

The Medical World of Early Modern England, Wales and Ireland, 1500-1715:  
Working Paper Two

## **John Houghton and Medical Practice in William Rose's London**

Jonathan Barry

Centre for Medical History  
University of Exeter  
[j.barry@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:j.barry@exeter.ac.uk)

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During the two decades before the Lords' judgement in the case of William Rose (1704), the best-known apothecary in England was surely John Houghton (1645-1705).<sup>1</sup> Houghton's fame rested not on his career as an apothecary, nor on his (limited) involvement in the politics of the Society of Apothecaries, but on his pioneering writings advocating 'improvement'. He was an active Fellow of the Royal Society from 1680, though he left no scientific legacy (his major published paper is on the history of coffee: though it contains a chemical analysis of the beans, it is famous because it discusses early coffee houses in London, suggesting that William Harvey was the first regular coffee-drinker in England).<sup>2</sup> But he was most notable for his journalism. His 1677 tract, *England's Great Happiness*, was an innovative defence of consumerism and economic growth, while his two periodical series (1681-5 and 1692-1703), each concerning 'the improvement of husbandry and trade' have long been considered ground-breaking both in their provision of economic information and in their advertising of goods and services.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Anita McConnell, 'Houghton, John (1645–1705)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/article/13868>]. Harold J. Cook, 'Rose, William (fl. 1693–1705)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/article/57249>] usefully summarises id., 'The Rose Case Reconsidered', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 45 (1990), 527–55 and id., *The Decline of the Old Medical Regime in Stuart London* (1986): Houghton is never mentioned by Cook in his book and his publications are not cited.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Hunter, *The Royal Society and its Fellows 1660-1700* (BSHS Monographs 4, 1982); John Houghton, 'A Discourse of Coffee', *Philosophical Transactions* 256 (1699): 311-17

<sup>3</sup> Paul Slack, 'The Politics of Consumption and England's Happiness in the Later Seventeenth Century', *English Historical Review* CXXII:497 (2007): 609-631; id., *The Invention of Improvement* (Oxford, 2015), esp. pp. 142-53; R.B. Walker, 'Advertising in London Newspapers 1650-1750', *Business History* 15 (1973):112-30; Natasha Glaisyer, 'Readers, Correspondents and Communities', in A. Shepard and P. Withington (eds), *Communities in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 235-52; id., *The Culture of Commerce in England 1660-1720* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 145-55; Michael Harris, "Exchanging Information: Print and Business at the Royal Exchange in the Late Seventeenth Century," in Ann Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange* (1997); id., 'Timely Notices: The Uses of Advertising and its Relationship to News during the Late Seventeenth Century', *Prose Studies* 21:2 (1998): 141-56; id., 'Printed Advertisements : some variations in their use around 1700' in Robin Myers et al. (eds), *Books for Sale* (2009), pp. 53-65; id., 'The Information Business: John Houghton F.R.S. and serial publication around 1700', Friday 27 March 2009 talk at the Royal Society to be found at: <https://royalsociety.org/events/2009/john-houghton/>.

Yet curiously Houghton's expertise as an apothecary, and the light his work might throw on medical practice, have been completely ignored.<sup>4</sup> This may reflect doubts over how far Houghton practised as an apothecary: various historians have labelled him a journalist or dealer in tea, coffee and other goods.<sup>5</sup> Yet Houghton was a properly-trained apothecary, apprenticed 6 February 1663 to Nathaniel Upton (master of the city pesthouse in 1665), became a member of the Society in 1672, served on its Court of Assistants, and took 6 apprentices between 1673 and 1690. He achieved reasonable prosperity, being taxed at the higher band (of those with £600 in personal estate) under the 1695 Marriage Duty, whereas his journalism probably lost money.<sup>6</sup> When he gave up his periodical he stated: 'since besides my trade of an Apothecary, wherein I have always been, and still am, diligent) [sic] I have fallen to the selling of coffee, tea and chocolate in some considerable degree, I cannot, without great inconvenience to my private affairs, which must not be neglected, spare the time to carry on this history as well as I would do.'<sup>7</sup> True, he traded in many items beyond drugs and offered other services, but such diversification was typical of apothecaries in this period: many dealt in oils and colours for example.<sup>8</sup>

This paper reveals what we can learn about medical practice in London from Houghton's *A Collection for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, a one- or two-

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<sup>4</sup> Two short articles appeared in *Pharmaceutical Historian* (2:3 (Dec.1971): 5-6 and 9:1 (Apr.1979): 2-3), the latter by D.T. O'Rourke. Juanita Burnby, *A Study of the English Apothecary from 1660 to 1760* (Medical History Supplement no 3, 1983) makes four brief references to 'Houghton', but only to his journalism and Royal Society work. Houghton's *Collection* is cited regularly in Nancy Cox and Karin Dannehl, *Dictionary of Traded Goods and Commodities, 1550-1820* (Wolverhampton, 2007), online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/traded-goods-dictionary/1550-1820/>.

<sup>5</sup> Hunter, *Royal Society*, p. 222; E.J. Furdell, *Publishing and Medicine in Early Modern England* (Rochester, NY, 2002) p. 136 (Furdell relies on Walker's article); Markman Ellis, *The Coffeeshouse* (2004), p. 146. B. Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee* (New Haven, 2008), p. 175 wrongly suggests he only became an apothecary when his journalism had failed (two years before his death).

