

West Sussex History of Medicine Society

Afifah • October 14, 2012



Yesterday I was busy, but not in a rushing around way, more in a nourishing, warm, mind expanding and communicative way.

I will explain.

I attended the first of this season's West Sussex History of Medicine Society's lectures. As usual it was superb, but on this occasion I was invited to offer the Vote of Thanks to the first speaker, an honour which I accepted.

The gentlemen doctors who run this society are particularly amiable and have, I feel, gone out of their way to be generous to me. I have a feeling they are pleased to have in their midst a living breathing Medical Herbalist who perfectly connects the current orthodox form of medicine with the ancient ways that we *all* know, in our water, were powerful, good and ancestrally wise. These are thoroughly experienced medical practitioners and consultants, experts in their fields, and know just what will fascinate and inform the people who attend their fortnightly meetings.

Yesterday the two speakers complemented each other perfectly, the first being Mark Nesbitt PhD FLS from Kew on *Botany and Empire – the Materia Medica of the 19th Century*, and the second, Dr Sedgwick, on *The History of Tonsillectomy – Henry Cline and Sir Astley Cooper at St Thomas' Hospital*. Both presentations were highly informative, and very entertaining! Dr Sedgwick has a special interest in all matters Ear Nose and Throat, and continues to train current GPs in this field, using great humour and wit to hold his audiences in wrapt attention. Mark Nesbitt, on the other hand, has taken on the vast and probably insurmountable task of *Curator of Research into the Economic Botany Collection, Ethnobotany, Taxonomy of Useful Plants and Seed Morphology* at The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew.

Mark Nesbitt's role could actually be a task for a team of 50 researchers! One would need the combined brains of at least that number to be able to identify, accurately name, assess, catalogue, appropriately rearrange and store the information within the ultra-rich seam of material now brought together and housed at Kew. This job is not for the fainthearted! The collection contains hundreds of thousands, probably millions, of items of relevance drawn from many centuries of painstaking gatherings and garnerings of men and women botanists, herbalists and physicians the world over. I thank Mark for his intellect, dedication and persistence in the service of my beloved Herbal Medicine.

I was accompanied by my guest Julian Barker FNIMH, my earstwhile botany tutor and Medical Herbalist extraordinaire. He was a delight to spend time with, and, with 35 year in practice, is a *font* of knowledge. Amazingly he revealed that when he has a cold trying to take hold he takes a massive dose of 200ml of *Echinacea* tincture over one morning, finding this the best way to stop it in its tracks. That is about 10 times the dose I use, or have ever prescribed, but there you are, different people do things in different ways, and *viva la difference* I say! That's humanity for you.



Lunch was at The George and Dragon in North Street Chichester, and was surprisingly good. Thank you Prof Richardson for organising us all and seating us so thoughtfully. The service was excellent, the company superb and I went away repleat at every level. Having seen Julian off by bike, after the downpour passed, I went on to The Assembly Halls also in North Street to take my place at my own trade stand at [Transition Chichester's Green Fair](#).

What a great bunch they are, the Transition Chichester folk! The wonderful, stately venue was abuzz with activity. Colour, warmth, plants, games, friendliness and meaningful conversations were happening wherever I turned. The Economics Group, of which I am a founding member, were busy on the stand opposite my Herbal Medicine and Nutrition stand, and joined up lots of new members to the new Local Currency we have devised so brilliantly.

Well done everyone in TC for such a great Green Fair, I think we all deserve a group hug for achieving a beautiful day of positive actions and supportive neighbourliness, with a healthy future for us all in mind. I hope you are feeling as warm inside as I am today The sun is shining down (albeit without a lot of warmth), there is a gentle breeze blowing, the sky is blue with it fluffy white clouds meandering past, and the sparrows are eating the dates and hazel nuts I put out for them earlier when there was frost on the ground.

To me, today, it looks as though all's right with the world. I trust you feel that too.