

The President's Page

I have been tasked by Council to announce that from next year our newsletter will be circulated to all members electronically only. This has been under consideration for some time, and it is appropriate for us to move with the times.

We have come a long way since *Medical History Australia* was launched as a quarterly newsletter in 1981, and a review of past issues reveals some interesting developments over time, both with changing technology and through initiatives by our respective editors. Instigated in 1981 by the University of Melbourne's Medical History Unit and the Medical History Section of the Victorian branch of the Australian Medical Association, the first editor was Melbourne obstetrician and medical historian, Dr Frank Forster, who was soon joined by Professor Harold Attwood, a pathologist at the University of Melbourne and Curator of its Medical History Unit. At this time the newsletter was printed on A4-size bright yellow paper which changed to white in 1997, and full-colour in 1999.

From 1986, Attwood had been joined as editor by Dr Geoffrey Kenny, lecturer in Anatomy and active in the local medical history society in Melbourne, and in 1991 Dr Ian Chapple from Queensland took over. Chapple edited the newsletter for eleven years, until 2003, ably supported by his wife Beth who did 'all the typing, detected and corrected many errors, and [had] been a most helpful participant in the entire editorial process'. Such were the expectations of those days.

The next editor, from 2003-9, Peter Tyler, refined the publication process by adopting Microsoft Publisher as an editing tool and introduced illustrations (the first

apparently a portrait of Di Tibbits to accompany her president's message).



The 'president's message' had been the brainchild of Chapple and became a constant feature. Derek Dow, who took over as editor from Tyler in 2009 (until 2021), reflected in 2017 that the 'message' had been renamed 'President's Page' in 2004. Despite what he described as a 'delicious contradiction that at the foot of the column was the advice "continued on page 3"', Dow wrote of the President's Page, 'It is a tribute to successive presidents that we have not missed a presidential offering since 2003, and they have all written to order so that it fits on a single page. If only all editors had such compliant and disciplined contributors!'

Peter Tyler had introduced the valuable 'All About Ourselves' column, where members explained their interest in medical history and the Society. Derek Dow established a new column entitled 'Blast from the Past', looking at past issues highlighted in the newsletters. A second regular feature he introduced was Stephen Due's AMPI column drawing on the Australian Medical Pioneers Index, matched by Dow's own research on New Zealand counterparts. He also expanded the journal watch and book reviews, which along with other features have been further advanced by our new newsletter collective (Kathryn Weston, Maggi Boulton, Charmaine Robson and Louella McCarthy). They will be overseeing the new era, and we look forward to a bright future for our much-loved newsletter.

Linda Bryder

l.bryder@auckland.ac.nz

The Australian and New Zealand Society of the History of Medicine acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia and the Torres Strait, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community, and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. In respect to Aotearoa New Zealand, we acknowledge and respect the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

All About Ourselves

Members of the ANZSHM describe their life, work and interests.

Alison Downham Moore

I am a scholar of history and medical humanities at Western Sydney University. I studied European, medieval and ancient history, French, Italian and Sanskrit, then I did a PhD in the history of psychiatry, later developing it into a book, *Sexual Myths of Modernity: Sadism, Masochism and Historical Teleology* (2016). I was lucky to score a postdoctoral fellowship (UQ) to work on a collaborative book with literary studies professor Peter Cryle, on the history of medical ideas and treatment of women's sexual asexuality, *Frigidity: An Intellectual History* (2011).

I worked at several universities (UoW, USyd, UQ, UTS), before finally landing in my current home at WSU in 2012, where I have taught on the history of sexuality, historical theories and methods, intellectual history, and the history of Europe. But from 2009 onwards, I also became interested in biomedical research on ageing, nutrition, digestive health, women's health, diabetes and dementia, and so embarked on a new study in biomedical sciences at the University of New England, via their distance program. This was very generative, allowing me to understand biomedical science studies better, and spurring new research ideas, including projects on *Gut Feeling and Digestive Health in Nineteenth-Century Literature, History and Culture* (2018) and on 'History of Private Preventative Health' (current) - both with Dr Manon Mathias at the University of Glasgow; and another interdisciplinary collaboration (history, anthropology and sociology) on 'Gynaecological Surgeries Past and Present'.

In 2018, I had noticed there was very little scholarship on the history of ageing medicine that said anything about women or gender. So, I developed a project about this, which proved very popular with granting bodies, including the Australian Research Council, and I spent several years focused on it from 2019-2021, albeit living under the Covid-19 lockdowns in Germany where I had a series of research fellowships. Out of this came my 2022 book with Oxford University Press, *The French Invention of Menopause and the Medicalisation of Women's Ageing: A History* and another short book with Cambridge University Press, *The Gendering of Ageing in the Emergence of Biomedicine* (forthcoming 2024). I am now working on another book with UQ's Dr Karin Selberg: *Gender and Ageing in the Global History of Medicine, 1850-2020*.

I have also always been curious about how different diets impact bodies, and have tried eating lots of different ways myself, including a really fun experiment where I removed all the carbohydrates from my diet for several years and tracked all the effects it had on my cognition and blood biomarkers. Ever since, I have been thinking to write about the medical history of low-carbohydrate diets. Most people think that America invented this for epilepsy, but there was actually a French clinic in the nineteenth century that had a really sophisticated approach to dietary treatment of adult 'chubby' diabetes (what we now call Type II), using a high-fat, low carb regime with daily exercise. Many people today restrict carbs for different reasons, but no one seems to know where this idea came from.



Left: Alison as a farm kid.

Measurements of low glucose (top) and high ketones.

Images courtesy Alison Downham Moore

SAVE THE DATE



ANZSHM 2025



The 19th Biennial ANZSHM conference
will be held from
Tuesday 8th July to Saturday 12th July 2025
at Sydney University.

Members' news

New members

*A warm welcome to the following
new members!*

NZ: Maebh Long

NSW: Elizabeth Golding; Kate Bryan

SA: Liana Dedina; Joel Wren

Vic: Damon Eisen; Gab Kovacs

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Congratulations!

Dr Paige Donaghy was the 2024 winner of the AHA General History Thesis Prize: Paige Donaghy (UQ), "Uncertain Knowledge: False Conceptions and Molas in European Medicine, 1500–1800."

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Dr Michelle Bootcov was recently awarded the Mike Smith Student Prize by the Australian Academy of Science's National Committee for History and Philosophy of Science in partnership with the National Museum of Australia. Dr Bootcov won the prize for her essay titled "Robert Kirk: Blood, genetics, race and rights in the mid to late twentieth century".