<sup>6</sup> McConnell, 'Houghton'; D.V. Glass (ed.), *London Inhabitants within the Walls 1695* (London Record Society, 2, 1966), p. 155. Cook, *Decline*, p. 49 notes that about half the 30 apothecaries identified by occupation in the 1695 list paid at this higher rate. I owe the apprenticeship information to the kindness of Patrick Wallis

<sup>7</sup> *A Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade* (1692-1703), 24.9.1703. Hereafter I shall simply give the date for each reference to this series, in this form. I have used the 1969 facsimile edition by Gregg International Publishers. The text of Houghton's editorials was reproduced in R. Bradley (ed.), *A Collection for Improvement of Husbandry and Trade* (4 vols, 1727-8), but not the advertisements.

<sup>8</sup> Houghton also had other sources of income. Mark Jenner notes his investment in his brother Thomas's waterworks company between 1693 and 1703 in P. Griffiths and M. Jenner (eds), *Londonopolis* (Manchester, 2000), p. 271 n. 119.

sheet periodical which ran (almost continuously) from March 1692 to September 1703. Its scale and format shifted significantly: initially one sheet costing 2d twice a week, it relaunched (after a half-year break) in January 1693 as a Friday weekly for 1d, rising to two sheets in July 1693 but reducing again to one in April 1697.<sup>9</sup> Its two stable features were an editorial letter by Houghton (informing his readership about an aspect of husbandry or trade) and a large table of commodity prices around England with London financial information (including 10 'drugg' prices from April 1693 to November 1697).<sup>10</sup> The editorial gradually became a serial natural history, considering in turn the mineral, vegetable and finally animal kingdoms, epitomising the publications of fellow members of the Royal Society (men such as Evelyn, Ray, Plot and Willis) giving readers the latest scholarship on the nature and uses of objects, and linking these to trade issues by considering the import data for each substance and discussing how far England could either produce the commodity better itself or make more profitable use of it. Houghton frequently discusses how products are used medicinally, offering us an apothecary's perspective on a wide range of health issues. However, Houghton also needed to make his publication pay by taking in advertisements. Initially these took the form typical of other newspapers, namely the sale of books (many medical), patent medicines and other announcements by those with products or services to sell. But increasingly Houghton dropped these in favour of advertising his own services, noting 'I find publishing for others does them kindness'.<sup>11</sup> I discuss later the range of (largely medical) products he could himself supply, but he also offered an information service: 'whoever will buy or hire, sell or let houses, lodgings or estate, want or will put out apprentices, want servants or will go to service; will take or go to board; will put to school or want scholars; or will have anything else enquired of, that is honourable for me to do, may be enter'd in my books for half a crown each; and its probable I may help them'.<sup>12</sup> How accurate the advertisements were is a moot point, but for my purposes they need only offer a plausible indication of the services people might have wanted, and what features Houghton chose to highlight.

I will focus on Houghton's editorials and his information service: his early advertisements for books and patent medicines, though interesting for the range of medical approaches they involved (from learned orthodox works by leading fellows of the College of Physicians, to Paracelsian chemical collections and the medicines

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<sup>9</sup> See Glaisyer, 'Readers', pp. 236-7, but also the printed proposal for the 1693 relaunch at Cambridge University Library (Wing 1627B) not noted by her.

<sup>10</sup> From 11.5.1694 he identifies the following as 'druggs': alum; barley and barley pearl; civet; cerus; oil of turpentine and rape; saffron; yellow and white wax.

<sup>11</sup> 21.2.1696

<sup>12</sup> 10.9.1703. This is the final version: similar statements had appeared for many years.

and ephemerides of an astrological physician) reinforce the conclusions of other historians studying medical advertisements rather than constituting a novel source.<sup>13</sup> Although his readers presumably included fellow medical practitioners (for example on 7 June 1695 he observes 'I find several barbers think it in their interest to take in these papers, and I believe the rest will when they understand them'), they were not Houghton's primary audience, whom he termed the 'plain man'.<sup>14</sup> No woman's opinion is ever cited and he never targeted any service specifically at women, though he does advertise some women's services in childcare and nursing, and one housekeeper 'that is rarely accomplished, understanding distillery, preserving, cooking, dressing, chirurgery etc'.<sup>15</sup> We have the opportunity to see a male medical practitioner describe the world in lay terms. Significantly, Houghton made no effort to engage directly in the controversies raging about medical practice in London between and within the ranks of the physicians and apothecaries.<sup>16</sup> He may have thought the public would not be interested, or did not wish to alienate any potential readers, or wished to sustain the apparent impartiality on non-scientific matters boasted by the Royal Society, or perhaps he was genuinely not concerned with these medical politics. If anything, his other comments suggest a willingness to accept the traditional subordination of the apothecary to the physician, since he frequently cites admiringly the works of learned physicians such as Willis, and refers his readers for fuller details to the 'physical books' or the 'dispensatories'. Houghton is certainly not another Culpeper seeking to liberate his lay readers from dependence on medical professionals. Significantly, he never mentions astrological remedies or

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<sup>13</sup> For the most recent discussions see: Louise Curth, 'Medical Advertising in the Popular Press' in id., (ed.), *From Physick to Pharmacology* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 29-48; Mary Fissell, 'The Marketplace of Print' in M. Jenner and P. Wallis (eds), *Medicine and its Market in England and its Colonies c.1450-1850* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 108-32; and Harris's articles in n.3.

