

The **Edinburgh History of Medicine Group** allows those interested in social and medical history to enjoy some talks and to interact with medical practitioners and medically-trained historians at the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh.

We hope that our 14th, 2011–12 season will be the best yet. We invite anyone with either a general interest in medical history or a particular interest in any of the topics on the programme to come along to the College at 9 Queen Street for the Wednesday meetings which are promoted jointly by the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh and the University of Edinburgh.

Refreshments are available from 4.00pm; the seminars begin at 4.30pm and should finish around 5.45pm.

Further information is available from—
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Admission to the seminars is free

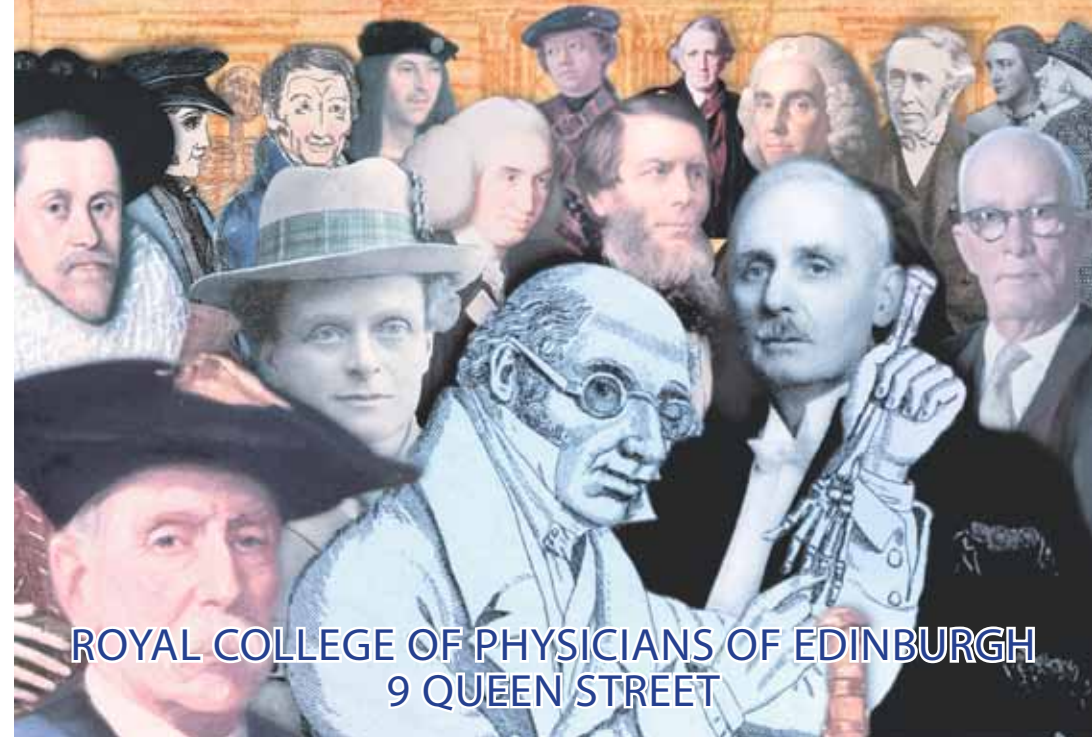
To view webcasts of previous EHMG seminars and other Sibbald Library medical history activities visit —
<http://www.rcpe.ac.uk/library/watch/index.php>



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THE EDINBURGH HISTORY OF MEDICINE GROUP

2011–12 SEMINARS



ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF EDINBURGH
9 QUEEN STREET

12th October 2011

Victorian Skin

Professor Pamela Gilbert *University of Florida*

The body brings together a number of vexing questions: it is 'animal' yet 'human'; 'natural' yet the ultimate object of cultural inscription? The part of the body that most represents us to others is its surface: for Victorians, skin, especially of the face and hands, was an important medium through which to read character and selfhood, a membrane that both divided the inner and outer worlds and served as a medium for the projection and interpretation of interiority. In this talk, I will discuss Charles Bell, Charles Darwin and Cesare Lombroso's discussions of blushing and the emotions. I will survey examples from both literary and visual culture to show how Victorian perspectives on the skin aid our understanding of representations of the relation between selfhood, the material body and the emotions