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Dr Julie Collins was recently awarded the South Australian Historian of the Year Award. Julie has established a national profile as an authority on South Australian architecture, architectural collections and the history of therapeutic places, and contributed new knowledge to the field. Her community engagement has strengthened the profile of South Australia's architectural history and is building public knowledge that will influence the heritage preservation of these places. *Text and image from: <https://historycouncilsa.org.au/hcsa-historian-awards-2024-winners/>*



Dr Julie Collins with HCSA President Matt Fitzpatrick
Image: Dylan Sanders - Frankie the Creative

Many thanks!



Shayne Brown is stepping down from the role of Presidency in the NSW Branch of ANZSHM. We thank Shayne very much for her service in the role, and wish her all the best with future endeavours!

NSW Branch news

On Wednesday 8 May, ANZSHM-NSW held a fascinating Zoom lecture by Associate Professor Alison Downham Moore, who is also branch secretary. The topic was 'Why French Doctors Were Fascinated by Menopause in the Nineteenth Century'. For those who were not able to attend, her abstract is as follows:

It is commonly thought that either menopause symptoms have only recently become recognised by western medicine, or that they were always recognised by every medical tradition in history. Neither was the case. Instead, the concept of women's final cessation of menses as a 'critical time' that needed to be managed through lifestyle and medical interventions had a very specific contextual unfolding in nineteenth century French institutional medicine. The first works describing menopause and its treatment were penned by young men in medical degrees at the universities of Paris and of Montpellier. The uses of menopause in medical debate, contestation and in the formation of specialist identities made it an enduring object of

inquiry for hygienists, psychiatrists, physicians, medical popularisers, surgeons and pharmacists. But only in the final decades of the nineteenth century were any women involved in medical descriptions of it, or in other kinds of responses to medical views of their ageing.

As a change we held the lecture at 4pm which was a good time. The lecture was well attended with around 30 people tuning in.

Our next event will be the Ben Haneman Memorial Lecture at the State Library of New South Wales on 21 August. Professor Michael Bennett from the University of Tasmania will be speaking on 'Spain's Smallpox Vaccination Response in the 19th Century'. All are welcome to attend. Entry is free and refreshments will be served prior to the lecture. Thanks to Diana Jefferies from ANZSHM and Susan Hunt from the Library for organizing this lecture.

The NSW Committee met on 29 July 2024 at which the President, Shayne Brown AM resigned due to some pressing other commitments. Charmaine Robson has taken on the Presidency role until elections early next year.

Shayne Brown

Medical History Society of Victoria news

The May meeting of the Medical History Society of Victoria was addressed by Dr Will Twycross, from Mansfield in central Victoria. Will has been a procedural GP at the Mansfield District Hospital for 35 years and was able to explore some historical aspects of changes in healthcare in a regional centre, with many amusing anecdotes. He was also able to draw on his experiences working in Antarctica, India, Liberia and Kenya, and touched on the importance of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area as one of the last great wilderness areas on the planet.

The Victorian Society is looking forward to a resumption of its biennial "Country meetings", following the last pre-Covid meeting in Beechworth in 2019. The next meeting is to be held in Bendigo on 6th to 8th of September, with a full Saturday lecture program, accompanied by social get-togethers and a historical walking tour of the City of Bendigo. Interstate visitors will be very welcome to join us.

Members may also be interested in The Hugh Anderson Lecture, to be delivered by Dr Ross Jones on 20th August <https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/event/hugh-anderson-lecture-delivered-by-dr-ross-jones/>

Rod Westhorpe, Hon Secretary



Hugh Anderson lecture to be delivered by Dr Ross Jones (pictured above)

RENOVATION OR REVISION: (RE) WRITING INDIGENOUS AND INSTITUTIONAL HISTORIES

Dr Ross L Jones will deliver the 3rd Hugh Anderson Lecture in the RHSV's Distinguished Lecture series.

AUGUST 20 @ 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM

\$10 to \$20



South Australian Medical Heritage Society news

SAMHS Field Trip to the Vernon-Roberts Museum, University of Adelaide

On Thursday afternoon, 16 May, 2024, twelve of our SAMHS members visited the Vernon-Roberts Anatomical and Pathological Museum situated on the ground floor of the Helen Mayo Building (the old Adelaide Medical School) on Frome Road.

It was a fascinating experience as we were introduced to many anatomical specimens of man and other species and to their gross pathologies. As is detailed in the Museum's introduction guide, the museum "contains the most extensive collection of examples of human diseases and detailed anatomical dissections in South Australia. The inventory has in excess of 2000 potted specimens – of which approximately 400 are on display and the remainder available upon request – and include a large comparative skeletal collection as well as models of hominids and development embryology. Specimens are used as invaluable aids for not only the undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, but also visitors (including primary and secondary students, nurses and doctors in training and also other interest groups)".

The museum is named in honour of Professor Barrie Vernon-Roberts AO (1935-2015) who was an eminent and internationally recognised Anatomical Pathologist with a special interest in the articular and skeletal system. He was a former Professor of Pathology at the University of Adelaide and Head of the Division of Tissue Pathology at the Institute of Medical and Veterinary Science.

Established in 2018, the Museum was an amalgamation of several collections from the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Adelaide. These included the Abbie Museum of Anatomy, Mounir Ghabriel learning Hub, Hans Schoppe Pathology Museum and donations of skeletal material from the Adelaide Dental School.

I well remember many of these pathological pots currently on display in the museum. We used to be examined on them in our final three years as medical students. Many of the more conscientious students spent hours trying to note and remember the specific characteristics of the various diseases exhibited in the pots as they would be used in subsequent pathology, medical and surgical exams where the examiners would hand you the specimen pot and then, with a gleeful

expression, ask you to describe what you saw and what was the disease? One particular pot demonstrated the bony upper skeleton of a patient with myositis ossificans (ossifying muscles and other soft tissues) and was a known favourite for confusing the examinee. Yes, I failed this pot and have never forgotten it!

Another most interesting pot contains the brain of the Adelaide philosopher Ullin T Place (1924-2000). Place's area of interest was the philosophy of the mind, in particular, the nature of conscious awareness – did a collection of atoms in a complex arrangement allow the emergence of this phenomenon? Place's famous 1956 *British Journal of Psychology* paper "Is consciousness a brain process?" argued against the major theories of the time (dualism and behaviourism) and contended that consciousness should be seen solely as a brain process (i.e. materialism). It was Place's wish and he gave his consent that his brain should be displayed to encourage discussion of this age long dilemma.



