

BURRELL COLLECTION-MEDICAL INTERESTS.

compiled by Keir Fisher.

Sir William Burrell - 9th. July 1861. – 29th. March 1958. Three things to mention of **medical interest**. 1. There was a doctor in the family! Three brothers and five sisters at least one of whom died in childhood. Adam - 2 years older than William and least conformist of the sons left the business after a short while and became a doctor! Which annoyed the family no end. Died age 49. (Four sons in order were George, Adam, William and Henry.)

2. Close connection with a doctor. This man qualified as a doctor from Glasgow Medical School in 1916. A well-known fellow medical student was James Bridie (O.H.Mavor.) He was a general practitioner in the Dennistoun area of the city until 1929 when he became an art dealer and moved to London two years later. In June 1939 he was appointed Director of Glasgow's Museums and Art Galleries - I am referring, of course, to Dr. Tom Honeyman. Sir William summoned Dr. Honeyman to Hutton Castle in December 1943 and told him to keep the journey confidential. He was informed that Sir William and Lady Burrell had decided to present the collection to the City of Glasgow. He decided to present the collection to Glasgow for two reasons - first his affection for the city of his birth, and secondly his respect at that time for Tom Honeyman. In May 1944 Burrell wrote that Honeyman's 'great knowledge of art was one of the principle factors which decided my wife and myself to offer our collection to Glasgow'.

3. It is of medical interest that Burrell had such a long and apparently healthy life. He was three months short of his 97th birthday when he died. He was physically weak for two to three years before his death but he was mentally alert and active till his death. Hearst died in 1951. This left the National Magazine Company with the problem of disposing of St. Donat's Castle in Wales and also quantities of objects of all shapes and sizes that had remained packed since they had been purchased. Many of the architectural pieces had been sent over the Atlantic for possible use at San Simeon and then returned to St. Donat's - one of Hearst's biographers quotes a comment that a large part of the world's tonnage was used in shipping Hearst oddments back and forth across the seas. The Hearst material was bought in four separate lots. The first in August 1952 when Burrell was aged 91. This included the Bridgewater Ceiling. The second lot around November 1953 included the Tudor Mantelpiece from Oatlands in Surrey, which Burrell bought by telephone unseen! The third and fourth lots followed in quick succession in 1954. The fourth lot included the archway forming the entrance to the Great Hall at Hornby Castle. Burrell regarded this as a great bargain at £150! So you can see that even at the age of 93 he was still very much in control of the collection although he was now using the interest on the money he had given the corporation to help pay for the gallery. Burrell probably didn't realise the amount of work that was carried out by Andrew Hannah the assistant Director of Museums and Art Galleries and the staff unpacking measuring transporting and storing these large objects. In 1954 the first signs of physical deterioration were becoming apparent his handwriting started to get shaky and at the end of the year his eyesight was becoming so poor that he had to ask Andrew Hannah to write to him in black ink so that he could decipher it more easily. My view is that longevity is mainly due to your genes rather than your lifestyle, nevertheless there is some evidence that Sir William was fairly careful with his diet and of course he had lived through two world wars when a healthy diet would have been thrust upon him! One story told about him before we move on. When he was in London he usually stayed at Claridge's Hotel and Frank Surgey who advised on the restoration of Hutton Castle remembers dinner at Claridge's with the Burrells when Sir William ordered a full meal for Surgey and Lady Burrell and merely had porridge himself!

EGYPTIAN -

Head of Goddess Sekhmet. 3402 - 1363 BC. Made of Granite. Would have had a Lunar disc on her head. She was the wife of the Creator god PTAH Later she was associated with Mut the wife of Amun. South of the temple of Amun Rae at Karnak was a temple to Mut. The precincts of this

temple had hundreds of statues of Sekhmet standing and seated embellishing it. Sekhmet was the Goddess of war and strife and **Medical Interest** - Epidemics. She had a lioness's head and a woman's body.

IBIS. This is the case for the mummified body of the Ibis. It was a sacred animal and as such, it was embalmed on death and placed inside the body of this figure. There were temples devoted to this bird and their embalmed remains in pots would be placed in their hundreds in these temples. The Ibis was revered because it kept the crocodile population down by eating their eggs. **Medical interest** - This case has been endoscoped by a Glasgow Surgeon and it is empty! (© 1990 Mr. A. Hutcheson, Consultant Urologist – Victoria Infirmary). This Case is now highly valued but initially the contents would be highly valued as bits of mummified remains were included in potions and cures of all sorts and allegedly made them more effective! The god Thoth with whom it is associated was the God of Wisdom and Writing and patron of educated scribes who were responsible for the administration of Egypt He had a man's body and the head of a bird.

Medical Interest - Both Sekhmet and Thoth remind us of the potential hazards of genetic engineering!

RAMESSES 11- Pharaoh 1279-1212 BC. Regarded by his subjects and posterity as the most successful of all rulers of Egypt Apart from early skirmishes with the Hittites his was a peaceful reign. He brought prosperity to Egypt and he embarked on an ambitious building programme which included the temple to his father Seti I at Luxor, the colonnaded hall at the temple at Karnak and the two temples carved out of rock at Abu Simbel and the temple at Abydos. Tutankhamun reigned briefly about 100 years before him.

