



BSHP Gazette

The Newsletter of the British Society for the History of Pharmacy

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Seasonal Greetings from Chris Duffin, our President

2023 has proved to be a year of challenges for the world at large post-Covid – increasing pressure on local authority service provision, unrest in the workplace, terrorism and war on the international stage, household incomes squeezed in the light of rising prices and the cost-of-living crisis to name just a few of the tests we have been experiencing. With those constraints in mind, we are grateful to all BSHP members for your continued support of the Society; we hope that our programme of events and the regular editions of the *BSHP Gazette* and *Pharmaceutical Historian* are keeping your interest in the history of pharmacy stimulated and, to some extent, satiated. The annual conference is turning into a thoroughly international affair, with interesting talks provided by a diverse array of domestic and foreign members! This year has brought its own challenges to the BSHP as we have sought to adapt to the various pressures experienced by most smaller academic and special interest societies. The Committee has tried its best to navigate its way through some stormy waters but we are always ready to welcome new insights, wider experience and active participation in the workings of the Society from members new and old. If you think you might be able to serve the Society in some way, and would like to discuss things further, please do get in touch with us.

I am very grateful to the Committee for their support and continued work on behalf of the Society. It just remains for me to wish all BSHP members and their families the very best regards of the season for the New Year, which I hope will be peaceful, stimulating and fulfilling.

Pharmaceutical Historian - Volume 53 No.4

With this mailing you are receiving the December 2023 issue (Volume 53, No. 4) of *Pharmaceutical Historian*, our flagship international journal for the history of pharmacy. This number includes an article on medicinal plants in British drug market reports 1910-1965 by Jemma Houghton, an account of the origins and early years (1894-1902) of the Lister Institute Serum Department by Edward Wawrzynczak, and a history of pharmacy and photography in Great Britain, 1839-1905 by Norma Cox.

It also includes a short communication on Royal patronage, Ducal crests, and a Glossop pharmacy, 1838-2012 by Fay Hartley, following her presentation at the BSHP Conference in Manchester. Anyone interested in learning more about the history of this pharmacy can obtain a copy of the author's book *A Glossop Apothecary: The History of Pharmacy at 7 High Street West, Glossop*, available for £9.99+p&p, by contacting her at this email address: finlay.mckinlay01@gmail.com.

Membership Subscription Renewals

A note from our outgoing Treasurer:

For the last few years, we have tried to streamline the subscription payment process to make it as efficient as possible. This has meant that Go Cardless has been closed as a payment option. It is preferable for people to pay directly into the Society's bank account if possible,

so the Society retains all of the £30. PayPal is also an option for people to pay, but we incur a small fee for each payment received. Payment is possible by cheque but please note the new address for Association Enterprises (see page 4).

If you have received a membership subscription renewal invoice with this mailing then please pay promptly to ensure continuing benefits.

BSHP Online Lecture Series - Global Histories of Pharmacy

If you have attended any previous lectures, you should receive notifications of future ones for this year via Eventbrite or please watch our website www.bsHP.org/events/.

They will be on Mondays again and are timed to start at 6.30pm.

Annual Conference 23rd March 2024

Join us in March at the Thackray Museum of Medicine in Leeds for our annual conference! Full details are enclosed including the Eventbrite link for all bookings. Members have exclusive access for two weeks before we publicise the event more widely.

Peter Homan Small Grant Scheme

Third Call closes on 31st May 2024

Having received no applications in the previous round, we would be keen to hear suggestions for further promotion. Please consider spreading the word - or applying yourself! Full details here: <https://www.bsHP.org/Awards/PeterHoman.asp>

New Members

We welcome the following into membership:

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|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Karen Davis (Amersham) | Alaster Rutherford (Knowle) |
| Pablo Alcover-Cateuna (Spain) | Daisy Cunynghame (Edinburgh) |
| Jenny Stephenson (Sheffield) | Meng Zhang (Manchester) |
| Thomas Cox (Kidderminster) | David Wilkinson (Abergele) |
| Kate Wescombe (Buckingham) | |

Society of Apothecaries - Faculty events

The Friends of the Archives of the Society of Apothecaries agreed at their AGM in November to change their name to The Friends of the Collections to reflect their wider remit and interests. The Friends run a programme of talks and summer party each year, support the acquisition and conservation of the Society's collections, run a research bursary scheme, and encourage research into medical and pharmacy history. More details, including membership information, here: <https://www.apothecaries.org/history/friends-of-the-collections-2/>

The Faculty of the History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy said goodbye to Maria Ferran, Faculty Manager, in December after 10 years in the role. Her successor will be appointed in 2024.