A demonstration of the anatomical adaption in the evolution of *Homo Sapiens* in the Museum. Image: Peter Roberts-Thomson.

If you wish to visit this Museum you will need to indicate your desire by contacting the Museum's caretaker. Visit "Vernon Roberts Museum" on Google for further details.

Peter Roberts-Thomson (Em. Prof.)
President of SAMHS



Left: Professor Barrie Vernon-Roberts, (AO, MD, BSc, PhD, FRCPATH, FRCPA, FAOrthA (Hon), FRS.SA)

Right: Display cabinet at the Museum. <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/infrastructure/projects/completed-projects/vernon-roberts-museum>

What is Medical History?

The present in the medical past: The shaping of a PhD

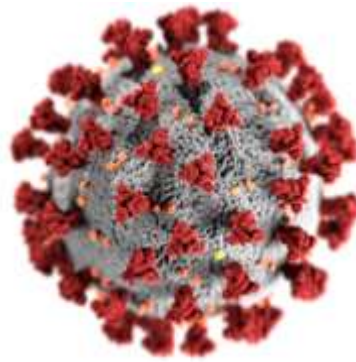
Michelle Bootcov

What is history and how is it shaped? Edward Hallett Carr suggested that the present ‘determines [historians’] vision over the past.’¹ For me, the present gate-crashed the past, shaping my medical history research. I came to medical history late, after a PhD in molecular immunology (last century) and a couple of decades working in corporate technology. Still, after returning to university to complete a BA and honours, medical history reached out and pulled me into a PhD full of unexpected twists and turns in a strange intersection of blood, genetics and virology in the late twentieth century.

I commenced the application process in late 2019, proposing a history of viral hepatitis. Within weeks, even before I received a notification of my success, came news of a different kind - a respiratory infection was circulating in Wuhan, China. Having worked in an HIV-adjacent field in the 1980s/90s, I had a casual curiosity about emerging viruses. Having consumed so much history about human viruses for my PhD application, I paid that news report particular attention. In the last days of 2019, Dr Li Wenliang warned colleagues to protect themselves against a new SARS-like illness (he contracted it himself and died on 6 February). Incredibly, within two weeks of that warning the entire genome of that newly isolated virus was sequenced. Seemingly in

an instant, the vocabulary of virology—antigen, antibody, viral variant became commonplace in a COVID-19 pandemic-transformed world.

How much did the COVID-19 present influence how I perceived the hepatitis past? I had originally planned to write about all five hepatitis viruses. Along the way, with the refinement of my topic and a more realistic understanding of what was achievable, the scope narrowed to one, hepatitis B. There were many ways I could have approached that history. I could have explored its clinical, epidemiological, social, political or institutional pasts, or the ethics of its research. Given my initial training, its scientific development was always going to underpin some part of my investigation of hepatitis history, but my interest homed in on detection and diagnosis. How much did the experience of living through a one in a 100-year pandemic affect my choice? It is impossible to say. There is no denying however that the heightened urgency of rapid detection and need to know a viral sequence in the present must have impacted my ‘angle of vision over the past’.



¹Edward H. Carr, *What is History?* (Hammondsworth, Penguin Books: 1964), p.25.

Image: COVID-19 virus (Centers of Disease Control and Prevention)

<https://www.amprogress.org/covid-19-resources/covid-19-photo-library/>

What is ‘medical history’?

An invitation to hear your perspective....

The newsletter team would like to explore the idea: "What is Medical History?" We believe that this question holds various interpretations, insights, and perspectives, which can be enriched by the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our members.

We invite contributions from members with different professional backgrounds and experiences, including historians, healthcare practitioners, researchers, educators, and students. Your unique viewpoint will add depth and richness to our exploration of this topic.

Your article could cover, but is not limited to:

- *Personal reflections on the significance of medical history in your field of expertise,*
- *Insights into how understanding medical history, or the history of medicine, can inform current healthcare practices and policies,*

- *Discussions on the role of medical history in shaping cultural, social, and ethical perspectives on health and medicine,*
- *Experiences with conducting research or teaching in the field of medical history,*
- *Examples of historical events, figures, or discoveries that have influenced the trajectory of medicine.*

The newsletter provides a platform to explore the knowledge and expertise of the diverse voices within our society, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among our members. Your contribution will help to promote discourse surrounding our understanding of medical history and/or the history of medicine.

If you are interested in contributing an article, please send your article to anzshm@anzshm.org.au. Please include the word newsletter in the subject line. We encourage submissions of 250-500 words, accompanied by any relevant images or references.

In this issue we include perspectives from members who have kindly submitted articles to keep the ball rolling.

What is Medical History?

My life in medical history (Sydney University year of '66)

Roger Wilkinson AM

I had my first publications in medical history while an undergraduate. The first was a discursive juvenilia called *Chapetoneda*. (It dealt with the discovery of the cause of Yellow Fever).¹ The other was on the early history of pernicious anaemia published in the Sydney University Medical Journal, (Vol.53, 1964, pp.53-56). This was apparently of sufficient merit for the then Professor of Public Health to invite me for a chat.



Image: Yellow Fever mosquito. Centres for Disease Control, public domain.

My own exposure to the rich history of medicine as a student was meagre. Once a consultant I made

a point of introducing a small element of the medical history, whenever appropriate, in any lecture I subsequently gave, right up to the point of retirement. Clearly more and more of it centred round my own discipline of cardiology.

To this day you could ask of my own medical staff and students how I would rabbit on in any given situation on the historical background to a set of circumstances. E.g. how frusemide came to change the face of cardiac failure treatment. I have always been a great one for talking on the names of those who had introduced procedures or ideas e.g. Mason Sones and his development of coronary angiography or Helen Taussig's idea for helping patients with the Tetrad of Fallot. I am firmly convinced that unless we keep reminding ourselves of the many aspects of a discipline's history those presently practising now will lose the wonder of the often hard-won aspects of their past that they now accept as always having been there.