Medical Interests:- Long-lived like Burrell. Fathered more than a hundred children by his several queens and large harem! The Greek historian Herodotus writing in the 5th.Century BC marvelled at the sheer numbers of doctors in Egypt and their degree of specialisation There was even a physician whose job it was to regulate the Pharaoh's bowels! A lot of medical interest has happened to Ramesses since his death. Originally his mummified remains would be wrapped in cloth and decorated with jewels and laid to rest in the Valley of the Kings. Two centuries later robbers broke into his tomb and stole all the treasures adorning his body including the gold plaque placed over the embalming incision in his abdomen. The mummy was restored in the 21st dynasty on orders of the High Priest of the god Amun. In 1000 BC his body along with those of some other royal mummies was concealed in the cliffs at Deir el Bahari. There they remained until 1881 AD when they were discovered by a local peasant He was X-rayed in 1912 and this showed his remains were deteriorating. In 1976 his mummified remains were removed to Paris for examination by scientists and after extensive laboratory investigations it was discovered that his remains were suffering from a fungal infection - (*Daedalea biennis* Fries). As a result of the other studies carried out at that time it is now known that Ramesses had a slight limp and stiffening of his vertebral column and his head was inclined forward in relation to his spine. When he was buried the embalmers straightened his head causing fractures of his upper cervical vertebrae. He also had numerous abscesses in his teeth and it is thought he probably died as the result of a general infection. The immediate question in 1976 was how to treat his current fungal infection. It was discovered after extensive tests that the way to treat it was by irradiation so he was moved to the nuclear institute at Saclay near Paris and irradiated with radioactive Cobalt 60. This was successful and he is now back in the Cairo Museum.

It is thought that the reason for the fungal infection is the exposure of his remains to the public in the Cairo Museum. It is well established that the method of embalming used by the Egyptians was first class and the mummies were well preserved in the Valley of the Kings because of the very dry atmosphere. The Cairo Museum is situated near the Nile and is a very popular museum. They have a large number of visitors and the atmosphere in the gallery where the mummies were housed became very humid. Of course fungi thrive in dampness. Quite a number of the mummies apart from Rameses were affected. 1987 The Getty Conservation Institute were asked to design special cases to house the mummies and they are now in hermetically sealed cases filled with an inert gas (Argon) which reduces exposure to oxygen and maintains them in a controlled environment.

CANOPIC JARS These could be regarded as pathology specimen jars! They were used to store the entrails removed from the deceased before the process of mummification. There were four jars and the lid of each jar had a head on it that indicated what the jar contained. 1. IMSETY- Human Head - contained the Liver. 2. HAPY – Baboon Head - contained the Lungs. 3 QEBHSENEUF - Falcon Head – contained the Intestines. 4. DUAMUTEF - Jackal Head – contained the Stomach. The four are the sons of the god Horus.

MYCENAEN EARTHENWARE MODEL CHARIOT - c. 1250 BC. Found in Cyprus. Two charioteers - Two horses - only four legs! ? early Conjoint Twins!

EDGAR DEGAS - 1834 - 1917. The **medical excuse** I am using to let you have a look at the Degas on display concerns the artist himself. He lived till the age of 83, but by the time he reached his late fifties his eyesight was beginning to fail. I don't know what was wrong with his eyes but in view of the fact that his eyesight began to deteriorate in his late fifties I would suspect he probably developed cataracts rather than some form of retinal deterioration. This is supported by the way in which he dealt with colour. Cataracts cause deterioration in colour vision, most colours becoming shades of grey. Show extract from BMJ Oct98 - Addenbrookes Hosp Ophthalmology Dept. Painting done by 79 year old woman with L. cataract extracted + lens implant. Also -

Former *BMA* artist demonstrates the effect of cataract operation on her eyesight (BMJ 127 JANUARY 2007 / VOLUME 334)

Lynn Eaton LONDON

A former BMJ illustrator, artist Yvonne Fuller, decided to chronicle the changes in her vision when she had a recent cataract operation at a hospital in Truro. Like many people, Yvonne, who is 66 years old, had been struggling for several years with deteriorating vision. After the cataract on the first eye was removed Yvonne was delighted and decided to make a record of the changes in her sight.

"Even on the day of the operation I could see better," she said. "It was nothing short of miraculous. In fact, when I walked home I realized I could see everything, including car number plates, without glasses. I cried with joy."

The other eye was operated on two months later.

"I can see as well as I could when I was 30, it's fabulous. Now I have a renewed confidence it's like rolling back the clock, I don't have to think about it anymore and I have new spring in my step," she said.

Yvonne's illustrated booklet shows the change in images from before her cataract operation to afterwards, when, as she says, "all is bright and clear and clean-looking."

See her book on this CD - [YvonneFullerBook.pdf](#).



(Historical notes not necessarily used on tour.) Degas was the son of a wealthy art-loving banker and originally trained for the law. In 1855 he entered the Ecole des Beaux Arts and studied under Lamothe a pupil and admirer of Ingres, who laid the foundation of Degas' superb draughtmanship. His real artistic education was gained through assiduous study of the Old Masters in Italy. Early works were portraits or history paintings on classical themes. In 1861 he was introduced to the circle of the young Impressionists. He abandoned historical subjects and began to paint contemporary subjects, specially racing scenes, ballet, theatre rehearsals, cafe scenes, and laundresses. Exhibited in seven out of the eight Impressionist exhibitions and is regarded as one of the most prominent members of the Impressionist School. Did not share the Impressionist concern for rendering the effects of changing light and atmosphere. He was more interested in draughtmanship. He was influenced by the new techniques of photography and by Japanese coloured prints He did not paint out of doors or directly from nature. He said 'No art was ever less spontaneous than mine'. He worked much in pastel and his preference for this medium increased in the 1880's as his eyesight deteriorated. His colors grew stronger and his compositions more simplified. For the last twenty years of his life Degas was virtually blind and lived a reclusive life. Renoir ranked him above Rodin as a sculptor. His reputation as one of the giants of 19th. Century art has endured undiminished.

