

Claire Ridgway23:57

Welcome to tonight's expert live chat. Thank you so much to Seamus for his wonderful talk, excellent book and for joining us today in the chatroom. Feel free to ask questions about Seamus's research, his book, Tudor treatments, Henry VIII's health etc. One lucky participant will be picked at random to win a copy of Seamus's book.

Lorna Wanstall23:58

And hello to Elizabeth as well

Seamus O'Caellaigh23:58

Thank you everyone for having me and joining the chat!

Claire Ridgway23:58

Hi Roland!

Elizabeth Goodman23:58

Hi Claire!

Roland Hui23:58

Is it true that Henry VIII had his own medical concoctions?

Charlotte Donovan23:59

Seamus I love the topic of your book! It's something that grabs my interest, hugely 🤔

Elizabeth Goodman23:59

Hi Lorna!

Lorna Wanstall23:59

What exactly was a clyster and what the usual sort of ingrediants could you expect to find in them

Roland Hui23:59

sorry - I meant 'made' his own concoctions.

Charlotte Donovan23:59

That's something I'd like to know too Roland 🤔

Lorna Wanstall23:59

Roland he had his own plaster what ever that was

Seamus00:00

@Roland Hui: Yes! The Sloane Manuscript collection at the British Library has a hand written book from Henry's Medical staff and he was involved, it is thought, in about half of them.

Seamus00:00

@Charlotte Donovan: Thank you! I love both Henry and Apothecary 🤔

Charlotte Donovan00:01

That's so interesting! Was he rather knowledgeable in this area then?

Adrienne Dillard00:01

He was a bit of a prince of all trades, LOL

Claire Ridgway00:02

He must have been a nightmare patient! One of those people who thinks he knows as much or more than the doctors.

Charlotte Donovan00:02

Hahaha! 😊

Charlotte Donovan00:02

Yeah and if you didn't do it how he thought you should I can imagine him kicking off

Seamus00:03

@Charlotte Donovan: I believe that he was fairly knowledgeable compared most people of his day! lol
Maybe not as knowledgeable as his staff but still well read.

Lorna Wanstall00:03

I wouldn't say that Claire, as H8 had a boil on his bum and Dr butts simply proscribed leeches, didn't work of course cause H8 sat and squashed it

Seamus00:03

@Claire Ridgway: The worst kind of patient! I bet he was!

Charlotte Donovan00:03

Did you come up against anything you didn't know literally anything about when it came to Henry while writing this, @seamus?

Claire Ridgway00:04

I've always wondered how people ever discovered the healing properties of plants. I know you mention about the idea that some flowers and plants looked like parts of the body.

Lorna Wanstall00:04

I think it may have been a case of trial and error with a lot of herbal cures

Seamus00:04

@Charlotte Donovan: I knew that lead was used in period but I had no idea to what extent!

Lorna Wanstall00:05

Women were more skilled in the art of herbal law

Charlotte Donovan00:05

Oh really!?!? To what extent!? Severely?

Adrienne Dillard00:05

Seamus, do you have a favorite of Henry VIII's doctors...Is there one you really admire in particular?

Seamus00:06

@Claire Ridgway: Trial and error over hundred of years...

Seamus00:07

@Charlotte Donovan: One of the treatments in his book had 3 types of lead. And it seemed that a good portion of the other treatments in the texts had some in it as well. More than I would have ever thought lol

Lorna Wanstall00:07

Did any of the medicine given to H8 contain lead?

Seamus00:08

@Adrienne Dillard: by Thomas Gale author of Certaine Workes of Chirurgie. Thomas was one of Henry VIII's army surgeons and was in the Barber-Surgeons' Guild.

Charlotte Donovan00:09

Oh wow! That's super interesting! I wonder what they thought it did? Or whether it was super helpful.