<sup>14</sup> In his November 1691 proposal for the publication, Houghton listed various potential readerships including: 'And farther for the benefit of physicians, apothecaries, and others that are desirous to know the state of health at London; as also for the political arithmeticians that desire to know the Increase and decrease of places; 'tis still designed to give weekly an account of the several parts of the Bills of Mortality of London.' But the much briefer version of this prospectus in his first issue did not list any specific interested parties. He did present data from the Bills initially, noting 6 causes of death, namely 'aged; fever; gripings; small-pox; spot. fever; teeth' but replaced them from 11.5.1694 by stock market prices.

<sup>15</sup> 12.2.1698. Patricia Crawford, 'Printed advertisements for women medical practitioners in London 1670-1711', *SSHM Bulletin* 34 (1984): 66-70

<sup>16</sup> See Cook references in note 1. The *List of the Liverymen of the 56 Companies of London* (1701), p. 5 includes Houghton among the apothecaries, but he had not polled at the recent parliamentary election. For his earlier politics see below n. 49

considerations in his own comments. On 16 August 1695, discussing urine, he questions those who 'have pretended to tell all diseases by it', noting 'this latter age has been much more modest, especially those physicians whose parts and learning should enable them to know most. How can any man know the disease by the colour of the urine, when they do not know the cause of the colour itself'. He concludes 'If it be thus, what wise man will trust to the judgement of urines, I know not. Without doubt the best way for any sick person is to have the physician see him: and thereby comparing pulse, urine, colour of the tongue, relation and other circumstances together, he may commonly find out the distemper, altho' sometimes all is too little.'

On 22 March 1695, noting that a 'perfect account' of the nutrition and blood of cattle 'can hardly be written by any but the true physician,' he offers a 'character' of the 'Physicus':

he that understandeth or searcheth out the cause of natural things, or a philosopher, lover of learning or wisdom. Medicus a physician comes from medeor to heal, remedy, cure, help, succour. The first I take to be the means, the last the end of his profession. So then he is not only a physician, philosopher or naturalist, but also a healer, or else he'll hardly deserve his title of physician. Then, in order to healing he well understands the nature of such bodies he is to heal, and this is done by his own most curious observation of what hurts or helps the patient; and not only so, but he knows the observations eminent men have made, and compares them with his own, which prepares him for several cases he never before met with, and confirms him in others. Altho' observation conduces much to this art, yet he well understands anatomy, knowing else he should want a great deal of fit knowledge: for it teaches him the outward and inward parts of animals; the outward, so as to apply employsters, ointments, oils, epithems, fomentations, cataplasms or any thing else proper; the inward, so to order the administration of acids, alkalies, purges, vomits, diaphoreticks, narcoticks, and several other medicines. Understanding all this he is well-vers'd in the nature of the simples whereof his medicines are made, he knows well the outside of minerals, vegetables and animals: also he is a good chymist, and knows the nature of the parts and effects of mixture, whereby in animal bodies shall be destroyed or improved any sort of juice. So that a physician is a great reader to know what has formerly been done, a great observer of what in his time is done, an exquisite anatomist, a curious simpler, an industrious chymist, and well-vers'd in the art of mixture. In short, he is a good philosopher, and of good judgement to compare things with things, and thence draw inferences. This art is chiefly applied to human bodies, but in a large sence its applicable to all animals.

This definition captures the essence of Houghton's approach. Respectful of learned medicine and the ideal of the physician, he also demands a great deal beyond traditional book learning, reflecting the three main challenges to the authority of the Galenic physician in the previous 150 years, namely the need for skills in both anatomy and chemistry and powers of 'observation', all judged by the criterion of empirical effectiveness. These, together with the knowledge of 'simples', made his 'physicus' in effect a general practitioner, combining the skills of physician, surgeon, chemist and apothecary. Late seventeenth-century physicians adopted into orthodox practice those skills and methods which had been associated with their rivals and critics and embraced the experimental approach of the 'new science'.<sup>17</sup> Houghton saw his publication as an extension of the work of the Royal Society, and it was endorsed by 28 leading members, including eminent physicians such as Robert Plot, Edward Tyson, Hans Sloane and Frederick Slare.<sup>18</sup>

Another sign of Houghton's acceptance of the traditional medical hierarchy may be his publication of a list of London medical practitioners on 8 June 1694. As he explained, 'I know by experience that often patients in city and country are at loss what physician to choose, singly and in consultation; and after resolution, where to find them; therefore I'll continue this a while, and afterwards, if desired, for a small charge; and do the like for chirurgeons, attorneys, brokers, stage-coaches, carriers by land or water, or any other shall desire it; and altho' some of it at first will seem strange, yet I am sure after trial will be found useful: for all people of accidental business love it should be known where to find them, and others to have choice and persons they want'. The list he printed was the 1693 membership list of the College of Physicians, divided into Fellows, Candidates, Honorary Fellows and Licentiates, with London street addresses mostly given (or towns for the few provincial Fellows in Shrewsbury, Bath, Exeter, Canterbury, Northampton, Gloucester and Bishop's Stortford). On 15 June he repeated the physicians' list and added one of 34 'free chyrurgeons', presumably surgeons who were freemen of London, adding at the end, 'country physicians or chyrurgeons may be inserted here if they please', though none ever were! On 10 August he put the surgeons in street order and reprinted both lists every few weeks until 8 November 1695. Whether Houghton's decision to guide his readers to consult College physicians was a matter of convenience (he had access to a published list) or reflected support for the College in its attempts to publicise its

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<sup>17</sup> Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in Early Modern English Medicine* (Cambridge, 2000), chs. 9-10.

