



Editorial for Special Edition

Dear Reader

It is with great pleasure that I present this bumper Bicentenary Special Edition of the Journal. I want to thank everyone that has contributed to this edition, especially the authors and those who have permitted photographs to be reproduced here. I also wish to record my thanks to Andrew Gallagher, current President of Lancaster and Morecambe Medical Book Club (L&MMBC) and Shadaba Ahmed, longstanding MBMJ Editor and L&MMBC Secretary, for their enthusiastic support for this edition.

Very few provincial medical societies have survived continuously for 200 years so for the L&MMBC (formerly the Lancaster Medical Book Club) this is an important and historic milestone. I am delighted that the exact date (November 11th 2023) will be marked by the unveiling of a Heritage Plaque in Market Square and a special L&MMBC 'David Campbell' Bicentenary Lecture given by Professor Gareth Williams, one of the UK's leading medical historians. As well as the formation of Lancaster Medical Book Club, 1823 is also notable for the first publication of the Lancet and the death of Edward Jenner. Professor Williams will discuss Jenner's life and legacy.

In all its 200 year existence only one Book Club member has had his records expunged from the records of the society: Dr. Buck Ruxton, notorious GP and double murderer. Robin Jackson, L&MMBC Archivist, continues this Journal's series of book reviews with a review of one of the historical books in the Book Clubs remaining collection that describes the forensic evidence used to convict him. For a short period in the early nineteenth century the Book Club also became involved with the dissection of murderers and this strange episode is also examined within this Edition.

With the exception of the infamous Dr. Ruxton, the Book Club has always featured outstanding local GPs and I'm delighted to be able to include articles by and about some of our leading local GPs. John Chippendale, retired GP, has been a regular contributor to this Journal and his latest article highlights his experiences in community obstetrics. The first female President of the Book Club, Elizabeth Dowell, was a truly outstanding GP in Bentham.

If you wish to find out more about the fascinating history of L&MMBC, I would first direct you to the website of this Journal (www.mbmj.co.uk) where there is an online archive of all previous editions and an excellent search engine which will take you to Brian Higson's article of 1997 about the Book Club. There is also, of course, a book about the history of the Book Club, edited by G.H. Anderson, available in the RLI library.¹

As founding Editor Professor Morris predicted, this Journal has become 'essential reading' and I hope you enjoy reading this Bicentenary Special Edition.

Bryan Rhodes,
Guest Editor and Editorial Board member, MBMJ

1. Anderson GH. (Ed). The Minutes of the Lancaster Medical Book Club. 1997

The LMMBC Committee has awarded the paper entitled "Understanding the impact of the CV-19 pandemic on a socially deprived coastal town" the prize for the best paper published in the MBMJ 2022. The authors are Dr Maddy French *et al*.

The award includes a trophy as well as a cash prize of £250 to be shared between the authors.

The LMMBC Committee has invited some of the co-authors to attend its prestigious dinner on 3rd March at Morecambe Golf Club.

It is an added honour that at this event Mr Jonathan Calvert, a leading investigative journalist with the Sunday Times Insight team, will bestow the trophy to the main author Dr Maddy French. The President of the Book Club, Dr A Gallagher, also extends his heartiest congratulations to the winning team.

Ms Shadaba Ahmed
Editor MBMJ



Cover image: "Lancaster Market Place", British, unattributed. The Royal Oak public house, site of the first Book Club meeting on November 11th 1823, is shown in the centre of the painting. Image © the Whitworth, The University of Manchester – reproduced by permission.