



BSHP Gazette

The Newsletter of the British Society for the History of Pharmacy

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Season's Greetings from Chris Duffin our President

One of the famous aphorisms of the Greek philosopher, Heraclitus (6th century BCE), is 'the only constant in life is change'. Over the past year, the truth of that statement is something that has dominated our lives as we have weathered the vicissitudes of living with the Covid 19 pandemic and all the adjustments and readjustments to life that it has brought. Amidst all the different and evolving restrictions to travel, working, socialising and daily life in general there has also been a significant adaptive response from the pharmaceutical industry. We are all beneficiaries of the novel and innovative methods of fast-track stable and efficacious vaccine development and production that have emerged this year. Whilst the process of change is inherently uncomfortable, it is an essential dynamic of growth. As Winston Churchill wrote: 'To improve is to change'.

The BSHP, alongside many other similar bodies, has not been untouched by the upheavals brought by the pandemic. In-person meetings have not been possible, so we have embraced new technology such that our committee meetings, AGM and lecture programme have all been facilitated on the Zoom platform. Although somewhat limiting this has provided some unanticipated benefits: we have been able to schedule more meetings, deliver to a wider audience, engage the services of international speakers and, together with streaming to the new BSHP YouTube channel, generally increase the scale of our reach and promotion of pharmacy history. I do hope you have been able to participate in what, I hope, has been a stimulating programme that has ranged from the history of space medicine to Coptic pharmacology. Whilst we are looking forward to being able to return to in-person meetings, we are delighted that these changes have also resulted in numerous additions to our membership.

The past year has also brought sadness. We are always sorry to lose members, but the passing of three very supportive and, in their time, extremely active members of the Society (Peter Homan, Renzo Console and Melvin Earles) in quick succession was particularly distressing.

Although living in uncertain times, we look forward to embracing a year of continued opportunity for the Society. The committee and I hope that you all enjoy a healthy, productive and safe year ahead, with many opportunities for indulging your interest in the history of pharmacy.

BSHP 54th Annual General Meeting 2021

The Society has been forced to play catch-up with our AGMs since the cancellation of one due to be held in March 2020 during the first lockdown arising from the pandemic. We held the delayed 53rd one online in October 2020. As an incorporated charity we have to submit specific information annually to the Charity Commission which enables them to check that we are fulfilling our charitable objectives.

In an attempt to get back on track we held our 54th AGM on Monday 18th October once again online using Zoom. The meeting approved the Annual Report for 2020 and the 2020 Annual Accounts – these documents have been lodged as required with the Charity Commission. The meeting also ratified members of the BSHP committee. Here, Shirley Ellis was stepping down after 20 years and she was thanked for her years of service to the Society during which time she was Vice-President, President (2006-2007) and Annual Conference Organiser. Since then, we have welcomed John Crellin back onto the committee to fill the vacancy created by Shirley's resignation.

An AGM for the election of Officers (Charity Trustees) along with agreeing other business items (2021 Annual Report and Accounts) will be held on Sunday 27th March 2022 at the conference.

Pharmaceutical Historian - Volume 51 No.4

With this mailing you are receiving the December 2021 issue of our flagship international journal for the History of Pharmacy. One article this time is only available as online content, the title being "Some medical receipts by Sir Walter Raleigh (c.1554-1618)" by Christopher J. Duffin.

Please enquire if that particular item interests you and you need guidance on how to access it.

Membership Subscriptions 2022

Also, this month, we are including a membership renewal invoice for those who do not pay by Standing Order or by Direct Debit. Those who joined using PayPal can now renew this way via a link on our website: (www.bsHP.org/joinus/) or by using the "Paypalme/BSHPRenewal" link.

We do ask Members to pay promptly please. This will help us avoid spending valuable admin time following-up unpaid invoices or underpayments. Your assistance here is greatly appreciated.

BSHP Conference 2022 - Salford, Manchester

A booking form for our first in-person conference for two years (all being well) accompanies this mailing. Our thanks must go to Briony Hudson, Conference Organiser (conference@bsHP.org) for putting together such an interesting programme.

The deadline for bookings is Friday 4th March.

