



BroadSheet

The newsletter of the John Snow Society

Summer 2018

26th Pumphandle Lecture 2018

“The Cost of Fear: humanitarian crises in the age of anxiety” by Joanne Liu

Thu 6 September – 5:30 pm

John Snow Lecture Theatre,
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Book online via

pumphandle2018.eventbrite.co.uk

Dr Joanne Liu has served as International President of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) / Doctors Without Borders since 2013. The organisation is a world-recognized authority on medical humanitarian crises. During the 2014 Ebola crisis, MSF was given a voice at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, bringing it to a new level of engagement with world leaders.

Dr Liu trained at McGill University School of Medicine in Montreal. She holds a Fellowship in Pediatric Emergency Medicine from New York University School of Medicine and an International Master's in Health Leadership, also from McGill University. Since she began MSF field work in 1996, Dr. Liu has undertaken over 20 missions, in Central Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East. Her operational contributions range from introducing comprehensive medical care for survivors of sexual violence, to developing a telemedicine platform connecting doctors in remote areas with medical specialists worldwide.

Dr Liu will give the MSF view from the field. With patients and humanitarians increasingly painted as threats, how can we best respond to medical emergencies?

The lecture will be followed by the Society's Annual General Meeting, held in the John Snow Public House (at the corner of Broadwick and Lexington Streets, in Soho) to which all are warmly invited. The lecture will be recorded and placed on the Society's website.



25th Pumphandle lecture and AGM 2017

“Life and Death in 2100: Health, History and Human Contingency” by Richard Horton

The 25th Annual Pumphandle Lecture was delivered on 12th September 2017, by Dr Richard Horton, Editor in Chief of The Lancet.

This was a broad and passionate critique of global health and today's world. Dr Horton began by emphasising a fundamental principle of evolutionary biology which guides selection for altruistic behaviour: “ $rB > C$ ” where r is relatedness, B is benefit and C is cost. In effect the more distantly related are two individuals, then the greater the benefit must be of an action if it is to be worth doing (ie to exceed its cost). He then reviewed the contrast between techno-utopian (ever increasing healthy life expectancy, robots for everything...) versus the dystopic (2 billion climate refugees by 2100, unsustainable environments, heightened extinction risks...) visions of our future, and related this to historical trends, in particular the evolution from the optimism of the 17th century enlightenment, to the desperate circumstances of urban environments in the early industrial revolution and political reaction, to the consequent anger and despair of the romantic movement. References to Aimee Cesaire, Francis Bacon, John Rawls and Amartya Sen were cited to illustrate these tensions and point to the importance of dialogue and communication between peoples.

At this point our speaker referred to his own experience as editor of a major journal, which publishes much in the area of global health, and regretted that so much of the reality of the contemporary communication industry was concerned with survival and impact factors and profit and competition, with too little concern for purpose and meaning of the larger enterprise. Too much concern for human rights which focuses upon our rights over others... too much focus upon the extremism of others but not of ourselves... too much concern over the “post truth” world without sufficient concern for the brutal facts of the lives of others.

Turning to solutions he referred to the usual calls for equity and the right to health ... but stressed the overall importance of solidarity, or the degree of social cohesion – hence returning to his original reference to $rB > C$, stressing the importance of relatedness and the need to expand this beyond simple genetics to all humanity. We in the health professions have much to contribute, as health is one of the greatest levers for creating solidarity between all peoples. This in turn will require moving beyond simple objective descriptions of our subjects and study participants, as in so much contemporary research, to sympathetic appreciation of the plight of others and of our common humanity. To help meet this challenge he announced that The Lancet would start a new series exploring personal experiences.

He concluded by referring to the great romantic William Blake, who was born very near to the Broad Street pump, and who noted that “what is now proved was once imagined”.



The vote of thanks was proposed by Professor Jimmy Whitworth, and Dr Horton was invited to remove the handle of the pump to close the proceedings. Society Members then adjourned to the John Snow Pub in Soho for the Annual General Meeting of the Society. A video of the lecture is available on our website:

johnsnowsociety.org



Return of the pump...