Evening lecture series at the Society of Apothecaries

Bookings are open for the evening lecture series presented by the Faculty of the History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy. Held in the historical Apothecaries' Hall in the City of London, there are a number of talks of pharmacy history interest. Each lecture starts at 6pm with a drinks reception afterwards and an option to stay for supper. The programme continues as follows:

6th February - The ubiquitous Mr Burroughs and the origins of Big Pharma, with speaker Julia Sheppard.

22nd February – Speaking uncomfortable truths to the world: a critical role for the medical writer, with speaker Dr Rachel Clarke

More information and booking details here: www.apothecaries.org/events/category/faculty-hp-cc-events/

BSHP in Brittany - Part 2 - by Dr Chris Duffin, BSHP President

As promised here are abstracts of the two papers I presented at the conference in Rennes:

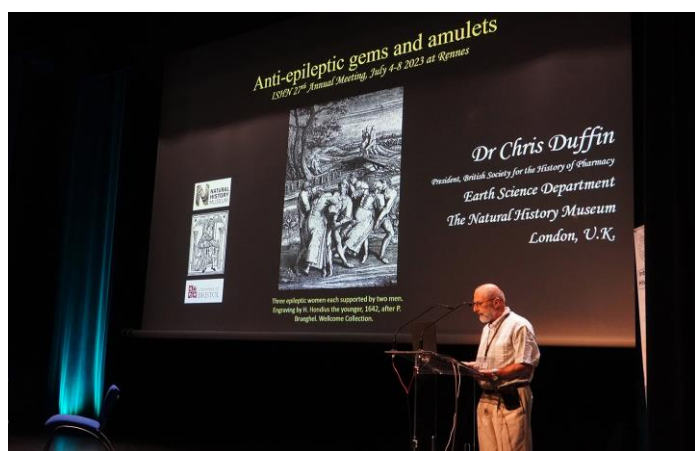
Anti-epileptic gems and amulets

The loss of motor control during epileptic seizures has led to the disease being called the Falling Sickness. Anti-epileptic amulets and charms are known from at least the 3rd century BCE; a gold sheet includes a personal incantation seeking protection 'from every evil spirit and from every epileptic fit and seizure'.

Amulets include *Ungula alcis*, the 'Nail of the Great Beast' or Elk Claw. The Elk supposedly suffered continuously from epilepsy which it cured by touching its right hoof against its left ear. The limb was rendered into powder for treatment purposes and worn as an amulet. Asses' hoof was an acceptable alternative and often fashioned into anti-epileptic rings.

A gold pendant found in 1985 near Middleham Castle was probably made between 1450 and 1475. The Latin inscription around the border reads 'Ecce Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi ... miserere nobis ... tetragramaton ... Ananyzapta'. The final word, 'Ananyzapta' was commonly used to protect the wearer from epilepsy. The pendant is a reliquary which originally contained a piece of holy cloth. Ananyzapta was also inscribed onto a variety of rings. The names of the Magi – Melchior, Balthazar and Caspar – were also seen as having special anti-epileptic power and were commonly written on charms, talismans and items of jewellery.

Emerald was believed to have special powers against the disease and was often worn in amuletic jewellery. Hildegard von Bingen commended putting an emerald in the mouth of a sufferer to mitigate fitting.



