

Health In Harrogate: 200 Years Exhibition & Events



Proud of Our Past, Inspiring the Present, Educating the
Future

Health In Harrogate: 200 Years

Health in Harrogate: From the First Hospital to the Future

Discover the fascinating story of health and wellbeing in Harrogate – from the opening of the first hospital, through Victorian and Edwardian medicine, to modern healthcare and future perspectives. This special programme of talks, walks, exhibitions and activities celebrates Harrogate's unique medical, spa and social history, and the people who shaped it. We hope this makes you proud of the rich Harrogate history that you are a part of.

Exhibition

The exhibition looks back over the past 200 years to share the history of health in Harrogate. The story will take you on a journey from the very beginnings of spa health, to the modern day hospital and a glimpse into the future. It will also share the stories of those interesting historic characters who have shaped the medical world. Throughout this exhibition there are interactive and child friendly sections, so please bring the family along to find out more.



Location: West Park Centre, Corner of Victoria Avenue, Harrogate, HG1 1EQ
Exhibition is Open: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays 10.30am-3pm from 6th April - 16th May

Health In Harrogate: 200 Years - Events Calendar



Talk by Dr Paul Jennings

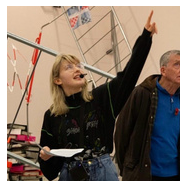
"Children's sickness and health: the experience of late Victorian and Edwardian Harrogate"

8th April, 7PM-8:30PM

The fear of the illness and possibly premature death of a child was an ever-present source of worry to Victorian and Edwardian parents. This talk explores those themes through Harrogate's schools, looking at the state schools attended by the working classes and the private schools of the middle classes. The talk will examine the range of sickness to which children succumbed, the reasons for it and efforts to improve the situation.



<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FUJJ>



Drop In by Emily Holmes

"Object 'Show & Tell' with Harrogate Museums"

10th April, 10:30AM-3:00PM

Join the Curator of the Mercer Art Gallery and the Royal Pump Rooms to get up close and personal with objects held in North Yorkshire Council's Harrogate Museum Collection. This wide-ranging collection contains everything from archaeology, 19th century costume, spa heyday memorabilia, contemporary art, and all things in between! Come and meet the curator to discover some curious items, normally hidden away in the collection store, and learn how these objects came to be in Harrogate.



Guided Walk by Harry Satloka

"Harrogate's Spa Heritage"

11th & 25th April, 3:30-5:00PM

Harry describes himself as barely a historian let alone a medical professional, but he can tell a good story. He would be delighted to celebrate 200 years of the first hospital in Harrogate and the millions who have sought out "the cure" in our beautiful Spa town over than time... and some who wish they hadn't!

Starts at the Cenotaph near Bettys, finishing at West Park Centre, with tea and cake to follow.

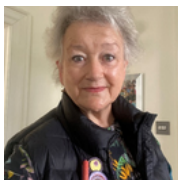


11th - <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXLA>

25th - <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FXMD>

Free event. No booking necessary.

Health In Harrogate: 200 Years - Events Calendar



Stories of Royal Bath Hospital

"200-year anniversary of the first hospital in Harrogate the Bath hospital"

15th April, 7PM-8:30PM

Peter Holmes, civil servant, and Fiona Evard, retired physiotherapist, will lead a presentation with former staff of the Royal Bath Hospital bringing the hospital's history to life. With contributions from Dr Mike Martin, Carmel Duff and other staff.



<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FUJU>



Harrogate Dramatic Society

"A Healthy Miscellany"

17th & 18th April, 7PM-8:30PM

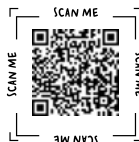
The Harrogate Dramatic Society will entertain with an evening of readings from plays, poems and other writings on the general theme of wellbeing in Harrogate and beyond.

17th April



<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FVQI>

18th April



<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FVQM>



Talk by Dr Peter Hammond

"1922+ : from insulin to the artificial pancreas - searching for a cure for type 1 diabetes"

22nd April, 7PM-8:30PM

Peter Hammond, consultant endocrinologist, will talk about the history of treatment for type 1 diabetes. From ketotic diets, through the discovery of insulin to closed-loop insulin delivery systems and future developments.



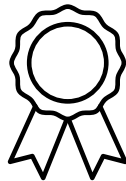
<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FUPW>

Schools Competition and Awards Ceremony

Come and join us to celebrate the winners of the **primary and secondary schools' competition** with special guest, The Mayor of Harrogate, Councillor, Chris Aldred.

On the day, there will be a talk from **Dr Jed Atkinson**, Education Officer at the Royal Pump Room Museum. A doctor of geology, Jed explores the intersection between earth sciences and social history. He is also part of the Fossils in t' Hills team, sharing stories of local geo-heritage.

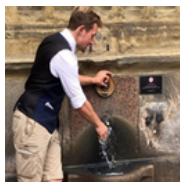
For over 450 years people have been "taking the waters" at Harrogate in the hope of curing a wide range of ailments. Unlike the fresh, clean springs we might expect, Harrogate's waters are often foul-smelling and rich in salt, sulphur and iron. Visitors were prescribed different waters much like medicines from a GP, helping Harrogate become a renowned centre for healing and wellbeing. In this talk, we explore what is really in these waters, why Harrogate has 88 different springs, and what lies beneath the town.



Supported by
**Harrogate Brigantes
Rotary** 
from the Dennis Smith Legacy Fund

Location: West Park Centre, Corner of Victoria Avenue, Harrogate, HG1 1EQ
Date: Saturday 18th April 2026, 3:00PM-4:00PM Talk and 4:00PM-5:00PM Awards
No pre-booking necessary

Health In Harrogate: 200 Years - Events Calendar



Talk by Harry Satloka
"Harrogate's Spa Heritage"

29th April, 7PM-8:30PM

Harry describes himself as barely a historian let alone a medical professional, but he can tell a good story. He would be delighted to celebrate 200 years of the first hospital in Harrogate and the millions who have sought out "the cure" in our beautiful Spa town over than time... and some who wish they hadn't!