<sup>18</sup> 30.3.1692

membership (recently enlarged) to prove that they could cater to London's needs, is impossible to judge.<sup>19</sup>

However his advertisements reveal that, whatever the College wanted, there was no simple tripartite division of medicine into physic, surgery and pharmacy. Houghton regularly advertises that if a town wants a medical practitioner, he can supply one. In 3 cases he specifies a physician: 'if any considerable town needs a physician I can help'.<sup>20</sup> Twice he specifies a surgeon: 'If any good town that had lately lost its chirurgeon and wants one, will give me notice, I can supply them with one that has been experienced in the army and divers foreign hospitals, in Paris and elsewhere'.<sup>21</sup> But three times he treats physic and surgery as joint skills: 'I'll give one thanks that will give me an account of a considerable town that wants one who understands physick and chirurgery'; and 'If any considerable town be destitute of a practitioner in physick and chirurgery I would gladly know'.<sup>22</sup> Apothecaries' businesses are discussed later, but two advertisements involve medicine and/or surgery: 'I can inform of a person who will immediately leave his business in the practice of surgery and pharmacy if meet with a person of the same profession who will take his house, shop and give a gratification. Tis well situated and well accustomed'; and 'in a considerable market town about 50 miles from London is an apothecary's house and shop to be let. Tis well-accustomed for medicine and chirurgery, there being employment for 2 servants and the present occupant will if desir'd stay with him 6 or 8 months to bring him into all the business.'<sup>23</sup> That practitioners trained in both physic and surgery is clear from several advertisements: 'one that understands medicine and chirurgery, but is willing to see something of the London practice, desires to be with some able chirurgeon, for which he will give him thanks to content'; 'one that understands physick or chirurgery desires to be a chirurgeon to a

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<sup>19</sup> Cook, *Decline*, pp. 226, 275. The lists gradually reduced in length, with only 29 surgeons named in the final list, 12 original names being replaced by 7 new ones. More drastically, 70 Fellows are named in the first list, but only 44 in the last (28 names disappearing), with the Honorary Fellows falling from 12 to 9, though the licentiates remained at 38 (4 names changed). Of the original 6 candidates, 3 had become Fellows, 2 disappeared and one remained a candidate, together with 3 new candidates. The College's published lists of Fellows in 1694 and 1695 had not recorded reduced numbers, so either certain fellows had objected to appearing in Houghton's lists, or he had decided to omit them.

<sup>20</sup> 30.3.1699. I have only given references for advertisements quoted in the text. Where the date of the advertisement is clear from the text, it is not footnoted separately. Many of Houghton's advertisements appeared for many weeks, even months, but only the first date is given.

<sup>21</sup> 4.8.1699

<sup>22</sup> 5.8.1698; 10.5.1700

<sup>23</sup> 4.12.1696; 28.5.1697. He added to the latter on 18 June 'but he who takes it must understand chirurgery'.



ship or attend some gentleman that desires such: or he would be tutor to some young gentleman in travel'; and 'a genteel young man of about 25, writes well, understands arithmetic and the Latin tongue, and has been several years well exercised in the practices of physick and chirurgery, desires to serve some nobleman or person of quality as clerk, secretary etc, or in any other station above a livery'.<sup>24</sup> Evidently medical practitioners still considered serving in elite households (not necessarily medically) rather than opening a public practice, and other advertisements confirm this: 'A doctor of physick that understands all common learning and French would willingly travel as governour with some noble or gentleman or if desired be with him half or a whole year beforehand'; and 'one of understanding and friends, that has been a chirurgeon at sea and in the army several years, desires some employment such may be thought fit for; or he would wait on a gentleman at home or abroad in a creditable post'.<sup>25</sup>

Houghton included considerably more advertisements relating to surgery than to physic. Occasionally these refer to London practice: 'a house ready furnished and fit for a chirurgeon about £20 the year in one of the principal streets of London, is to be let'.<sup>26</sup> But mostly they refer to ship's surgeons, especially those going to the East or West Indies. On 13 April 1694 Houghton notes 'if any masters of ships want chyrurgeons or chyrurgeon's voyages, I'll strive to help them' and the next year 'one that practised surgery in the country, desires to go to sea, under some other surgeon whose interest he will make it to be'.<sup>27</sup> Occasionally he advertises surgeons themselves: 'if any master of a considerable merchant's ship wants a chirurgeon of good understanding and gravity, about 40 years old and of good esteem and wealth, I can help'.<sup>28</sup> More frequently he reports the availability of or demand for surgeon's mates: 'I want 2 or 3 chirurgeons mates for the East Indies, likewise a barber or two that is not married and has a desire to learn chirurgery; if he can play on musick the better'; 'if any chirurgion of a ship wants a mate, I can help to one who has served a chirurgion of good business four years'; and 'I want an apprentice for a surgeon going to sea in a merchant ship of great force and value, who will bind him at the Hall, and make him free of the company and city, as likewise a mate or two, none dislike the ship or voyage and a barber or two for the same voyage and all other circumstances, which will go to sea'.<sup>29</sup> Nine advertisements solicit potential surgeon's apprentices, and two report boys seeking apprenticeship: 'if a very able

