

etching. Rowlandson portrays John Monro using a quizzing-glass²⁰ in order to diagnose incurable insanity in Charles James Fox. But in our only written record of a professional encounter between Monro and a lunatic, there is no mention of visual examination. Rather, Monro conversed with his patient with the evident intention of allowing him to reveal his state of mind: “they addressed one another in a complaisant way”, “they talked together in a familiar manner”, “they conversed together in a very friendly manner”.²¹ In such a situation the quizzing-glass would have revealed nothing. But in the viewing-rooms at Christie’s or Sotheby’s, or at Greenwood’s candle-lit auctions, elderly connoisseurs such as Dr Monro would certainly use a quizzing-glass when inspecting the fine gravure of an admired (or a suspect) impression. Matthew Darly had already engraved such a scene in 1771 (Fig. 3), Rowlandson himself depicted it no less than eleven times,²² and the tradition was continued in such prints as Louis-Léopold Boilly’s lithograph *Les antiquaires*.²³

Here, then, the politician Fox, portrayed as a madman, is inspected as if he were a rare Quattrocento print, while the mad-doctor Monro is portrayed as arch-connoisseur of lunacy, whose expert eye elicits a definitive diagnosis.

²⁰ On the meanings of this term see Richard Corson, *Fashions in eyeglasses*, London, Peter Owen, 1967, pp. 79–83.

²¹ Alexander Cruden, *The adventures of Alexander the Corrector*. London, the author, 1754, pp. 14, 20, 22.

²² Riely, *op. cit.*, note 16 above.

²³ Reproduced by Pierre Marly, *Les lunettes*, [s.l.], Atelier Hachette, 1980, p. 81.

News, Notes and Queries

BRITISH SOCIETY FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

The British Society for the History of Medicine was founded in 1965 in order to represent, on a national scale, the many British societies and groups involved in the history of medicine and, in particular, to represent British medical historians at the International Society for the History of Medicine (founded in 1921), which is responsible for organizing the biennial International Congresses.

Since 1973, the activities of the British Society for the History of Medicine have been at low ebb but recently there has been a revival of interest. On 20 November 1982, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Society was held at the Royal Society of Medicine, at which all the major organizations concerned with medical history in the British Isles were represented. It was agreed to reconstitute the Society, which will in future consist only of federal members (the constituent societies and groups) but not individual members.

An Executive Committee was formed and the following officers were elected: President – Dr F. F. Cartwright; Vice-President – Dr K. D. Keele; Honorary Secretary – Dr A. Sakula; National Delegate – Dr J. Cule; Treasurer – Major C. O’Leary. Correspondence to the Honorary Secretary should be addressed to him c/o Faculty of the Soc. of Apothecaries, Apothecaries’ Hall, Blackfriars Lane, London EC4V 6EJ.

WELLCOME INSTITUTE FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

The following Wellcome public lectures in the history of medicine have been arranged for 1983:

Thursday, 17 February – Prof. Robert Darnton (Princeton University): ‘Policing authors in Paris, circa 1750’

Thursday, 22 March – Prof. A. McGehee Harvey (Johns Hopkins University): ‘The university clinic: its evolution in Great Britain and the United States’

Thursday, 12 May – Prof. Gerald Geison (Princeton University): ‘Louis Pasteur and the ethics of biomedical research’.

These meetings will take place at 6 p.m., at the Wellcome Institute, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP.

The following Wellcome Symposia will take place at the Institute in 1983:

Friday, 25 February – Historical perspectives on medicine and the law

Friday, 25 March – The historical language of medicine

Friday, 27 May – Disquisitions relating to matter and spirit: Joseph Priestley

Friday, 1 July – William Hunter (1718–1783) and his age

Friday, 16 September – New light on ancient medicine.

In addition, the following exhibitions will be on show to the public in the Library:

5 January to 23 February – Early twentieth-century amateur botanical paintings

28 February to 6 May – German prints

10 May to 22 June – The life and work of Joseph Priestley (1733–1804)

27 June to 28 September – William Hunter (1718–83) and his world

3 October to 22 December – Wellcome incunabula.

The two fortnightly research meetings continue in 1983: Dr Nutton and Dr Palmer’s seminar on Mondays at 4.45 p.m., fortnightly from 17 January, will look at seventeenth- and eighteenth-century texts on syphilis. Dr Bynum and Dr Porter’s seminar, on Wednesdays at 5.30 p.m., fortnightly from 12 January, will continue investigations into the history of psychiatry, with papers from Charlotte Mackenzie, Anthony Clare, Martin Stone, and Esther Fischer-Homberger. From 9 March, fortnightly, there will be a new topic for this research seminar, “The patient’s view: lay attitudes to medicine, disease and doctors”.

Further information from this programme may be obtained from the Secretary of the Academic Unit at the above address.

PYBUS CLUB

The following meetings of the Pybus Club will take place at 5.15 p.m. in the Department of Classics, University of Newcastle upon Tyne: Thursday, 17 February 1983 – “The singular case of Napoleon’s wallpaper”, by David Jones (Department of Physical Chemistry, University of Newcastle upon Tyne); Thursday, 12 May 1983 – “Blood and breath in Shakespeare”, by Maurice Pope (University of Oxford).