Tributes

Melvin Peter Earles (25/12/25 – 9/10/21)

We report, with deep regret, that Dr Melvin Earles died last year aged 95. He was one of BSHP's founder members and had served two terms as President. He had also been Honorary Secretary, Programme Secretary and Vice-President while on our committee. Indeed, details of his career including his academic activities would easily fill all four pages of this Gazette.

After a distinguished period of active service during World War 2 he went to Chelsea Polytechnic where he gained his B.Pharm(Honours) in 1950. The following year he registered as a Pharmaceutical Chemist and subsequently gained an MSc. Some years later, in 1962, he was awarded a PhD for his thesis on the history of experimental pharmacology. He worked for Wellcome for 2 years then continued with various lectureships mainly still at Chelsea.

A sabbatical in 1967/8 saw him appointed Associate Professor, History of Pharmacy, at the University of Wisconsin. He became an honorary member of their History and Philosophy of Science Department and for a short time was Acting Director of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy (AIHP).

After this he was appointed Head of the Department of Pharmacy at Chelsea College before "retiring" in 1984. He served on the committee of the Society of Apothecaries, Faculty of the History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy. Many other roles in academia continued, including lecturing, which kept him as busy as ever. He was a regular attendee at our annual conferences. On top of all this he was a prolific author of articles on pharmacy history – [*A copy of a list of these is available on request from Roy using honsec@bsHP.org*].

Melvin's funeral was held at Eltham Crematorium on Friday 5th November 2021 and BSHP were represented at this.

He will be remembered for his outstanding contributions not only to this Society but also to the whole field of the history of British Pharmacy. In doing so he helped this Society fulfill its various charitable aims and objectives by furthering interest in the subject and the study and promotion of it.



Dr Earles in 2000 at the BSHP Conference in Aldridge, Walsall.

Renzo Console (14/9/41- 3/10/21)

We are a Society with a longstanding tradition of welcoming people to the History of Pharmacy from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. In that respect, Renzo Console typified the interested lay person in the sense that he had no academic background in pharmacy or history but was fascinated by the subject.

Renzo was born in wartime Rome, although the family had several changes of address in the early years of his life. Working for Alitalia meant that Renzo had flying privileges. On a trip to Kyoto in 1973, he met his future wife, Atsuko. They were married and had two sons, Andrea and Giulio. Conversations at the dinner table regularly switched between Italian, English and Japanese! Renzo's gift for languages also included being able to read Latin, a consequence of 8 years study at school, a talent which was to prove especially useful in his later research.



It is not entirely clear as to how Renzo first became interested in the History of Pharmacy. In general, he was a person who read widely and pursued areas of interest with vigour. He took pains to evaluate what he heard and read very carefully, thinking deeply about interactions and consequences, and would challenge the conclusions of 'experts' in cases where he perceived there to be flaws in logic. He would also apply that discipline to his own thinking. Seemingly fascinated by the fact that people could follow what he considered to be bizarre ideas uncritically, he developed an abiding interest in charlatans and quacks. One manifestation of this side of his character is the regular conversations he had with his parish priest concerning problems associated with the theology of the Old Testament.

He joined the BSHP around 2003 and became an active member of the Society, regularly attending and speaking at many annual conferences. On one occasion, Atsuko explained to the audience that Renzo found studying the History of Pharmacy something of a lifeline at a time when he was suffering extreme ill health.

At some point near the turn of the Millenium, Renzo began a very effective collaboration with the Italian researcher Patrizia Catellani. Together they made seminal contributions to the life and pharmaceutical works of a number of prominent 17th century characters, including Moyse Charas (1619-1698), Nicolas Lémery (1645-1715) and Christoph Glaser (born 1615). They published together both in English and Italian. Renzo's interests in popular, long-lived medical concoctions with overtones of associated 'quackery' were also expressed in their papers on Orvietan, the Queen of Hungary Water and Mithridatium. As his bibliography* shows, Renzo also collaborated with other researchers and published a number of papers in the *Pharmaceutical Historian*. In all his contributions, Renzo brought a precise, polyglot and analytical approach to bear, yielding carefully argued and intelligently constructed results. Renzo suffered from heart disease and Alzheimer's Disease in his later years but is fondly remembered as a committed member of the BSHP with an abiding and active interest in the subject. He was a regular contributor to BSHP conferences and published both in the *Historian* and in other journals.