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<sup>24</sup> 26.4.1695; 10.9.1697; 24.9.1697

<sup>25</sup> 16.8.1700; 7.10.1698

<sup>26</sup> 20.9.1695

<sup>27</sup> 9.8.1695

<sup>28</sup> 8.5.1696

<sup>29</sup> 2.12.1698; 13.1.1699; 4.12.1696

chyrurgion wants an apprentice, I can help him'.<sup>30</sup> Occasionally these specify the boy's qualities: 'I want a young man well grown, and a scholar, to be apprenticed to a chirurgeon in a great ship to East India, who will either bind him at Chirurgeon's Hall or take him for the voyage as the parties concerned like or agree'; and 'if any good apothecary or chyrurgion wants an apprentice, with £40 or £20 that is a rare scholar, I can help'.<sup>31</sup> More often they praise the master as 'of very good business, belonging to the Hospital' or 'in a considerable practice' or 'very considerable'.<sup>32</sup> The later advertisements mostly specify a 'sea-chirurgeon', for example 'in a large ship bound for the Streights' or 'bound for the Indies'.<sup>33</sup>

Houghton only once mentions barber-surgeons: 'one that desires to serve a barber-chirurgeon in the suburbs would treat with such an one'.<sup>34</sup> Apart from the two references to barbers on ships, quoted above, he only has one apprenticeship notice: 'I want an apprentice for a barber and perukemaker, of very good business'.<sup>35</sup> Twice he reports such people seeking posts waiting on gentlemen, namely 'one that has been bred a barber' and 'a French refugee that seems of good sense and looks gracefully ... He has been a peruke-maker and can shave curiously' (many others seeking posts as butler's or gentlemen's servants stressed their ability to shave or manage a wig).<sup>36</sup>

Most medical advertisements relate, unsurprisingly, to apothecaries: 20 advertisements for apothecary's apprentices (4 by boys seeking masters) and 5 for 'chymist's' apprentices. Apart from the one quoted above, none specify the boy's qualities, but several praise the master: 'of great trade in a great town in Lincolnshire'; and 'of very good business in a considerable country-town not far from London' (four early advertisements are for 'country' apprentices).<sup>37</sup> One 'apothecary of good business' urgently needed an apprentice, and 'therefore would take one with less than at another time' while another specified he 'will not take under £50'.<sup>38</sup> Two referred to a 'turn-over' (an apprentice who needed a new master to complete his seven-year training), one specifying that he had served five years.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> 3.8.1694

<sup>31</sup> 16.12.1698; 25.9.1696

<sup>32</sup> 12.7.1695; 10.1.1696; 10.4.1702

<sup>33</sup> 13.8.1697; 7.7.1699

<sup>34</sup> 26.4.1695

<sup>35</sup> 14.12.1694

<sup>36</sup> 4.9.1702; 16.6.1699

<sup>37</sup> 9.11.1694; 3.4.96

<sup>38</sup> 27.12.1695; 11.10.1695

<sup>39</sup> 9.3.1699; 28.7.1699

The fullest advertisement states: 'an apothecary that is a Freeman of London and of the Apothecaries Company there, and lives in a good town in Essex, and has the chief business of the town, wants an apprentice'.<sup>40</sup> This leads us to those 19 advertisements that offer businesses or properties for sale/lease, two already quoted when discussing mixed practice. Six others specify businesses in provincial towns, normally giving the county (Kent, Shropshire) or their distance from London. The towns are praised as 'considerable', 'very good' or 'one of the best' and the shop itself 'extraordinarily accustomed'.<sup>41</sup> One advertisement combines all these: 'in less than 24 miles from London in a very considerable market town is an apothecary's house and shop to be let. It stands in the market-place, is well-accustomed but the master is lately dead.'<sup>42</sup> Some London apothecaries clearly considered moving out: 'if any knows of a good apothecary's shop to be dispos'd of, in any considerable town within 60 miles of London, I can help to a London apothecary would take it'; and 'an able apothecary who can be very well recommended, for his health sake, would leave London and live in a market-town, in any place in England where there is one wanting'.<sup>43</sup> As the advertisements for physicians' and surgeons' places indicated, Houghton envisages towns 'wanting' a certain type of practitioner, especially if one had died. However, this does not mean towns only had one medical practitioner: on 12 May 1693 he lists the main occupations in Derby (with 694 families or c. 4000 people) including 7 apothecaries, 11 barbers, 2 physicians and one 'chyrirgion'.