Seamus00:09

@Lorna Wanstall: Well we don't know for sure, as we do not have actual records... but the treatments that Henry's staff recommended for the same ailments he had contained lead... so one would think that it is very likely

Charlotte Donovan00:09

I used the word super there far too much.. apologies haha

Lorna Wanstall00:10

Well it probably didn't help H8 any

Claire Ridgway00:10

Apart from the use of these metals, was there anything that really surprised you in these recipes for treatments?

Elizabeth Goodman00:11

Poor Henry, he must have been in so much pain from his bad leg!

Seamus00:11

@Charlotte Donovan: Well it actually feels really good on the skin... Experiments in period cosmetics, I might have tried a little. I bet that the way it feels make one think it it helping to sooth and heal

ADMIN Tim00:11

You've tried lead?

Seamus00:12

@Claire Ridgway: Coral, Mercury Salts, Ivory, resins all sorts of things!

Claire Ridgway00:12

Hi Julie! Hi RealTudorLady!

Lorna Wanstall00:12

I still say H8 had something called HS, completely unknown then of course and still very rare now.

ADMIN Tim00:12

Where might the coral have come from?

Julie Lindner-Reid00:12

Hi Claire and everyone!

Seamus00:12

@ADMIN Tim: Only a little, on un-broken skin and then washed it off

Lorna Wanstall00:12

Hi Julie

Charlotte Donovan00:12

Ahhhh I see! I bet they were convinced it did then @seamus

Lorna Wanstall00:13

Hi real Tudor lady

Charlotte Donovan00:13

I bet that felt weird!

Charlotte Donovan00:13

Hi everyone 😊

Seamus00:13

@ADMIN Tim: I am not totally sure but I would believe it was imported along with the resins and other ingredients.

Seamus00:14

@Elizabeth Goodman: The pain from his leg I think had a lot to do with his moods...

Claire Ridgway00:14

Have you tried anything that worked? That actually helped you?

Lorna Wanstall00:14

Were there any types of painkiller back then

Lorna Wanstall00:14

apart from willow bark

Seamus00:14

@ADMIN Tim: I have also tried a 1st Century Antidote containing 60 ingredients that was used through Tudor times into the 1800's!

RealTudorLady00:15

Hi Everyone, just being listening to Seamus talk and I didn't know they used lead in his leg treatment. No wonder he had a problem with his temper. Lead can kill as well as it is poison.

ADMIN Tim00:15

Antidote to what, if you don't mind sharing?!

Seamus00:15

@Lorna Wanstall: Opium and Wild Lettuce

Charlotte Donovan00:16

You can kind of sympathise now as to why he was a bit of a tyrant :/

Lorna Wanstall00:16

Interesting, I wouldn't have thought of opium being available back then

Elizabeth Goodman00:16

I'm sure the pain affected him deeply

Seamus00:16

@ADMIN Tim: It was believed to be an antidote to every known poison! 🤔 It was very interesting. Contained beaver gland, resin and numerous plants.

RealTudorLady00:16

Opium is thousands of years old.

Lorna Wanstall00:17

What was a clyster and what exactly was in it

Seamus00:17

@ADMIN Tim: King Mithridates was the original creator.

Charlotte Donovan00:17

Agreed, @elizabeth

Lorna Wanstall00:17

That you real tudor lady

Lorna Wanstall00:17

thank you I mean

Seamus00:17

@Lorna Wanstall: It was also used in sleeping meds

RealTudorLady00:18

It is a good job he didn't have syphilis as he would have been treated with mercury. Mercury plus lead = goodnight Vienna

Roland Hui00:18

We often hear about pearls used medicinally in history. Were pearls used by Tudor doctors?

Charlotte Donovan00:19

Did Henry take any form of sleeping tablets at all? I can't imagine he got a lot of it with his bad leg acting up @seamus

Seamus00:20

@Claire Ridgway: I found that some ingredients can have an active chemical that will do what it was believed it will do. I cross-referenced the treatments in Hildegard's Physica once and found about 18% do. I would love to have the time to do more

Claire Ridgway00:20

Lorna, I think a clyster/glyster was an enema. Is that right Seamus?

