 2026, 18.30, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Lecture

Norah Schuster: Life and Times of a Pioneer Cytopathologist, Tina Matthews and Oliver Sacks *and the Hidden History of Neurodivergent Reading*, Professor Matthew Rubery

<https://www.apothecaries.org/events/event/elizabeth-garrett-anderson-macdonald-lecture-dr-tina-matthews-prof-matthew-rubery/>

All Society of Apothecaries, Apothecaries' Hall, Black Friars Lane, London EC4V 6EJ

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