The key attribute of London shops was to be 'well-accustomed' but also 'fitted' or 'wellfurnished' or 'ready fixed'.<sup>44</sup> Occasionally Houghton advertises the fittings, such as 'the frame, pots, glasses etc' or 'the shelves or utensils'<sup>45</sup> and on 18 June 1697 he reported that 'all the utensils belonging to an apothecary's shop to be sold, and if desir'd some drugs and a few compositions. They will be sold a penny-worth and are at Newberry in Berkshire. The buyer may remove them if he pleases.' Usually he mentions the house associated with the shop: 'I know of a pretty apothecary's shop to be dispos'd of, almost new, and either with or without a house, in town, with a good trade to it'.<sup>46</sup> Apothecaries were still expected to live above the shop and there was a strong sense of a suitable location: 'Near a very good market in London are 4 new brick double houses to be sold, having very good shops to them all. Tis a lease of 40 years and the clear rent is £80 the year. One of them stands rarely for an

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<sup>40</sup> 20.5.1694

<sup>41</sup> 5.8.1698; 4.11.1698; 9.9.1698; 8.4.1698

<sup>42</sup> 26.11.1697

<sup>43</sup> 5.8.1698; 28.8.1696

<sup>44</sup> 19.7.1700; 18.10.1700; 21.2.1696; 9.3.1699

<sup>45</sup> 14.3.1701; 18.6.1697

<sup>46</sup> 28.7.1699

apothecary.<sup>47</sup> Tantalisingly, he offers no indication of what made a good location. Houghton himself occupied two shops. Until December 1694 he traded in Bartholomew Lane (just north of the Royal Exchange and close to the main apothecary quarter of Cheapside/Bucklersbury/Cornhill) on the corner of Ship Court where the Ship Tavern was located, and next to his parish church of St Bartholomew Exchange. Perhaps adjoining a church was critical, because his second shop, the 'Golden Fleece' in Gracechurch Street, on the corner with Little Eastcheap, was next to his new parish church, St Leonard Eastcheap (a few hundred yards south of his previous location and just north of the other focus of apothecaries around London Bridge).<sup>48</sup> Or possibly Houghton, a strong royalist and Tory and friend of the clergyman of St Bartholomew's (Dr Woodroffe, another FRS), simply wanted to live close to his church;<sup>49</sup> the London satirist Ned Ward caricatures an apothecary from the Royal Society, probably Houghton, whose numerous 'whims' include 'he lives over-against a church, that when he dies he might not have far to travel upon four men's shoulders'.<sup>50</sup>

Houghton twice advertises potential partners: 'if an eminent apothecary of good business will take a partner that will put into stock £500 or more, I can help him to such'.<sup>51</sup> If an apothecary died, Houghton offered: 'if any apothecary's widow that keeps a shop in the country wants a journey-man that has lived 20 years for himself in London, and has had the conversation of the eminent physicians of the Colledge, I

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<sup>47</sup> 2.4.1697

<sup>48</sup> Patrick Wallis, 'Apothecaries and the Consumption and Retailing of Medicines in Early Modern London' in Curth (ed.), *From Physick*, pp. 13-28 at pp. 23-4.

<sup>49</sup> For his politics see James Jacob, 'Restoration Ideologies and the Royal Society', *History of Science* 18 (1980): 25-38 at pp. 30-4 and Slack references in n. 3. For his links to Woodroffe, who was also a prominent Oxford academic, see Thomas Birch, *History of the Royal Society* (4 vols, 1756-7), vol. IV p. 126 and Peter Doll, *Anglicanism and Orthodoxy* (2006), p. 158. Whereas his 1681-5 periodical had been overtly Tory Anglican, Houghton only reveals his religious opinions once in his *Collection*, when recommending four religious publications on 25 May 1694, and never comments explicitly on party politics, though his freely-expressed views on free trade and support for trading companies held political implications.

<sup>50</sup> Edward Ward, *The London Spy*, part 1, Nov. 1698, pp. 9-10. Ward later satirised the job notices, portraying a distressed gentleman finding Houghton's periodical on a coffeehouse table and being encouraged at first by the advertisements until he realised that every post offered was exactly balanced by someone offering the same skills, leaving no chance for him (*Labour in Vain* (1700), p22)! This is not actually the case and I see no reason to suppose Houghton invented any of his advertisements, though he will have determined their wording.

<sup>51</sup> 4.10.1695

can help to such one'.<sup>52</sup> Houghton advertises 16 times for journeymen, with 9 journeymen's posts available and 7 journeymen wanting jobs; six specify the 'country', but few details are given except occasionally that the apothecary is of 'good' or 'very good' business.<sup>53</sup> More details appear in two related notices: 'one who would be a labourer or house-servant to a druggist, apothecary or such like, desires an employment. He can write and cast accompt well, and have £100 security'; 'if any wants a servant that has been bred a joyner, and is willing to serve any gentleman, so he may not wear a livery, or to serve an apothecary or druggist, or such like, I can help'.<sup>54</sup> He also advertises 'I want a lusty fellow between a 18 and 20 years old, that has had the small-pox to serve a druggist, and do any kind of work that he has for him to do'.<sup>55</sup> Finally, there are three advertisements for 'servants' for chemists or gentlemen interested in chemistry including 'one that has practised chemistry some years, desires to serve a chymist, or some gentleman that for his diversion keeps a laboratory'.<sup>56</sup> Chemistry had an appeal beyond its trade potential, due not least the Hon. Robert Boyle (whom Houghton knew well, recording how he had helped Boyle 'to a great many [chocolate beans] for his own eating').<sup>57</sup> Houghton himself reports sending various medical substances 'to my chymist' for analysis.<sup>58</sup>