CHINESE DISH. 1700 - 1710. Porcelain - Cobalt Blue. Centre of the dish shows Europeans in a garden. Probably from a set of engravings called 'The Senses' by Nicholas Bonnat 1646 - 1718 and his brother Robert. This particular dish illustrates the sense of smell. A study carried out at the University of Westminster © 1998 involved testing the Immune response of a group of volunteers to

pleasant and unpleasant odours! It was discovered that their production of the antibody

Immunoglobulin-A was much reduced when they smelled rotten meat. However a pleasant smell of chocolate was found to prevent this suppression of the immune system! So pleasant smells are good for you!

RODIN BRONZE - Man with a broken nose. I wonder if he was a boxer or just a street fighter. Could his hair be covering a cauliflower ear on the right side? You will also notice a large part of the back of his head is missing! Apparently this was caused by frost damage. The plaster caste was stored carelessly and the frost caused the posterior part to break off!

ANTOINE ? LE NAIN c.1630-1640 **Peasant Children.** It is not certain that this painting is by Antoine – one of three brothers. Powerful and dignified genre scenes of peasants are conventionally given to Louis. Antoine is credited with a group of small-scale family scenes mainly on copper. It has recently been proposed that the traditional description of the figures in these paintings as 'peasants' is a misnomer (they are said to be too well dressed for that) and that in fact they represent members of the bourgeoisie.

Medical Interest – Small figure in front of picture appears to be suffering from Dwarfism. Interestingly Nain is the French word for dwarf!

LUCAS CRANACH THE ELDER - 1472-1553.

Paintings illustrate the three main areas in which he painted. First as court painter to Frederick III (the Wise) Elector of Saxony. The Stag Hunt is an example of his work for the Elector, at the time he painted this the Elector was John the Constant The **medical interest** here is really the way in which he 'signed' his paintings - a branch with a serpent round it. I think this seal was presented to him by Frederick the Wise and he then used it to 'sign' his paintings. The Greek god of the medical art was called Asclepius later called Aesculapius by the Romans. Son of Apollo and Coronis. He healed the sick and also called the dead to life again! Zeus killed him with a flash of lightning, as he feared men might contrive to escape death altogether. Serpents were especially sacred to him. In art he is always represented holding a staff with a serpent twisted round it This is now frequently used in the badges and Coats of Arms of Medical Societies. His descendants were called the Asclepiadae and Hippocrates was one of them. I think this emblem was given to Cranach by the Elector = Frederick the Wise. He was Burgomaster of Wittenburg for several years, and became very wealthy.

The Second area of his paintings was private commissions. This picture of Cupid complaining to Venus because he has been stung by the bees while stealing the honey is a good example. **Medical Interest** -Actually Venus could be an example of a condition known as Sheehan's Syndrome or Simmond's Disease. This is Adult panhypopituitarism where the Pituitary Gland has largely ceased to function It is now very rarely seen as the common cause was severe post-partum haemorrhage resulting in interference with the blood supply to the Pituitary gland. The physical signs of the condition were Weakness + Apathy + loss of libido. Pubic and body hair became sparse. Genitalia and breasts atrophy, Skin of face soft, wrinkled and pale. Alabaster skin and loss of areolar pigmentation, due in part to anaemia. Perhaps she is wearing the hat to cover her hair thinning rather than to emphasize her nudity! Having said all this I have to admit that Cranach was particularly known for his skill at depicting female beauty and as beauty lies in the eye of the beholder maybe this epitomised beauty at that time. Third area of painting was religious. He is regarded as foremost among Reformation painters. He was friendly with Martin Luther and was, in fact, godfather to one of his sons. Judith and the Head of Holofernes was frequently depicted in the art of that time. The story of Judith is told in the book of Judith in the Apocrypha. This would be well known then, as the Apocrypha was included in the Vulgate version of the bible. **Medical interest** - I wonder if the doctor got Holofernes death certificate correct! The primary cause of death here was loosing his head but did he include the secondary cause - acute alcoholic poisoning? Ch. 12 v. 20. 'Holofernes was entranced with her (Judith) and he drank a great deal of wine, more than he had ever drunk on any single day in his whole life.' Ch. 13 v.2. -'Judith was now alone in the tent with Holofernes lying sprawled on his bed, dead drunk'. The story is 16 chapters long and well worth reading if you haven't done so.

The cut surface of Holofernes neck is anatomically correct but factually inaccurate. Judith took two swipes at him with a two handed sword. It must have been quite a mess!

(Apocrypha - Greek word meaning 'hidden things. One interpretation is that these are a group of books outside the Hebrew 'canon', the scriptures accepted as authoritative by the Jews).

FLIGHT TO EGYPT. (Master of the Praedo.) **Medical interest** - The infant looks much older than his years. He was probably between 2 and 3 years old when they fled to Egypt. This is an example of a very rare condition called **Progeria**. This is a form of Infantilism marked by small stature wrinkled skin and gray hair and the facial appearance, attitude and manner of old age.

In relation to the flight which was to escape the slaughter of the Innocents ordered by Herod it is interesting to note that on 25th. January 2002 Professor Jan Hirschmann Prof. of medicine at Washington University, one of a team of American Forensic Pathology experts and Historians who have since 1995 been examining the deaths of some famous figures from the past announced their findings on the death of Herod. It appears that his past caught up with him as he died an excruciating death from chronic kidney disease and probably complicated by Fournier's Gangrene – i.e gangrene of the Genitalia.

CELADON WARE Imported in quite large quantities by the Turks 12th – 15th Centuries. The TOPKAPI SARAY MUSEUM has 1,350 items of Celadon ware in its collection.

Medical interest - Muslims believed that the bowls were **ALEXIPHARMAC**. i.e. they acted as an antidote to poison and anything put in the bowls or on the plates if it was unfit to eat would cause the bowl/plate to crack or break up. This was also believed to be true of Jade dishes.

FIGURE OF LUOHAN. 1484 AD. Ming Dynasty. I have to admit that it is not easy to find anything in the Chinese part of the collection of medical interest. This is a pity as Chinese artifacts form almost a quarter of the collection. In addition the Chinese view of medicine is, in many ways, so different from the Western view of medicine.