Pari-passu with all of this I finally plucked up courage to

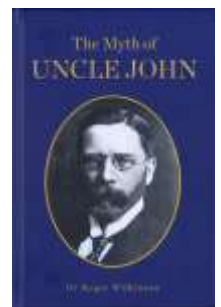
do two things. First, I did a BA in History through the University of New England's distance education. This was in the nineties when we still had to do all our assignments by hand, submit them by post on the prescribed day and receiving (by post) our marks and comments by return post! And I went on and did a master's degree. All this over 9 years! The second was to start presenting with my first paper in 1999. Encouraged that no one actually went off to sleep during my lecture I have persisted and have researched on my discipline, on all the doctors who went to Antarctica 1788-1930, and on my great uncle, Dr. John Francis Wilkinson, physician to the Melbourne Hospital, all with subsequent papers.²

However, the history project, if you like, that has given the greatest satisfaction was with groups of students from my own medical school and from several overseas. I taught specifically during their specialist term in cardiology at the Royal Brisbane and Women's hospital during my final years in practice. I asked each quite voluntarily to give me a paper of around 1500 words on a designated historical aspect of cardiology chosen by me. Over several years not one declined to do so and gave me their thoughts on such topics as *The history of atrial fibrillation*, *Alexis Carrel* and *cardiac transplantation to Shumway*. For 2010 there were 24 different essays which I lightly edited, provided a short introduction, bound together and sent each student a copy of the bound edition. It is my hope that they will pass it on to their generation of students and perhaps be emboldened to explore the history of whatever discipline finally claims them in medicine. In such a manner it's a use of history to 'show that the miracles and breakthroughs of today will in turn become the commonplace of tomorrow and that they are no less prone to error than we ourselves were, and which our progeny will recognize.'³

¹If you must know! *Chapetoneda*, *Innominate*, Vol.18, no.6, p.3.

²I also managed to condense all my research on great uncle John into a book, *The Myth of Uncle John* published by History Smiths in June 2023.

³Philip Rhodes, *An Outline History of Medicine*, Butterworths, London, p. 4.



Mystery object

Can anyone identify this mystery object submitted to the newsletter by Cate Storey?



What is Medical History?

A continuum of evidence and experience

Kath Weston

My early career was as a biomedical scientist at the laboratory bench. Undertaking experiments and interpreting results meant reflecting on published data with careful thought about the quality and relevance of evidence created by those who had worked in the field in earlier years, or even earlier months, or even during the previous week. Advances in medicine are always happening and drive our knowledge and our future. Each research publication, conference, and water-cooler chat can contribute to the chronicle that is the history of medicine.

Without knowing how it worked, ancient Egyptians applied bread mould to cuts and wounds to heal infections.¹ It represented expert knowledge of the time. Centuries later, Fleming noted the bactericidal nature of the mould growing on a petri dish in his laboratory. He had the technical capacity to investigate the observation, work that eventually led to the development of penicillin. Similarly, results from 18th century variolation practice, and the idea that lack of pustulation after inoculation could be due to a prior exposure to cowpox, led Jenner to investigate the phenomena, and the rest is public health history - the eventual eradication of a deadly disease.²

My lens on the history of medicine is thus through a continuum of evidence being revealed over days, years, centuries and even millennia. Incremental advances along the continuum have driven improved understanding of the human body, and the development of evidence-based expertise, therapies, and procedures. Each snippet of new information has real or potential benefit to the health and lives of people, with relevance as one of many building blocks creating a growing body of knowledge. Over time, technology has enabled insights into earlier observations, leading to even more advances and deeper understanding.

It may be tempting to think that the continuum of knowledge being created throughout history is always positive in terms of outcomes, and always forward in direction. This is naïve. Mistakes can, and have, been made, with varying levels of consequences. These are nonetheless part of our history and have relevance and impact.

At best, errors can slow progress and, at worst, be catastrophic to human life. Poor scientific method or taking a wrong pathway in an investigation can confound progress. The temptation to falsify or withhold information or yielding to lobbying by a ‘for-profit’ interest can have dire effects. One only needs to reflect on the tragedy of thalidomide, and the grip and coercive control of the tobacco industry, to understand the value of openness and respect for human life in sharing important research findings. The contrast in openness is starkest when recognising the benefit of sharing of medical advances during the recent pandemics, actions that have been critical in allowing rapid and positive progress at a time of great need.

More recently, I have appreciated that medical knowledge is not just about science. As I have broadened my academic interests into public health and the history of contagion, I have come to realise that the humanities can make just as profound a contribution. History is itself a humanities subject, and the wider world that includes literature, art, drama and dance can show us many ‘truths’ that might otherwise remain hidden and unappreciated. In that vein, I offer a poem titled ‘Eradication’ that reflects on the continued potential of vaccination, and its reputation as one of history’s greatest advances in medicine.

¹K. Elsayad ‘What Ancient Egyptian Medicine Can Teach Us’. *JCO Glob Oncol* 9, e2300146 (2023).

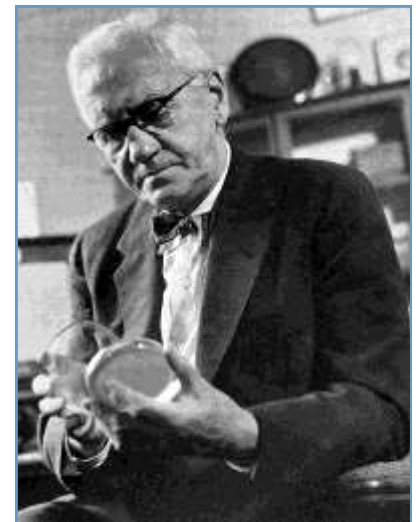
²J. Jarry ‘The white lie at the heart of vaccine history..’ <https://www.mcgill.ca/oss/article/medical-critical-thinking-history/white-lie-heart-vaccine-history>. 2023



Left: Penicillium mould. Photograph by Teresa Maria Lopez, Creative Commons lic.

Centre: Slice of bread with various species of mould. Photograph by Vincent van Zeijst, Creative Commons lic

Right: Photograph of Sir Alexander Fleming. Wellcome collection



Eradication

Outbreaks once meant devastation, tragic death and deprivation,
Infections met with trepidation, no help from herbal ministrations.
Then Jenner wrote a publication that captured our imagination,
The farmer's cowpox aggravation was Jenner's foe, yet inspiration.

A rural doctor his vocation; a 'physician science' combination,
His experiment on vaccination led us to pox eradication.
Frank Fenner made his acclamation, 'Smallpox is dead', his affirmation.
What virus next for execration, what target for annihilation?

The Salk and Sabin innovation, allowed for mass immunisation,
And fueled the world's appreciation for polio extermination.
For polio caused consternation, and parents feared its complication,
Paralysis, lung ventilation - the vaccine brought much jubilation.