This returns us to Houghton's own medical practice and principles. Unfortunately he never discusses or advertises his mainstream apothecary practice. Occasionally he drops hints, for example in his discussion of 'rhubarb' (*Rheum officinalis*), which he praises greatly both as a purgative and a 'binder', especially 'mixed with some other proper medicines, as our physicians now know how, it is a medicine that in several cases we can as well depend on, as we can on Jesuits Powder for an ague, which seldom fails. It has of late been very scarce. I hunted many of the principal druggists shops and can get but very little that is superfine, of which if possible I'll always have some'.<sup>59</sup> He also noted 'I have to sell some of the choicest Jesuit's Bark in England and some that I'm sure is very good of lower value'.<sup>60</sup> The goods he mostly advertises were those which his readers would not expect to find in a standard apothecary's shop; they were not his only or even main products.

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<sup>52</sup> 8.11.1695

<sup>53</sup> One advertised 'a French journeyman that speaks English pretty well': 12.7.1700

<sup>54</sup> 29.11.1695; 24.1.1696

<sup>55</sup> 26.7.1695

<sup>56</sup> 22.3.1695

<sup>57</sup> 28.2.1701

<sup>58</sup> 8.3.1695

<sup>59</sup> 27.1.1699

<sup>60</sup> 13.9.1695

The earliest he advertises is chocolate, which he had sold 'in small quantities' since 1682, adding later 'I know this to be a restorative to weak people, and a great helper of bad stomachs'.<sup>61</sup> On 6 April 1694 he reported 'if any want any true German spaw-water they may have it of me' and this became another standard. By 1695 he was selling both 'extraordinary superfine thea' (coffee is added from 1697) and 'very good flower of brimstone, as cheap, or cheaper than any in town', and offered to 'furnish grocers, chymists or others with any reasonable quantity' of the latter.<sup>62</sup> On 21 February 1696 he began advertising 'lozenges for 8d the ounce' highly commended 'against heart-burning' (later adding 'excellent against consumption and all sharp humours for women with child and to prevent miscarriages') and a week later added 'casheu or catechew excellent against rheums and bad breath, if dissolv'd in mouth, at 18d per box'. 17 April he reported: 'I have a good quantity of several sort of pearl and other East India commodities to sell; and of as good Gascoigns powder as ever was made. Also some very good trim'd sarsaparilla, bezoar or large sprig-coral and true goa-stones.' On 24 July he offered 'lpais Nephreticum' (later called 'nephritic stones') 'which is esteem'd excellent for the stone, by wearing it on the wrist. I have also the heltropian or blood-stone', which he later explains was 'to stop bleeding'.<sup>63</sup> All these products are then regularly advertised until 1703, along with 'a large parcel of excellent DIAPALMA plaister'.<sup>64</sup> He only claims personal credit for one product. On 28 February 1696 he notes that Richard Blome's *Gentleman's Recreation* has a 'receipt' of balls for equine glanders: 'this his recipe I have improved and will upon reputation make it of good things, and sell it for 2s the pound', assuring the reader 'if the flesh of beast, be any thing agreeable to the flesh of man (which I think none doubts) they are excellent to improve'. From 30 April 1697 he advertises them as Bloom's Horse Balls 'excellent against glanders, colds, sickness, molten-grease, bad stomachs, fainting and leanness ... to improve and strengthen all sorts of animals'. In 1699 he adds 'since this plague on horses, I have made some additions to my horse-balls, and I can't learn there are better in England', increasing the price 'by reason of the addition' to 2s 8d and later advertises *The Compleat Horseman*, noting 'I can furnish gentlemen with the medicines therein mentioned'.<sup>65</sup> Finally, on 8 May 1696 he offers, 'Sal Volat., Oleos. Sp., Sal Armon., Cornu Cervi, Sal Succin and Ol. Succin. Rectif' and promises to 'procure any chymical medicine as cheap or cheaper than any in town does; and I'll

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<sup>61</sup> 17.11.1693; 26.1.1694

<sup>62</sup> 16.8.1695; 23.10.1696

<sup>63</sup> 2.10.1696

<sup>64</sup> 10.9.1703

<sup>65</sup> 7.4.1699; 22.12.1699

sell any good commodity for any man of repute if desired', and from 13 August 1697 he offers 'a great variety of chymical medicines'.

This final item is perhaps of greatest interest, as it raises directly the question of Houghton's attitude to chemical vs Galenic medicine. His longest comment, significantly, comes in a discussion of alkalis on 30 December 1698:

Great has been the study among philosophers and physicians, what have been the principles of natural things, from which they hop'd to find out the nature of health, that is the due proportion of each principle; and by the different proportions to find out the difference of diseases: And in order to it, the ancients suppos'd fire, air, earth and water, others since chymistry grew in fashion salt, sulphur and mercury; Dr Willis spirit, salt, sulphur, water and earth. Others will have it only water; and of late some are mighty earnest for acid and alkali; and Dr Morton was for venoms and antidote, but he meant the same thing as he once told me. That any of these are right, I find the learn'd don't agree, and truly where it do's not consist only in such and such proportions, but also in such and such obstructions, and sometimes more than ordinary large passages; sometimes through such and such percolations, or strainings, through variety of angulated colanders and sometimes by different ferments and coagulations: truly twill be a difficult thing for those that have study'd Nature but a little to hit her right. I find those that study her most are most diffident and modest, and will trust more to their large skill in history of cures, than they will to any mathematical conclusion from any principles have been yet laid down, although they that know most in chimistry, anatomy and other natural knowledge should know most of principles.

