Freud the Physician
Monday 2 February – Saturday 25 April 2015
FREE ADMISSION

OPENING TIME
Monday – Thursday: 9.00 – 21.00
Friday: 9.00 – 17.30
Saturday: 10.00 – 16.30
Admission free. Open to all.
The Library, Royal Society of Medicine, 1 Wimpole Street, London, W1G 0AE
Tube: Oxford Circus or Bond Street
This exhibition on “Freud the Physician”, curated jointly by the Royal Society of Medicine Library and by the Freud Museum, London, explores and celebrates the pre-psychoanalytical career of Sigmund Freud.

“I was decidedly negligent in pursuing my medical studies, and it was not until 1881 that I took my somewhat belated degree as a Doctor of Medicine.”

Long before Dr. Sigmund Freud coined the term psychoanalysis in 1896 and developed a profound new body of psychological theory and technique, he had already distinguished himself as a young scientific researcher and physician. Between 1876 and 1895, Freud made numerous contributions to various branches of medicine and biology, including, physiology, anatomy, histology, anaesthetics, paediatrics, and neurology.

As early as 1876, aged only twenty years, Sigismund Freud began his internship as a “Famulus” [servant or attendant] in the Physiologische Institut of the Universität Wien, apprenticed to the legendary Professor Ernst Wilhelm von Brücke. Shortly before his twenty-first birthday, the young Freud succeeded in publishing his research on the histology of the spinal ganglion of the Petromyzon Planeri (or sea lamprey) in the proceedings of the Kaisserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Vienna. Thereafter, he developed staining techniques using gold chloride, which permitted microscopists to study cell and tissue samples with greater visual clarity. Freud also explored the anaesthetising properties of cocaine; and furthermore, he undertook important new research on the aphasias and on various aspects of paediatric neurology.
Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)
Uber den Ursprung der hinteren Nervenwurzeln im Ruckenmark von Ammocoetes (Petromyzon Planeri).

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)
Notiz über eine Methode zur anatomischen Preparation des Nervensystems.
Zentralblatt fur die medizinischen Wissenschaften. 1879; 17: 468 – 469.

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)
Uber den Bau der Nervenfasern und Nervenzellen beim Flusskrebs.

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)
Eine neue Methode zum Studium des Faserverlaufs im Centralnervensystem.

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)
A new histological method for the study of nerve-tracts in the brain and spinal chord.
“The laboratory (at the Salpetriere) was not at all adapted to the reception of an extraneous worker, and such space and resources as existed were made inaccessible owing to lack of any kind of organization. I thus found myself obliged to give up anatomical work and rest content with a discovery concerned with the relations of the nuclei of the posterior column in the medulla oblongata. Later, however, I had an opportunity of resuming some similar investigations with Dr. von Darkschewitsch (of Moscow); and our collaboration led to a publication in the *Neurologisches Centralblatt* (1886, 5, 212), bearing the title 'Über die Beziehung des Strickkorpers zum Hinterstrang und Hinterstrangskern nebst Bemerkingen über zwei Felder der Oblongata.'

**Sigmund Freud. Report on my studies in Paris and Berlin (October, 1885 – end of March, 1886). In: The standard edition of the complete**

“I now became as active a worker in the Institute of Cerebral Anatomy as I had previously been in the physiological one. Some short papers upon the course of the tracts and the nuclear origins in the medulla oblongata date from these hospital years, and some notice was taken of my findings by Edinger.”

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)
Ein Fall von Hirnblutung mit indirekten basalen Herd-symptomen bei Scorbut.
*Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift. 1884; 34: 244*

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)
Zur Kenntnis der Olivenzwischenschicht.
*Neurologisches Zentralblatt. 1885; 4: 268*

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)
Ein Fall von Muskelatrophie mit ausgebreiteten Sensibilitätssorungen (Syringomyelie).
*Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift. 1885; 35: 389*

Ludwig Edinger (1855 – 1918)
Twelve lectures on the structure of the central nervous system.
2nd rev. ed. With 133 illustrations. Tr. by Willis Hall Vittum ... Ed. by C. Eugene Riggs.
Translation of Zwölf Vorlesungen über den Bau der nervösen Centralorgane.

