



YORK MEDICAL SOCIETY

Oration 2021

We were very privileged to have an excellent oration from Dr Heather Bonney on the afternoon of 2nd October 2021. Heather is Principal Curator of Human Remains and Anthropology at the Natural History Museum and is in charge of 27,000 of our ancestors, with all the ethical implications that this implies. Heather was our orator this year's public meeting and gave a fascinating exposition of what it is to be a forensic archaeologist. She described several of the complex assessments that she has been involved in including the attempts to identify the body of Richard III from a Leicester car park. She described how it is not uncommon for the media to pick and choose from scientists' words, and to reach their own conclusions before the scientific work has been completed. She also gave some interesting insights into a range of important figures from history and the ways in which forensic archaeology have helped to understand their potential remains. This has included Beethoven, Alfred the Great, Louis XIV, St John the Baptist, the Princes in the Tower and others. There was universal agreement that this had been an excellent oration.

We have a number of other excellent talks coming up over the year including an expert volcanologist, the Queen's previous obstetrician and many others; on the 15th October we will be hearing from Prof Malcolm Alison who will be examining our understanding of stem cells and their contribution to medicine. In particular he will look at the public myths that exist around them and shine a light on the scientific reality as it unfolds. We hope that you will be able to join us.

Professor Barry Wright
York Medical Society President