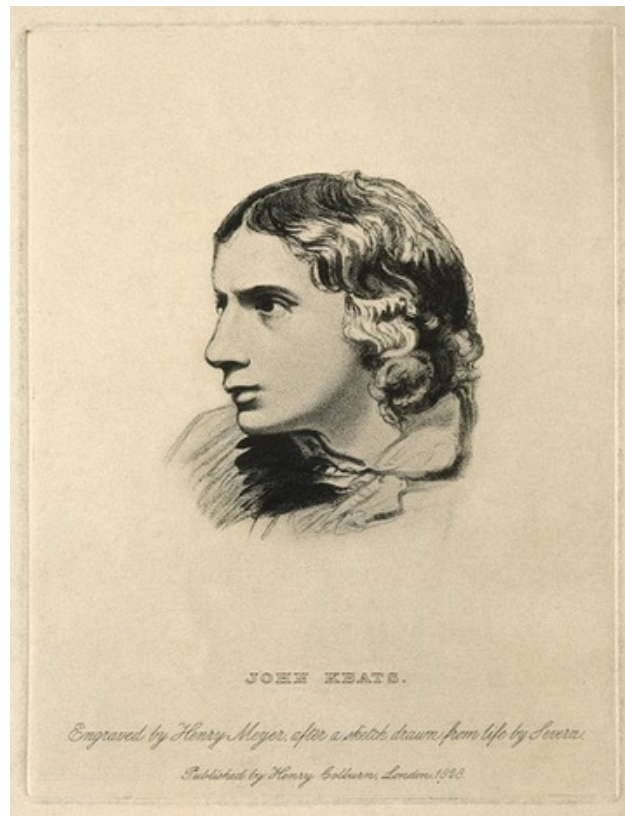


FACULTY OF THE HISTORY & PHILOSOPHY OF
MEDICINE & PHARMACY

2021 Celebrating the bicentenary of John Keats' death



John Keats. Reproduction of stipple engraving by H. Meyer, 1828, after J. Severn, 1816. Severn, Joseph, 1793-1879. (Wellcome Collection)

Our final special issue newsletter features an interview with Dr Noel Snell who wrote a paper on Keats with our last interviewee, Professor Sean Hughes.

It was not his poetry that elicited Noel's interest but his illness and how this played an important role in understanding a medical disease of its time.

Dr Noel Snell
MB FRCP FFPM FRSPH FRSB FLS DA DRCOG DHMSA



- Honorary clinical senior lecturer, National Heart & Lung Institute, Imperial College
- Vice-president, British Lung Foundation (director of research 2013-15)
- Royal College of Physicians Garden Fellow

MF: Tell us a little about yourself?

NS: I trained in medicine at Bart's Hospital and spent most of my career in clinical research, in respiratory medicine and infection. I have always been interested in the history of medicine, and was fortunate enough to be awarded a short-term history of medicine research fellowship by the Wellcome Trust, many years ago. When I semi-retired I attended the Apothecaries' history of medicine diploma course, achieving the DHMSA in 2017 and being nominated to give the Osler Lecture the following year. I have been a member of the Faculty Executive Committee since 2018, and am currently joint Honorary Meetings Secretary.

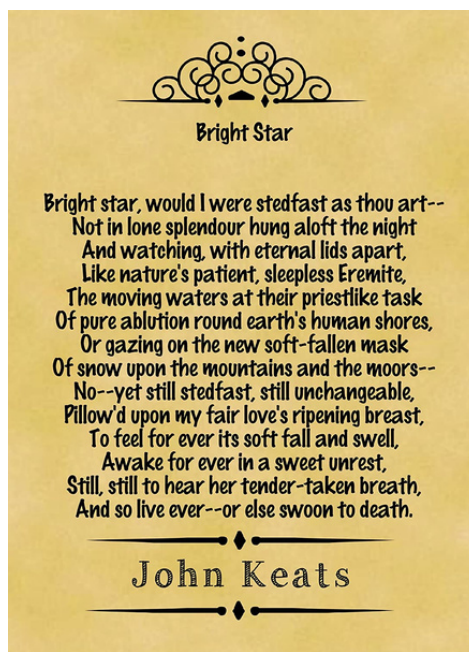
MF: What connected you to Keats and where has the inspiration come from?

NS: I went to school in Hampstead and walked past Keats' house regularly. My interest in Keats did not come about through his poetry (I prefer prose!) but his tuberculosis: I was a member of the clinical scientific staff of the Medical Research Council's tuberculosis and chest disease unit for several years, and subsequently looked after TB patients at the Royal Brompton Hospital. When I was a trustee of the national TB charity, 'TB Alert' we managed to secure a private screening of the Keats film 'Bright Star' at the Everyman cinema in Hampstead as a fundraiser; we had a reception in Keats' House afterwards. When Sean approached me about collaborating on a paper about Keats' doctors I originally felt that their management of his case was less than optimal, but as we looked into it further came round to the view that, for their era, their treatment was logical and compassionate. I am delighted that our paper has just been accepted for publication in the Keats-Shelley Review in Spring next year, the 200th anniversary of Keats' death.

MF: What is your next project?

NS: I have just had a paper published in the Historical Medical Equipment Society Bulletin (2020; No.35: 3-6) on 'The cyrtometer: a forgotten diagnostic instrument in thoracic medicine', and am currently researching the topic of creativity in TB (which has implications for Keats, but incorporates recent scientific findings about the disease). I am also co-authoring a book on 'Modern medicines from plants' with my colleagues at the Royal College of Physicians' medicinal garden.

Contact E-mail: nsnell@ic.ac.uk



Thank you to Dr Snell for sharing how Keats touched his life and we look forward to hearing more about the Keats-Shelley paper next year.

If you would like to join us for this year's Keats Memorial Lecture, to mark the exact bicentenary of Keats' death on 23 February 2021 [click here](#). The Keats Memorial Lecture has been organised in association with King's College London since 1969, [click here](#)

Members may book through the members' area - [click here](#)

Social Media

Did you know you could listen to previous lectures on our Soundcloud or Stitcher platform?

Our new YouTube channel hosts our lectures and meetings through lockdown. [Click here](#).

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