26th October 2011

After Burke and Hare: Procuring Corpses to Dissect in Scotland

Dr Helen MacDonald *University of Melbourne*

Grave-robbing and the Burke and Hare murders have become anatomy's enduring reference points, but during the nineteenth century most bodies were stealthily acquired by medical schools through other means. After the 1832 Anatomy Act a distinctive pattern of corpse procurement was creatively forged in Scotland, through alliances between the country's anatomists, anatomy inspectors, local law makers, and the men who were in charge of hospitals, poor houses and lunatic asylums. This system was one that the English schools could only envy.

23rd November 2011

Vesalius and the Canon of the Human Body

Dr Sachiko Kusakawa *University of Cambridge*

Andreas Vesalius' *De humani corporis fabrica* (1543) is a landmark publication in the history of medicine, well known for its illustrations. Yet, the actual function of these illustrations within Vesalius own project of classical anatomy has not always been appreciated. In this talk, I examine the different - and often ingenious - ways in which Vesalius used anatomical images in his book.

7th December 2011

George III and the Porphyria Myth: Diagnostic Implications for James VI/I

Professor Timothy Peters *University of Birmingham*

Considerable doubt has been cast on the claim that King George III suffered from acute porphyria. The alternate diagnosis of recurrent acute mania is much more in keeping with his clinical features, but historians and their adherents still claim that suggestive features of acute porphyria in some of his ancestors, notably King James VI/I, support a diagnosis of porphyria in George III. Assessment of his detailed and complex clinical history and features using the computerised diagnostic aid SimulConsult provides no support for porphyria in James but indicates a quite unexpected diagnosis that may help to explain the King's medical condition and psychological behaviour.

11th January 2012

The Piano Plague: The Nineteenth-Century Medical Campaign Against Female Musical Education

Dr James Kennaway *Durham University*

Although playing the piano was often seen as a thoroughly respectable pastime for young ladies, for much of the nineteenth century there was serious medical discussion about the dangers of excessive music in girls' education. Many of the period's leading psychiatrists and gynaecologists argued that music could over-stimulate the female nervous system, playing havoc with vulnerable nerves and reproductive organs, and warned of the consequences of music lessons on the developing bodies of teenage girls. This talk will examine some of the theories relating to this medical panic and consider the motivations behind it.

25th January 2012

Thomas Mann's fictional characters and their quest for the patient narrative

Dr Thomas Rütten *Newcastle University*

In the majority of his novels, short stories, and essays, in his diaries and personal letters, that is throughout his life and work, Thomas Mann (1875-1955) reflects on matters of health and disease, patients and doctors, healing and dying. The radically autobiographical roots of his writing blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, historiography and the art of narration, experience and imagination. In my presentation, I will explore the interface between medicine and literature in his work and assess the latter's relevance for a medical historiography that takes the individuality of the patient seriously.

22nd February 2012

Is there such a thing as "Scottish" medicine?'

Dr David Hamilton *University of St Andrews*

Medical practice and medical education in Scotland have shown distinctive features from earliest times, and these distinctions may in fact be increasing. The reasons for these differences will be explored, notably in relation to attitudes to scholarship and support for the common weal.

14th March 2012

Books and Beaks: Doctors' Fight Against the Plague in Early Modern Europe

Dr Jane Stevens Crawshaw *Oxford Brookes University*

The plague was one of early modern Europe's most deadly and feared diseases. At the forefront of developing public health campaigns in the face of epidemics, from the 14th century onwards, were the doctors who advised on the prevention and treatment of the disease. This paper will consider continuity and change in the attitudes and advice given by doctors between 1500 and 1700. In particular, it will set theories, as reflected in written texts, alongside the information we have about the realities of treatment. In the context of the latter, attention will be paid to the material culture of public health for the plague, including occupational clothing and the iconic plague doctor costume.