Albert Villaret (1847 – 1911)
Handwoerterbuch der gesamten Medizin.
Stuttgart : F. Enke, 1888-91
*Sigmund Freud’s unsigned article on cerebral anatomy and on aphasia appeared in this important medical reference work.*

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)
Über einem Fall von hysterischer Coxalgie aus traumatischer Ursache beim einem Manne.
*Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift. 1886; 36: 711-
Sigmund Freud’s translation of Professor Jean-Martin Charcot’s clinical lessons, two chapters of which appeared in the Wiener Medizinische Wochenschrift, one on 15 May 1886, and the other, a week later, on 22 May.

**Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)**
L’Heredite et l’etiologie des nevroses.
On page 166 of this paper, the word “psycho-analyse” appears in print for the very first time.

**Josef Breuer (1842 – 1925) & Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)**
Studien über Hysterie.
Leipzig : F. Deuticke, 1895.
“The foundation of psychoanalysis. Using what they called the cathartic method, in which hysterical patients were made to describe the manifestations of their symptoms in detail, with or without hypnosis, Breuer and Freud were successful in providing the patients with temporary relief from symptoms. Breuer chose not to continue research on these patients. However, Freud, who had studied hypnosis with Charcot, as well as the psychotherapeutic methods of Liebault and Bernheim, used this work as the basis for development of the method of free association, and the essential psychoanalytic concepts of the unconscious, repression and transference.”


**Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)**
Freud’s paper on hysterical and motor paralyses, based on his work at the clinic of Professeur Jean-Martin Charcot, and published as “Quelques considerations pour une etude comparative des paralysies motrices organiques et hysteriques” in the

*July 1893 issue of Archives de Neurologie.*
**Hermann Jakob Knapp (1832 – 1911)**
Cocaine and its use in ophthalmic and general surgery.
New York ; London : G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1885.
*This book contains what is, arguably, the first English language reference to the work of Sigmund Freud.*
“Early in 1886 Freud had the experience of meeting in Paris Dr. Knapp, then America’s leading ophthalmologist. In a company of acquaintances

Knapp greeting him as the man who had introduced cocaine to the world, and congratulated him on the achievement. It was a welcome balm.”


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**Hippolyte Bernheim (1840 – 1919)**
De la suggestion et de ses applications à la thérapeutique.
Deuxième édition corr. et augm. avec figures dans le texte.

“With the idea of perfecting my hypnotic technique, I made a journey to Nancy in the summer of 1889 and spent several weeks there. I was a spectator of Bernheim’s astonishing experiments upon his hospital patients, and I received the profoundest impression of the possibility that there could be powerful mental processes which nevertheless remain hidden from the consciousness of men.”

Theodor Billroth (1829 – 1894)

“...in a letter of 29 January 1884 to his fiancee, Freud refers to a medical meeting where he sat behind Theodor Billroth, the surgeon, and Nothnagel, and with ‘outrageous impudence thought to myself: Just wait, the time will come when you will greet me as you now greet the others.’”


Paul Brouardel (1837 – 1906)
La pendaison, la strangulation, la suffocation, la submersion.

“I abandoned my occasional attempts at attending other lectures after I had become convinced that all they had to offer were for the most part well-constructed rhetorical performances. The only exceptions were Professor Brouardel’s forensic autopsies and lectures at the Morgue, which I rarely missed.”

In his preface to a German translation of Bourke’s Scatologic Rites of all Nations, Freud quoted one of Brouardel’s sayings: ‘Les genoux sales sont le signe d’une fille honnette.’ (‘Dirty knees are the sign of a respectable girl.’)

Jean Martin Charcot (1825 – 1893)

“On Tuesdays Charcot held his ‘consultation externe’, at which his assistants brought before him for examination the typical or puzzling cases among the very large number attending the out-patient department...In this way I had an opportunity of seeing a long series of patients, of examining them myself and of hearing Charcot’s opinion on them. But what seems to me to have been of greater value than this positive gain in experience was the stimulus which I received during the five months I spent in Paris from my constant scientific and personal contact with Professor Charcot.”


Charcot’s lectures for the year 1887-1888 were later translated into German by Freud under the title Poliklinische Vortrage and published in Vienna, 1892-4.
**Sigmund Exner (1846 – 1926)**

“Another worker who endeavoured to link nervous function and mental phenomena was Sigmund Exner, student of Brucke and Helmholtz, assistant to the former and eventually his successor, and one of the men whom Freud took as a model when he joined the Physiological Institute. Exner worked on optical physiology, particularly on the retina; on the physiology of voice and speech... and on cerebral physiology, [establishing] that localization in the brain was not sharply defined and that cortical areas tended to overlap.”

