

## CONFERENCE REPORT

The Lindsay Society for the History of Dentistry 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference

By Brian Williams, Honorary Secretary, Lindsay Society for the History of Dentistry, Surrey, UK

Anybody with an interest in dental history can join the Lindsay Society for the History of Dentistry – dentist, hygienist, dental nurse, therapist, technician, student, historian, young, old(er!) – and once a year we get together for a sociable and educational weekend.

On Friday 3 October 2025 delegates checked in and registered for this year's conference at the Woodland Grange Hotel & Conference Centre on the outskirts of Royal Leamington Spa for a weekend of lectures and the renewal of friendships new and old, all fused together with fine dining and an outing to the superbly preserved medieval Lord Leicester Hospital. It started with an excellent buffet on the Friday evening with the first lecture of the weekend, 'Colditz' the following morning. Here we learnt that dentists did work there throughout the war and an escape tunnel was discovered beneath one of the dental chairs!

The lecture programme continued with the presentation of a 'hoax child's denture' originally sent to the BDA Museum and shown to the delegates in the hope of fooling them! This was followed with 'Eponyms in Dentistry'. It was fascinating to learn just how many surgical instruments are named after the great and not so great of our profession. The ubiquitous 'Cryer' elevator is a good example.

Continuing the surgical theme, 'Broken Faces & Napoleon's Great Army' was the next talk on the surgical advances made by Dominique Larrey the Chief Surgeon to the Imperial Guard under Napoleon. Many consider him the first modern military surgeon. The morning finished with a talk from a local guide who surprised and entertained us with the history of the town and the famous people who visited (Royal) Leamington Spa.

The afternoon was taken up with a visit to the previously mentioned Lord Leicester Hospital (Fig. 1). Founded in 1571 by Robert Dudley, Queen Elizabeth's favourite, for ex-servicemen called Brethren. With the age of the building as



Fig. 1 At The Lord Leicester

a backdrop, the guides were able to lead us through centuries of English history – much unknown to the delegates – and finishing with tea and cake in the Great Hall.

The final event of the Saturday was the conference dinner, held in the Oak Room private dining suite at the Grange. The food was five stars, the wine very enjoyable and the conversation even better. A great evening which went long into the night.

The Sunday lectures were just as diverse and enjoyable as on the previous day. They started with the 'Troubled Life of George William Gregory', a dentist whose life consisted of violence, suing and countersuing, prison and attempted suicide to name just a few of his misdemeanours. This was followed by the development and design of surgical instruments and the importance of making or adjusting the right instrument for the correct procedure.

The last lecture before the coffee break was the eagerly awaited update about the BDA Museum and Library now that the BDA Headquarters in Wimpole Street has closed. We were told that both collections are now in museum standard storage with no date for their release. However, books may still be ordered from the library, although now being 'off site' their delivery may take a little longer than before. Similarly, museum items may also be retrieved from storage.



Fig. 2 Helen Nield hands over to Peter Dyer

By coincidence, the very last presentation of the conference was a display of photographed items from the vast museum collection now in store. Many pictures brought smiles to faces with voices heard to say, 'I used to use that!' There were some that no one had a clue what they were or how they could have been used – but they did produce a lot of ideas and laughter.

The conference closed with the AGM and the installation of Peter Dyer as President, by retiring President Helen Nield (Fig. 2).

A great weekend was had by all and we are already looking forward to the 64<sup>th</sup> annual conference in October 2026. Keep an eye on [www.lindsaysociety.co.uk](http://www.lindsaysociety.co.uk) for further details.