Another threat waits termination, *contagion* its vile reputation,
For measles when in circulation is not a simple botheration.
An angry rash of some duration, coryza, cough and inflammation,
That virus has no hesitation in raging through a population.

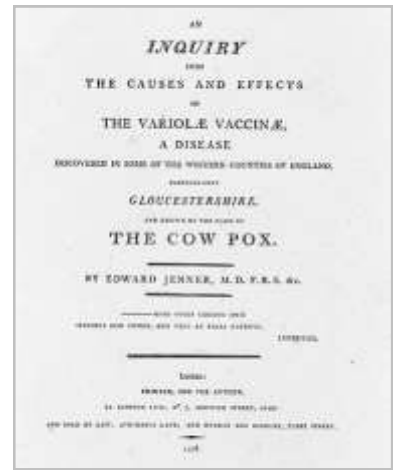
A mortal risk with clear causation, measles needs elimination.
Our public interest obligation is global vaccine penetration.
But anti-vax preoccupation, with pro-vaccine renunciation,
And arguments without foundation, maintain its evil propagation.

COVID caused us desperation, lack of hope and resignation,
Serious exasperation, where to go for inspiration?
Could science be our celebration, like Jenner's pox inoculation?
With global health coordination, the world faced down this situation.

COVID gone from every nation? And no more measles domination?
The key, of course, is vaccination, and firm resolve and education.
With scientific motivation, and need for much improvisation,
Here's hoping with anticipation, we are all part of that equation.

Jenner needs our admiration, his 'cow-pock' test inoculation,
Inspired the world's collaboration, and sent a virus to damnation.
The challenge for our generation is to vaccinate earth's population,
And counter any protestation - a healthy world's our aspiration.

Kath Weston



Top images: From Jenner E (1798), *An inquiry into the causes and effects of the variolæ vaccinæ, a disease discovered in some of the western counties of England, particularly Gloucestershire, and known by the name of the cow pox.* By Edward Jenner, M.D. F.R.S. &c. Wellcome collection

Above: Vaccine awareness T-shirt. <https://printerval.com/got-smallpox-me-neither-thanks-vaccines-awareness-t-shirt-p7802939>

AN ANNOUNCEMENT *from the editorial team*

As mentioned by Linda in the President's Page, the Council has determined that the next issue of the ANZSHM newsletter (November 2024) will be the final issue to be distributed in paper format. From 2025, the newsletter will be distributed to members in electronic format only. This has been a topic of discussion over recent years and, with the increasing length of the newsletter, as well as costs and environmental impact of paper printing, the time seems right to change to an all-electronic format.

Now is also a good time to mention that the editorial team always welcomes new material and ideas for the newsletter from ANZSHM members. We hope that our focus on *What is Medical History?* continues to provide unique perspectives and much food for thought on this topic.

Upcoming events

The Eventbrite booking page for Ben Haneman lecture:
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/2024-dr-ben-haneman-memorial-lecture-tickets-938033632847>

2024 Ben Haneman Memorial Lecture

Presented by the State Library of NSW Foundation
and the Australian and New Zealand Society of the History of Medicine



Presented by
Professor Michael Bennett

From prohibition to rapid global rollout

Spain's smallpox vaccination response in the 19th century

Smallpox was endemic in Spain in the 18th century and epidemics regularly broke out in its overseas empire. And yet Spain prohibited the smallpox inoculation procedure used elsewhere in Western Europe at the time. But when Edward Jenner discovered the cowpox inoculation (vaccination) against smallpox in the late 1790s, Spain quickly trialled and rolled out this new, effective vaccine across the country. Then in 1803 it launched an expedition that took the vaccine around the world, with hundreds of thousands of people vaccinated across an empire stretching from Mexico to Macao.

Emeritus Professor Michael Bennett will explore this remarkable medical and logistical undertaking, and discuss why and how a country previously resistant to reform and innovation achieved it.

Michael Bennett is Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Tasmania and a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities. He is the author of five books and many papers on British, European and world history, including most recently *War against Smallpox: Edward Jenner and the global spread of vaccination* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), shortlisted for the NSW Premier's History Awards in 2021. One of his current projects relates to the history of the idea of contagion.

Wednesday 21 August 2024, 6 pm

Dixon Room, Mitchell building
State Library of NSW
1 Shakespeare Place

Free event

[BOOK NOW](#)

Enquiries: foundation@sl.nsw.gov.au

Refreshments will be served and the rooftop bar is open after the event.



ESD-443-50024



Join us in Bendigo for our traditional "country meeting", as we dig for some historical gold!

Medical History Society of Victoria, Country Meeting, Bendigo, 6-8 September 2024
For further information, please email Rod: mhsvmail@google.com

5 years on from COVID-19: lessons from past health crises and the future of global health

Presented by:

History Council NSW for History Week 2024

with the support of the Australian and New Zealand Society of the History of Medicine

13 September 2024 18:00

Sydney Mechanics School of the Arts

280 Pitt Street, Sydney

Book now: <https://historycouncilnsw.wildapricot.org/event-5802651>

Speakers:

- Edward Holmes, Professor of Virology, University of Sydney and NHMRC Leadership Fellow
- Claire Hooker, Associate Professor in Health and Medical Humanities, University of Sydney and President of the Arts Health Network NSW/ACT

- Julie Leask, Professor of Public Health, University of Sydney, and Visiting Professorial Fellow, NCIRS
- Brent Mackie, Director Policy, Strategy and Research, ACON
- Bernadette Saunders, Associate Professor in Life Sciences (Cellular Immunology) and Tuberculosis & Respiratory Diseases Group Head, University of Technology, Sydney
- Susana Vaz Nery, Professor at Kirby Institute UNSW and Neglected Tropical Diseases research group lead
- Jane Williams, Research Fellow (public health ethics), University of Wollongong

Facilitator: Philippa Nicole Barr, ANU and Western Sydney University

In person: \$10.00 general admittance, or free for Members of SMSA

Zoom link will be sent with registration confirmation.

Event contact: Amanda Wells

Event email: programs@historycouncilnsw.org.au

The banner features logos for the Australian Health & Medical Humanities Network, NSW Government, and History Council NSW. It includes the event title, date (13 September 6pm), and venue (SMSA 280 Pitt Street Sydney). The SMSA logo is also present.