<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FUQC>



**Sarah Devonald, Andrew Hitchen
and Dr Paul Jennings**
**"Sound Health - the music of
Harrogate's Spa, Stray and
Streets"**

2nd May , 7PM-8:30PM

In the 100 years leading up to the Second World War Harrogate was known for its cures, green spaces and elegance. But what was music's role in the town and how might it have promoted health and wellbeing, not only for its many rich visitors but also for the working people who served them?

Social historian Dr Paul Jennings, Concerts Director Andrew Hitchen and BBC Radio 3's Sarah Devonald take us through some of the musical highlights of Harrogate's heyday as a spa town, illustrated with plenty of music, stories and images of times gone by.



<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FWK0>



Talk by Professor Paul Emery
**"Rheumatology advances
through the ages"**

13th May, 7PM-8:30PM

Over the past 200 years, rheumatology has changed dramatically. In the 1800s, treatment mainly focused on relieving pain and resting because little was known about these conditions. In the 1900s, better understanding led to anti-inflammatory drugs, steroids, and medicines like methotrexate, as well as improved imaging and diagnosis. More recently, biologic and targeted treatments have greatly improved outcomes, helping people stay active.



<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FWKL>

What Else Is Happening Around Harrogate?

Locations

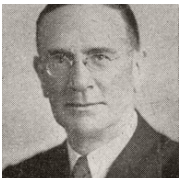


The **Royal Pump Room Museum** explores Harrogate's unique spa history, from its early 16th century beginnings to its prosperous Edwardian heyday, and eventual decline as a destination spa.

Visitors interested in Harrogate's heritage are encouraged to visit the Pump Room to explore this remarkable story in more detail. Contact museumseharrogate.gov.uk.



Harrogate & District NHS Foundation Trust will be hosting two **Open Days** on **Friday the 8th of May** and **Wednesday the 20th of May** between **10am** and **4pm** for those interested in finding out more about our local hospitals, past and present. Join us in our newly refurbished Herriot's learning space to speak to teams about the work they do and how you can get involved, as a Trust member, volunteer or by working for us. We look forward to welcoming all members of the public who are interested in finding out more about the services we run. Our restaurant adjacent to the learning space will be open all day for hot and cold refreshments. Please contact hdf.membership@nhs.net to confirm if you would like to attend.



During the exhibition period we hope to unveil our latest **heritage plaque** to commemorate Dr Wilfrid Edgecombe. He qualified as a doctor in 1893 and came to Harrogate in 1894. In 1932 he was instrumental in the foundation of Harrogate General Hospital. He was twice president of the Harrogate Medical Society and three times President of the Harrogate Club. He served as a Harrogate Borough Councillor between 1919-1932 and was Justice of the Peace. Fittingly he was described as "perhaps the last of the Spa Physicians". It will be located at Craven Lodge, Victoria Avenue where he lived from 1931-1945.



Harrogate Library will host a small display of information and photographs on the theme of "Health in Harrogate", created using resources from their archive. Contact harrogate.library@northyorks.gov.uk.

The local studies section is a treasure trove of information. With a library card, visitors can also access Ancestry, Find My Past, and the British Newspaper Archive for free on library computers.

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Thank You

A huge thank you to all organisations and societies that have dedicated time to supporting this programme of events: the Harrogate Medical Society, West Park Centre, the Harrogate Civic Society, Harrogate & District NHS Foundation Trust, Harrogate Hospital Community Charity, Harrogate Hospital Radio, the Harrogate Dramatic Society, Harry Satloka, and all our guest event speakers and societies.

A special mention to our wonderful donors Harrogate Brigantes Rotary Club, Prosperis Financial Consultant, Dr Scott Green, Mr and Mrs Leinhardt, Mr James Ellis, Harrogate Spring Water and the Fat Badger Group.

All money raised from the events will go to support St Michael's Hospice Harrogate.

Spa Today



The Crown Hotel in Harrogate has a rich history, evolving from an inn established around 1740 by Joseph Thackwray into a cornerstone of Harrogate's spa town heritage. Today, the hotel continues the town's tradition of hospitality and wellness, blending historic grandeur with modern comfort. Rooted in the origins of Harrogate's spa waters, The Crown Hotel offers a peaceful sanctuary designed to support relaxation, stress relief and overall wellbeing – honouring the town's iconic spa legacy for today's guests.



The DoubleTree by Hilton Harrogate Majestic Hotel & Spa is a grand Victorian hotel situated in the heart of the picturesque spa town, Harrogate. With a rich history dating back to its opening in 1900, The Majestic offers a regal retreat for guests seeking luxury and comfort. With 184 elegantly appointed guest bedrooms, acclaimed dining experiences including the Carters Champagne Bar & Grill and Fredericks Lounge & Terrace, 15 beautiful event spaces and the luxurious Harrogate Spa. A haven of relaxation, the premium spa facilities feature an inviting indoor heated swimming pool, a fully equipped Technogym, thermal experiences, indulgent ESPA treatments and a lounge bar opening onto a tranquil outdoor terrace and Zen garden with a hot tub. The Majestic embraces Harrogate's spa legacy, bringing over a century of elegance and wellness to its guests.

All donations collected during exhibition opening hours will go to West Park Centre. All refreshments to be provided by West Park Centre.

Scan the QR code for details on West Park Centre accessibility and parking. Email administrator@harrogatemedicalsociety.co.uk with any questions.