Medical interest - I am going to cheat slightly! I originally thought of presenting the Luohan and the Bodhisattva (Buddha Elect) as examples of self mutilation because of their enlarged and elongated ear lobes! However I suspect this is unfair, as the enlargement of the ear lobes was probably a way of identifying statues of Buddha and his followers. There are no actual pictures of the Buddha and because of their belief in re-incarnation Buddha is represented in various countries with facial features common to that country - e. g. Chinese as here or Indian if you see statues of Buddha in that country. What is common to all of them is the identifying feature of their enlarged ear lobes.

Three things of **medical interest** are

1. The Chinese only paid their doctors when they were well!

2 about 3,500 years ago the Sages of Ancient China stumbled across something remarkable. They noticed that warriors who survived arrow wounds also made remarkable recoveries from long- term ailments once their wounds had healed. Accidentally they had hit on the rudiments of a new form of medical treatment, acupuncture. Their faith in acupuncture was tied up with their belief in a life force. This they held flowed through the body along invisible energy channels known in English as meridians Acupuncture was devised to correct any imbalance of this life force. Sharp needles were inserted into the appropriate points. Traditional Chinese medical charts show some of the 700 points in which acupuncture needles can be inserted. There are also ancient lacquer ornaments, which show the symbols of Yin and Yang the two opposing forces in the body which dictate a persons state of health. They are represented as two fish one black and one white lying side by side with their heads in opposite directions and their tails curved round so as to form a circle.

3. As with most ancient cultures they used herbs to treat most ailments.

(Facts re: Luohan, which I may not use on tour.)

The Luohan - a few interesting facts. Burrell bought this statue from a firm in London called John Sparks. One of the few European dealers privileged to have offices in Peking and Shanghai. He bought it on 31st December 1943 for £350. In 1937 S parks had given a statue of a Budai to the British Museum and he offered two statues to the Victoria and Albert Museum. These had been offered because they had been so badly damaged in transport to this country. In the event the V. &A. accepted one and suggested the other should be offered to the Royal Scottish Museum. As you know if you look at the base of the statue there are Chinese symbols there which tell us about the statue. It is now almost certain that the statues in the British Museum and the V. &. A. come from the same temple as the Luohan as the date of making them is the same and the priest of the temple and the workman who made the statue appears to be the same on all three statues. No one has yet been able to establish the exact site of the temple.

GUANYIN 'The one who bears the sorrows of the world'. Associated with Compassion and Child Birth and with sailors and fishermen. Most houses have a small figure of the Buddhisatva for personal devotion. Still consulted by millions of people throughout the world.

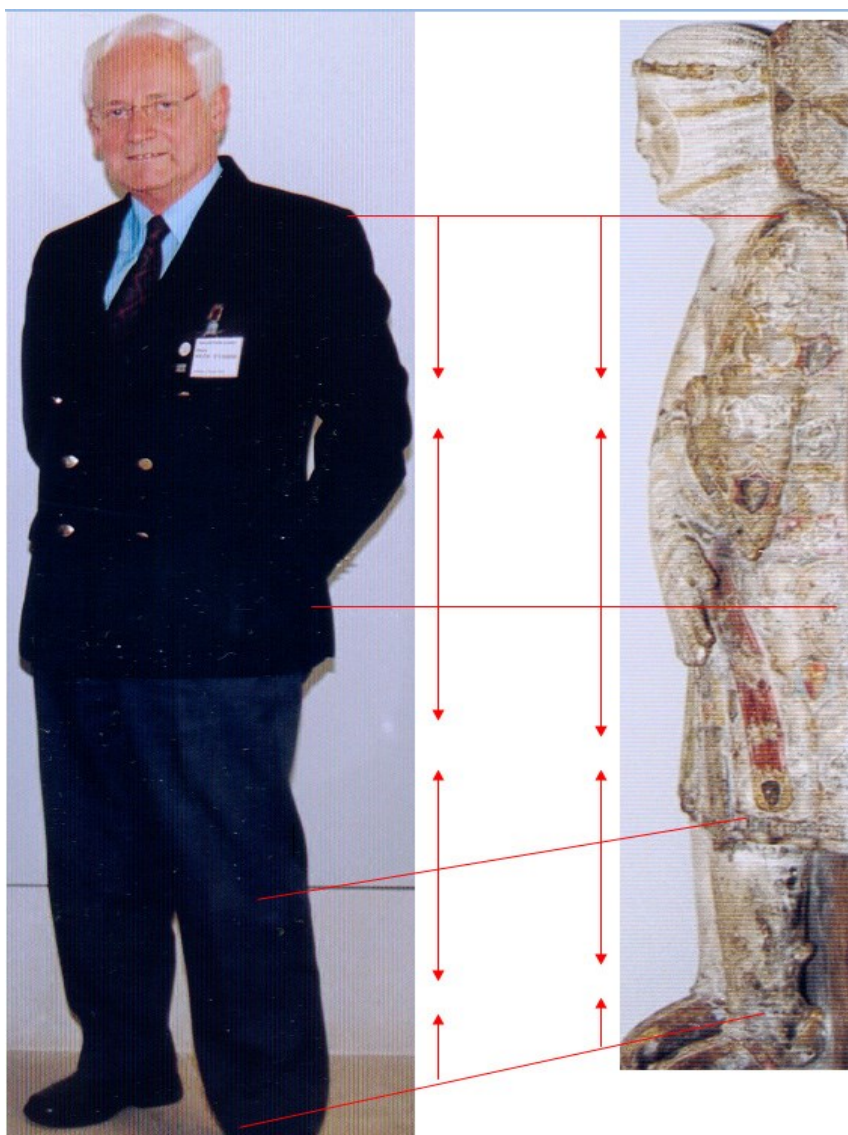
Medical association is that she was the Buddhist equivalent of the Christian Patron Saint of Child Birth.