Many members will know that the replica pump which was placed by Westminster Council at the corner of Poland and Broadwick Streets in 1992, to commemorate our hero's work, was removed in 2015 because of construction. The Society has worked tirelessly over the past three years to ensure its return – and to the historically proper position. We can now report success, as the pump, appropriately without handle, was unveiled at its new and correct site on Friday 20th July 2018. A small ceremony took place at 0800 on that day, at which time Dr Ros Stanwell Smith, our Society's Pumphandle Ambassador, gave a short speech and Councillor Richard Beddoe removed a sheet uncovering the pump. The event led to a storm of approval on social media.

The plaque reads as follows:

"Dr John Snow (1813 – 1858) a noted anaesthetist and physician, lived near the focus of the 1854 Soho cholera epidemic, which started in August 1854 in Broad Street, as Broadwick Street was then called. In September of that year more than 500 people died in Soho from the disease.

Snow had studied cholera in the 1848-9 epidemic in South London and developed a novel theory that polluted drinking water caused the disease. He recognised that cholera cases were clustered around the water pump located here and showed it was the cause of the epidemic.

His theory initially met with some disbelief but he convinced the parish council to remove the pump's handle on 8th September 1854, to prevent its further use. 'Removal of the pumphandle' has become an international symbol of public health. The John Snow Society was founded in 1992 to commemorate Snow's work.

The original pump was situated outside the site where the 'John Snow' Public House now stands, and this replica has been returned to its historic location previously marked by a pink granite kerbstone.

This water pump
was unveiled by
Cllr Richard Beddoe
On 20 July 2018
It marks a pioneering example of
medical research in the service of
City of Westminster"

Members with a particular concern for detail will be pleased to note that the pink granite kerbstone has been incorporated into the installation, immediately west of the pump's plinth.



David Hemming (John Snow Pub Manager), Oliver Cumming, Paul Fine, Councillor Richard Beddoe, and Ros Stanwell Smith, by the newly unveiled pump.



Chapters

According to our Constitution (<http://www.johnsnowsociety.org/the-society/constitution.html>) we have not given detailed guidance on Chapter formation, but two statements are particularly relevant: "Eligibility to join the Society is defined as wishing to celebrate the memory of John Snow." And: "Members of the Society are encouraged to establish informal groups, chapters (divisions) and meetings in their own countries and localities. Local groups may levy an additional fee to finance their local activities."

We are aware of at least 11 chapters that have been organised in various places over the years, including in Kampala Uganda, Norway, Iceland, Finland, Auckland New Zealand, Heidelberg Germany,

Bethesda Maryland, San Francisco California, Texas and South Carolina in the USA, and Sydney Australia - but we have not always been kept informed of their activities or status.

It is useful in this context to acknowledge another principle enshrined in the Society's Constitution: "A John Snow Society meeting can be declared wherever and whenever at least two Members of the Society are present. A photographic record of meetings and events may be sent to the Secretary for inclusion in the Society's archives."

This year brings several contributions from these honoured Chapters' round the world.

Scandinavia

Prof. Hallvard Ødegaard awarded John Snow Pumphandle Award 2018

Every second year at the Nordic drinking water conference, the John Snow Pumphandle award is presented by the John Snow Society Scandinavian branch. Hallvard Ødegaard was awarded the prize this year for his dedicated and enthusiastic work in developing and improving technology and treatment for drinking water and waste water.

The jury has, in awarding this prize, focused on:

Hallvard Ødegaard is nationally and internationally recognized for his dedicated and enthusiastic work in developing and improving technology and treatment for drinking water and waste water. His efforts and achievements go far beyond the requirements and expectations of his position.

Ødegaard is well respected in the environmental specialist and research community and has made important contributions to putting safe water safe drinking water on the agenda. The Jury especially emphasized Ødegaard's contributions and work as a specialist in water quality and water and wastewater treatment through his research and development relating to waterborne microbes and health risks.

In the context of this award, the Jury wants to draw attention to Ødegaard's contribution to safe water through his development of the Microbial Barrier Analyses guideline which is now used in several countries in creating safe water plans. And to Ødegaard's contributions to national and international societies and works.

