

Senior Fellows Newsletter Summer 2023

Despite the UK Government's assertion that Covid is gone colleagues and friends still seem to be catching it. Fortunately, the clinical syndrome has certainly changed since the early days of 2020, although, from personal experience not the 'mild flu' asserted by some. Whether due to immunisation or virus mutation we are all grateful for this trend. What this has meant though, is that all our Club meetings this year have gone ahead. Since Christmas we have been regularly informed and entertained as well as learning some unexpected things. For example, if you live in Scotland, you can acquire your own coat of arms via the Lord Lyon King of Arms (at a price), but not if you live in England unless you have a formal Royal authority. The black (or blue) and white square patterns on police cars in many countries derive from an heraldic symbol.

We have all seen epilepsy clinically, but the historical insights provided by a neurologist with a child with the condition, and his comparison with its portrayal in films was truly enlightening. The lecturer Ian Bone's book *Sacred Lives* (available from www.bookguild.co.uk) is well worth a read for those wishing to have a detailed historical background, understand the interaction of the disorder with the arts, its portrayal in the media and the interactions of epilepsy with society at large.

The talents and interests of Club members and their partners are diverse, and many were on show at the annual Guest Lunch. This event always proves popular and gives an opportunity to host our colleagues in the College who help us run our events. On this occasion we also had an excellent musical entertainment from "The 5 Doctors", sadly not yet on BBC sounds or Spotify, but it always surprises me as someone completely lacking instrumental skill how much talent my colleagues have.

The talk from David Leakey, a former Black Rod was amusing and gave special insights into the job's relationship to the Crown. The College's lifts could be favourably compared with those in the Commons and Buckingham Palace. When transporting the late Queen and Duke of Edinburgh in the Commons David's lift went up and not down. The Queen retorted 'This is always happening to us. We were stuck in the lift in Buckingham Palace for 45 minutes last week'.

Our last talk was on the North Atlantic Convoys to Russia. A terrifying experience for those involved. We heard the incredible camaraderie this brought, but that the risk did not end when the convoy's made land in Russia. One unlucky seaman lost his fingers from frost bite when he drank too much local vodka in a Russian port and fell unconscious in the snow suffering frostbite as a result! The Russians published a book of photographs of the convoys when they awarded surviving seamen a special medal some years ago, but sadly recent events in Ukraine have degraded this relationship.

Our last event of the academic term was our first summer outing since 2019. This was to the newly redeveloped Burrell Collection. It was an excellent day out, although I discovered doing a head count on a bus is a challenge beyond my skill mix! The collection itself is stunning with over 2000 items on view of Burrell's total collection of approximately 8000. Well worth a repeat visit and more time.

I am attaching two personal essays with this missive. The first by David Boyd is a real historical insight. David was a founder member of the club and still attends. His address at the 30th anniversary event is in the Club archive. Here he describes his experiences as a medical student in Edinburgh in the 1940's. I am chastened to be reminded that he qualified the year I was born....

Our second essay is a contribution from one of our "Five Doctors", the talented musician Philip Welsby. He is also a member of our committee.

We hope you enjoy reading these and that those who are able will join us in October. Our next meeting will be on Monday October 2nd.