Lorna Wanstall00:20

I'm sure I have read somewhere that H8 had a medicine which was very bitter tasting so mixed it with hippocras and sugar to disguise the bitter taste of the medicine

Claire Ridgway00:20

Thanks Seamus. They all look so exciting to make.

Seamus00:21

@Roland Hui: I have seen references to that as well, but I am not off the top of my head remembering and that particularly Tudor Doctors used.

Lorna Wanstall00:21

Thank you clear... I wouldn't want to be the one to shove that in H8

Lorna Wanstall00:21

Claire

Seamus00:21

@Claire Ridgway: Yes Clyster is an enema. Used with a bladder or syringe

Claire Ridgway00:22

Thanks!

RealTudorLady00:22

Did Henry use valerian at all to help him sleep? The Romans used it and it actually works?

Lorna Wanstall00:22

So what was in the clyster? I'm thinking it might be licorice.. or something like that

Lorna Wanstall00:23

That was the one I could remember Real Tudor Lady Valerian

Seamus00:23

@RealTudorLady: I haven't found any reference to Henry using Valarian. But I believe it is referenced in De Materia Medica and being the Grandfather of all European Herbals I bet it was used in Tudor times

Elizabeth Goodman00:23

I'm feeling more and more sorry for Henry!

Lorna Wanstall00:24

My keyboard is acting up

RealTudorLady00:24

Thanks Seamus.

Seamus00:24

@Lorna Wanstall: The reference I found in William Bulleins text used Dock.

Seamus00:25

@RealTudorLady: Of course!

Charlotte Donovan00:25

Right guys I'm sorry for not staying long but I'm gonna have to say good bye! Thank you for answering my questions

Charlotte Donovan00:25

@seamus! Speak to you all soon

RealTudorLady00:25

Give it an enema Lorna. It will have a goodly siege lol.

Elizabeth Goodman00:25

Bye Charlotte!

RealTudorLady00:25

Night Charlotte.

Claire Ridgway00:25

Bye Charlotte!

Seamus00:26

@Charlotte Donovan: Good Night 🙄

Lorna Wanstall00:26

It's the toast crumbs Real Tudor Lady.. own fault for eating breakfast at my computer desk

Adrienne Dillard00:26

Whenever I read William Bullien's name in your book, Seamus, I kept thinking Boleyn! 🙄

Lorna Wanstall00:26

Goodnight Charlotte Keep safe

Seamus00:27

@Adrienne Dillard: haha yeah

Seamus00:27

@RealTudorLady: I love the passage written by henry's Groom of the Stool... "a good seige"

Sharon Conrad00:28

Same here, Adrienne. Took me off guard whenever I saw it.

Claire Ridgway00:28

Seamus, what is your very favourite medicinal plant and why?

Seamus00:28

@Sharon Conrad: @Adrienne Dillard: What I found most interesting was that he was not a medical doctor

Seamus00:28

@Sharon Conrad: @Adrienne Dillard: How do you get to be a medical staff person for a King without a degree...

Roland Hui00:29

Seamus - what started your interest in all this?

Lorna Wanstall00:30

Why did the doctors think that bleeding a patient was such a good thing?

Lorna Wanstall00:30

thing

Seamus00:31

@Claire Ridgway: That is a tough one! Water Soldiers I think.

RealTudorLady00:31

I know Henry was a bad one in his later years, but because there may have been a number of medical reasons for his behaviour, I do have some sympathy for him. I get a lot of pain and am not easy to live with when I do. I also don't agree when people say his wife is justified to have lovers just because he was fat and had smelly legs. To me that isn't an excuse and Katherine Parr nursed his legs.

Claire Ridgway00:31

Oooh, I've never heard of water soldiers. Will look in my books. Thanks!