George Rosen. Freud and medicine in Vienna. In:
Moriz Kaposi (1837 – 1902)
Ueber den gegenwärtigen Stand der Lehre von der ætiologischen Beziehung kleinster Organismen (Micrococcus) zu den Infectionskrankheiten.
Wien, 1874.
Freud worked with Kaposi investigating the electrical resistance of the skin.

Max Kassowitz
Vorlesungen über Kinderkrankheiten im Alter der Zahnung.
Leipzig und Wien : F. Deuticke, 1892.
“In 1885 Freud took charge of the neurological department of Kassowitz’s Children’s Clinic. The important work he did there on infantile paralysis belongs to his neurological productions.”


Theodor Meynert (1833 – 1892)
Wien : Wilhelm Braumüller, 1884.
“The great Meynert in whose footsteps I had trodden with such deep veneration.”

Freud accepted Theodor Meynert’s invitation to work with him at the Laboratory for Cerebral Anatomy and did so from 1883 to 1886, but declined Meynert’s suggestion that he take over his university lectures on brain anatomy.
Hermann Nothnagel (1841 – 1905)
Beiträge zur Physiologie und Pathologie des Darmes.
Berlin : A. Hirschwald, 1884.

“On October 4 1882 Freud called on the great Nothnagel, bearing an introductory letter from Meynert. Nothnagel had just arrived in Vienna from Germany to occupy the Chair of Medicine. The influence of a man in that position was very great, and Freud rightly surmised that his future career would depend very much on Nothnagel’s grace. Nothnagel had two Assistants. There was a vacancy, but it was already promised. So Freud asked him if he might function in his department as an ‘Aspirant’, roughly the position of our ‘Clinical assistant’, until he could be appointed a Sekundararzt. Meynert spoke again to Nothnagel in his favour, and Freud thus entered his Clinic as Aspirant on October 12, 1882. He was then given a nominal salary.”


Carl Freiherrn von Rokitansky (1804 – 1878)
Die Defecte der Scheidewände des Herzens : pathologisch-anatomische Abhandlung, mit 50 chromoxylographirten Abbildungen.

Wien : W. Braumüller, 1875.

“It was with a jest that the great Rokitansky replied to the question of what were the professions of his four sons: ‘Two heilen [heal] and two heulen [howl]’ (two doctors and two singers).”

**Ernst Wilhelm von Brücke (1819 – 1892)**


“My revered teacher, Professor von Brucke.”


Von Brucke was Professor of Physiology, and Director of the Institute of Physiology, Vienna, in which Freud had worked from 1876 to 1882.

“At length, in Ernst Brucke’s physiological laboratory, I found rest and satisfaction – and men, too, whom I could respect and take as my models: the great Brucke himself, and his assistants Sigmund Exner and Ernst von Fleischl-Marxow.”

“Brucke gave me a problem to work out in the histology of the nervous system; I succeeded in solving it to his satisfaction and in carrying the work further on my own account.”

“The subject which Brucke had proposed for my investigations had been the spinal cord of one of the lowest of the fishes (Ammocoetes Petromyzon); and I now passed on to the human nervous system.”

**Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939)**

“He boyishly asked me if it meant that he could now put a row of letters after his name, such as H.F.R.S.M.”


In 1935 Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, was awarded Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Society of Medicine. Shown in the exhibition are two letters and a postcard written by Freud to thank the Society for bestowing this honour upon him.

The first letter, dated 25th May 1935, reads in translation: “The news that the Royal Society of Medicine has unanimously elected me as an Honorary fellow gives me great pleasure and personal satisfaction. I can appreciate this great honour as I should. For many years my scientific work found no recognition among physicians. In the honour I am receiving from the Royal Society of Medicine I see a sign that psychoanalysis, which I have practised and recommended, can no longer escape recognition by the medical world.”
The second letter is dated 20th June 1935 and was written by Freud in response to receiving the Diploma of Honorary Fellowship of the Society. The Secretary General of the RSM had remarked that “we were the more delighted to confer upon you (this honour) in that it coincided with the celebration of your birthday. Therefore, on sending this Diploma may I add my good wishes that you have many happy years.”

Freud replied: “I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of the beautiful diploma which makes me an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. I found the birthday wishes which you added particularly kind. It was my 79th which coincided with this great honour.”

Three years later on 6th June 1938 Freud arrived in London where he took up residence.