Ødegaard's extraordinary enthusiasm, engagement and contributions to safe water are in the best spirit of John Snow.

We congratulate Hallvard Ødegaard for this honour, which was received on 11th June at the opening session at the Nordic drinking conference in Oslo. He then delivered an address on "Organic micropollutants - how can we avoid them in our drinking water and how safe is safe?"



Hallvard Ødegaard receives the Scandinavian Chapter's John Snow Pumphandle Award from Asle Aasen



Texas Chapter reports on Primary Amebic Meningoencephalitis (PAM)

PAM is a current concern related to water quality because of deaths that have occurred in North Texas. Daniel Nix, Utilities Operations Manager at the Wichita Falls water treatment plant and member of the John Snow Society presented a program on water-borne diseases including a warning about PAM. PAM is a rapidly fatal disease of the Central Nervous System that primarily attacks children and teenagers, but not adults. It is most common during the dry, summer months when the temperature is above 80 degrees Fahrenheit, the water is warm and water levels are low. These conditions allow the causative organism, *Naegleria fowleri*, to proliferate in lakes, rivers, hot springs and poorly maintained swimming pools. When the organism comes in contact with warm muddy water it becomes pathogenic.

When children play or swim in the water, they may accidentally get some up their nose. This forceful entry of water into the nose allows *N. fowleri* to begin infection. Entry through the nose is the only route of infection and it cannot be spread by person-to-person contact. Initial symptoms of PAM include headache, fever, nausea, vomiting, and stiff neck, which can mimic flu-like symptoms.

The disease progresses to confusion, lack of attention, loss of balance and bodily control, seizures and hallucinations. The disease progresses rapidly and usually results in death within 3-7 days. Initial symptoms after water exposure, should be reported immediately to a physician.

Steps for prevention include:

- Avoid swimming in stagnant or polluted water
- Prevent the forceful injection of water into the nose by wearing nose clips or holding the nose when jumping into water
- Swim only in properly maintained pools

To prevent this highly fatal disease, children should be educated on the proper methods of playing/swimming in water.

Mozambique

Baltazar Chilundo
John Snow in the Curriculum

Five members of the John Snow Society from the Faculty of Medicine at Eduardo Mondlane University met recently in Maputo, thus exceeding the quorum of two required for a Society meeting. The main aim was to discuss inclusion of teaching about John Snow in curricula. In the faculty, teaching about John Snow is an integral part of the undergraduate epidemiology programme. The proposed new competency-based curriculum includes an objective that graduates must be able to demonstrate how John Snow influences public health and epidemiology today. Members resolved to advocate with the Ministry of Health to include John Snow in all public health curricula. Dr Dgedge immediately agreed to include a lecture on John Snow in the Ministry of Health's Public Health Training Programme.

We also discussed the need for training materials on John Snow, particularly short films and material in Portuguese. The John Snow Society could provide a forum for divulging training materials. And members throughout the world could check if John Snow is included in their public health training programmes.

Plans are afoot to commemorate John Snow in the Faculty, with a plaque or lecture.



Martinho Dgedge, Baltazar Chilundo, Julie Cliff, Jim Black – visiting epidemiologist, Mohsin Sidat – Dean, Cesar Palha de Sousa

Australia

Stephen Leeder
Another Chapter Down Under

Greetings from your new Australian branch! The co-convenors are Stephen Leeder (stephen.leeder@sydney.edu.au) and Jack Best (jbbest@iimetro.com.au), both public health physicians but past our prime. Neither of us subscribe to the power of large numbers so we have very few members. Sue Morey, another public health physician usually joins us.

Our country is in drought so pumps and pump handles are currently embarrassing and of much less use than desalination plants. But Snow is remembered: our prime minister is spruiking a massive expansion of our major hydroelectric system - to be called Snowy II - but of course for snow one needs water.

As a distraction from politics the Australian government is spending generously developing an opt-out electronic medical record for us all. This has awakened interest in privacy and choice. The saga of such an instrument is strikingly similar to that experienced in the UK before Brexit and other distractions.

