



Figure 2 A small penis plus testicles made of pewter that can be worn dangling from the wrist cuff. Photograph author's own

stone and even on the edge of some seats in church. Great fun, when you know what you are looking for and if you consider that some Christian services lasted for 3 hours and people were obliged to attend. Perhaps these artisans were offering a humorous service too?

Symbols of desire

During the frustrating medieval days of 'Courtly Love' the man and woman were supposed to pine and wax lyrical, being able only to glance at those they desired without ever touching, except perhaps in a dance. This concept of pure knights and sighing damsels had cult status in England at one time in honour of the legend of King Arthur and also became fashionable in foreign courts such as in France. The result was a large quantity of art born out of pure frustration and no doubt given to those desired as a symbol of unrequited love. Many of these pieces tell passionate

tales with black humour, such as the chest made in Berne in Switzerland showing a woman grating a man's heart and another with a man covered in arrow quills as if martyred by a woman's rejection of him.

What we can't tell is if the artisans concerned were briefed in each case by the client or if they interpreted the passion and sexual desire of humanity. What is sure, however, is that these relics from the past tell brilliant and colourful tales of real lives: the lives of our ancestors in all their ribald glory.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following individuals for their help and advice: Professor R Arnott, Director of the Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Birmingham Medical School, Birmingham and Dr G Williams, British Museum, London, UK.

Bibliography

- 1 Camille, Michael. *The Medieval Art of Love: Objects and Subjects of Desire*. London, UK: Laurence King Publishing, 1998.
- 2 McDonald, Nicola (ed.). *Medieval Obscenities*. York, UK: York Medieval Press, 2006.
- 3 Haynes, Alan. *Sex in Elizabethan England*. Stroud, UK: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1997.
- 4 Herman, Eleanor. *Sex With Kings*. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2004.

About the Author

Lesley Smith is currently a postgraduate student in the Centre for the History of Medicine of the University of Birmingham, where she is developing a PhD in obstetrics and gynaecology in early modern Britain. She holds an honorary degree for "services to history". She makes 200–300 public appearances a year and also works as a TV historian in the UK and abroad including the USA. Lesley is also Curator of Tutbury Castle and is currently involved with a major research project with the British Museum, which is her excuse for why it is taking her so long to finish her PhD!

MEETINGS AND COURSES

30 January 2009

Title: 4th Annual Scientific Meeting of BASHH and the FSRH: "Building Bridges and Forging Relationships". **Venue:** RCOG, London, UK. **Details:** Topics include: sexual behaviour in young people; updating on HPV and the chlamydia national screening programmes. **Accreditation:** FSRH and RCP applied for. **Information:** Cathy Taylor, Conference Office, c/o Palm Training Ltd, 6 Foinavon Close, Rowley Regis, West Midlands B65 8QB, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 1384 235207. E-mail: palmtraining@tesco.net.

7 March 2009

Title: Northern Interbranch – Spring Update. **Venue:** Holiday Inn, Wakefield Road, Garforth, Leeds LS25 1LH, UK. **Details:** Speakers: Dr John Lee – Men's bits & bobs: some diagnostic and management challenges; Dr Sue Stillwell – Informed consent for IUD/S fitting: are we getting it right? and Dr Okimiyomibo Graham – Cultural and religious beliefs: impact on sexual and reproductive health care. **Accreditation:** 1 hour IUD/S, 3 hours. **Information:** Dr Jennifer Manuel, 28 The Spinney, Moortown, Leeds LS17 6SP, UK. E-mail: jennifer.manuel@nhs.net.

7 March 2009

Title: North West Society of Sexual and Reproductive Health Care. **Venue:** The Centre, Birchwood, Warrington, UK. **Details:** 10.00am–4.00pm. Morning session: an update on intrauterine contraception, chlamydia screening, osteoporosis and long-acting progestogens. Afternoon session: psychosexual medicine: an interactive session. **Accreditation:** FSRH applied for. **Information:** Mrs Linda Sloan, Course Organiser, 5 Redhouse Lane Ecclestone, Chorley, Lancs PR7 5RH, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 1257 453665. E-mail: lindasloan5@btinternet.com.

11–13 March 2009

Title: DFSRH Theory Course organised by Kirkcaldy & Levenmouth Community Health Partnership. **Details:** See display advertisement on page 67.

27–29 April 2009

Title: DFSRH Course. **Venue:** London, UK. **Details:** A 3-day course suitable for doctors wishing to obtain the Diploma of the FSRH (of the RCOG). The course is also suitable for updating family planning doctors. **Accreditation:** FSRH applied for. **Information:** Grace Gray, Training Administrator, Sexual & Reproductive Health Training Partnership, Southwark PCT, Artesian Health Centre, 138 Grange Road, Bermondsey, London SE1 3GF, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 20 3049 7949. Fax: +44 (0) 20 3049 7940. E-mail: srhttp@southwarkpct.nhs.uk.

11–12 May 2009

Title: Loc Med. **Venue:** Welsh Institute for Women's Health, Cardiff Medicentre, Heath Park, Cardiff, UK. **Details:** Applications are invited from Diplomates of the Faculty of Sexual and Reproductive Health who are actively involved in contraception and reproductive health care, equivalent to 100 sessions in the past year. **Accreditation:** MED09/02. **Information:** Mrs Deborah Jenkins, Welsh Institute for Women's Health, Cardiff Medicentre, University Hospital of Wales, Heath Park, Cardiff CF14 4UJ, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 29 2075 8587. E-mail: wiwhdeb@btinternet.com.

15 May 2009

Title: Update in Women's Health. **Venue:** Centre for Life, Times Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4EP, UK. **Details:** Open to all doctors, nurses and health care staff working in or with an interest in contraception. **Accreditation:** FSRH applied for

(6 hours). **Information:** Dr Margaret Hogarth or Mrs Deborah Crudace, Newcastle Contraception and Sexual Health Service, Newcastle General Hospital, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE4 6BE, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 191 219 5239. Fax: +44 (0) 191 219 5232. E-mail: margaret.hogarth@newcastle-pct.nhs.uk or deborah.crudace@newcastle-pct.nhs.uk.

21–22 May 2009

Title: FSRH Annual Scientific Meeting. **Details:** See display advertisement on page 68.

16–19 May 2009

Title: 8th European Menopause Conference. **Details:** See advertisement on inside back cover.

22–24 June 2009

Title: DFSRH Course. **Venue:** London, UK. **Details:** A 3-day course suitable for doctors wishing to obtain the Diploma of the FSRH (of the RCOG). The course is also suitable for updating family planning doctors. **Accreditation:** FSRH applied for. **Information:** Grace Gray, Training Administrator, Sexual & Reproductive Health Training Partnership, Southwark PCT, Artesian Health Centre, 138 Grange Road, Bermondsey, London SE1 3GF, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 20 3049 7949. Fax: +44 (0) 20 3049 7940. E-mail: srhttp@southwarkpct.nhs.uk.

1–3 July 2009

Title: DFSRH Theory Course. **Venue:** Britannia Stadium, Stanley Matthews Way, Stoke on Trent ST4 4EG, UK. **Accreditation:** DFSRH Modules 1–6 applied for. **Information:** Michelle Broomhall, Medical Secretary, Piccadilly Centre, 59 Piccadilly, Hanley, Stoke on Trent ST1 1HR, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 1782 425962. Fax: +44 (0) 1782 425965. E-mail: Michelle.Broomhall@stoke.nhs.uk.