

**Minutes of the Derby Medical Society, Tuesday 8th October 2024**  
**Derby Medical School Lecture Theatre**

**Presidential Address: A Dip in the Archives**

*Dr Sally Archer*

**Apologies:** Dr Tracey Tinklin

Dr Tanya Bleiker, President for the 2023-2024 season, welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the 2024-2025 season. She introduced the new President for the coming year Dr Sally Archer and formally handed over the Presidential medal. Dr Archer graduated from St Mary's Hospital Medical School (now part of Imperial College) in 1987 and trained as a GP on the scheme in York. She joined Alvaston Medical Centre 1993 and enjoyed many years of partnership. Now retired, she works part time at the Alvaston practice. Hoping for more adventures, she has recently joined the Joy Project, which helps to provide cover for rural and remote practices in Scotland. Her interests include horse riding and bell ringing. Dr Bleiker announced the recommendation of Council for Mr Owen Judd to take over the President role for 2025-2026 which was approved by those present and he was welcomed to the role.

Dr Archer announced the recent deaths of two members: Dr Anne Wigley, a Past President of the Society and a much respected GP for many years at Maklin Street Practice; Dr John Spincer a much loved GP who had worked at the Lister House practice. In addition the sad death of the Mr Roddy Nash who was a General Surgeon for many years in Derby was also announced. Members observed a minutes silence as a mark of respect.

Dr Archer reflected on her own journey to becoming a GP but often describes herself as 'just a GP'. Schooled in a north London comprehensive and with no family connections to medical careers she often wonders whether she would have got into medical school today. However the Dean of St Marys at the time, Prof Peter Richards, was forward thinking in refining an admission process to be more equitable and fairer although included those admissions he referred to as 'the Deans risk'. Dr Archer described some of her experiences at medical school and the learning process including Finals where she gained a prize. She continues in clinical practice and her career has been rewarding and varied.

Dr Archer's presentation, titled 'A Dip into the Archive', used material from the records of the Derby Medical Society that are held in the Royal Derby Hospital. The Society was founded by Dr William Ogle in 1862 and with minutes extending back to that date provides fascinating insights to medical practices over the decades. At its foundation, the handwritten rules of the Derby Medical Society stated it was "...for the advancement of Medical science...; and for the encouragement of good fellowship amongst members of the medical profession.' Dr Archer has dipped into the records and in her talk presented material from each decade. Of particular relevance to her was the recurring theme of what to talk about at the Presidents address and quoted from Dr Douglas McFarlane in 1949 '...it falls on the unhappy President of the Society to give the Presidential Address, and to reward such members as survive the ordeal, or are still present, by asking them to his house to partake of a bottle of beer

afterwards, presumably to take away the taste of the address'. In 1894 the menu included: 'Thick Turtle Spring Soup • Boiled Fowl and Tongue'

Typical meetings at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century/early 20<sup>th</sup> century involved presenting clinical cases eg in the February 1914 meeting Retinitis pigmentosa, Paraplegia, Addison's Disease and Landry's paralysis. She was surprised to find from a Urological case in 1928 the fact they had cystoscopy and diathermy and cystograms at this time.

A commonly discussed topic in the 1920s/30s was syphilis and the varied presentations including congenital but the sad lack of any safe curative treatments. However after the discovery of penicillin such cases were rarely mentioned again. There were also some important forward looking insights and Dr Archer gave the example of hypertension in a 1940's lecture in which Prof Platt noted the lack of any current treatments but because of known physiology speculated on the possibility of designing anti-renin drugs. The discovery of penicillin also revolutionised outlook for those patients who grew up with congenital or rheumatic heart disease of whom up to a quarter died of bacterial endocarditis; SBE could now be treated. In the 1950's Dr Archer came across a treatise on the use of sex hormones in practice, where the author is dismissive of HRT and makes pertinent comments about the use of oral contraception. A case from the 1960's followed the clinical journey of a 70year old who presented with a hydatid cyst in 1956 and charted over the next 8 years the complicated post operative stormy course until 1962 when a bronchopleural cutaneous fistula was operated on and finally healed.

Dr Archer finished her talk highlighting the valuable insights from letters from the 1860's held within the Archive between two of the foremost local pioneers of clinical practice at that time Dr Ogle and Florence Nightingale.

Dr Archer concluded by acknowledging the fun she had exploring the Archives and hoped Dr William Ogle would approve of how the Society has followed 'The Rules' and shared medical knowledge and fostered professional relationships over the years.

**Minutes of previous meeting:** These were given by Dr McIntyre who also gave members an update on the new Society website.

22 members and guests signed the register.