Each quarter we eat lunch at a pub in central Sydney, raising our glasses of bottled water to the splendid JS. Let us know if you plan to visit - we would welcome you warmly.



Co-convenor Stephen Leeder



No news from South Carolina or San Diego/Washington

Special report:

Concert

On April 19th the society organised its first fundraising musical event, entitled “Uncomfortably Numb” (a nod to Snow’s anaesthetics background and to Pink Floyd).

Around 120 people packed into a Hackney music venue to enjoy three live bands (including the society’s co-secretary James Hargreaves in The Hare and Hoofe), hear DJs play public-health themed tracks, participate in a raffle and generally have fun.

A song “On Golden Square” was even specially recorded for the event (it is still available for purchase at: <https://thehareandhoofe.bandcamp.com/track/on-golden-square>). Over 1200 pounds was raised for the society, and the society is already planning another fun event for the future. All together now, as the song says, “M-I-A--S-M-A--B-A-C-- I-LL-I”!



*Above: Jimmy Whitworth, JSS Co-Chair, in full flow as Compere
Right: James Hargreaves in flourish*



Transfer of the Society’s administration from RSPH to LSHTM

After hosting the administrative functions of the Society since 2001, The Royal Society for Public Health has decided to hand over these responsibilities to the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. The transfer will take place in the near future and will be announced by a separate email. Members should notice little change except for the Society’s postal and email address, and phone number.

The Society wishes to express its thanks to the RSPH for hosting our administrative tasks over recent years, and to the LSHTM for agreeing to take over these responsibilities.



Other Things

Exclusive to JSS Members

The 11th edition mugs have proven popular as ever.... Free to new members, additional mugs can be purchased if you wish to add to your collection or as insurance policy against breakage (which, according to our constitution, deactivates your membership). Members can purchase up to 3 additional mugs. The elegant pump-design silk ties and the illustrated book by Dr Spence Galbraith (John Snow: his early years) are also available for purchase. See website for details.



We invite applications from members in good standing (with intact mug and membership card). Following our constitution (johnsnowsociety.org/the-society/constitution.html) a valid application should be received by the Society by first September, and will consist of "a statement of 54 words describing commitment to - and vision for - the Society."

Applications will be considered by the J3SC for ratification by Members present at the AGM, unless it is necessary to conduct an email poll if suitable applicants exceed vacancies. Candidates should normally attend the AGM, where each will have the opportunity to speak for a maximum of two minutes, although in unavoidable absence, their statement may be read to the meeting."

Reminder to Members – update your email address

Our cumulative membership total, to whom we will send notice of this Broadsheet, now approaches 3800. Unfortunately, more than 25 % of emails bounce. We suspect that a few members may have crossed the great divide, but we also suspect that some have merely changed their email addresses. Or some email addresses may have been illegible or otherwise in error from the start....

So – if you are/have been a member, but do not receive one email a year from us – please let us know your appropriate (personal generally better than job-related) email. Or if you know of a member who has not heard from us – encourage them to contact us and update their email address.

Call for nominations to the John Snow Society Steering Committee

The John Snow Society Steering Committee ("J3SC") met on 4 June 2018, continuing its work to make the Society sustainable into the future.

The current committee comprises Jimmy Whitworth and Oliver Cumming (Co-Chairs), James Hargreaves and Paul Fine (co-Secretaries), John Watson and Michael Edelstein (co-Treasurers), Sandy Cairncross and Stefan Flasche (co-Historical Liaison and Web Content Officers), Ros Stanwell Smith (Pump Ambassador), Dilys Morgan and Sebastian Funk.

Ros Stanwell Smith is stepping down from the Steering Committee after being a key member since the Society's founding. Oliver Cumming, Michael Edelstein, Stefan Flasche, James Hargreaves and John Watson reach the end of their 3-year terms this year.

Keeping in touch

The John Snow Society contacts all members once per year, via email, with news about the Society and the details of the annual Pumphandle Lecture.

For more interactive participation in the Society, please follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/JohnSnowSociety) and Twitter ([@JohnSnowSociety](https://twitter.com/JohnSnowSociety)).