Houghton's other comments echo this cautious rhetoric, occasionally offering his own suggestions as to how medical processes might work, but stressing their provisionality and his willingness to be proved wrong. He is sceptical of speculative hypotheses, preferring empirical evidence, but also keen to see new 'theories' developed, noting regarding the effects of coffee 'could I meet with a satisfactory theory of sleep perhaps at this I might give some better guesses'.<sup>66</sup> Discussing metals as medicines, he cites regularly from Lemery's *Course of Chemistry*, praising his reasoning as 'very ingenious ... but some things are too high for my reach and who is he that passing thro' the pathless ways of conjecture, may not sometimes miss the right; tho I do not say this doctor doth, but to him I refer the reader to judge for himself'.<sup>67</sup> Citing Lemery on how mercury works he observes 'the solution of his hypothesis is very pretty, and for ought I know true: But methinks he has not

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<sup>66</sup> 16.5.1701

<sup>67</sup> 3.12.1697

explain'd it so well as might be. I'll give my thoughts, but submit them.' He proposes that mercury is globular and volatilised by body heat and because of these globes it leaves space between itself and when it flies, some of the salts are pressed in, so the rest of blood and humours are left thinner and can be cast out by spitting or evacuating.<sup>68</sup> Houghton's model of the body seems closest to that provided by Willis and Boyle, emphasising the operations of acids and alkalis through the pores and within the circulatory channels, with chemically-derived images of 'furnaces' and great stress on temperature. He spends July 1693 summarising 'the most excellent philosopher and physician Dr Willis' on fermentations, concluding 'whether such knowledge as this is worth minding by my brethren the apothecaries, or they are expert in it already, I must leave to their consideration': his sole reference to his fellow apothecaries.

A nice example, which also illustrates his economic nationalism, occurs in his discussion of the bezoar on 10 July 1696. He notes 'with this and several other things is made the Gascoign's powder, which is an excellent medicine indeed, and in very great use with our English physicians'. Then he mentions the 'Goa stone made in India' which 'is thought to be a such like medicine' He admits 'tis esteem'd as an excellent medicine, only there is this difference; The Gascoign's powder is made in England and we certainly know what it is; but the Goa stone we take upon trust; however, tis generally believ'd to be a good medicine.' He adds 'these are all excellent in a great many cases; our fam'd physicians seldom write a bill without some of them, particularly they are very good where the blood wants sweetening: for they are alkalis which have a nature to destroy acids' describing how 'by imbibing the acid salt from the blood the ferment causes a heat, and the thick parts being gone, the rest are made thinner and more ready to transpire, and thus it is according to my imagination that sweat is rais'd by such medicines; and by reason they commonly ease pain, it is an argument with me that pain is caused in a great measure by such acid salts'.

It would be wrong to conclude, however, by implying that Houghton subscribes solely to a chemical model of the body. He also refers regularly to humours and takes for granted the importance of processes of concoction and evacuation central to humoral medicine, and the key significance of diet, noting that both honey and milk are 'meat, drink and medicine' and 'we generally find, that where [milk] is most in use, there are fewest diseases and physicians'.<sup>69</sup> Space permits only two final examples of his summaries of the virtues of different products, both taken from 1700. On 30 August he discusses bay berries, which are 'emollient, sovereign in affections

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<sup>68</sup> 15.1.1698

<sup>69</sup> 15.8.1702; 17.5.1695



of the nerves, colics, gargarisms, baths, salves, perfumes and some have used leaves instead of cloves. It is a common thing with nurses, to help the children of the gripes, to boil bay-leaves in their food.' On 4 October he reports, citing his friend John Evelyn, that 'Juniper berries are one of the most universal remedies in the world', as the berry swallowed 'instantly appeaseth the wind-colic', a decoction is 'most sovereign against an inveterate cough' and the water is a 'most singular specific against the gravel in the reins; but all is comprehended in the virtue of the theriacle or electuary which [Evelyn] has often made for the poor against the stone, rheum, phthisis, dropsy, jaundies, inward imposthumes, nay, palsy, gout and plague itself, taken like Venice Treacle.'

Hence, through Houghton's *Collection* we obtain an invaluable insight into the shared medical world of layman and practitioner, scientist and ordinary patient. His advertisements underline the potential mobility of practitioners (both geographically and across the tripartite division of medicine), their need (at least sometimes) to look beyond personal connections when developing their careers and businesses, and the factors that might underpin the investments that apothecaries, in particular, might make. His comments on medicine and medicinal substances reveal the impact of the new science and changing models of medical practice, but without the polemical or intra-professional rhetorics that make it hard to trust many other writings. Overall, Houghton's caution and empiricism make his work a reliable testimony to the normal pattern of medical practice in William Rose's London.