His funeral was held on 4th November at Our Lady's Help of Christians Church, West Byfleet, and BSHP was represented at this. [**If anyone is interested in receiving a bibliography of Renzo's published works, then please contact Roy again using honsec@bshp.org*]

Society of Apothecaries

The Faculty of the History and Philosophy of Medicine and Pharmacy has this upcoming event:

Monday 28 February at 18.00, Hans Sloane Lecture on Zoom

"Poison that 'Sweetens the Blood'; Slavery, Drugs and the Apothecary" by Professor Pratik Chakrabarti
www.apothecaries.org/events/event/poison-that-sweetens-the-blood-slavery-drugs-and-the-apothecary/

Save the date of Friday 6th May for a full day joint symposium with the Society for the History of Alchemy and Chemistry to mark the 350th anniversary of the opening of the laboratory at Apothecaries' Hall in 1672 and the centenary of its closure in 1922. Speakers include Professor Patrick Wallis, Professor Anna Marie Roos and Dr Peter Elmer, and the programme includes lightning talks on archival research and a chance to view material from the Apothecaries' collections.

New Members

We welcome the following into membership:

Ian Paterson (Sheffield)

Rosemary Waters (Cardiff)

Mike Gould (Leicester)

Peter Homan Memorial Bursary

We are delighted to announce that the details for this new bursary scheme will be finalized later this month. We wish to thank all those who have contributed to the fund which will enable us to achieve most of the ideas for something significant to honour Peter's contributions to pharmacy history. Primarily it will be aimed at pharmacy students but also at those researching pharmacy or pharmaceutical history subjects (hopefully attracting interest from young researchers).

If anyone still wishes to contribute financially to this then it is not too late. You should contact Roy by email using honsec@bshp.org.

Events - BSHP's Virtual Events to the end of 2021

December saw the conclusion of a second series of online events which were again live-streamed using the Zoom platform. You can catch up with all the recordings to date on our YouTube channel at:

www.youtube.com/channel/UCGycostH8KsAE6JnWDsdIvA

or use this link from our website www.bshp.org/events/archive/

Monday September 13th

Dr Ted Bergman from the University of St Andrews spoke on "Women Apothecaries and the Law in Early Modern Spain: Three Case Studies".

Monday October 11th

Joao Neto, Director of the History of Pharmacy Museum in Lisbon, gave a talk based on some treasures in their collection. This was entitled "Agatha Christie and Hercule Poirot in the Pharmacy Museum".

Monday November 15th

Lucy Santos gave a presentation on "Half Lives : Tales from the Radium era"

Monday December 6th

Anne Grons from the Institute of the History of Pharmacy and Medicine, University of Marburg, spoke about "Coptic Pharmacological Prescriptions".

Events - A Third Season of Virtual Talks

Given their popularity we have decided to organise another season of online talks hosted via Eventbrite. All are timed as 6.15 for 6.30pm - Details so far are as follows:

Monday January 24th

Professor Alisha Rankin, Tufts University, Massachusetts, and author of *Panacea's Daughters* (2013) and *The Poison Trials* (2020). The title here is to be confirmed.

Monday February 7th

A new panel discussion is being planned - this will be confirmed on social media and on our website.

Monday April 25th

Xinyi Wen, Cambridge University, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, will give a talk on "The Doctrine of Signatures in Early Modern Medical Practice".

New Book

Stuart Anderson, BSHP Committee member and Editor of the *Pharmaceutical Historian*, has recently had a book published entitled "Pharmacy and Professionalization in the British Empire, 1780 to 1970". At present, it is only available as an e-book (@ £79.50) and in hardback (@ £99.99) The publisher, Palgrave Macmillan, will be promoting it to libraries in the first place. Stuart can obtain copies for anyone interested in his book at a discounted price.

For more information, please see <https://www.palgrave.com/gp/book/9783030789794>.

Contacts

Facebook: British Society for the History of Pharmacy

Twitter: @PharmHist BSHP Secretariat: info@bshp.org JiscMail : BSHPHARM@jiscmail.ac.uk