MING DYNASTY EWER I should just mention this Ewer as it does have a medical connection this is copper red.

Earlier cobalt blue more common. After the opening of the collection in October 1983 by the Queen a group were having a guided tour and when they came to this Ewer a young couple in the group were amazed because they said they had been left a water jug just like this by an uncle and they were proposing to bore a hole in it to lead a flex up the inside and make it into a table lamp. **Medical interest** - The uncle had, in fact, bought the jug in the 1940's and he was a Dr. William Clement a Gynecologist at the Samaritan Hospital.

ESPES TOMB. - Spanish Knight - Don Ramon Peralta de Espes (died 1348). Captain General of the armies of the kingdom of Aragon and General Admiral of Aragon and Sicily. He had a reputation for valour. Tomb was in the monastery of Santa Maria de Obarra at Calvera near Huesca in Northern Spain.

It is said that the effigy had to be foreshortened because of the narrow niche in which it was placed.



Medical interest - I thought I would measure him and interestingly his hip - shoulder measurement is 21" mine is 21½". His Knee - Hip measurement is 14" and mine is 21". His Foot - Knee measurement is 15" and mine is 18". So undoubtedly the shortening took place in his legs. I would like to suggest it took place at his knees. What they did was, in effect, excise his knee joints. He is 4ft.11" tall here. If 7" were excised then that would mean he was originally 5ft. 6" tall, which seems reasonable. (His bones are buried in the Crypt of the Monastery they are **NOT** in the tomb displayed here!)

14th.CENTURY DALMATIAN. Italian with English Orphries. At this time English embroidery was highly thought of in Europe and hence the reason for having it on an Italian Dalmatic.

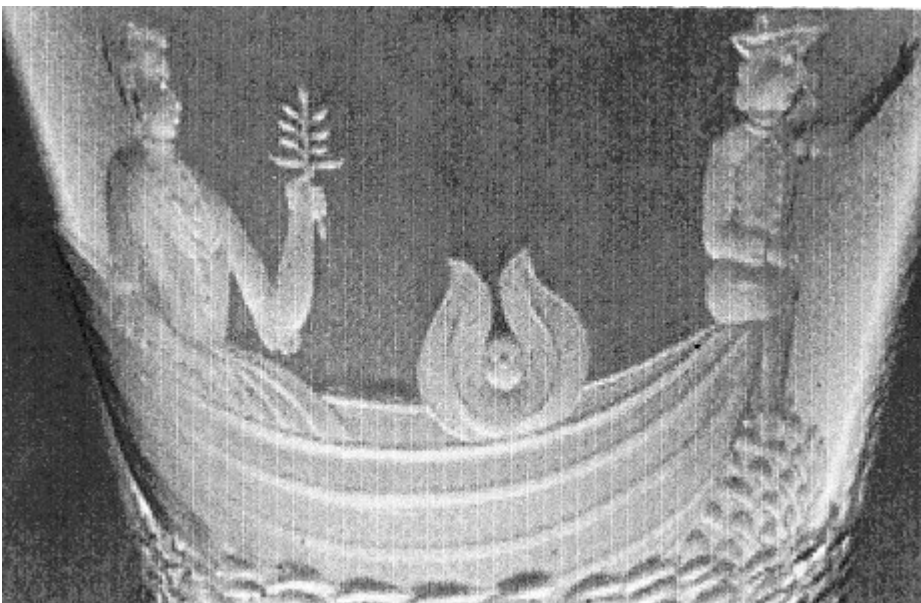
The **medical interest** here is the baby walker in the centre panel. In BMJ June 2002 article from University College Dublin School of Physiotherapy indicating that children using Baby Walkers showed delay in achieving normal locomotor milestones. BMJ September 2002 had an editorial comment by Brent Taylor Professor of Community Health at Royal Free and University College Medical School indicating they cause delayed development and injuries and we should consider banning them! They are already banned in Canada!

POLYCHROMED WOOD FIGURES OF THE VIRGIN AND St. JOHN. These are from a much larger Crucifixion group of the late 15th. Century. These are one of the few examples of Spanish medieval sculpture in British galleries. The shape of the statues indicates the introduction of High Gothic forms into their sculpture. **Medical interest** - There is a condition called Kypho-Scoliosis which means simply

bending and twisting of the spine. The Virgin is a good, if exaggerated example of the deformity that occurs in this condition which presents most frequently in young girls at the age of puberty and can

now be controlled by early surgery. A less than reverential friend suggested to me that perhaps St John might be suffering from toothache!

"EXPECTANCY GLASS" © 1760. Burrell has the largest collection of Dutch engraved glass outside the Netherlands in Europe. **Medical interest** - This is an example of a glass to commemorate a special occasion, namely pregnancy. This is a wineglass with Copper Wheel engraving. It would be given to a pregnant lady by her husband and if she drank from it at a dinner party that would indicate to those present that she was pregnant! The engraving shows a boat with the wife holding up a sprig = a good omen. Cabbage in the centre of the boat is the Dutch equivalent of a Gooseberry bush! It has a baby's head in the centre of it. In the bow of the boat the husband with a light hung from his nose shining into the darkness ahead = Hope for the future. Inscription reads - May the launch of the little ship proceed well"



SWISS TAPESTRY - VIRGIN SERIES. - ALTAR FRONTAL

Note the technical difficulty that the tapestry makers had with making people look to the front. -

Medical interest - The angel with left internal strabismus. Of course in those days surgical correction was not possible - the first successful operations to correct squints were carried out in 1840. Article in the Lancet – **Surgical epidemic**

The whole history of surgery will scarcely, perhaps, exhibit such an extraordinary number of new operations within the same period of time as the last twelve months have produced. A perfect mania for operating has

existed ever since the first operation for squinting was declared to be successful. .