Seamus00:31

@Claire Ridgway: they are a water plant that floats on the top, but in the winter they produce a mineral deposit that makes them heavy

Claire Ridgway00:32

What are they used for?

Seamus00:32

@Claire Ridgway: And then they are protected from the weather and then in spring it washes off and they float back up

Lorna Wanstall00:33

Yes I know that one very well real Tudor lady, it's a horrible feeling being in pain and not being able to control it. You have my sympathies

RealTudorLady00:33

@Seamus, sorry missed your comment. Yes, I love that description by the Groom of the Stool.

RealTudorLady00:33

Thanks Lorna.

Elizabeth Goodman00:34

I find "modern" medicine doesn't always help with the pain, so goodness knows how Henry managed!

Seamus00:34

@Claire Ridgway: Culpeper said they are good for cooling, king's evil, scrofulous swelling, provoking urine and hysteric disorders

Claire Ridgway00:34

Thank you!

Seamus00:35

@RealTudorLady: Yeah... they are not excuses for what he did... that is unforgivable... but does make more sense.

Seamus00:35

@Claire Ridgway: Welcome!

Seamus00:36

@Roland Hui: It was a mix between working in a Pharmacy, my grandmother being involved in garden clubs and such, and my love of the Tudor period

Lorna Wanstall00:37

Elizabeth to a certain degree you can switch pain off. But it isn't easy You see it's the word Pain that's the trigger and the more you think of pain the worse it gets. so perhaps H8 could in some ways switch off some of his pain

Seamus00:38

@Lorna Wanstall: To a point I bet he did learn to live with it... but I bet it was never really gone... and it stopped him from doing all the things he loved

ADMIN Tim00:38

Anyone else here tried Tudor/old remedies? I made a tincture of parsley a year or so ago and it really helped me with hayfever. Tinctures are so simple to make and definitely go back to Tudor times and before.

Elizabeth Goodman00:38

Very true, Lorna!

Lorna Wanstall00:39

That's probably what made him irritable as well he was simply frustrated that he couldn't do hunting etc all day long

Seamus00:40

@Lorna Wanstall: plus dancing, tennis, jousting...

Lorna Wanstall00:40

Some of my temper come from frustration, that I can't do things that I could with ease just a few years ago

Seamus00:40

@Lorna Wanstall: I am sorry to hear that 😞

Elizabeth Goodman00:41

I bet! He was confined by his illnesses, especially as he had been such an active man before

Seamus00:41

@ADMIN Tim: I would love to have a table top still like was used in tudor times to distill my own oils

RealTudorLady00:41

His inability to get the exercise of his youth and burn food off made him very depressed and of course contributed to his excessive weight gain.

Seamus00:42

@ADMIN Tim: I have made a few tinctures but haven't tried the,

Seamus00:42

*them

RealTudorLady00:42

@Lorna, sorry to hear you can't enjoy things as you used to.

Lorna Wanstall00:42

If my thought about H8 having Hs are correct the pain he must have been in at times would have been unbearable.

Lorna Wanstall00:43

and the excessive weight wouldn't have helped matters either

Elizabeth Goodman00:43

I know exactly what you mean, Lorna, can't always get around like i used to and I hate it!

Seamus00:43

@Lorna Wanstall: What do you mean about Henry having "Hs"

Lorna Wanstall00:44

Yep and me Elizabeth but I refuse to let my health issues beat me..

ADMIN Tim00:45

Keep your questions coming in - there are 15 minutes left of the chat...

RealTudorLady00:45

What is Hs?

Seamus00:45

@RealTudorLady: It was a perpetual cycle.. Ailment, Food, Lack of activity, Aliment, food, lack of activity

Lorna Wanstall00:45

Seamus HS is a very long word just put HS skin into a search engine, basically H8 issues with his legs kind of ring out to me

Elizabeth Goodman00:45

Me too. Just keep putting one foot in front of the other...

Seamus00:46

ohhh Hidradenitis suppurativa?