Chris Duffin presenting one of his papers



Display of proprietary medicines at the Conservatoire du Patrimoine Hospitalier de Rennes

Austro-Bavarian folklore approaches to Epilepsy

The Austro-Bavarian region during the 17th to 19th centuries was teeming with prophylactic and therapeutic approaches to the complex condition known locally as *Frais*; epilepsy was prominent among the conditions which this term embraced. Amuletic items of naturalia whose roots lay in secular folklore included *Schreckstein* (mounted materials, mostly mineral, credited with protection against 'Maternal impression'), *Fraisperlen* (paeony seeds), *Frais-knochen* (isolated temporal bones from the skulls of pigs), *Krampfkäfer* (Stag beetle heads), *Fraisenpulver* (powdered stomach of the Capercaillie), *Fraiskräntl* (probably Ironwort, used to produce 'Mountain Tea'), *Fraisbeter* (or *Heckwurmperven*, adder vertebrae), *Fraisenuhr* (special clock which is wound up during a seizure), and *Fraisengarn* (yarn spun by a girl under 7 years of age).

The region is steeped in post-counter-reformation Catholic traditions including an enthusiastic approach to pilgrimage. Items of associated religious folklore employed against *Frais* include a wide range of saints' medallions and tertiary reliquaries (especially those associated with epilepsy), *Fraisschlüssel* (usually 'Mercy Keys' from Rein Abbey), *Frais-haubchen* (special caps, printed with ecclesiastical images), *Lorettohemdchen* or *Froasenpfoadln* (miniature shirts from the Loretto Monastery in Salzburg), *Fraisensteine* (baked clay tablets from Sonntagberg and Maria Taferl), flasks of *Walpurgisöl*, and *Fraisbrief* (printed prayers, often folded into padded hangers or hung on the wall ready for recitation).

Many items were strung together on *Fraisketten* – polyamuletic chains hung around the neck or over the bedstead to protect the pregnant mother against any frights which could communicate epilepsy to the baby, and as prophylactics for the newborn child.

Book Reviews in the *Pharmaceutical Historian*

The journal frequently includes reviews of books which are thought may be of interest to its readers. Whilst some are published by university publishers and are aimed at a more scholarly audience (and are often very expensive) others are published privately by their authors and can be obtained at a reasonable price. The March 2024 issue of *Pharmaceutical Historian* includes two book reviews. The first – reviewed by Stuart Anderson – is an account of the growth of the Indian pharmaceutical industry by Nandini Bhattacharya, under the title *Disparate Remedies: Making Medicines in Modern India*. It is published by the McGill-Queens University Press.

The second is a review by John Crellin of a book by Jenny Stephenson entitled *The History of Physicians and Pharmacists: A Healthy Alliance?* which is described as "a study of the evolution of their relationship through the Ages". Jenny is a Sheffield GP who recently completed the Society of Apothecaries' diploma course on the history of medicine. Her 180-page book was privately printed and can be purchased for £12 by sending a request for a copy to Jenny at jenniferannstephenson@btinternet.com. All proceeds go to charity.

Future issues of the *Pharmaceutical Historian* will include a review by Chris Duffin of a volume edited by Petros Bouras-Vallianatos entitled *Drugs in the Medieval Mediterranean: Transmission and Circulation of Pharmacological Knowledge* (Cambridge University Press); a review by Selena Hurley of a volume edited by Henry Oakeley at the Royal College of Physicians entitled *Modern Medicines from Plants: Botanical Histories of Some of Modern Medicine's Most Important Drugs*, published by CRC Press; and a review by Stuart Anderson of a book by Patrick Chiu, president of the Hong Kong Society for the History of Pharmacy, entitled *A History of Western Pharmacy in Modern China*, published by Springer.

Also making an appearance in 2024 will be Stuart Anderson's latest book on colonial pharmacy, entitled *Pharmacopoeias, Drug Regulation, and Empires: Making Medicines Official in Britain's Imperial World, 1618 to 1968*. It is being published in the Spring by McGill-Queens University Press in Montreal as part of their 'Intoxicating Histories' series. It will be reviewed in the *Pharmaceutical Historian* in due course.

Secretariat Office - Change of Address

As advised in the last Gazette our Secretariat Office has now relocated and its new address is as follows:

AssociAction Enterprises, Unit 9, Cartwright Court, Cartwright Way, Bardon Hill, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 1UE

Phone numbers and emails remain the same as before.

Contacts

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