JH Curtis, Lancet, 2 April 1841

Submitted to BMJ by Ann Dally, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine

(Nov. 14th. 1847 - James Young Simpson Professor of Midwifery in Edinburgh experimented with Chloroform.)

EMBROIDERY - HAWKING POUCH and GAUNTLET. (early 17th. Century.) Given by James VI and 1st. to Sir William Pope after the King had visited Wroxton Abbey in Oxfordshire to act as godfather to one of Sir William's children. Lure and hoods may come from a different set. The leather is embroidered with blackberries (brambles) and mistletoe. **Medical interest** - Blackberry known as the "blessed Bramble" in the Scottish Highlands because of its healing properties. Tisane of bramble juice was taken to promote the healing of wounds, said to contain high quantities of Vitamin C.

EMBROIDERY - PANEL FROM CUSHION - Various flowers and vegetables- Cowslip, Columbine, Thistle, Pinks and Peapods. **Medical interest** - Another reminder of how important herbal remedies were in those days. The women would be particularly knowledgeable about this. It is easy to see how there was an element of truth in the advice given by 'Granny' and in so called 'Old Wife's Tales'

BMJ 19 January 2002. Controlled trial of Butterbur and cetirizine for treating seasonal allergic rhinitis. From an allergy clinic in Switzerland. – Butterbur is a herbal remedy (*Petasites hybridus*) which is

derived from butter dock or bog rhubarb. It proved to be as effective as the antihistamine used and is recommended for people who suffer sedative effects from antihistamines.

Article in B.M.J.05/03/05 (Small sample of 25 participants ? statistically significant!) – St. John's Wort is as effective as brand drugs. Researchers in Germany compared the effectiveness of extract

from the herb with the drug Paroxetine (Seroxat). Conclusion was that the herb was just as effective, if not better, than Paroxetine. In the ten years to 2002/2003 prescriptions in the UK for anti-depressants tripled to more than 3 million. The cost over the same period quadrupled to more than £55 million. No mention of the fact that the strength of many herbal medicines varies considerably as the manufacture is not so stringently controlled as with conventional drugs.

St Roch - A French 14th century pilgrim **Medical interest** - was said to have cured people of the plague. He is usually depicted with a pilgrim's hat and staff, a dog who was said to have looked after him when he was sick himself (see this at his feet), and displaying a plague sore on his leg.

MALE SAINT. May be either St Stephen or St. John the Evangelist. The **medical interest** here is his hands. Look at most of the statues in this section the hands are not well carved. In this case they are very well carved. One of the things we were taught as medical students is how much you can learn by examining people's hands. Even when someone has a young-looking face you can often guess at their age group by looking at their hands. In this case what his hands show are the signs of early arthritis - some enlargement of the interphalangeal joints and some spindling of the fingers both signs of arthritis - **Medical interest** - I thought I would measure him and interestingly his hip - shoulder measurement is 21" mine is 21½". His Knee - Hip measurement is 14" and mine is 21". His Foot - Knee measurement is 15" and mine is 18". So undoubtedly the shortening took place in his legs. I would like to suggest it took place at his knees. What they did was, in effect, excise his knee joints. He is 4ft.11" tall here. If 7" were excised then that would mean he was originally 5ft. 6" tall, which seems reasonable. (His bones are buried in

the Crypt of the Monastery they are **NOT** in the tomb displayed here!

Medical interest - I thought I would measure him and interestingly his hip - shoulder measurement is 21" mine is 21½". His Knee - Hip measurement is 14" and mine is 21". His Foot - Knee measurement is 15" and mine is 18". So undoubtedly the shortening took place in his legs. I would like to suggest it took place at his knees. What they did was, in effect, excise his knee joints. He is 4ft.11" tall here. If 7" were excised then that would mean he was originally 5ft. 6" tall, which seems reasonable. (His bones are buried in the Crypt of the Monastery they are **NOT** in the tomb displayed here!

think osteo-arthritis. It may well indicate that in earlier life the model for this statue had been a manual worker!

St. CATHERINE of ALEXANDRIA. Story apocryphal. Feast Day November 25th. - (suppressed in 1969 because based on fiction.) said to be of royal birth. Made public protest to Emperor Maxentius against the worship of idols. He commanded 50 philosophers to oppose her but although she was only 18, she demolished their arguments and converted them to Christianity. The emperor had them burnt alive when they admitted their failure. He then tried to seduce her with an offer of marriage. She refused - said she was already betrothed to Christ - resulted in long beating and imprisonment, but during her imprisonment, she was fed by a dove and saw a vision of Christ She also converted the emperor's wife and 200 soldiers. Maxentius next tried to break her on a spiked wheel - the 'Catherine wheel' but this disintegrated and some spectators were injured. When Catherine was eventually beheaded, milk, not blood, flowed from her veins. The wheel on which she was tortured gave rise to her patronage of millers, whose work is based on the wheel. **Medical interest** - Her features are, I suppose, meant to represent sadness. However the drooping eyelids would suggest a condition named MYASTHENIA GRAVIS. She must have missed her injection of Neostigmine!