Roundtable discussion: 5 years on from COVID-19: lessons from past health crises and the future of global health

While the public responses to prescient threats like COVID-19, Zika, and monkeypox capture immediate attention and resources, endemic diseases with substantial global health impact often do not incite a similar emotional urgency. Specific, acute crises may evoke stronger responses than statistical, chronic threats. Notwithstanding their long histories and high mortality rates, infectious diseases such as TB, HIV and malaria often lack the attention given to diseases like COVID-19, reducing their visibility and the urgency of interventions. At the same time, a transforming climate may impact the spread and distribution of both novel and endemic diseases, producing new circumstances of response. This interdisciplinary roundtable, part of History Week and run by History Council NSW, will explore how we can think about lessons learned from historically important diseases to create more effective and adaptive strategies for present and future health crises.

This event is presented by History Council NSW.

Our event is supported by the Australia New Zealand Society for the History of Medicine (NSW) and the Australian Health and Medical Humanities Network.

Our event venue partner is the Sydney Mechanics' School of Arts (SMSA)

Friday 13 September 2024, 6pm

Sydney Mechanics School of the Arts
280 Pitt Street Sydney

Hybrid event

[BOOK NOW](#)

Enquiries:
programs@historycouncilnsw.org.au

For details of roundtable participants please visit the event website:
<https://historycouncilnsw.wildapricot.org/event-5802651>



Australian Health & Medical Humanities Network

Book notes

A Formidable Man

Written by Allan Mawdsley

ISBN 9781923101982

Publication Date 25 JUN 2024

Genre Biography

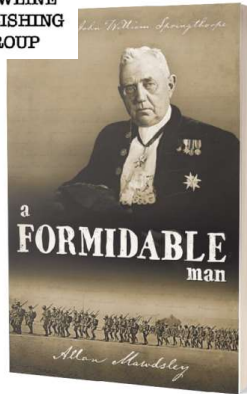
Format Paperback

Audience General

Author Location Melbourne, VIC

SLP

SHAWLINE
PUBLISHING
GROUP



A MAN OF MANY PERSUASIONS AND VAST ENERGY, *A FORMIDABLE MAN* IS AN EXPANSIVE DETAILING INTO THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONTROVERSIES OF A COMBATIVE PERSONALITY...

John William Springthorpe was a prominent general physician, lecturer, and writer in late nineteenth century's marvellous Melbourne. Springthorpe, affectionately known as Springy, took major advocacy roles in physiotherapy, dentistry, nursing, public health, child welfare, epilepsy, and mental health during his career.

His bitter criticism of the mistreatment of 'shell shock' victims during World War I was followed by advocacy for those afflicted with what's now known as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The Sydney Cove Naval Surgeons 1788-1794

Bruce Short recently published his book, *The Sydney Cove Naval Surgeons 1788-1794* (ISBN: 978-0-6457731-0-1), a collection of biographies of the Royal Navy surgeons appointed to the First Fleet by the Home Office.

Image: Sydney's first General Hospital. Thomas Watling, "View of Sydney Cove," c.1794-1796, DL Pd 704 / FL3190258, Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, after Watling's sketch.

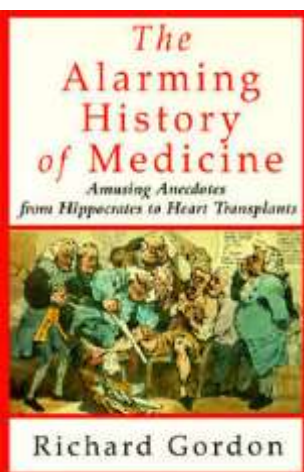


Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I presume that most of my ANZSHM colleagues enjoyed the four perspectives of medical history in the May 2024 Newsletter as much as I did.

Some years ago I read 'The Alarming History of Medicine – Amusing Anecdotes from Hippocrates to Heart Transplants', published in 1993. The author was the world famous author and anaesthetist, the late Dr Richard Gordon, 15 September 1921 – 11 August 2017.



Dr Gordon wrote over 40 books on or about medicine and several screenplays for movies, the most famous being 'Doctor in the House'. As well one of the first doctors to be awarded the Royal Society of Medicine's Diploma of Anaesthesia, the first recognised qualification of an anaesthetist, he practised as a ship's surgeon early in his career, before he

joined the team at St. Bartholomew's Hospital in London.

The final chapter of this outstanding book, actually a summary, of medical history from William Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood to the revelation of the secrets and functions of the DNA molecule by Watson & Crick is entitled: 'One Small Step for a Man, One Giant Leap for Mankind', perhaps a statement borrowed from Neil Armstrong?

As a keen student of medical history, I recommend this book to all ANZSHM members, and indeed to all who have an interest in medical history. This is a must-read for doctors, medical students and anyone fascinated by the world of medicine.

(Dr.) John A. Crowhurst B.Pharm., MB BS, Dip.(Obst.)
RCOG, FANZCA, FRCA.
Consultant Anaesthetist (Ret.)
Linden Park, SA



Images: Richard Gordon and his book, supplied by John Crowhurst.

AHA 2024 conference news

Home Truths: Australian Historical Association 2024 Annual Conference, Flinders University, Adelaide, 1-4 July 2024

At this year's AHA conference not only did our members enjoy and learn from a wide variety of historical papers, including some innovative and thought-provoking keynote addresses, we also sustained a lively and well-attended stream in medical history. The AHA conference provides an excellent opportunity for us to showcase current research in the history of health and medicine.

Speakers and topics in our stream and at the conference included:

Julie Collins, 'Architecture is public health': examining the medicine -architecture nexus in South Australia in the first half of the twentieth century.

David Roth, 'Nutrition in a 'Total Institution': The Dietary Regime at Callan Park Hospital for the Insane, Sydney, 1877-1923.

David Kaufman, European and Aboriginal eye disease pre and post colonisation.

Linda Bryder, Vaccination, midwives and 'home truths'.

Neville Yeomans, Home truths about Australia's treatment of refugee and other immigrant doctors, 1930-70.

Laura Dawes, The Brych Affair: Promotion and control of cancer quack Milan Brych.

Elizabeth Harford, The origin of Casualty Departments in Australia.

Ian Willis, The convalescent soldier and the British Red Cross on NSW wartime home front in the First World War.

Kathryn Irving, Home truths: Parents as allies of institutionalised disabled children in the 19th century United States.

Lorna Hallahan, Something different, somewhere else: social entrepreneurs changing disability.