RealTudorLady00:46

You get into a vicious circle and its hard to break.

ADMIN Tim00:47

Could his cooks have limited what Henry ate, or was it a case of "if the king wants it, the king gets it"?

ADMIN Tim00:47

Or didn't they really understand the biology of it all?

Claire Ridgway00:47

Seamus, is there a treatment you found listed that you thought "hey, they actually knew what they were talking about there!"?

Roland Hui00:48

Were leeches ever used by Tudor doctors? Do we know?

Seamus00:48

@ADMIN Tim: I doubt they could have had any effect on the amount of food...

Lorna Wanstall00:48

basic breakdown of HS is that a person has ulcers that refuse to heal, when they do it swells up with pus and can cause sepsis and when they burst or are lanced the smell is worse than anything you can imagine. they can pop out in the same place or they can break out in different places

Lorna Wanstall00:49

That's it Seamus

RealTudorLady00:49

O.K yes I remember now from the video. Thanks.

Seamus00:50

@Claire Ridgway: The treatments for constipation would have worked and the sleeping drink with opoium and wild lettuce 😊 Most really seem off the wall when looked at from a modern perspective.

Claire Ridgway00:51

Thank you!

Seamus00:52

@Roland Hui: Leeching was done as far back as 3,500 BC... It was common clear up until modern medicine for balancing Humors and not used for blood flow in modern medicine

Seamus00:53

@Roland Hui: "now used in Modern"

RealTudorLady00:54

Some hospitals use leeches today to help stop bleeding.

Claire Ridgway00:54

It is amazing how these treatments are coming back. Maggots too.

Seamus00:54

@RealTudorLady: They use them to help get blood flow to a severed limb that has bee reattached as well

Seamus00:54

@Claire Ridgway: Yes when I did an internship at the hospital we had leeches and maggots

RealTudorLady00:55

Thanks Seamus. Maggots are used to help heal deep surgical wounds by putting them in a net inside the wound.

Seamus00:56

@RealTudorLady: Its very interesting that they only eat dead flesh!

ADMIN Tim00:57

With just a couple of minutes to go on the chat, I would like to thank Seamus for his amazing video, and for spending time with us tonight. The winner of a copy of Pustules, Pestilence and Pain by Seamus is RealTudorLady. Congratulations!

Claire Ridgway00:57

We're just coming up to the hour. Thank you to everyone for coming to the chat and a very special thank you to Seamus for being so giving of his time and knowledge. It's been a fun chat. I can now go to bed thinking about leeches, enemas and leg ulcers!!

Elizabeth Goodman00:57

Sweet dreams Claire!

Seamus00:58

Thank you for the great questions! Thank you for having me!

Lorna Wanstall00:58

Nice one real tudor lady.. happy reading.

Seamus00:58

@Claire Ridgway: All the best things to think about! 🤔

Claire Ridgway00:58

You've been brilliant Seamus, thank you!

Lorna Wanstall00:58

Thank you Seamus, please feel free to drop in to the forum and make a comment on any post that tickles your fancy

Claire Ridgway00:58

Congrats RealTudorLady!

Seamus00:58

@RealTudorLady: Congrats!

Claire Ridgway00:58

Night everyone! Have a wonderful weekend xxx

Seamus00:58

@Claire Ridgway: You are most Welcome!

Seamus00:58

Good Night!

RealTudorLady00:59

Yes, my husband had black dead tissue and it was talking of using maggots but they didn't need to. Thanks that is brilliant. I am looking forward to the book.

Lorna Wanstall00:59

Yep time for me to go up the little wooden hill too, take care and keep safe everyone Xx

Sharon Conrad00:59

Thank you, Seamus. I loved your book. Congratulations RealTudorLady. Good night all.

Elizabeth Goodman01:00

Goodnight Lorna, goodnight everyone and thank you x

RealTudorLady01:00

Thanks looking forward to the book. What a lovely surprise. Cheers.