Oedema of upper eyelids called **HOAGLAND'S SIGN** – seen in Infectious mononucleosis. First described By Hoagland who saw it in young military recruits with Infectious Mononucleosis

St. MARGARET of ANTIOCH. Legendary virgin martyr. Story popularised in the Golden Legend. Daughter of a pagan prince - Theodosius of Antioch. A delicate child put in the care of a countrywoman who was a secret Christian. Governor Olybrius of Antioch saw her herding sheep one day and fell in love with her. She refused him. He ordered her tortured and thrown in prison where a fierce dragon appeared and swallowed her up. A cross materialised and grew larger and eventually split the dragon in two and she walked unharmed from its belly. **Medical interest** - She is thus the patroness of women in childbirth She was subjected to further trials and then beheaded. In art Crown inset with pearls. (Margarita = pearl in Latin.) I wonder what she would make of a report in the BMJ in November 1999 from the World Health Organisation. They did a study of the frequency of Caesarian Section in Latin America. One of their key messages was that there were more than 850,000 unnecessary caesarian sections performed in Latin America each year.

ORIENTAL CARPETS. As we pass through this section I would just like to mention a very common design on many of the carpets. If you look at the Dietrichstein Medallion Carpet (19th.Century Iranian.) You can see numerous medallions against a dark blue background carefully organised into a scheme of Lotus and Peony Palmettes within a framework of pairs of deeply curved cloud scrolls. **Medical interest** - Peony derives its name from the Greek word Paion and Paion was the Physician of the Gods. In Greek Mythology the Lotus was a legendary plant, which induced a feeling of luxurious languor in those eating it! So I guess it would now be regarded as a mythical tranquiliser!!

LOCHLEVEN HANGINGS. - Scottish - late 16th or early 17th. Century. It is likely these hangings were part of the furnishings for the New House of Lochleven, built about 1545 by the Earls of Morton. The design consists of pomegranates, carnations, roses and thistles. I want to look at the Pomegranate which is of medical interest The

pomegranate has been held sacred by many of the world's major religions. The Greek myth of Persephone's abduction by Hades, Lord of the Underworld, the pomegranate represents life, regeneration, and marriage. One day when Persephone was out gathering flowers she noticed a narcissus of exquisite beauty. As she bent down to pick it, the earth opened and

Hades seized her and dragged her down to his kingdom. By eating a few pomegranate seeds, Persephone tied herself to Hades - the pomegranate being a symbol of the indissolubility of marriage. Inconsolable at the loss of her daughter the corn goddess Demeter prevented the earth bearing fruit unless she saw her daughter again. Zeus intervened and worked out a compromise: Persephone should live with Hades for one third of the year and the other two thirds with Demeter. So Persephone's return from the underworld each year is marked by the arrival of Spring. In Christian art the pomegranate is a symbol of resurrection and everlasting life. It is found in devotional statues and paintings of the Virgin and Child.

Medical uses - Preparations of different parts of the plant - flower, fruit juice, and bark have all been used for a wide variety of conditions. Gastroenterological conditions predominate.

Dioscorides - Used for the stomach, for mouth ulcers, genital ulcers and perianal ulceration. Also used for pain in the ears and problems with the nose. A decoction of the flowers was used for

moist, flagging gums and loose teeth. The use of pomegranate rind and root bark as a treatment for tapeworm infestation was recommended by early Roman medical writers and it is still listed in a current encyclopedia of medicinal plants as a treatment for tapeworms and diarrhoea.

Heraldic uses. - The BMA and 3 Royal Colleges feature the Pomegranate in their coats of arms.

The colleges are Midwives, Obsts. and Gynes. and Physicians.

REMBRANDT – SELF PORTRAIT.

In the early 1970's the Rembrandt Research Project was set up in Amsterdam to determine the authenticity of as many Rembrandt paintings as could be accessed. So this portrait was X-rayed in the department of radiology at the Western Infirmary by Dr. John K. Davidson. This revealed that the painting is authentic and also that there is a portrait beneath him of a woman. It is thought that this may be a portrait of his mother. Rembrandt used old canvases and unable to afford models he frequently painted himself and family members. It is thought he may have painted this self portrait as a form of advertisement to obtain commissions as he was hard up at this time. Interestingly one of his commissions in 1632 was of **Medical interest** -

MEDICAL CLASSICS

The Anatomy Lesson By Rembrandt

Oil on canvas, painted in 1632

Rembrandt's famous painting ***The Anatomy Lesson*** of Dr Nicolaes Tulp was a group portrait commissioned by the Guild of Surgeons of Amsterdam. Rembrandt was only 26 at the time he painted it. The itinerant painter had travelled from his native Leiden to Amsterdam. Luck readily smiled on him.

Dr Tulp-the newly appointed reader of the Guild of Surgeons-needed a portrait to befit his new status.

Rembrandt's genius was in transcending the limited appeal of a group portrait to become a chronicler of anatomy dissection of his time. What is the story behind this autopsy? Where did the body come from? As a surgeon I get easily drawn to the subject matter.

Rembrandt leaves us various clues to the life and times of his contemporary anatomist. The body looks too healthy to have died a natural death. Only corpses of executed murderers were allowed for dissection in those days; indeed, the corpse was that of an executed criminal. We don't see any dissecting instruments, but a textbook is open at the foot of the corpse. This voluminous tome could be Vesalius's anatomy treatise, which was published nearly a century earlier and proved wrong many Galenic assertions, laying the foundations for a scientific study of the human body.

Some of the painting's subjects are looking ahead. Are they looking at other spectators? Anatomy dissection in 17th century Europe was as much a social as a scientific event. Demonstrations were held in public theatres once a year and the display offered to students, high officials, and the public for a fee. Although the body remains intact, the left forearm is already completely dissected. Centre stage is the demonstrator, Dr Tulp. Dressed in a wide brimmed hat and formal outfit, his social standing is obvious.

He is busy demonstrating the actions of the long flexors of the hand to his amazed audience. With one hand he is lifting and pulling the flexors; with the other he is mimicking their function. This action is of obvious interest to the observers, at least two of whom are looking directly at Tulp's hand. The spectators are forever locked in a moment of rapt attention. This chronicle of anatomy dissection is also a subtle narrative of our continuing obsession with unlocking the secrets of the human body. Rembrandt draws the viewer in to a private demonstration of the unravelling of a mysterious secret.