Kate Murphy, 'Like living in an Alice in Wonderland world': disability and Australian families in the 1970s.

Heather Lyle, At Home with Malaria: Perceptions of malarial disease in domestic settings on Australia's tropical frontier 1850-1910.

Roger Wilkinson, Accretions of History: A short history of the aortic valve.

Alison Downham Moore, Medical Management of Diabetes Through Low-Carbohydrate Diets between 1860-1930.

James Dunk, Psychology and Planetary Crisis, 1945-65.

Paige Donaghy, 'When her ship was laden with wares, then she could take in passengers': Pregnant Women's Sexuality in Early Modern England.

Jordan Evans, 'Give Blood. Save Life': The League of Red Cross Societies and the 1974 World Red Cross Day.

Jacqueline Healy, Shaping a profession: Fifty years of dental therapists.

Charmaine Robson, Singing Out! Locating Australian Mid-twentieth Century Female Protest in the Public Persona and Performances of Glen Tomasetti'.

Catharine Colborne, History with maps: exploring, testing, and showing the ARC Time Layered Cultural map project. "Mapping nineteenth-century vagrancy: clusters of arrests in New South Wales, 1862-80."

In addition,

Catharine Coleborne's book, *Vagrant Lives in Colonial Australasia: Regulating Mobility 1840-1910* (Bloomsbury, 2024) was launched by Victoria Haskins on 2 July at AHA conference.

2024 AGM update

We also held the ANZSHM Annual General Meeting at the AHA Conference.

We are delighted to announce the AGM approved changes to ANZSHM Rule 21.2. The proposal was to create two new Appointed Officer positions to Council to encompass work which is already undertaken by Councillors informally, to introduce an appropriate formality to the work involved.

The two positions are: Postgraduate/Early Career Researcher Officer (responsible for events and schemes to encourage postgraduate and ECR participation in Society and to organize schemes/events to support our postgraduate/ECR membership), and Membership Officer.

Council recommended that ANZSHM Councillors, Samantha Kohl-Grey and Madonna Grehan, be appointed as PGR/ECR Officer and Membership Officer respectively (both of whom are already undertaking associated responsibilities informally). This was approved by the AGM.

Linda Bryder

Animalia

The Helpful History of Dogs

Dogs and humans share a deeply entwined history, far beyond mere companionship. These loyal animals have played crucial roles in herding, transport, guarding, and warfare. Their highly sensitive noses have led to them being used for humanitarian purposes, significantly impacting the lives of countless people.

During the First World War, dogs were enlisted by Red Cross societies to locate and aid wounded soldiers on the battlefield.¹ They carried first aid supplies and rations to the injured, alerting their handlers to the whereabouts of those in need. In Britain, animal bravery was recognized with the PDSA Dickin Medal.² Recipients included 'Jet', a German Shepherd, who saved over fifty people trapped in bombed buildings.

Beyond their heroic feats in emergencies, dogs have a long history of assisting humans with health problems. In the eighteenth century dogs were evidently helping the visually impaired, as seen in a 1712 alphabet rhyme where 'B was a blind-man, and led by a Dog'.³ In the late eighteenth century, dogs were trained to assist at Les Quinze-Vingts, a hospital for the blind in Paris.

The First World War highlighted the need for guide dogs due to the number of soldiers blinded in action. In 1916, Dr. Gerhard Stalling, a German doctor, developed training techniques that were used at the world's first guide-dog school in Oldenburg. More schools followed throughout Germany. In the mid-1920s, Dorothy Harrison Eustis, an American dog trainer spent time in Germany learning the training techniques and established similar schools in Switzerland and New Jersey, USA, and her guidance helped establish the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in the UK in 1934.

WWI Red Cross nurse with a search and rescue dog



Dogs have proven time and again their invaluable contribution to human society, whether through their bravery in wartime, their lifesaving abilities in disasters, or their assistance to those with disabilities. Their loyalty, intelligence, and extraordinary capabilities continue to make them irreplaceable partners in many facets of life.

Maggi Boulton

¹www.britishpathe.com/video/red-cross-rescue-dogs/query/Red

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dickin_Medal

³Peter Opie and Iona Archibald Opie. *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*. Oxford University Press, 1992 p49.

Find & Connect web resource

The Find & Connect web resource provides information about the history of child welfare in Australia. We provide information about the institutions/Homes where children resided, the organisations who ran them, and key events and legislation impacting on the history of child welfare in Australia. Part of the contextual information discussed is that of medical experiments carried out on children in institutions.

We are working on expanding our current entry, available here: <https://www.findandconnect.gov.au/entity/medical-experiments/>

We are looking to expand this entry to include information on experiments done in states other than Victoria, and to acknowledge that there is a longer history of medical experiments on children in 'care' than the 1945-1970 period currently mentioned.

If you have any knowledge of medical experiments conducted on children in orphanages, children's Homes, farm schools, missions, or any other institutions, We would love to hear from you.

Kirsten Wright
Program Manager, Find & Connect web resource,
University of Melbourne
Kirsten.wright@unimelb.edu.au



Medical iconography



Image: Unknown author -
Child-proof cap,

Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=18747195>

Child-resistant packaging

The child-resistant locking closure for containers was developed in 1967 by Dr Henri Breault. Two dissimilar motions are required to open the container.

In 1957, as the Director of a new Poison Control Centre at the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Ontario, Canada, Dr Breault daily faced cases of children poisoned by medicines or other household hazards, especially aspirin bottles which were easily opened. In response to failed attempts to reduce the rate of children being poisoned, in 1962, Dr Breault established the Ontario Association for the Control of Accidental Poisoning and then established as alliance between local physicians and pharmacists to find a solution. A design from the President of ITL Industries, Mr. Peter Hedgewick, known as the "Palm N Turn," was developed and adopted locally in 1967. The incidence of child poisonings reportedly dropped by 91% as a result of the introduction of the new cap.



<http://www.cdnmedhall.org/dr-henri-j-breault>

Image: Dr Henri Breault © Irma Coucill and the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame

About 100 years ago...

Australian Medical Men Honored.