My appreciation is that of a layman, yet I cannot but also comment on the painting's visual beauty. Rembrandt was a master of light and shadow, and his skill is evident even this early in his career. The faces are remarkably bright, giving a lighting effect, but death casts its dark halo on the corpse. In painting this humble commission, Rembrandt created a masterpiece that, centuries later, still evokes a vivid leap of imagination.

Munier Hossain. staff grade surgeon, Ysbyty Gwynedd, North Wales munierh@doctors.org.uk

BMJ / 10 MAY 2008 / VOLUME 336



EXPECTANCY GLASS. - Depicts a pregnant lady in amongst some trees and there is a small baby in her upper abdomen - represents the baby in the womb The inscription is 'Little Hans in the cellar'!

PORTAL FROM CHURCH AT MONTRON. Burrell bought this towards the end of 1953 from the Hearst Collection He paid £550 for it much to his delight Burrell knew that Hearst had paid £4500 for it and it had been over to America then back to St. Donat's so it had crossed the Atlantic twice. Burrell reckoned it had cost Hearst at least £5000. I mention this to remind you of how mentally alert he still was at the age of 92.

STAINED GLASS - THE VISITATION. North German - Early 15th. Century. **Medical interest** - Could we imagine this as an early example of the precursor of X-rays? Both women have babies in their abdominal cavities. Actually Elizabeth looks as if her's is partially in her thorax! Elizabeth was six months pregnant when they met and Mary was early pregnant - ? six to eight weeks. Both babies are Breech presentation but I suppose they would have time to turn before labour commenced!

JOSEPH CRAWHALL. (1861-1913) Lesser-known Glasgow Boy. Burrell collected around 140 of his paintings. He loved animals and observed them then went back to his studio and painted them. Water Colours and Guache on linen. The Aviary at Clifton established Crawhall's reputation as a watercolourist. In 1890 there was a showing of the Glasgow Boys' work in Munich, and Crawhall was

awarded a gold medal of the second class for this painting. Of **medical interest** is the painter himself. He suffered from a chronic chest problem - I suspect probably chronic bronchitis and maybe emphysema He smoked and drank more than was good for him and this probably didn't help his chest problems. The thing I find most amazing is that he spent a few years in Tangiers and it was thought that the climate there would be beneficial to his chest Have any of you ever been to Tangiers? I would have thought the atmosphere there would have been anything but beneficial. Perhaps if he had gone up into the Atlas Mountains that would have been helpful. I think probably the big attraction was that he could live fairly cheaply there. Certainly there is some evidence that he was quite ill for part of the time he stayed there. Note the paintings done while he was in Tangiers.

Painting of sister on bike 1896 – The bicycle became very popular around 1898 and the article below indicates this interest.

THE CYCLE BMJ 1898.

The experience of the last few years has sufficiently proved that the bicycle is an excellent instrument for exercise. For the middle-aged it is less fatiguing than walking; in youth it is an admirable resource. Woman has profited greatly by this invention and as the race of Englishwomen is manifestly improving in strength and beauty, cycling cannot be doing them much harm. On the contrary, when properly used, it is probably of great benefit to them.

The bicycle, however, as was to be expected, has found its detractors. D'Alessandro in the *Policlínico* declares that it is a dangerous exercise for women. He believes that the only ladies who should stride the wheel are such as are obese, apathetic, or past the climacteric. Should this advice be followed the aspect of a West End thoroughfare or a road in the Thames Valley would at once undergo a very manifest modification, for the most picturesque element would be entirely obliterated.

(*BMJ 1898;ii:994*)



The advertisement features a central image of the 'The Thinker' statue by Auguste Rodin, set against a background of a blue spiral. The spiral is composed of various medical and scientific terms in a light blue font, including 'Blood Cell Counting', 'HbA1c', 'Electrophoresis', 'glucose', 'Osmolality', 'Urea', 'Creatinine', 'Lactate', 'ESR', and 'Hemoglobin'. Below the statue, the text 'THINK big' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. At the bottom of the advertisement, the company name 'ANALYTICAL @ TECHNOLOGIES' is displayed, along with the tagline 'A DIVISION OF F&L (S&S) LIMITED'. To the right of the company name, there is a list of services offered, including 'Bilirubin', 'Electrophoresis', 'Occult blood', 'ESR testing', 'Osmometry', 'Glucose/Lactate', 'Sport lactate', 'Blood Cell Counting', 'HbA1c and Variants', and 'Homocysteine'. Contact information is provided at the bottom right, including a phone number '01252 514711' and a website 'www.analyticaltechnologies.co.uk'.

THE CHARITY OF A BEGGAR AT ORNANS. 1868- Gustave Courbet (1819-77) Stuffier pictures of dim events were considered outmoded and real every day scenes were judged to be more relevant to art. Unconventional paintings such as this had political overtones, and Courbet's radicalism eventually led him to a term of imprisonment. He frequently came under attack both for the crude technique of his pictures and for their content. **Medical interest** - What is the beggar's medical problem? He has a crutch under his right arm and what could be a rather dirty looking bandage round his right ankle and foot. Is his right ankle swollen? His right foot is externally rotated. Perhaps he had been in a fight or been knocked over injuring his right knee and ankle? I don't know but it is interesting to consider the possibilities of what might be wrong with him.

THE THINKER – Auguste Rodin 1840 – 1917 – Rodin was asked to design the entrance to the School of Decorative Art in Paris. The Thinker was designed to go in the Tympanum above the doors – so you should be looking at him from below. It is said that his shoulders are broader and his arms longer to keep the perspective right! I think he is a well proportioned muscular man who probably had a physically demanding job. **Medical interest** – often appears in adverts. For medical products!