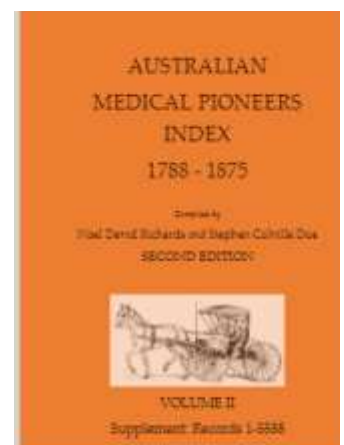
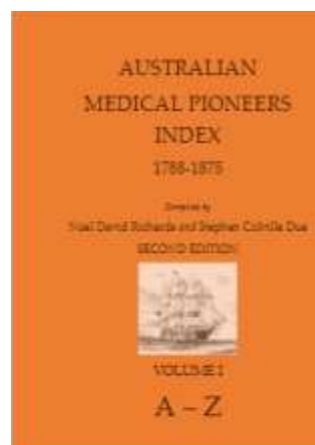
Three Australian medical men and others in New Zealand have been invited to attend and deliver papers at the congress of the American College of Surgeons, which will open in New York on October 20. All have accepted the invitation. It is said that the congress will be the most important yet held in America. The Australians invited are Professor John J Hunter, professor of anatomy at the University of Sydney, Dr N. D. Royle, of Sydney, and Dr Devine of Melbourne. They will leave on Thursday by the steamer Maunganui. Professor Hunter and Dr Royle have been asked to deliver jointly the inaugural address to the congress. The remarkable research work carried out at the Sydney University by Professor Hunter in collaboration with Dr Royle on the subject of spastic paralysis represents one of the most important advances that have been made in medical science in recent years, and has engaged the attention of the medical profession throughout the world. Professor Hunter is an Albury boy, and only a very young man.

1924, *Corryong Courier* (Vic. : 1894 - 1945), 18 September, p. 3., viewed 31 Jul 2024, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page30252488>

Australian Medical Pioneers Index (AMPI)

The Australian Medical Pioneers Index, first published as a printed book in 2023, is now available as a digital second edition, including updated introductory material. It can be accessed via the National Library of Australia website. Go to <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-3380389951> and select "browse this collection".

Stephen C. Due, AMPI compiler



Conferences



Conference “The Power of Oral History - Risks, Rewards & Possibilities”

International Oral History conference

One of the world’s leading authorities on oral history, Alessandro Portelli, will be the keynote speaker at the 2024 Oral History Australia Biennial Conference. Melbourne, Australia; 21 to 24 November 2024.

<https://www.ioha.org/2024-oral-history-australia-biennial-conference/>



Save The Date

The 31st BSHM Congress will be held at the University of Leeds

Wed 10 – Sat 13 September 2025.

<https://bshm.org.uk/>



27th International Congress of History of Science and Technology

The 27th International Congress of History of Science and Technology will be held from **29 June - 5 July 2025** at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Standalone Papers are due by **1 December 2024**.

For further details, please go to the Congress website: <https://www.ichst2025.org>

Conference Details

The International Congress of History of Science and Technology (ICHST), held every four years, is the world’s premier meeting for history of science and technology. The 27th Congress will be held as a hybrid in-person and online event at the University of Otago’s Dunedin campus in June-July 2025. Delegates registered for virtual participation will be able to both present and attend online. The Congress will bring together a diverse group of the world’s leading scholars and students in the fields of history of science, technology, and medicine as well as related disciplines. It will be the first time the Congress has been held in Australasia and only the second time in the Southern Hemisphere. The theme of the 27th ICHST is “Peoples, Places, Exchanges, and Circulation.”

ICHST Website: <https://www.ichst2025.org/>

49th CONGRESS
OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY
FOR THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

3rd ANNOUNCEMENT



International Society for the History of
Medicine, 49th Congress,
Salerno Italy, 9 - 12 October 2024.

https://www.topcongress.it/public/allegati/Brochure%20Eng_Ver_24-07-24.pdf



Fellowship opportunities



Mattia Preti, sketch of votive fresco for the plague of 1656 in Naples (Museo di Capodimonte, inv. Q 262)
https://it.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mattia_Preti_001.jpg

EPIDEMICS: CONTACTS AND CONTAGIONS, REACTIONS AND EMOTIONS

NAPLES, 4—6 JUNE 2025

Polo Umanistico CNR and
Fondazione Banco di Napoli

Epidemics: Contacts and Contagions, Reactions and Emotions

Naples, Italy, 4-6 June 2025

Call for papers in English, Italian, French or Spanish
due 1 November 2024

For further information see [https://networks.h-net.org/
system/files/attachments/call-congress-epidemics-ccre-
naples-it-2025.pdf](https://networks.h-net.org/system/files/attachments/call-congress-epidemics-ccre-naples-it-2025.pdf)

2025 Michael E. DeBakey Fellowship in
the History of Medicine, National
Library of Medicine USA. Applications
due 30 September 2024.

[https://www.nlm.nih.gov/news/
DeBakey_Fellowship_2025.html](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/news/DeBakey_Fellowship_2025.html)

Research Fellow, 3 year appointment,
Monash University. Job opportunity for a
Level A academic. "Medical
Internationalism: Cuba and Eastern
Europe, 1959-99" Applications due
Wednesday 17 July 2024.

[https://careers.pageuppeople.com/513/
cw/en/job/666489/research-fellow](https://careers.pageuppeople.com/513/cw/en/job/666489/research-fellow)

Mystery object revealed



The **Gomco circumcision clamp** is one of several devices currently used for neonatal circumcision. It was invented around 1935 by obstetrician Dr. Hiram Yeller, and inventor Mr. Aaron Goldstein, and has been in continuous use for over 70 years. The clamp gets its name from its manufacturer, the Goldstein Manufacturing Company.

Wan, Julian. "GOMCO Circumcision Clamp: An Enduring and Unexpected Success", *Urology*. 59 (5), May 2002, pp.790-794.

Medical History Newsletter is the news bulletin of the Australian and New Zealand Society of the History of Medicine Incorporated. It is published quarterly, in the months of February, May, August and November. The opinions of the authors of articles in this *Newsletter* are their own, and are not necessarily the views of the editor or the publisher, Australian and New Zealand Society of the History of Medicine Inc. Every care is taken in the preparation of the *Newsletter*, but the publisher can accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions. The Newsletter is currently edited and compiled in Australia.

All correspondence and submissions should be emailed to: anzshm@anzshm.org.au.

Please include the word 'newsletter' in the subject line of any submissions.

LETTERS, PHOTOGRAPHS AND ARTICLES ARE WELCOME IN ELECTRONIC FORMAT.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS **1 NOVEMBER 2024**

For the latest information, visit the ANZSHM website: www.anzshm.org.au